Honduras
Vanderbilt

Honduras is considered democratic 1920-1923 and 1925-1935. During the democratic periods, the regime is most appropriately considered presidential given that Archigos (Goemans et al. 2009) codes the presidents as leaders. Starting in January 1934 Geddes, Wright, Frantz (2013) code Honduras as a single-party/personalist under Carias Andino. Until 1955 a single-party/personalist system was in place, then followed a few years of no clearly defined regime type until 1962, a military-single-party system ruled the country between 1963-1970 and the military was in charge between 1972 and 1980. Honduras experiences a brief democratic period between 1982 and 1984 but is considered non-democratic between 1985 and 1988. From 1989 onwards it is coded as a presidential democracy.

Francisco Bertrand Barahona of the National Party of Honduras (PNH, conservative) served as president from 1915 to 1919. When his term ended in 1919 he refused to step down. The United States forced him out of office. "The United States ambassador helped arrange the installation of an interim government headed by Francisco Bográn [of the Honduran Liberal Party (PLH)], who promised to hold free elections" (US Library of Congress 1993). This is not a SOLS change.

In 1920 General Rafael López Gutiérrez (PLH), who "effectively controlled the military situation" rigged elections to become president (US Library of Congress 1993) but according to our coding rules Guatemala is a democracy starting in 1920. We code a SOLS change here since López (PLH, liberal) was affiliated with a different party than the last regular leader Bertrand (PNH, conservative). In 1924 López Gutiérrez, like Bertrand before him, refused to step down. Sometime between February and April 1924 López Gutiérrez died (US Library of Congress 1993). The United States once again stepped in to negotiate an interim presidency headed by General Vicente Tosta Carrasco, PLH (Cahoon 2010; US Library of Congress 1993). This is not a SOLS change.[1]

In 1925, when Honduras is again considered democratic, Miguel Paz Baraone, PNH, was elected president. This is a SOLS change since he has a different SOLS that the last regular leader López (PLH). In 1929 Vicente Mejia Colindres, PLH[2] (see Bethell 1990, 287; Striffler and Moberg 2003, 245), became president. This is a SOLS change.

In 1933 Tiburcio Carías Andino, PNH, became president. "Carías moved slowly but steadily to strengthen his hold on power" (US Library of Congress 1993). Geddes (2003) classifies his regime as being a single-party/personalist hybrid dating from this year until 1956, however, the spreadsheet does not indicate a departure from democracy until 1936, at which point Polity IV (Marshall and Jaggers 2002) codes Honduras as a non-democracy. This is due to the fact that it was only with the Constitution of 1936 that Carías Andino extended his term in the presidency and abolished the independence of local governments, and deemed Honduras to be in

---

[1] Note that due to López behavior the country is not coded democratic in 1924.

[2] WSM lists Vicente Mejía Colindres as a member of the PHN. However, we were able to found many sources that describe him as a leader of Liberal Party (PLH) (see Bethell 1990, 287; Striffler and Moberg 2003, 245). Thus, we code his SOLS as PLH.

a state of siege, a condition that could be extended indefinitely by Carías Andino (Meyer and Meyer 1994, 186). These new additions allowed for Carías Andino to solidify and extend his hold and control of power in the Honduran government. Carias Andino stayed in power until 1949. We code SOLS change when Carias Andino came to power. According to presidential democracy rules, we would not code a SOLS change in 1933. However, we follow Geddes, Wright, and Frantz (2013) and code a SOLS change as the single party/personalist regime began.

He came to power democratically, but he later established an authoritarian regime while it was a smaller proportion of the time of his rule. Later under his rule (starting in 1936) Honduras becomes non-democratic, because in February elections for a constituent assembly were held, but this new body did not include any Liberal or dissident member. Moreover, a new constitution was promulgated in March which declared that the president could stay in office until January 1943. For these reasons, from 1936 Honduras is not considered as a democracy according to Polity IV (Marshall and Jaggers 2002).

During his term, Carias survived two coups organized by sectors of the Liberal Party. The turning point for Carías came in 1944 when his fellow Central American dictators—Maximiliano Hernández in El Salvador and Guatemala's Jorge Ubico—tumbled from power. In Honduras, popular movements also fought for the democratization of the country. At some point, it was clear that Carias did not want to stay in office once his term ended in 1949. Therefore, it triggered disputes inside his Partido Nacional (National Party) for the presidential candidacy.

In 1948, faced with growing opposition led by university students and radical Liberal party factions, President Carías stepped down from power after ruling Honduras for sixteen years, paving the way for his vice-president and former United Fruit Company lawyer, Juan Manual Gálvez, to run for the presidency. He ran as the only candidate in the elections, and assumed office in January 1949. Since Geddes (2003) considers Galvez Duron to be part of the same single-party/personalist system as Carias Andino, this does not represent a SOLS change. Galvez Duron was clearly the pre-designated successor. After 5 years in office, Gálvez left office due to health problems in the middle of a constitutional crisis. His vice president, Julio Lozano Díaz, assumed the presidency as provisional ruler in November 1954. One month later Lozano declared himself de facto president due to the inability of the Congress to select the president among the most voted candidates in the presidential elections. This is also not a SOLS change since Lozano was Galvez' pre-designated successor and he is coded as part of the same regime as his predecessors by Geddes (2003).

Geddes (2003) codes the single-party/personalist regime as ending in 1956. In that year, Lozano called for a Constitutional Assembly election in order to legitimize his government. His party won the election; however, the Assembly was never inaugurated due to a coup in October 21, led by younger officers who installed a military junta composed of Héctor Caraccioli, Roberto Gálvez Barnes, and Roque Rodríguez. Archigos (Goemans et al. 2009) codes Caraccioli as the leader. The Junta's only objective was the return of constitutional government through new elections. Because the junta was set up with a promise to restore constitutional order as soon as possible, we consider this junta as a caretaker junta until new elections are held and a new president takes office. The U.S. Department of State (2010) also calls this a "provisional junta" that "paved the way for constituent assembly elections in 1957." So, the change from Lozano Dias to Rodriguez is not a SOLS change.

In May 1957, the junta announced the scheduling of elections for a National Constituent Assembly the following September. In that election, the Liberal Party (PNH) won over 60 percent of the vote in 1957.[3] This gave the liberals control of the Constituent Assembly, and they then selected Villeda Morales as president for a six-year term. This change is a SOLS change because Morales was not a pre-designated successor of Lozano.

On October 3, 1963, Villeda was overthrown by an anti-communist military coup which tried to prevent the victory of the Liberal candidate Rodas in the presidential election. The military was afraid that Rodas would revise the Constitution of 1957 and re-establish civilian control over the military. The military was backed by large landowners, both domestic and foreign, who were worried about the mobilization of peasants on the north coast. The coup was lead by Oswaldo Enrique López Arellano. General Oswaldo López Arellano ruled Honduras from 1963 to 1971 in league with National Party boss Ricardo Zuñiga Agustinus. Indeed, Geddes (2003) codes Honduras as having a single-party-military system between 1964 and 1971. Therefore, the change from Villeda to Lopez Arellano is a SOLS change. Additionally, we code Arellano's SOLS as Mil/PNH until 1970. According to Banks et al. (2011, 603), PNH was "created in 1923 as an expression of national unity after a particularly chaotic period the PNH is a right-wing party with close ties to the military."

In 1971, in a highly dubious election in which only 900,000 voters participated, and that was probably orchestrated by Lopez Arellano Nationalist Rámon Ernesto Cruz, who was backed by López, won. Between February and December 1970, Business and labor organizations, which had been severely damaged under Lopez's rule, requested Lopez to agree the Political Plan for National Unity (PPNU). This plan was a kind of a political pact between two major political parties: Liberal party and National party, stipulating that a single candidate for president to be selected by both parties, then the new chief executive would choose a cabinet based on expertise. On January 7, Lopez Arellano, giving his support as head of the armed forces, formally announced the PPNU. Following the March elections in 1971, Jorge Bueso Arias and Ramon Ernesto Cruz were chosen respectively as the Liberal and National party presidential candidates. As a result of election, a National party victory placed Ramon Cruz in office and gave the Nationalist control of Congress.

In the new government López Arellano remained the chief of the armed forces, which gave him a virtual veto power over all acts of President Cruz. Additionally, Lopez Arellano exerted his power over Cruz through Ricardo Zuniga who was a National party politician and Secretary of President Lopez Arellano. Ricardo Zuniga had a decisive control in Cruz's government as a minister of government and justice. Ricardo Zuniga worked in collaboration with President Lopez Arellano to from a civil-military government though 1963 to 1971. Morris (1984, 43) describes that "Ricardo Zuniga became minister of government and justice, assuming a critical role in filling government oppositions and placing the Nationalist politician at a central point for the disbursement of public funds....it was soon evident that national unity under the Pacto had become National party domination, with the minister of government functioning as a de facto chief of state. President Cruz was unable or unwilling to act decisively amid heavy

[3] Note though that the country is not coded as democratic at the time.

criticism of his "do-noting" government....Overly manipulated by his minister of government, President Cruz was being politically bypassed."

Hence, Cruz is considered an interim president. His change is not a SOLS change because Cruz was Lopez Arellano's candidate and he was even affiliated with the PNH, the party that shared power with the military during the single-party military rule.[4]

In 1972, Cruz was overthrown by Lopez Arellano after a peasant protest and Lopez re-instated himself as president. We code this as a minor SOLS change because, according to Geddes (2003), Lopez Arellano installs a pure military regime. Thus, while he still relied on the military for backing, the PNH had less influence over him. From 1972 to 1975, López led a populist military regime that redistributed land to about one-fifth of the peasants identified as landless or land poor at a time when the governments of El Salvador, Nicaragua, and Guatemala still opposed land redistribution. The presidency of López Arellano ended as a result of a corruption scandal. He apparently had gotten a $1,250,000 bribe from United Brands Company inreturn for lowering taxes on bananas. The military removed López from power on April 22, 1975, and its leader, Melgar Castro, took over the presidency himself. Melgar in turn was deposed by the Joint Chiefs of Staff on August 9, 1979, and this right-wing group placed Gen. Policarpo Paz García as new ruler of the country, who governed until 1982; but behind them and supporting the coup were López Arellano himself, who managed to be out of the country for the event, as he had been in 1971, and Ricardo Zúñiga, the secretary general of the National Party. None of the leadership transitions are SOLS changes as they all had military support.

In 1981, Honduras celebrated democratic elections and a civilian, Roberto Suazo Córdova (PLH), won and became elected president. Therefore, this is a SOLS change since he had the support of the liberal party rather than the military, and to some extent the nationals, like his predecessors. While Suaso's regime started democratic, he undermined this system when he used bribery and his control of the Supreme Court and National Electoral Tribunal to interfere in the presidential nomination process. Honduras is coded as a non-democracy starting in 1985.

In the 1986 elections, Suazo Córdova tried to prevent a victory by José Azcona Hoyo (from a rival faction), who had been his minister of communications. "The [1986] campaign appeared to pit two PLH candidates—Mej fa and San Pedro Sula engineer Jos Azcona Hoyo--against the PNH's Rafael Leonardo Callejas Romero in a contest that saw the two PLH candidates criticize each other as much as, or more than, they did their opposition outside of their own party. The final vote count, announced on December 23, produced the result that the makeshift electoral regulations had made all but inevitable--a president who garnered less than a majority of the total popular vote. The declared winner, Azcona, boasted less than 30 percent of the vote, as opposed to Callejas's 44 percent. But because the combined total of PLH candidates equaled 54 percent, Azcona claimed the presidential sash. Callejas lodged a protest, but it was short-lived and probably represented less than a sincere effort to challenge the agreement brokered by the military" (International Business Publications 2013, 74-5).

---

[4] Geddes (2003) codes the single-party/military regime as already ending with Cruz assumption of office but based on our rules we do not code a SOLS change here. Instead we recognize that the government SOLS switches from Mil/PNH to just PNH.

Despite these efforts, PLH candidate José Azcona Hoyo was elected president by receiving just 25 percent of the vote, compared with the PNH candidate, Rafael Leonardo Callejas Romero, who received 45 percent. Jos Azcona Hoyo was elected in spite of the lack of majority votes because of the combined total vote for PLH candidates which was equated 54 percent. This may suggest that factions in the PLH saw benefits to be in the PLH even if their interests were different.

Because these years are coded as autocracy, and because Azcona was not the pre-designated successor of Suazo, this change is a SOLS change, even though they both belonged to the same party, but different factions. According to Banks et al. (2011, 604), one of the central factions inside the PHL: Rodista was split into a radical antimilitarist conservative and a presidential faction encompassing right-wing technocrats with close links to the business community and the armed forces. Hoya was supported by radical antimilitarist conservatives. In the early 1980s, there were two formal factions: the conservative Rodista Liberal Movement (MLR) and the center-left Popular Liberal Alliance (Alipo).... By 1985, the MLR split into three factions: one led by President Suazo Cordova, which supported Oscar Mej fa Arellano as a 1985 presidential candidate; a second faction headed by Efra Bu Gir, who also became a presidential candidate; and a third faction led by Jos Azcona Hoyo, who ultimately was elected president with the support of Alipo, which did not run a candidate. "The Liberal Party of Honduras (PLH) has dad to contend with the forces of international division since its inception in 1890. Factionalism has been a fact of Liberal politics, and the party has tended to be less disciplined than its rival. With exiled leadership, and separated from public resources or patronage, the morale and organization of the Liberal party has suffered" (Morris 1984, 75).

Starting in 1989, Honduras is again coded as a democracy. In November 1989 there were free and fair presidential elections in which Callejas (PN) became winner. The next year, for the first time in Honduran history, there was a peacefully transition from the Liberal Party to the National Party. For that reason, the transition from Azcona Hoyo to Callejas is coded as a SOLS change. After Callejas, all presidents have been elected in Honduras, and they all belong to these two main parties: the PLH and the PNH. Thus, the changes in the affiliation of the new president mean a SOLS change.

In 2009, president José Manuel Zelaya Rosales attempted to celebrate a referendum in order to revise the constitution with the aim at being reelected. The referendum was declared unconstitutional by the Supreme Court and had a strong opposition in Congress (Goldberg 2). Amid this clash, President Manuel Zelaya was removed from the presidential palace on June 28, 2009 by the army and put on a plane to Costa Rica (Malkin 2009). Claiming that Zelaya had acted unconstitutionally by seeking the removal of presidential term limits, the Honduran Congress voted Zelaya out of office on the same day and replaced him with Roberto Micheletti (Malkin 2009; Finnegan 2017). Ecuador is coded as a democracy throughout this period, so we follow the coding rules for democracies. Micheletti and Zelaya were both from the same party, though Zelaya appears to have lost support from many in the party (Finnegan 2017; Malkin & Lacey 2009). Micheletti is considered by many sources as the acting president and only serves for about six months (Brice 2009). We consider him an interim leader and do not code the transition from Zelaya to Micheletti as a SOLS change.

Porfirio Lobo Sosa was elected president in the 2010 elections conducted by the interim government of Micheletti (Brice 2009). Lobo was from a different party than the previous non-interim leader, Zelaya, thus we code the transition in 2010 from Micheletti to Lobo as a SOLS change.

Sources

"Passings: Juan Alberto Melgar Castro, Former Honduran Ruler." 1987. Los Angeles Times, Dec. 04, 1987. http://articles.latimes.com/1987-12-04/news/mn-17476_1_juan-alberto-melgar-castro (August 31, 2013).

"Republic of Honduras." 2009. Political Database of the Americas. Center for Latin American Studies, Georgetown University. http://pdba.georgetown.edu/Elecdata/Hon/hon.html (August 31, 2013).

Banks, Arthur S., Thomas C. Muller, William R. Overstreet, and Judith F. Isacoff. 2011. Political Handbook of the World 2011. Washington DC: CQ Press.

Bethell, Leslie. 1990. The Cambridge History of Latin America. Volume 7. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Brice, Arthur. 2009. "Nations Divided on Recognizing Honduran President-Elect." CNN. http://www.cnn.com/2009/WORLD/americas/11/30/honduras.elections/index.html (March 1, 2019).

Cahoon, Ben. 2010. "Honduras." Worldstatesmen.org. http://worldstatesmen.org/Honduras.htm (August 31, 2013).

Finnegan, William. 2017. "An Old-Fashioned Coup." The New Yorker. https://www.newyorker.com/magazine/2009/11/30/an-old-fashioned-coup (March 1, 2019).

Geddes, Barbara, Joseph Wright, and Erica Frantz. 2013. "New Data on Autocratic Breakdown and Regime Transitions." http://dictators.la.psu.edu/pdf/gwf-code-book-1.1 (August 30, 2013).

Geddes, Barbara. 2003. Paradigms and Sand Castles: Theory Building and Research Design in Comparative Politics. Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press.

Goemans, Henk E., Kristian Skrede Gleditsch, and Giacomo Chiozza. 2009. "Introducing Archigos: A Dataset of Political Leaders." Journal of Peace Research 46(2): 269-283.

Goldberg, Maren. 2018. "Manuel Zelaya." Encyclopædia Britannica. https://www.britannica.com/biography/Manuel-Zelaya (March 1, 2019).

International Business Publications. 2013. Honduras: Country Study Guide, Volume 1: Strategic Information and Developments. Washington, DC: International Business Publications.

Lindvall-Larson, Karen. 2000. Latin American Election Statistics: A Guide to Sources. University of California, San Diego. http://libraries.ucsd.edu/locations/sshl/resources/featured-collections/latin-american- elections-statistics/dominican-republic/elections-and-events-18921914.html (August 31, 2013).

Malkin, Elisabeth. 2009. "Honduran President Is Ousted in Coup." The New York Times. https://www.nytimes.com/2009/06/29/world/americas/29honduras.html (March 1, 2019).

Malkin, Elisabeth, and Marc Lacey. 2009. "Honduras's Two Presidents Keep Their Distance." The New York Times. https://www.nytimes.com/2009/09/24/world/americas/ 24honduras.html (March 1, 2019).

Marshall, Monty G., and Keith Jaggers. 2002. Polity IV Dataset. College Park, MD: Center for International Development and Conflict Management, University of Maryland.

Meyer, Harvey Kessler, and Jessica H. Meyer. 1994. Historical Dictionary of Honduras. 2nd Edition. Metuchen, NJ: Scarecrow Press.

Morris, James A. 1984. Honduras: Caudillo Politics and Military Rulers. Boulder: Westview Press.

Nohlen, Dieter, ed. 2005. Elections in the Americas: A Data Handbook. Volume I: North America, Central America and the Caribbean. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Striffler, Steve, and Mark Moberg. 2003. Banana Wars: Power, Production, and History in the Americas. Durham: Duke University Press.

The Sunday Times (online version). May 19th 2010. http://www.timesonline.co.uk/tol/comment/obituaries/article7130855.ece (August 31, 2013).[5]

US Department of State. 2010. "Honduras." http://www.state.gov/outofdate/bgn/honduras/172098.htm (August 31, 2013).

US Library of Congress. 1993. "A Country Study: Honduras." http://memory.loc.gov/frd/cs/hntoc.html (August 31, 2013).

[5] The link is accessible, but it requires log-in (on August 31, 2013).

Pre-1945 coded by Anna Carella in February 2011
Post-1945 coded by Arturo Maldonado (Vanderbilt) on June 18, 2010
Pre-1945 revised by Michaela Mattes on July 27, 2012
Pre-1945 revised by Naoko Matsumura on August 05, 2013
Post-1945 checked by Michaela Mattes on July 17, 2010
Post-1945 updated by Mariana Rodriguez on February 14, 2012
Post-1945 revised by Michaela Mattes on March 07, 2012
Combined by Ahra Wu (Rice) on September 7, 2013
Edited by Andrew Wood (Rice) on 5/23/14
Edited by Kristin Bryant to include information about 2009-2018 period coded by Alex Pugh on 08/08/2020