

Guatemala

Rice

In 1919, the president of Guatemala was Manuel José Estrada Cabrera, who had been in power since 1898. He was a ‘member’ of the Liberal Party (Lib), and had established his control over the military by the start of our study. We choose to classify Estrada Cabrera as a personalist leader because his political party played a minimal role in his government. Elections held during his time in office were “a farce,” and Cabrera himself enjoyed “little personal popularity,” but remained in power through sheer political will and control of an elaborate “spy system” (Rosenthal 1962, 165). He was not a member of the military, and in fact created his own secret police rather than rely on the military to maintain his rule (Galván 2012, 34). In 1920, he was removed by the Guatemalan Congress, on the basis that he was mentally incompetent (essentially a legislative coup), and was replaced by Carlos Rafael Herrera y Luna on April 15, 1920. Herrera y Luna was initially acting president but became president later in 1920 (Opie 2009, 70), so this is a SOLS change.

Very little has been written about Herrera y Luna’s time in office, perhaps due to the short duration of his presidency. Several sources confirm that Herrera y Luna was a member of Liberal Party (See Dosal 1993, 52; Opie 2009, 70). However, they also describe that he was supported by the Unionist Party, which was a coalition of Liberal and Conservative (Wilson 1992, 386). Indeed, his government included both Liberal and Conservative (Unionists) members, and reconstructed a political and economic system more sympathetic to the interest of the oligarchies. We code his time in office as no specific consolidated regime type.

In December 1921, Herrera y Luna was ousted in a coup led by General José María Orellana Pinto, who then held elections and got himself officially elected President. Orellana’s regime is listed as a “Republican dictatorship,” which indicates a definitive return to an authoritarian-type regime. Rosenthal mentions that “all of [the leaders between 1920 and 1931] were either Army officers or had the support of the Army and ruled more or less in the Cabrera tradition” (Rosenthal 1962, 191). Dosal (1993, 54) also points out the influence of military in his government, stating that “The military terminated the oligarchy’s brief tenure as a governing class on December 17, 1921. Support within the army was so complete that not even Herrera’s personal guard resisted....Although the new cabinet included representatives of the oligarchy, the military high command, having assumed its role as arbiter of presidential succession, circumscribed the range of civilian political activity....military reserved the presidency, and the ministry of war for itself, thereby blocking any future civilian effort to reduce either the size of the bureaucracy or the army.” From these descriptions, we believe that his regime falls under the category of military government. Orellana’s coup is a SOLS change.

Orellana died of a heart attack while still in office, in 1926. He was succeeded by General Lazaro Chacon, who continued the tradition of military leaders, which is not a SOLS change. He was an active General and served as vice president under Orellana (Lentz 1999, 214). He had a

stroke on December 12, 1930 (Streeter 2000, 10). 3 different provisional leaders (Palma, M. Orellana, and Andrade) were in charge in succession until elections were held. On February 15, 1931, a new long-term personalist dictator, Jorge Ubico y Castañeda, a member of the Liberal Party, won the elections and assumed office. This is a SOLS change. We choose to classify Ubico as personalist because he used a spy network and police force to enforce his actions, not the military directly (Rosenthal 1962, 192). Further, he generally ruled by decree and exercised direct control over economic decisions. He also established his control over the legislature, which in turn produced a temporary constitutional amendment extending his term of office (Rosenthal 1962, 199). However, over time, Ubico's policies became increasingly unpopular, especially as he failed to remedy the Guatemalan employment crisis brought on by the Great Depression.

In June 1944, mass demonstrations and strikes forced Ubico to resign (on July 4, 1944). He was replaced by another member of the Liberal party, General Frederico Ponce Vaides. Ponce Vaides assumed the title of provisional president. Smith and Adams (2011, 80) also describe him as an Ubico's handpicked successor, which is not a SOLS change. However, Ponce Vaides proved extremely unpopular, and he was overthrown in a military coup on October 20, 1944. He was replaced by a trio of military leaders who served in a provisional capacity until democratic elections could be held. As they were provisional leaders, this is not a SOLS change.

Elections were held, and in March 1945, the military trio ceded power to the victor, Juan José Arévalo Bermejo, a member of the Revolutionary Action Party (PAR). This is a SOLS change. It would appear that Arévalo, whose time in office is not classified by Geddes (2003) as being authoritarian was therefore a democratic leader. This conclusion is backed up by the fact that Guatemala is coded as a democracy beginning in 1944 on the spreadsheet. Polity IV (Marshall and Jaggers 2002) gives score of 6 from December 20, 1944 to December 10, 1950, and score of 0 from March 16, 1931 to December 19, 1944. Arevalo should be coded as a democratic leader, while Archigos (Goemans et al. 2009) lists him from March 1945. He remained in office, surviving 25 assassination attempts, until 1951.

In 1951, Captain Arbenz Guzmán ran as a legitimate PAR candidate for office and won, signaling no SOLS change. Arbenz's interest in socialism proved his downfall; in 1954, a United States CIA-backed invasion by opposition exiles took over the government in collaboration with military officers. The period from June 27 to July 8 in that year was marked by turmoil, as two different provisional military governments took power while the coup ousted all members of the Arbenz regime. On June 25, Arbenz received an ultimatum from his senior officers to resign. Arbenz resigned on June 27 and left office in charge of his friend the Chief of the Armed Forces Carlos Enrique Diaz de Leon as a provisional leader. This is not a SOLS change (Cahoon 2012). However, the USA did not approve of Diaz as he was a friend and political ally of Arbenz. Therefore, Diaz resigned as member of the Junta and a new military Junta was established with Monzon as chief. Monzon and Castillo Armas, the leader of the invasion, could not agree to a power sharing deal, however. The U.S. mediated an agreement in which Monzon stayed in office

as a provisional president until the Junta elected a new president by vote (Blasier 1989, 176). Therefore, this is not a SOLS change. On July 15, Carlos Castillo Armas assumed office, which is a SOLS change.

Ex-Colonel Castillo ruled in a personalist regime until his assassination in 1957. He was succeeded by the interim leader Luis Arturo González López, whose primary goal was to call elections. This transition is not coded as a SOLS change because he was a temporary leader. The military grappled control away from the interim leader, and for a few days in October, the country was led by a military junta headed by Colonel Óscar Mendoza Azurdia. This transition is not coded as a SOLS change because the military still had the idea of temporary control in mind, as evidenced by their appointment of Colonel Guillermo Flores Avendaño as the new interim leader. Finally, in 1958, General José Ramón Ydígoras Fuentes came to power with the backing of the National Democratic Reconciliation/Redemption Party (PRDN) (SOLS change). Geddes, Wright, and Frantz (2013) code the country under Ydígoras Fuentes as a personalist regime.

Ydígoras Fuentes ruled for several years in increasingly autocratic style until 1963, when Colonel Enrique Peralta Azurdia took over the government in a bloodless coup. This transition is coded as a SOLS change because it marked the beginning of a military regime as coded by Geddes, Wright, and Frantz (2013), that lasted until 1985 with interruption by an indirect military regime. Elections were held in 1966, but they were far from free and fair; according to Schlager et al. (2006, 521), “the 1965 Guatemalan constitution called for presidential elections at four-year intervals. A civilian, Mendez Montenegro of the moderate leftist Revolution Party (RP), was elected to the presidency in 1966.” We code a minor SOLS change with Mendez Montenegro because Geddes, Wright, and Frantz (2013) code a switch from a military regime to an indirect military regime here. Although it is true that real power remained in the hands of the armed forces, Mendez Montenegro himself was a civilian and PR was not entirely a military-puppet party.

Mendez Montenegro’s term lasted until 1970. The next four-year president was Carlos Manuel Arana Osorio of the National Liberation Movement (MLN). However, military control characterized Guatemalan politics through the early 1980s (see Schirmer 1998, 17-8). Therefore, we code the SOLS of Arana Osorio as Mil to emphasize the aspect of effective control in a government. We code a minor SOLS change with Carlos Manuel Arana Osorio. This is because Geddes, Wright, and Frantz (2013) code a shift from an indirect military regime to a military regime here. In 1974, Laugerud García, the candidate of a coalition of the MLN and the Institutional Democratic Party (PID) comes to power (Rouquié 1987, 356). Still, the real power lies with the military, so we continue to code Mil as the SOLS of the president. 1978 saw the last leader elected under this military trend; General Fernando Romeo Lucas García (Mil) won with the support of the PID and the PR (Rouquié 1987, 356).

In 1982, the hand-picked predecessor of General Lucas García was prevented from taking office by a coup of young military officers. These men called upon General José Efraín Ríos

Montt to take power in a military junta; he ended up as the president of the country. Ríos Montt was deposed a year later by his defense minister, General Óscar Humberto Mejía Victores, who was the last leader under the military's direct control. It should be noted that from 1985 to 1995, because Geddes (2003) records an 'indirect military rule,' coding has essentially been done based on the pre-designated successor rule.

General Mejia oversaw a new constitution and return to measured democracy for Guatemala. In 1986, Marco Vinicio Cerezo Arévalo took office after winning elections in late 1985 as a member of the Guatemalan Christian Democracy Party (PDCG). His ascension should be coded as a minor SOLS change because Geddes, Wright, and Frantz (2013) code it as a transition from military regime to indirect military regime in 1986. Cerezo served until 1991, when his term expired and Jorge Antonio Serrano Elías was elected to office. Serrano was a member of the Solidarity Action Movement (MAS), so his rise to power is also a minor SOLS change based on our rule on the indirect military regime. In 1993, Serrano tried to initiate an autocoup by dissolving congress and restricting liberties; however, his efforts failed due to strong unified protest. As a result, Serrano fled the country, and his Vice President Gustavo Adolfo Espina Salguero attempted to take control. The Congress, however, found Salguero unfit to govern, and instead appointed the third-in-succession, Ramiro De Leon Carpio, to the presidency.

De Leon was a member of no particular party, he was a civilian human rights ombudsman (BBC 1993, Washington Post 1993). His appointment represents a minor SOLS change. While he was nominally an interim leader, he served more than 18 months, which leads us not to code him as interim. However, at the same time, since he was not involved with the coup orchestrated by Serrano and Salguero, we do not consider him as a pre-designated successor. Thus, following our ruling on indirect military regime, we code a minor SOLS change with De Leon. 1995 elections after the end of De Leon's term resulted in runoffs, and in 1996 Álvaro Enrique Arzú Irigoyen took office in a SOLS change, being backed by the National Progress Party (PAN). In 1999, the PAN lost power in another SOLS change when Alfonso Antonio Portillo Cabrera was elected. Portillo Cabrera was a member of the Republican Front (FRG) who fled the country shortly after his term was up on account of corruption charges.

The 2003 election saw another SOLS change in 2004, with the election of Óscar José Rafael Berger Perdomo. Berger represented the Grand National Alliance (GAN). Finally, in the most recent SOLS change to date, Álvaro Colom Caballeros won the 2007 elections and took office in 2008. He is a member of the National Unity of Hope Party (UNE).

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