

ECONOMIC REFORMS AND THE DEFICIT OF DEMOCRATIC LEGITIMACY IN HONDURAS

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ABSTRACT

For the last decade Honduras underwent two critical developmental processes, that is, the consolidation of its democracy and a comprehensive program of economic reforms. Both processes achieved only relative progress resulting in a persistent crisis of democratic legitimacy and the need for a second wave of profound economic reforms to be implemented in the next fifteen years. Contrary to most conventional analyses, this paper explores the impact that economic reforms have had upon the democratic consolidation process in Honduras. The hypothesis is that economic reforms shape democratic consolidation to the extent that affect the socio-economic inclusion and State's capacities to carry out nationally desired policies. These channels are analysed and compared with the role that political factors have had in the process of legitimisation. It is found that traditional political practises and subsequent unfinished political transitions have had a major and more substantial role than economic reforms in explaining political dissatisfaction and democratic delegitimation. This in turn causes a higher pressure on structural reforms to deliver 'economic goods' if democracy is to further consolidate in the country.

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