

NICARAGUA

Polity5 regime codes:

fac	scode	polity	pers	bmon	bday	byear	emon	eday	eyear	exec	exconst	polcomp
1X	NIC	-5	72	4	30	1838	12	16	1909	3	1	6
1Xa	NIC	-3	17	12	17	1909	12	2	1926	3	3	6
1Xb	NIC	-66	2	12	3	1926	11	4	1928	-66	-66	-66
1Xc	NIC	-3	8	11	5	1928	6	2	1936	3	3	6
1O	NIC	-8	43	6	3	1936	6	2	1979	3	1	2
1Oa	NIC	-77	0	6	3	1979	7	19	1979	-77	-77	-77
1Ob	NIC	-3	2	7	20	1979	3	3	1981	5	3	3
1Oc	NIC	-5	3	3	4	1981	2	21	1984	4	2	2
2X	NIC	-1	6	2	22	1984	4	24	1990	5	3	6
2Xa	NIC	6	5	4	25	1990	7	5	1995	8	5	7
2Xb	NIC	8	11	7	6	1995	1	9	2007	8	7	7
2O	NIC	9	9	1	10	2007	6	9	2016	8	7	9
2Oa	NIC	6	3	6	10	2016	99	99	9999	7	6	8

PITF Problem Events:

- 1) 10/77-03/88 (REV 10/77-06/79; ARC 07/79-03/81; REV 02/81-03/88; ETH 08/81-12/84)

Since independence in 1838 Nicaragua's politics have been characterized by intense factional conflict between liberal elites centered in Leon and conservative elites in Granada, with international intervention, particularly by the U.S., often determining the victor. In 1909 U.S. forces invaded Nicaragua in support of conservative political forces rebelling against President Zelaya, who opposed U.S. plans for a canal, and remained in Nicaragua until 1933. Before their departure U.S. forces installed a conservative military junta composed of Anastasio Somoza, General Augusto Cesar Sandino, and figurehead President Juan Bautista Saucasa. By 1936 Somoza had executed Sandino and outmaneuvered Bautista, taking the presidency, which his family would hold until 1979.

Revolutionary War: October 1977 – June 1979

Although rural insurgents had opposed the Somoza regime periodically, the Managua Earthquake of 1972 galvanized opposition to the regime when stories surfaced that the Somoza family had embezzled international relief funds. The Sandinista National Liberation Front (FSLN) led the militant opposition to the Somoza regime for most of the 1970s but changed its strategy in late 1978 to favor popular insurrection. In October 1977, following the lifting of martial law on September 19 and its gaining support from the conventional opposition (Democratic Liberation Union, UDEL), the FSLN launched a series of coordinated attacks on National Guard posts. In apparent retaliation, a popular leader of UDEL and editor of the newspaper *La Prensa*, Pedro Joaquin Chamorro, was gunned down on January 10, 1978. Popular reaction to Chamorro's death was intense and widespread. AS a result, the FSLN gained the support of the general populace and initiated a systematic and sustained insurrection to oust the Somoza regime.

1Oa) June 3, 1979 (collapse of central authority; revolutionary change in regime) –

Adverse Regime Change: June 1979 – July 1979

Following its brutal repression of the opposition following the dramatic seizure of the National Palace by the FSLN on August 22 and subsequent offensive, international support for the Somoza regime evaporated and pressure mounted for a negotiated settlement. Mediation efforts

failed and, in late May 1979, the FSLN launched its “final offensive” against the Somoza regime. On June 3, the FSLN attacked the capital, Managua, and, during June, it consolidated control of Nicaragua’s major cities. Gen. Somoza resigned and fled the country on July 17, 1979; he was temporarily replaced by Francisco Urcuyo, who resigned and fled on July 19. On July 19, 1979, FSLN forces entered the capital and declared a new government under the control of a provisional junta led by Daniel Ortega, leader of the FSLN.

1Ob) July 20, 1979 (new government) – On July 20, 1979, the FSLN installed a broadly-based, five-member, “junta of national reconstruction” that included Violeta Chamorro, widow of the slain conservative leader, Pedro Chamorro, and named an 18-member government. Between July 1979 and March 1981, the Sandinista-dominated junta consolidated its control over the state apparatus by eliminating opposition members from both the junta and government bodies.

Revolutionary War: February 1981 – March 1988

Beginning with skirmishes along the Nicaragua/Honduras border in February 1981, US-trained and financed forces, primarily composed of former Nicaraguan National Guard soldiers, known as Contras, fought a protracted civil war against the FSLN government. The conflict largely subsided in early 1988 following the Sapoa ceasefire agreement.

1Oc) March 4, 1981 (consolidation of one-party rule) – On March 4, 1981 the FSLN continued to consolidate its control over government by reducing the provisional junta from five to three members. Among the displaced junta members was Arturo Cruz, a conservative political opponent of both Somoza and the Sandinistas.

Ethnic War: August 1981 – December 1984

Beginning in August 1981 indigenous Miskitos of the Atlantic coast region joined the Contras in rebellion against Sandinista government.

2X) Date of Change to Factional-Autocratic: February 22, 1984 (political liberalization)

Brief Explanation of Change To:

On February 21, 1984 Daniel Ortega announced an electoral timetable including elections to be held on November 4, 1984. This announcement opened the way for political participation and competition in preparation for the election, although opposition parties continued to object to the government's proposals demanding that the new constitution be drawn up first and threatening to boycott the elections. Ortega won the 1984 election with 66.9% of the vote, and the FSLN won 61 of 90 seats in the National Assembly. Although the 1984 election was characterized as generally free and fair by international observers, the election was tarnished by a combination of the opposition boycott, ongoing Contra War, and active opposition by the U.S.

Identify Main Factions:

- *Sandinista National Liberation Front (FCLN)* — The FCLN was the main opposition group against the dictatorship of the Somoza family from 1970 to 1979. The Sandinistas were weakened in the 1990s due to electoral defeat at the hands of a unified domestic opposition,

as well as continued opposition from the United States due to the group's professed Marxist ideology.

- *Opposition to the Sandinistas* — Opposition to the Sandinistas leading up to the 1984 elections was highly fragmented, with high-profile candidates, including Arturo Cruz, the most prominent political rival of Daniel Ortega, boycotting the election. By 1990, however, the opposition had united behind Violeta Chamorra, who led the National Opposition Union (UNO), a coalition of fourteen parties representing a range of ideologies from the Communist Party of Nicaragua to the reactionary Independent Liberal Party.

Changes within Factional-Democratic Period:

2Xa) April 25, 1990 (presidential inauguration) – Opposition to the FSLN united under the National Opposition Union in 1989, with Violeta Chamorra challenging the incumbent Daniel Ortega for the presidency. In the election held on February 25, 1990, Chamorra defeated Ortega, winning 55% of the vote to Ortega's 40%. UNO secured 52 seats in the National Assembly, making the FSLN a minority party for the first time since the overthrow of the Somoza regime in 1979. Chamorra was sworn in on April 25, 1990. The FSLN, however, continued to control the military.

2Xb) July 6, 1995 (constitutional reforms) – The 1987 constitution drafted and promulgated by the FSLN had included provisions incorporating many of its early social reforms, including a large role for the state in economic regulation and the nationalization of many industries. The 1990 victory of the opposition coalition UNO led to a confrontation between the President Chamorra and the FSLN, which maintained enough congressional seats to stop undesirable constitutional amendments. On July 6, 1995, a compromise agreement was passed that included the following provisions: reduction of the presidential term from six to five years with a consecutive two-term limit; prohibition on relatives of the president running for the presidency; establishment of civilian control over the army; reduction of the role of the state in the economy; prohibition of nationalization of private property; and a guarantee of public access to free health care, education and social security benefits.

2O) Date of Change from Factional-Democratic: January 10, 2007 (presidential inauguration)

Brief Explanation of Change From:

The inauguration of Daniel Ortega Saavedra of the Sandinista National Liberation Front (FSLN) as president took place on January 10, 2007, following his victory by a narrow plurality (38.06%) in the November 2006 election. The fact that the FSLN government enjoyed only a plurality of the popular vote both in the presidential and legislative elections required it to build coalitions to implement policy; the return of Ortega marks the reintegration of the FSLN as a conventional political party.

Changes within Democratic Period:

2Oa) June 10, 2016 (disqualification of presidential candidate) – The Sandinista National Liberation Front (FSLN) used its popularity and control of the government to eliminate term limits on the presidency, allowing President Daniel Ortega to run for a third consecutive term in

office (and fourth overall) in November 2016 general elections. On June 9, 2016, the Supreme Court ruled on a six-year old case that effectively eliminated the candidacy of the strongest challenger, Luis Callejas. The opposition called for a boycott of general elections. General elections held on November 6, 2016, resulted in strong victories for both the FSLN and President Ortega and his wife, Rosario Murillo, who joined the administration as Vice President; Ortega won over 72% of the vote. Widespread demonstrations erupted in Nicaragua on April 18, 2018, in response to President Ortega's attempt to implement pension reforms; the confrontation quickly devolved into violence.