

Cuba

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Cuba is considered authoritarian from 1919 to 1945. According to Whitney (2001, 17) “after the American occupation of Cuba in 1898 the sovereignty of the Cuban Republic was sharply restricted by the shifting policies and priorities of successive administrations in Washington.” In fact, “the United States intervened militarily in Cuba in 1906-9, 1917, and 1921” (U.S. Library of Congress 2006). However, since Correlates of War (2011) consider the country to be independent for this period, we follow their lead and code as if the country was independent. Through all its history, Cuba can be been considered an autocratic regime. Starting in 1952 until 1958, Geddes (2003) codes Cuba as having a personalist regime under Batista. Since 1959, Fidel Castro instituted a single-party-personalistic regime which last until now.

Regarding autocratic sub-regime type coding, since organized political parties peacefully transitioned power back and forth until the social revolution of 1933, this era cannot be classified as rule by a single-party authoritarian regime. Also, the period cannot be considered to be rule by a military regime because civilians were leading the government. Whitney (2001, 18) explains: “ruling groups appealed to real or fictitious bloodlines and kin ties” and to the United States (Whitney 2001, 19) for authority. Reliance on kin ties signals a personalist regime; however Whitney (2000, 436) refers to the leadership as “oligarchic” because power transitioned among a group of rival elites with little popular support.

We code the period from 1919-1925 as a non-specific autocracy and follow a predesignated successor rule to determine SOLS changes. Mario García Menocal of the Conservative Party (PC) ruled as president from 1913 to 1921. In 1921 Alfredo Zayas y Alfonso of the Cuban Popular Party (PPC-LN) became president. The PPC-LN was a splinter of the PC formed in 1918 “by dissident members of the other two parties” (Whitney 2001, 19). This is not a SOLS change because Zayas was Menocal’s pre-designated successor and was ostensibly only able to win elections thanks to government vote fraud (Thomas 1998, 547). In 1925 Gerardo Machado y Morales of the Liberal Party (PL) became president. While he had the backing of Zayas, who negotiated spots in Machado’s future government in exchange for his endorsement (Thomas 1998, 571), Machado ended up creating a personalist regime, and thus we code a SOLS change for his entry into office.

Machado was elected in a manner that was tainted with fraud, and once he came to power, he replaced military officers loyal to Menocal with ones loyal to himself and the Liberal Party (the same goes for high-level appointments and offices). During Machado’s time in office, he used the military as his base of power, but was not a member of the military himself. This does not mean that Cuba was a military government by any means—it was common practice in Cuban politics to “politicize the military” at that time—which made it less of a political force on its own, and more a tool of the leader in power (Staten 2003, 48). In 1928 he further extended his time in

office using an uncontested election. These characteristics again point to a personalist system, because it was Machado, and not his party (and not the military, which he filled with his loyalists), who was in charge of the government.

Following a revolution of students and radicals and “several small army revolts, Machado was forced to resign and flee the country on August 12, 1933” (U.S. Library of Congress 2006). According to Staten (2005, 59) “General Herrera became the interim president, who quickly turned the presidency over to Carlos Manuel de Céspedes.” Archigos (Goemans et al. 2009) only recognizes Céspedes, so we follow their coding and ignore Herrera’s brief rule. On August 12, Carlos Manuel de Céspedes y Quesad of the ABC Revolutionary Society party (ABC) took over as “provisional” president (Cahoon 2011; TIME 1933; Lipski 2008, 102) from August 13 and his government was recognized by the United States. This is not a SOLS change because it was an interim government. ABC was a party of students and others opposed to Machado (Cahoon 2011); however, there were various groups who had worked to overthrow Machado who did not feel that Céspedes was progressive enough. A little less than a month later a revolt forced Céspedes out of power. The U.S. Department of State (2011) claims that Sergeant Fulgencio Batista y Zaldívar, Mil, “organized” the revolt. However, Batista and the military did not act alone, they merely “joined forces with the militant students” to form “a loose coalition of radical activists, students, middle-class intellectuals, and disgruntled lower-rank soldiers” (Whitney 2000, 436). University professor Ramón Grau San Martín of the Cuban Revolutionary Party (PRC) became president “by acclamation” (Thomas 1998, 649). There seems to be a disagreement about whether Grau was a regular or provisional president. Whitney (2000, 436), Walter (2001, 46) and the U.S. Library of Congress (2006, 2) claims he was provisional; however, Cahoon (2011) and Staten (2005, 61) seem to consider him a regular leader. Since by our rules there is enough evidence to consider him provisional, we code no SOLS change here.

While Grau San Martín became president, the 1933 revolution really transferred power to Batista and the military. There is consensus that Batista controlled the government “behind the scenes” (U.S. Department of State 2011; Whitney 2000, 439) from 1934 until 1940. According to the U.S. Library of Congress (2006, 2), “by making the military part of the government and allowing Batista to emerge as self-appointed chief of the armed forces, the Sergeants’ Revolt marked a turning point in Cuba’s history ... Batista (president, 1940–44; dictator, 1952–59) and the military emerged as the arbiters of Cuba’s politics, first through de facto ruling and finally with the election of Batista to the presidency in 1940.” Yet, Batista removed old military officers and promoted new ones based on loyalty to him. He picked presidents and filled cabinets with his friends and supporters (Thomas, 1998, 705). We thus code Cuba as a personalist regime 1934-1943.

In 1934, the U.S. Library of Congress (2006) claims that Batista “forced” Grau to resign. It appears that Batista backed Grau until it was clear that the United States would not accept his presidency (Thomas 1998, 674). The students were opposed to Batista’s candidate Carlos

Mendieta y Montefur, but the army and the U.S. were opposed to Grau staying on without U.S. backing (Thomas 1998, 675) so the military junta named a “compromise candidate” (Thomas 1998, 675): Carlos Hevia y de los Reyes, PRC, as president. This is not a SOLS change. Hevia has been called an interim president (Cahoon 2011; TIME 1952). Batista quickly had him replaced with his man Mendieta of the National Union party (UN) three days later. We code this as a SOLS change. While some sources also refer to Mendieta a provisional president (Cahoon 2011; Thomas 1998, 698), he is the first president who clearly was put in charge by Batista. Thus, it seems that the regular rule of Batista began with Mendieta.

In 1935, in continuing conditions of revolt, Mendieta first delayed elections, then resigned. Secretary of State José Agripino Barnet y Vinageras, UN, took over as “provisional” president (Cahoon 2011; Thomas 1998, 701). This is not a SOLS change since the Batista personalist regime continues. In 1936 Miguel Mariano Gomez y Arias, UN, was elected president. This is also not a SOLS change. When Gomez crossed Batista, Batista had him impeached by Congress (Thomas 1998, 704). Federico Laredo Bru, UN, his more pliant vice president, took over for the rest of his term and ruled as president until 1940. This is not a SOLS change. Under Laredo Bru the country adopted a democratic constitution (Whitney 2000, 438). Despite Batista’s strongman status, he remained a popular figure in Cuban politics. In the 1940 election, Batista, now of the Social Democratic Coalition party (CSD) won the presidency (Thomas 1998, 722). This is not a SOLS change.

In 1944 Batista first dictatorship came to an end when he wanted to appear democratic let himself be “voted out of office” (Thomas 1998, 735; U.S. Library of Congress 2006) and Grau San Martin, PRC-A (Cuban Revolutionary Party-Authentic), once again became president. This is a SOLS change since it constitutes the end of Batista’s personalist regime. While based on our coding Cuba remains a non-democracy, the U.S. Library of Congress (2006) and Geddes, Wright, and Frantz (2013) claim Grau’s presidency was democratic. Since we cannot identify his regime type by Geddes (2003)’ criteria, we code non-specific autocratic regime for Grau.

In 1948, there was a presidential election in which the official candidate of Grau’s party and pre-designated successor Carlos Prío Socarrás won who governed from 1948 to 1952. Indeed, they, Grau and Prío Socarrás, belonged to the same group, the so-called Partido Autentico (Authentic Party) when Prío Socarrás was considered the Autentico successor of Grau. (Del Pozo 2002, 154). Therefore, the change from Grau to Prío Socarrás is not a SOLS change because Prío was the designated successor (TIME 1947).

By 1951, the Cuban Revolutionary Party (PRC-Partido Revolucionario Cubano) was in the middle of a severe moral crisis because even though the exports grew, citizens did not feel this growth, and because several accusations of corruption inside the government. For that reason, in March 1952, the military decided to overthrow the PRC government, and Fulgencio Batista installed a personalist regime. For the citizenry, this coup was justified due the corruption

of the previous regime, and for the entrepreneurs this coup meant order and stability in the country. Batista promised that new presidential elections were going to be held in 1954. In sum, the change from Prío to Batista is a SOLS change since it marks the end of the PRC and the beginning of a personalist regime.

By 1958, Batista was clearly an obstacle to the economic development. In that year, the insurgent movement reached its peak in three provinces of Cuba where 75% of the sugar was produced. Cuba was on the brink of a revolution though the entire year. In a meeting in Caracas, the different insurgent groups decided to organize a united front, naming Fidel Castro as the insurgent leader. Batista launched a counter insurgent campaign in Sierra Maestra, but this strategy failed and started the end of the Cuban armed forces. At the end of 1958, Batista decided to abandon the country, leaving room to the insurgent movement and its leader Fidel Castro to take the power. Then, the change from Batista to Castro is also a SOLS change.

Castro instituted a single-party-personalist regime in Cuba which has lasted more than 50 years until now. He governed for the Cuban Communist Party (PCC-Partido Comunista de Cuba). In 2006, due to health problem, Fidel Castro was replaced by his brother Raúl Castro, but this change does not mean a SOLS change since Raul Castro continues the same single-party personalist regime. However, given that there is a leadership change in 2008, we code SOLS as PCC, PCC.

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