



Honduras — Va-PoReg Country Report

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09/15/1821 Start Electoral Oligarchical Autocracy: On 09/15/1821, Honduras gained independence from Spain and became part of the First Mexican Empire before joining the Federal Republic of Central America. On 11/15/1838, Honduras declared independence from the Federal Republic of Central America, adopting a new constitution in January 1839. Since then, Honduras replaced the constitution on several occasions (1839, 1848, 1865, 1873, 1880, 1894, 1906, 1924, 1936, 1957, 1965, and 1982) with corresponding electoral laws (Somoza 2005). The 1894 constitution introduced secret, direct, and male suffrage.¹ As one of the first countries in Central and South America, Honduras extended suffrage to illiterates in 1894 (Kellam 2013: 29). Voting for men has always been compulsory, and the military personnel has been disenfranchised since 1895. Between 1876 and 1878, liberal reforms were introduced with the goal of reducing the traditional oligarchic dominance held by landholders, the clergy, and the military. These reforms included the implementation of the separation of church and state, as outlined in the 1879 constitution (Somoza 2005: 400). Elections have been held since independence in 1839, although somewhat irregular and presidential terms varied with the different constitutions. On 02/27/1902, the National Party (Partido Nacional -PN) was established by General Manuel Bonilla.² In October 1902, general elections were held. The presidential elections were won by Bonilla. However, President Terencio Sierra declined to surrender governance to General Bonilla, leading Congress to elect Juan Angel Arias as president.³ According to Vanhanen in 1898 10.4 and in 1903 12.2 percentage of the total population voted (Vanhanen 2019). Although suffrage was extended to illiterates, military personnel were excluded, elections were held only irregularly, a traditional oligarchy was evident, and the proportion of voters was less than 15 percent of the population. Therefore, we classify this period as an electoral oligarchy. In the initial decades of the 20th century, American corporations like the United Fruit Company, the Standard Fruit Company, and the Cuyamel Fruit Company held sway over Honduras' economy. They set up vast banana plantations along the northern coast, swiftly turning bananas into the nation's chief export. In exchange for sizable land concessions from conservative politicians, these companies gained significant influence.⁴ The interests of these American companies were of great importance for the behavior of the USA in relation to Honduras. Based on our observations, multiparty executive and legislative elections were held during this period, which aligns with the observations of LIED. LIED classifies elections during this period as not competitive. V-Dem's EF&FI scores them as not really free or fair while their CEI scores them as not clean. Moreover, both LIED and V-Dem's PCLI confirm the absence of political liberties. Based on Polity5's assessment, during this period, the executive encountered substantial institutional limitations on power. For the relevant regime period, V-Dem's JCE is interpreted by us as indicating that judicial constraints on the executive were limited, while V-Dem's LCE is classified by us as indicating that legislative constraints on the executive were absent.

04/13/1903 End Electoral Oligarchical Autocracy/Start Military (Personalist) Autocracy: On this date, following a coup, General Manuel Bonilla took control and suppressed any political opposition (Stokes 1950: 47, Haggerty/Millet 1995: 19, Euraque 1996: chap. 3, Lentz 1999: 2020-21, Casey et al. 2020: 9). The regime is classified according to our coding rules as a military autocracy because Manuel Bonilla gained power through a military operation. Despite winning a plurality vote in the presidential elections on 03/01/1902, Bonilla failed to meet the absolute majority requirement specified by the constitution. Consequently, the

congress appointed Juan Ángel Arias Boquí as president and General Máximo Betancourt Rosales as vice president. After seizing power, Bonilla summoned congress and coerced them to overturn the election results, declaring him president and Miguel R. Dávila vice president. They assumed office on 05/17/1903. Subsequently, Bonilla called for a constituent assembly, which annulled the 1894 constitution and reinstated parts of the 1880 constitution, leading to a six-year presidential term. This new constitution took effect on 01/01/1906.⁵ During his presidency, Bonilla imprisoned the former president, Policarpo Bonilla, and suppressed the political opposition of the liberals while organizing conservatives into a single political party (Merrill 1995). Moreover, both LIED and V-Dem's PCLI indicate that political liberties were absent in this period. Based on Polity5's assessment, during this period, the executive operated with unlimited authority, facing no institutional checks on power. During this regime period, V-Dem's JCE is classified by us as indicating that judicial constraints on the executive were limited, whereas V-Dem's LCE is classified by us as indicating that legislative constraints on the executive were absent. According to LIED only legislative elections, which weren't multiparty, were held in 1903 and executive and legislative elections, which weren't multiparty were held from 1904 to 1906.

03/25/1907 End Military (Personalist) Autocracy/Start Non-Electoral Transitional Regime: On this date, Bonilla was ousted by a Liberal rebellion led by General Dionisio Gutierrez and supported by Nicaragua. On the same day, a cabinet (Consejo de Ministros) assumed office composed of Miguel Oquelí Bustillo, Máximo B. Rosales, and J. Ignacio Castro (Somoza 2005). The government junta appointed vice-President Miguel Dávila as provisional president on 04/18/1907.⁶ (Stokes 1950: 47-48, Haggerty/Millet 1995: 20, Lentz 1999: 221, Casey et al. 2020: 9). Dávila summoned a constituent assembly to reiterate the constitution of 1894 and called for elections. LIED identifies political liberties as absent, and V-Dem's PCLI is also classified by us as indicating that political liberties were absent. According to LIED only executive elections were held in 1907. For the relevant regime period, V-Dem's JCE is interpreted by us as indicating that judicial constraints on the executive were limited, while V-Dem's LCE is classified by us as indicating that legislative constraints on the executive were absent.

03/01/1908 End Non-Electoral Transitional Regime/Start Electoral Oligarchical Autocracy: Dávila was elected president in March by an unclear election process.⁷ Apparently, Dávila was elected by the constituent assembly.⁸ Somoza does not record an election for 1908, but only in 1902 and 1911 (Somoza 2005: 407). Vanhanen does record an election in 1908, in which 0 percentage of the population participated (Vanhanen 2019). Since we cannot assume that Dávila was legitimized by the population but rather within the ruling elite, we code the regime change event as a strategic status quo restructuring. On an unknown date in 1908, opponents of Dávila, most likely backed by Guatemala and El Salvador, entered Honduras, which in turn was supported by Nicaragua. There was a real threat of war. Due to the threat of US intervention, however, the case was submitted to the newly established Central American Court. The case still pending, the revolt collapsed and order and peace was restored to Honduras for a short while (Haggerty/Millet 1993). Based on our observations, multiparty executive and legislative elections were held during this period, which aligns with the observations of LIED. LIED classifies elections during this period as not competitive. V-Dem's EF&FI does not provide a score for electoral freedom and fairness while their CEI scores them as not clean. Besides both LIED and V-Dem's PCLI score concerning the political liberties remained unchanged. Based on Polity5's assessment, during this period, the executive encountered substantial institutional limitations on power. During this regime period, V-Dem's JCE is classified by us as indicating that judicial constraints on the executive were limited, whereas V-Dem's LCE is classified by us as indicating that legislative constraints on the executive were absent.

03/28/1911 End Electoral Oligarchical Autocracy/Start Non-Electoral Transitional Regime: On this date, a revolt spearheaded by General Manuel Bonilla prompted the United States to pressure Dávila into resigning (Stokes 1950: 48-49, Haggerty/Millet 1995: 22, Euraque 1996: chap. 1, Casey et al. 2020: 9). The US led mediations between Bonilla and Dávila between 02/21/1911 and 03/15/1911. It was agreed that Francisco Bertrand would be appointed as provisional president and that general elections were to be held.⁹ Even though

the revolt was led by General Bonilla, the regime change would not have been possible without the United States intervention. This fits our characterization of an externally sponsored coup or regime replacement, which we classify as a foreign-imposed regime change. Bertrand acted as provisional president between 03/28/1911 and 01/21/1912 (Somoza 2005). According to the Polity5 indicator, during this period, the executive faced substantial limitations on decision-making power.

10/29[-31]/1911 End Non-Electoral Transitional Regime/Start Electoral Oligarchical Autocracy: General elections took place on this date. The presidential elections were won by Bonilla, who was the only candidate (Somoza 2005). Bertrand, although stepping down as president, continued as vice president. Therefore, we consider this a strategic restructuring instead of a voluntary exit through elections. The elections are categorized as "non-competitive." Bonilla passed away barely a year into his presidency. Following his demise, Vice President Francisco Bertrand assumed the presidency and emerged victorious in the 1916 elections (Stokes 1950: 49-50, Haggerty/Millet 1995: 22, Euraque 1996: chap. 1, Casey et al. 2020: 9).¹⁰ Bertrand was the only candidate in the elections and took office on 01/02/1916 (Somoza 2005). It soon became clear that Bertrand would not allow free and fair elections in 1920. On 09/09/1919, after Bertrand started planning to manipulate the forthcoming elections, General Rafael Lopez Gutierrez initiated arrangements for his ousting (Stokes 1950: 50-51, Haggerty/Millet 1995: 24, Euraque 1996: chap. 3, Casey et al. 2020: 9). On 09/09/1919, Bertrand resigned and left the country, after the United States of America threatened an invasion if he would not accept their offer to mediate the dispute with General López Gutiérrez (Merrill 1995). With the help of the US, Francisco Bográn was installed as the head of an interim government with the promise to hold free elections.¹¹ On 02/01/1920, Following Bertrand's removal from power, General Rafael Lopez Gutierrez orchestrated the subsequent elections and assumed office in October 1920 (Stokes 1950: 51, Haggerty/Millet 1995: 24, Euraque 1996: chap. 3, Casey et al. 2020: 9). From 1920 to 1921, Honduras, Guatemala, and El Salvador made an unsuccessful attempt to reintroduce the CAF. The corresponding constitution from 09/21/1921 introduced women's suffrage but was never implemented (Smith 2008). During this time, the United States defended its interests and those of its companies in Honduras to a great extent and interfered in Honduran politics (Somoza 2005: 400).¹² The fruit companies wielded significant influence over the political decision-making process, a sway that was amplified by the absence or fragility of the national oligarchy and the populace's exclusion from political and economic engagement. During this turbulent period there were no fair elections (Somoza 2005: 400). The available sources on electoral restrictions are inadequate. It is not entirely clear whether the electoral restrictions for military personnel of the 1894 constitution were lifted with the constitution of 1904. In general, it can be stated for the beginning of the 20th century and the Central and South American states that universal male suffrage was often only guaranteed *de jure* (Negretto/Visconti 2018: 30-32). According to Vanhanen, between 10.0 and 12.9 % of the population participated in the elections. Therefore, we classify the regime in this period as an electoral oligarchical autocracy. Based on our observations, multiparty executive and legislative elections were held during this period, which aligns with the observations of LIED. LIED classifies elections during this period as not competitive. V-Dem's EF&FI scores them as ambiguously free and fair while their CEI scores them as not clean. Furthermore, LIED and V-Dem's PCLI maintained their scoring, referring to an absence of political liberties. Based on Polity5's assessment, during this period, the executive encountered substantial institutional limitations on power. For the relevant regime period, V-Dem's JCE is interpreted by us as indicating that judicial constraints on the executive were limited, while V-Dem's LCE is classified by us as indicating that legislative constraints on the executive were absent. Amid the civil war that had erupted in February 1924 after López Gutiérrez declared his intention to remain in office following the inconclusive elections of October 1923, López Gutiérrez passed away on 03/10/1924. Following the death of President López Gutiérrez executive power passed to the Council of Ministers headed by José Ángel Zúñiga Huete. Under the then-applicable Constitution of 1894, which provided no vice-presidential succession, the Council of Ministers represented the constitutionally prescribed line of succession. The transition thus remained within the institutional framework of the existing Electoral Oligarchical Autocracy and amounts to a government

change rather than a regime change. However, the council governed without any electoral legitimacy amid ongoing civil war, with rebel forces under Generals Ferrera and Carias Andino controlling large parts of the country. US naval vessels and marines were deployed to protect American economic interests in the banana zones. The transitional phase ended when US envoy Sumner Welles brokered a peace agreement aboard the USS Milwaukee (04/23/1924–04/28/1924), resulting in the appointment of General Vicente Tosta Carrasco as provisional president.

04/30/1924 End Oligarchical Electoral Autocracy/Start Non-Electoral Transitional Regime: Based on the US-brokered peace agreement of 04/28/1924, General Vicente Tosta Carrasco took office as provisional president on 04/30/1924 (Stokes 1950: 53, Haggerty/Millet 1995: 25-26, Morris 2018: 8, Casey et al. 2020: 9-10). Tosta adhered to the stipulation of not seeking the presidency in the upcoming elections. Unlike the preceding caretaker government, Tosta's regime rested on a clear institutional mandate: promulgating a new constitution and organizing presidential elections, while refraining from candidacy himself. Although the USA exerted continuous pressure, including an arms embargo and credit restrictions, Tosta retained full control over security and foreign policy, commanding military operations against a renewed rebellion by General Ferrera.

12/28/1924 End Non-Electoral Transitional Regime/Start Electoral Oligarchical Autocracy: On this date, presidential elections were held, and Miguel Paz Barahona was inaugurated on 02/01/1925, ending this transitional phase. On 02/01/1929, in an unexpected turn of events, opposition contender Vicente Mejia Colindres secured victory in the presidential elections, prompting Paz Barahona to consent to stepping down from office (Stokes 1950: 54-55, Haggerty/Millet 1995: 27-28, Casey et al. 2020: 10). According to LIED only legislative elections, which weren't multiparty were held in 1924, from 1925 to 1927 executive and legislative elections, which weren't multiparty were held and from 1928 onward multiparty executive and legislative elections were held. LIED categorizes the elections as not competitive between 1924 and 1928, after which they are categorized as competitive. V-Dem's EF&FI scores them as somewhat free and fair from 1924 to 1927, after which it scores them as fair. V-Dem's CEI scores them as not really clean for the entire period. However, according to LIED no political liberties were achieved. V-Dem's PCLI classified them as not present except from 1929 to 1931 they were not really present. General Carías emerged victorious in a legitimate election held in October 1932. The election was classified as competitive by LIED, but V-Dem's CEI indicates no real cleanliness. Nevertheless, the overall conditions were somewhat free and fair (V-Dem EF&FI). Based on Polity5's assessment, during this period, the executive encountered substantial institutional limitations on power. On 11/26/1933 Carías upheld the state of siege initiated by his predecessor and expanded his political dominance across the nation by appointing local political and military figures. Initially, Carías employed patronage and control over state resources to sway opposition politicians. From 1935 onwards, there was a noticeable escalation in arrests and suppression of dissenting voices (Dodd 2005: 62-71, Haggerty/Millet 1993, Leonard 1998: 96, MacCameron 1983: 17, Stokes 1950: 219-26, Geddes/Wright/Frantz 2014b: 67). In 1935 the Communist Party of Honduras was outlawed. Based on Polity5's assessment, during this period, the executive encountered substantial institutional limitations on power. During this regime period, V-Dem's JCE is classified by us as indicating that judicial constraints on the executive were limited, whereas V-Dem's LCE is classified by us as indicating that legislative constraints on the executive were absent.

04/15/1936 End Electoral Autocracy/Start One-Party Autocracy: The constitution prohibited an immediate reelection of President Carías so he called a constituent assembly to propose a new constitution. The constitution was amended on 04/15/1936.¹³ The major constitutional changes included the elimination of the prohibition of immediate reelection as well as a prolonged term in office of six rather than four years. The constitution also established that the incumbent president would remain in office until 1943.¹⁴ Other constitutional changes included restoring the death penalty, reducing legislative powers, and denying women citizenship and voting rights (Merrill 1995). On 12/12/1939, a proposal presented to the congress which would prolong Carías' presidency until 1949 was adopted.¹⁵ By the conclusion of the 1930s, the National Party of

Honduras (PNH) stood as the sole organized and operational political party in the country.¹⁶ Leaders of other political parties had been imprisoned or had fled to exile. In the 1940s, antigovernment protests and uprisings emerged. In July 1944, antigovernment protestors were killed by the military. Following pressure from the United States of America, Carias announced free elections for October 1948 when his current term in office expired (Merrill 1995). Opposition parties were allowed to return.¹⁷ Following a boycott of the elections by the PLH due to restricted campaigning and their accusation of election fraud to be committed by the PNH, Carias' choice for president, Gálvez won the elections on 10/10/1948 unopposed.¹⁸ According to LIED executive and legislative, which weren't multiparty, were held. Besides, LIED continued to code political liberties as absent. V-Dem's PCLI indicates them as absent until 1949 and as what we interpret as ambiguous afterwards. According to Polity5, during this period, the executive encountered slight limitations on decision-making power imposed by other institutions. Until 1953, V-Dem's JCE is classified by us as indicating that judicial constraints on the executive were limited, whereas V-Dem's LCE is classified by us as indicating that legislative constraints on the executive were absent. For 1954, V-Dem's JCE is interpreted by us as indicating that judicial constraints on the executive were moderate, while V-Dem's LCE is classified by us as indicating that legislative constraints on the executive were limited.

10/10/1954 End One-Party Autocracy/Start Electoral Autocracy: On this date, relatively free elections were held and Villeda Morales of the PLH won a plurality of the votes, but an absolute majority was required. During this time, president Gálvez went to the United States due to health issues, and, in line with the constitution, Vice President Julio Lozano Díaz assumed office on 11/16/1954 as provisional president. The congress vote was boycotted by the PNH and MNR, the two major conservative parties. Thus, it fell to the supreme court to select a president, but because the court was primarily composed of appointees by Carias, the PLH declined to comply with this course of action (Leonard 2011: 143). The constitution allowed the incumbent president to assume dictatorial powers as chief of state if a new president was not elected by congress within eight weeks. This deadline passed on 12/04/1954, and on 12/05/1954, Julio Lozano Díaz proclaimed himself president, dissolving the congress and claiming dictatorial powers. Subsequently, Lozano appointed a council of state, led by a PLH member but comprising representatives from all three major parties, to temporarily replace the congress until a constituent assembly could be chosen to draft a new constitution (Merrill 1995). Chin/Wright/Carter (2021b: 125) categorize this event as an autogolpe due to Lozano's actions falling partially within constitutional bounds, whereas in standard procedures, the president should have been one of the presidential candidates. Universal suffrage was decreed in November 1955 and ratified in the 1957 constitution (Smith 2008). On 10/07/1956, constituent assembly elections were held. Before the elections, President Lozano Díaz formed his party, the National Union Party (PUN). The elections were allegedly rigged, as the PUN won all 56 congressional seats (Leonard 2011). While for a period between 12/05/1954 and 10/07/1956 there was no legislative assembly, formally the conditions for an electoral autocracy are not fulfilled in this period. However, because the procedure was more or less in line with the constitution, we classify this period still as an electoral autocracy. According to LIED no multiparty executive and legislative elections were held. According to Polity5, during this period, the executive encountered slight limitations on decision-making power imposed by other institutions. For the relevant regime period, V-Dem's JCE is interpreted by us as indicating that judicial constraints on the executive were moderate, while V-Dem's LCE is classified by us as indicating that legislative constraints on the executive were limited. Furthermore, political liberties were still coded as absent by LIED and can be interpreted as ambiguous following V-Dem's PCLI.

10/21/1956 End Electoral Autocracy/Start Military Autocracy: On this date, the armed forces, under the leadership of the commanders from the army and air force academies, along with Major Roberto Gálvez, the son of the former president, removed Lozano Díaz from power and established a military junta to govern the nation.¹⁹ The subsequent military junta consisted of a military triumvirate comprising General Roque Jacinto Rodríguez Herrera (Director of the "Francisco Morazán" Military Academy), Roberto Gálvez Barnes (an engineer who served as Minister during Lozano's government), and Héctor Caraccioli Moncada (chief of the Honduran Armed Forces).²⁰ After the junta took power, they annulled the fraudulent constituent elections held

on 10/07/1956, established a new cabinet and declared martial law against armed partisans of Lozano (Chin/Wright/Carter 2021b). The coup represented a pivotal moment in Honduran history. It marked the first instance where the armed forces operated as an institution rather than merely serving as a tool for a political party or a single leader (Merrill 1995: 36). On 07/07/1957, the ruling junta ousted Rodríguez. López Arellano became chairman. The classification of this event depends on the regime leader at the time. In agreement with Chin/Wright/Carter (2021b), we consider Rodríguez to be the nominal executive, not the regime leader. Therefore, this constitutes a coup by a faction of the junta, rather than a regime change. This period was falsely described as a military coup that installed an interim government to oversee a democratic transition in the GWF dataset. According to LIED no multiparty executive and legislative elections were held. According to Polity5, during this period, the executive encountered slight limitations on decision-making power imposed by other institutions. LIED identifies political liberties as absent, and V-Dem's PCLI is classified by us as ambiguous regarding the state of political liberties. For the relevant regime period, V-Dem's JCE is interpreted by us as indicating that judicial constraints on the executive were limited, and V-Dem's LCE is similarly interpreted as indicating that legislative constraints on the executive were also limited.

12/21/1957 End Military Autocracy/Start Electoral Hybrid Regime: The military allowed relatively free popular elections on 10/07/1957 for a constituent assembly, resulting in a majority victory for the PLH under a system of proportional representation. On 11/14/1957, the military junta and the liberal party decided against the initially planned direct presidential elections, opting for Ramón Villeda Morales to assume the presidency. During this period, Villeda was the only candidate widely supported by the military and civil society. Thus, Villeda was appointed by a democratically elected body, despite the unfulfilled promise of direct elections. His six-year term as president commenced on 12/21/1957 (Leonard 2011, Chin/Wright/Carter 2021b). He exerted significant influence over politics in the ensuing era. Nevertheless, the nation struggled to solidify democratic institutions (MCM codebook, S. 22). For instance, the low Polity score of -1 corroborates our coding of these years as an electoral hybrid regime.²¹ MCM coded the country as a multiparty autocracy, PRC as semidemocracy, GWF, LIED, BR, BMR as a democracy. The classification by RoW as a closed autocracy seems to be a sheer misclassification since elections took place in this period. Based on our observations, multiparty executive and legislative elections were held during this period, which aligns with the observations of LIED. LIED categorizes elections during this time as competitive. V-Dem's EF&FI does not provide data for this time while their CEI scores the elections as not clean. Additionally, political liberties were absent (LIED), but V-Dem's PCLI scores them with an ambiguous presence. According to Polity5, during this period, the executive encountered slight limitations on decision-making power imposed by other institutions. For the relevant regime period, V-Dem's JCE is interpreted by us as indicating that judicial constraints on the executive were limited, and V-Dem's LCE is similarly interpreted as indicating that legislative constraints on the executive were also limited.

10/03/1963 End Electoral Hybrid Regime/Start Military Autocracy: Military coup led by Air Force Colonel and commander of the armed forces López Arellano ousted the elected government of Villeda Morales days before the presidential election and established a military junta because they feared Villeda would enact leftist reforms after re-election. On the same day, General Oswaldo López Arellano declared himself president, dissolved the congress, suspended the constitution, and cancelled the planned elections (Haggerty/Millet 1993, Morris 1984: 39, Geddes/Wright/Frantz 2014b: 67). As a result, the military emerged as the predominant political force in Honduras, yet it relied on civilian allies for support. From 1963 to 1971, General of the Air Force Oswaldo López governed the country in partnership with Ricardo Zúniga Agustín, the leader of the National Party (Ruhl 1996: 36). According to LIED no multiparty executive and legislative elections were held in 1963 and 1964, from 1965 onward multiparty executive and legislative elections were held. Besides, political liberties continued to be coded as absent (LIED). V-Dem's PCLI decreased into a range which we interpret as not real presence of political liberties. According to Polity5, during this period, the executive encountered slight limitations on decision-making power imposed by other institutions. For 1964, V-Dem's JCE is classified as limited, indicating weak judicial oversight. Concurrently, V-Dem's LCE shows no value,

which can be cautiously interpreted as indicating an absence of legislative constraints on the executive. For the rest of the relevant regime period, V-Dem's JCE is interpreted by us as indicating that judicial constraints on the executive were limited, and V-Dem's LCE is similarly interpreted as indicating that legislative constraints on the executive were also limited.

03/28/1971 End Military Autocracy/Start Electoral Autocracy: On this date, elections under the auspices of a pact for power sharing between the PN and PL took place. Based on our observations, multiparty executive and legislative elections were held during this period, which aligns with the observations of LIED. LIED classifies them as not competitive. V-Dem's EF&FI scores them as somewhat free and fair while their CEI scores them as not really clean. Under the agreement, the seats were divided equally between both parties, disregarding the electoral results (Morris 1984: 43, Anderson 1988: 134, Somoza 2005, Geddes/Wright/Frantz 2014b: 67). Ramón Ernesto Cruz Uclés, a non-military, was elected as president. It is true that the regime period was "sandwiched by military regimes on either side" and not free of military influence (MCM, S. 23). However, precisely the fact that there was a military coup against Ucles shows that he was not just a puppet president of the military. According to LIED multiparty executive and legislative elections were held during this period. Furthermore, political liberties were not given (LIED). V-Dem' PCLI scores them as not really present. According to Polity5, during this period, the executive encountered slight limitations on decision-making power imposed by other institutions. For the relevant regime period, V-Dem's JCE is interpreted by us as indicating that judicial constraints on the executive were limited, and V-Dem's LCE is similarly interpreted as indicating that legislative constraints on the executive were also limited.

12/04/1972 End Electoral Autocracy/Start Military Autocracy: On this date, a military coup, led by General López Arellano, ousted elected president Cruz Ucles and López Arellano ruled as a military dictator (Morris 1984: 44, Geddes/Wright/Frantz 2014b: 67-68). The ensuing government adopted a populist stance and implemented various socio-economic reforms aimed at modernizing the nation through proactive state involvement. One of the most contentious initiatives introduced was an agrarian reform program.²² On 04/22/1975, López Arellano was deposed for his corruption scandal involving an American fruit company. This internal military coup was led by Melgar Castro, who announced his cabinet on 04/23/1975, but ruled de facto alone as a military dictator. Under this regime, military hard-liners gradually regained control, bringing an end to the era of military reformism (Ruhl 1996: 37). On 08/07/1978, right-wing elements in the military charged that his corruption and repression cost him control over the country, ousted Melgar Castro, and replaced his government with a three-member junta led by General Policarpo Paz García. According to LIED no multiparty executive and legislative elections were held. As classified by FH for this regime period, the country scores between 9 and 10 as not free, which we interpret as rather not free. Moreover, the state of political liberties is coded as absent per LIED and can be interpreted as not really present per V-Dem's PCLI. According to Polity5, during this period, the executive encountered slight limitations on decision-making power imposed by other institutions. For the relevant period, V-Dem's JCE is classified as limited, indicating weak judicial oversight. Concurrently, V-Dem's LCE shows no value, which can be cautiously interpreted as indicating an absence of legislative constraints on the executive.

04/20/1980 End Military Autocracy/Start Electoral (Military) Autocracy: On this date, the military regime permitted the election of a constituent assembly. On 07/25/1980, the constituent assembly held presidential elections. As no candidate received an absolute majority, Paz García remained in office (Somoza 2005). Since the military still played a major role in politics and held veto power the regime is classified as an electoral autocracy. According to LIED no multiparty executive and legislative elections were held. LIED classifies them as not competitive. V-Dem's EF&FI scores them as somewhat free and fair while their CEI scores them as not really clean. Per FH, for this regime period, the country scores between 6 and 7, categorized as partly free, which we interpret as rather free. V-Dem' PCLI still scores political liberties as not really present and LIED views them as absent. During this regime period, V-Dem's JCE is classified by us as indicating that judicial constraints on the executive were moderate, whereas V-Dem's LCE is classified by us as indicating that legislative constraints on the executive were absent.

11/29/1981 End Electoral (Military) Autocracy/Start Electoral Democracy: On this date, multiparty elections ended military rule. The election was won by the party not endorsed by the military, and the newly elected president assumed office in January 1982, finalizing the transition to democracy (Pearson 1982: 439, Anderson 1988: 155, Geddes/Wright/Frantz 2014b: 67-68). A new constitution was approved in 1982 and the PLH government of Roberto Suazo assumed power. In a regularly scheduled election, opposition candidate Rafael Leonardo Callejas of the National Party captured 42 percent of the vote to 27 percent for of the ruling Liberal Party candidate Jose Azcona Hoyo. However, the PLH interpreted election law in such a way that it allowed for multiple candidates from one party. Taken conjointly, the results of all the candidates from the PLH outweighed Callejas' score. Therefore, Azcona, the PLH candidate with the most votes, assumed presidency.²³ The transfer of power was peaceful and strongly supported by the military. Elections in 1990, 1993 and 1998 went smoothly. Civilian control over the military was established. In the 2001 elections the PNH triumphed over the PLH. On 11/27/2005, Zelaya (PLH) won the presidential elections with a margin of only 4%.²⁴ 2009 marked the beginning of the Honduran constitutional crisis surrounding Zelaya's plans to execute a referendum concerning the establishment of a constituent assembly tasked with the drafting of a new constitution. This move was deemed unconstitutional by many and led to the 2009 coup.²⁵ Based on our observations, multiparty executive and legislative elections were held during this period, which aligns with the observations of LIED. LIED categorizes elections during this time as competitive. V-Dem's EF&FI scores them as somewhat free and fair. Their CEI scores them as of ambiguous cleanliness from 1982 to 1989 and from 2001 to 2009. In between these periods, the CEI scores elections as somewhat clean. As per FH's classification for 1982, the country receives a score of 5 as free, which we categorize as rather free. In 1983 a score of 6 to 7 designates the country as partly free, which aligns with our interpretation of rather free. Between 1984 and 1992 Honduras is classified as free with a score of 5, which falls into our interpretation of the rather free category. For the period from 1993 to 1996 it scores between 6 and 7, categorized as partly free, which we interpret as rather free. In 1997 and 1998 the country is once again classified as free with a score of 5, which falls within our interpretation of the rather free category. For the remaining period Honduras scores between 6 and 7, categorized as partly free, which we interpret as rather free. Moreover, political liberties were absent until 1998 (LIED). V-Dem's PCLI scores the political liberties as ambiguous until 1990. From 1991 to 1997 they were somewhat present and fully present from 1998 onwards. From 1982 to 1984, based on Polity5's evaluation, the executive's power was limited to a degree between substantial constraints and parity with other institutions, fitting Intermediate Category 3. Since 1995, as per Polity5's classification, the executive's authority was significantly constrained by institutional checks during this time. For the year 1982, V-Dem's JCE is classified by us as indicating that judicial constraints on the executive were moderate, whereas V-Dem's LCE is classified by us as indicating that legislative constraints on the executive were absent. From 1983 to 1989, V-Dem's JCE is interpreted by us as indicating that judicial constraints on the executive were moderate, while V-Dem's LCE is classified by us as indicating that legislative constraints on the executive were limited. From 1990 to 1992, V-Dem's JCE is interpreted by us as indicating that judicial constraints on the executive were robust, while V-Dem's LCE is classified by us as indicating that legislative constraints on the executive were limited. From 1993 to 1998, V-Dem's JCE is interpreted by us as indicating that judicial constraints on the executive were moderate, while V-Dem's LCE is classified by us as indicating that legislative constraints on the executive were limited. For the years 1999-2008, V-Dem's JCE is interpreted by us as indicating that judicial constraints on the executive were robust, while V-Dem's LCE is classified by us as indicating that legislative constraints on the executive were limited. For 2009, V-Dem's JCE is interpreted by us as indicating that judicial constraints on the executive were robust, while V-Dem's LCE is classified by us as indicating that legislative constraints on the executive were moderate. The regime is a borderline case between an electoral democracy and an electoral hybrid regime.

06/28/2009 End Electoral Democracy/Start Non-Electoral Transitional Regime: On this date, following orders from the Honduran Supreme Court, the army ousted President Manuel Zelaya and sent him into exile.²⁶ Zelaya had attempted to schedule a non-binding poll on holding a referendum on convening a constituent

assembly to rewrite the constitution. He refused to comply with court orders to cease, and the Honduran Supreme Court issued a secret warrant for his arrest dated 06/26/2009. Two days later, Honduran soldiers stormed the president's house in the middle of the night and detained him, forestalling the poll. Instead of bringing him to trial, the army put him on a military airplane and flew him to Costa Rica. Later that day, after the reading of a resignation letter of disputed authenticity, the Honduran Congress voted to remove Zelaya from office, and appointed Speaker of Congress Roberto Micheletti, his constitutional successor, to replace him. On 11/05/2009 the Micheletti administration formed a so-called unity government without the participation of Zelaya and his supporters, prompting Zelaya to threaten to pull out of the reconciliation agreement and boycott the upcoming presidential election. On 11/25/2009 the Supreme Court ruled that Zelaya could not legally return to office (Lansford 2021: 701-702). As per Polity5's classification, the executive's authority was significantly constrained by institutional checks during this time.

11/26/2009 End Non-Electoral Transitional Regime/Start Electoral Autocracy: On this date, parliamentary and presidential polling took place amid greatly heightened security, as some 30,000 police and military personnel were ordered to patrol the streets and oversee the electoral process. In the presidential election, the PN's Lobo won 56.6 percent of the vote, easily defeating the PL's Elvin Santos, who had served as vice president under Zelaya. Santos garnered 38.1 percent on turnout of slightly less than 50 percent of the electorate. In concurrent parliamentary elections, the PN won 71 seats of the total 128 contested seats in congress. The PL secured the second highest number of seats with 45. On 12/02/2009, the outgoing congress voted against reinstating Zelaya as president (Lansford 2021: 701). The election results were rejected by many national and internationally actors.²⁷ General elections were held in Honduras on 11/24/2013. The elections took place at a time of rapidly declining human rights.²⁸ Voters went to the polls to elect a new President, the 128 members of the National Congress, 298 Mayors and vice-mayors and their respective councilors and 20 representatives to the Central American Parliament. Honduran elections have historically been marred by fraud, and polls leading up to the elections found that 59% of Hondurans believe the elections would be fraudulent. However, the Supreme Electoral Tribunal (TSE) has stated that these would be the most clean and fair elections in Honduras's history, and both the traditionally dominant parties – the National and Liberal parties – agree. The newly formed Libre Party and Anti-Corruption Party feared that there would be fraud, a position backed by the Carter Center. Anti-Corruption Party candidate Salvador Nasralla publicly denounced attempts at vote-buying by the National Party across the country.²⁹ In 2014, the Hernández government abolished five ministries at the cabinet level and established seven overarching ministries as a cost-cutting measure. Critics contend that this restructuring centralized power excessively.³⁰ On 11/26/2017, following that, President Juan Orlando Hernández was re-elected with the Supreme Electoral Council (TSE) declaring in December, three weeks post the election, that he had garnered 42.95 percent of the vote, compared to opposition candidate Salvador Nasralla's 41.42 percent. The Organization of American States (OAS) highlighted several concerns regarding the electoral procedure, describing it as "marked by irregularities and deficiencies, with notably low technical standards and electoral cleanliness," and called for fresh elections to be conducted.³¹ Based on our observations, multiparty executive and legislative elections were held during this period, which aligns with the observations of LIED. LIED categorizes some elections as competitive and others as not competitive. V-Dem's EF&FI fluctuates between speaking of not really and ambiguous free or fair elections. Their CEI scores elections as not really clean. Overall, the quality of the elections fluctuated, but never reached the stage of (semi-)democratic elections. In addition, there were also measures that substantially increased the power of the executive. Per FH's scoring for the regime period until 2019, the country is classified as partly free with a score of 8, which we categorize as rather not free. In 2020 a score between 9 and 10 makes the country not free, which aligns with our interpretation of rather not free. For this time political liberties decreased back to absent (LIED). Whereas V-Dem's PCLI scores were still at a somewhat present level until 2019 and full present ever since 2020. As per Polity5's classification, the executive's authority was significantly constrained by institutional checks during this time. For 2010 and 2011, V-Dem's JCE is interpreted by us as indicating that judicial constraints on the executive were robust,

while V-Dem's LCE is classified by us as indicating that legislative constraints on the executive were limited. For 2012, V-Dem's JCE is interpreted by us as indicating that judicial constraints on the executive were moderate, while V-Dem's LCE is classified by us as indicating that legislative constraints on the executive were limited. For 2013 and 2014, V-Dem's JCE is interpreted by us as indicating that judicial constraints on the executive were robust, while V-Dem's LCE is classified by us as indicating that legislative constraints on the executive were limited. From 2015 to 2020, V-Dem's JCE is classified by us as indicating that judicial constraints on the executive were moderate, whereas V-Dem's LCE is classified by us as indicating that legislative constraints on the executive were limited. For the year 2021, V-Dem's JCE is interpreted by us as indicating that judicial constraints on the executive were robust, while V-Dem's LCE is classified by us as indicating that legislative constraints on the executive were limited.

11/28/2021 End Electoral Autocracy/Start Electoral Democracy: In November 2021, Xiomara Castro of the Libre Party secured the presidency with 51.1 percent of the vote, marking the end of 12 years of National Party control of the office. As the transition of power happened peacefully and constitutionally, we code this regime change event as a voluntary exit. Castro, the country's inaugural female president, was elected amidst a historically high voter turnout. The EU election mission to Honduras noted that, despite several lingering challenges, the electoral system reforms implemented in May 2021 had enhanced transparency and bolstered confidence in the election outcomes.³² Based on our observations, multiparty executive and legislative elections were held during this period, which aligns with the observations of LIED. LIED categorizes the elections as competitive. V-Dem's EF&FI scores them as somewhat free and fair. Their CEI scores them as not clean. As per FH, for this regime period, the country receives a score of 8, which we interpret as falling into the rather not free category. However, political liberties were absent in 2021 according to LIED. V-Dem's PCLI still underlines full political liberties. For the relevant regime period, V-Dem's JCE is interpreted by us as indicating that judicial constraints on the executive were comprehensive, while V-Dem's LCE is classified by us as indicating that legislative constraints on the executive were moderate.

Electoral Democracy as of 07/01/2025 continued.

Additional Sources (Bendel 1995, Benítez 2009, Oettler/Peetz 2010, Peetz 2009)

Notes

¹ https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Universal_suffrage#Dates_by_country

² <https://uca.edu/politicalscience/dadm-project/western-hemisphere-region/honduras-1902-present/>

³ https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/1902_Honduran_general_election

⁴ [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/History_of_Honduras_\(1838%E2%80%931932\)](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/History_of_Honduras_(1838%E2%80%931932))

⁵ [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/History_of_Honduras_\(1838%E2%80%931932\)](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/History_of_Honduras_(1838%E2%80%931932))

⁶ <https://uca.edu/politicalscience/dadm-project/western-hemisphere-region/honduras-1902-present/> The chronology of events by Casey et al. is somehow different and not completely in line with our observations.

⁷ The actual date is also unknown:

<https://uca.edu/politicalscience/home/research-projects/dadm-project/western-hemisphere-region/honduras-1902-present/>;
https://es.wikipedia.org/wiki/Elecciones_generales_de_Honduras_de_1908

⁸ <https://uca.edu/politicalscience/home/research-projects/dadm-project/western-hemisphere-region/honduras-1902-present/>

⁹ https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/1911_Honduran_general_election

¹⁰ The elections were wrongly dated to 1912 by Casey et al.

¹¹ https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/History_of_Honduras#Honduras_in_the_twentieth_century

¹² [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/History_of_Honduras_\(1838%E2%80%931932\)#Expanded_role_of_the_United_States_\(1907%E2%80%931919\)](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/History_of_Honduras_(1838%E2%80%931932)#Expanded_role_of_the_United_States_(1907%E2%80%931919)); <https://countrystudies.us/honduras/16.htm>

¹³ <https://uca.edu/politicalscience/home/research-projects/dadm-project/western-hemisphere-region/honduras-1902-present/>

¹⁴ https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/History_of_Honduras#Honduras_in_the_twentieth_century

¹⁵ https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/1939_Honduran_presidential_election

¹⁶ https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/History_of_Honduras#Honduras_in_the_twentieth_century

- ¹⁷ https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/History_of_Honduras#End_of_Caria's_regime
- ¹⁸ https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/1948_Honduran_general_election
- ¹⁹ <https://onwar.com/data/honduras1956b.html>
- ²⁰ https://www.wikiwand.com/en/Honduran_military_junta_of_1956-1957
- ²¹ <https://www.systemicpeace.org/polity/hon2.htm>
- ²² <https://www.oxfordreference.com/display/10.1093/oi/authority.20110803100114713;jsessionid=FC581B2B49BA8746EC9BA6E72CBB1966>
- ²³ https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/History_of_Honduras#1980s
- ²⁴ https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/History_of_Honduras#2000s
- ²⁵ https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Honduran_fourth_ballot_box_referendum
- ²⁶ https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/2009_Honduran_coup_d%27%C3%A9tat
- ²⁷ https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/2009_Honduran_general_election#Reactions
- ²⁸ https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/2013_Honduran_general_election
- ²⁹ https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/2013_Honduran_general_election
- ³⁰ <https://freedomhouse.org/country/honduras/freedom-world/2021>
- ³¹ <https://freedomhouse.org/country/honduras/freedom-world/2018>
- ³² <https://freedomhouse.org/country/honduras/freedom-world/2022>

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