

## Panama

### Rice

In 1919, Panama's political situation has been described as a "constitutional democracy dominated by a commercially oriented oligarchy" (U.S. Department of State 2010). Conditions in the country clearly indicate an authoritarian form of government, despite the fact that presidential elections were held regularly. Indeed, the Polity IV (Marshall and Jaggers 2002) codes Panama with a democracy score of 0 and an autocracy score of 3, which indicates quite non-democratic. While we acknowledge the dominance of the Partido Liberal (PL, or Liberal Party)<sup>1</sup>, we also consider the weakness of the party cohesion and focus individual oligarchy within the LP. Alexander (1982, 566) describes that "During the 1920s, when Panama's political parties became primarily representative of elites clustered around personalist leaders, the Liberals managed to maintain the support of the owners of small ranches." Conniff ([1999] 2012, 185) also points out these political leaders who represented rival elite groups, such as commercial elites benefited from US business. Following our regional expert's suggestion as well as these descriptions, we code oligarchy for the period of 1919-30 and code no SOLS changes for any leadership transitions during this period.

In 1919, the president of Panama was Belisario Porras Barahona, a member of the Liberal Party (PL). He had been in that office since 1918. In 1920, Barahona stepped down from office to run for president in the elections of that year. He was therefore briefly replaced by his Vice President Ernesto Lefevre de la Ossa, who served as "acting" president from January until October 1920, when Barahona was elected again and took office. This is not a SOLS change. Barahona served in office until 1924, when presidential elections brought a new PL candidate, Rodolfo Chiari Robles, into office, which is not a SOLS change, either. Conniff (2001, 85) refers to Chiari as Porras Barahona's "hand-picked successor." Conniff (1990, 613) writes "Porras chose Rodolfo Chiari, a wealthy sugar and cattle baron, to succeed him in the presidency." In September 1928, the Vice President Tomas Gabriel Duque Gomez, PL, became "provisional" president (Hilton 1971, 129). This is not a SOLS change. In October 1928, Florencio Harmodio Arosemena Guillén, PL, became president, which is not a SOLS change, either. Conniff ([1999] 2012, 185) refers to Arosemena as Rodolfo Chiari's "handpicked successor," and Harding (2001, xvi) writes "Unable to run for second term, Chiari transfers presidency to close associate Arosemena."

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<sup>1</sup> Here are some descriptions of the role of the Liberal Party in Panamanian politics at this time: "After an initial decade of conservative rule, the Liberal Party imposed one-party rule that converted political elections into personality contests devoid of substantial debate on national issues. Political allegiances were based on politicians' personal interests rather than ideology or conviction" (Conniff [1999] 2012, 185). Conniff ([1999] 2012, 185) also refers to the Liberal Party as a "political machine." "Within a decade the Liberals has become so dominant that the Conservatives all but disappeared, and most political rivalry was between various liberal factions" (Alexander and Parker 2008, 8). On one hand, the party was not ideologically driven, although it did have a particular economic base. On the other hand, it was the means to political power at the time.

In 1931, a civilian group known as Acción Comunal (AC), with the support of the National Police, staged a coup and overthrew Arosemena. The leader of the coup, Arnulfo Arias, allowed for his brother, Harmodio Arias Madrid, to be placed in office as “acting president” between January 2 and 16, 1931 until Ricardo Alfaro Jované could return from Washington (where he was serving) to take over as acting President. We do not code a SOLS change or solschange30 for H. Arias, since he was an interim leader. Alfaro also played an interim role, but he was in office more than 18 months, and thus we must code his ascension to office as a SOLS change. He was not affiliated with the AC movement, and in fact, had been involved in the past Liberal administrations (Bethell 1990, 619). He was selected to lead the transition in part because he was acceptable to the United States. For example, “Seeking to quell U.S. State Department concerns, the Panamanian Supreme Court engaged in a clever constitutional sleight of hand that placed Harmodio Arias in the presidency on an interim basis until Minister Plenipotentiary Ricardo J. Alfaro could return from Washington to become the next president of Panama . . . The choice of Alfaro pleased the United States because his tempered diplomatic skills impressed government officials. Many of Accion Comunal’s most loyal adherents, however, pointed to the chaotic search for a new president after the coup as the moment when the momentum of the revolution might be lost. In fact, some argued that the same political insiders that the coup was designed to purge hijacked the revolution at the moment of its inception by placing Alfaro in the presidency. Ricardo J. Alfaro never belonged to Accion Comunal and took no part in the overthrow of Arosemena. He stood out as one of Panama’s most distinguished lawyers, however, and enjoyed U.S. support” (Conniff, 2012: 187). We code non-specific autocratic regime for Alfaro.

Harmodio Arias was elected president in elections held in 1932, and assumed office on October 1 as a member of the Doctrinary Liberal Party (PLD). This is a SOLS change. Harmodio Arias held office until 1936, when elections resulted in Juan Arosemena Barreati. Historians report that he was the predesignated successor of Arias. Henderson et al. (2000, 186) write “Juan D. Arosemena was elected Panamanian president following an electoral campaign tainted by fraud and violence. The hand-picked candidate of outgoing president Harmodio Arias, Arosemena continued the nationalistic and populist policies of Arias.” Conniff (1990, 620) writes “In 1935, Harmodio Arias tried to amend the constitution to allow reelection, but this initiative split his party and eventually failed. He then decided to back his weak foreign minister, Juan Demostenes Arosemena..., Arnulfo organizing a new coalition, the Partido Nacional Revolucionario (PNR), to manage Arosemena’s election. Insiders knew that the price was support for Arnulfo in 1940....Arnulfo’s PNR collaborators....dominated Arosemena’s cabinet and provincial appointments,...laying the basis for the younger Arias’ victory in 1940.” While Arosemena is listed on WSM as PLN (probably his earlier party affiliation), we code his SOLS as PNR. Note that the PNR was the same party as the PLD, just with a new name (Nacional Revolucionario) (DiTella 2005, 67). Arosemena Barreati was in office until his death in December 16, 1939. He was briefly replaced by Augusto Boyd Briceño, who served as “president” until elections could be held the following year. This is not a SOLS change.

Arnulfo Arias was then elected president as the leader of the PNR, which is not a SOLS change. Arias departed from a democratic system of government, and passed a new constitution that subordinated the legislature to the executive and created a National Secret Police. These authoritarian measures, and the fact that the PNR was basically centered around Arias and his policies, leads us to classify this regime as personalist (US Library of Congress 1987), with the personalist regime extending back to 1932 when Harmodio Arias comes to power. Conniff ([1999] 2012, 187-8) describes that “Simply put, the party [the PNR] was designed to maintain the Arias family’s hold on the presidency until Arnulfo [a brother of Harmodio Arias] was ready to run in 1940.” These departures from democracy, coupled with Arias open expression of support for Germany’s Nazi government and therefore his refusal to cooperate with the United States, led to a coup against him in October 1941 (Harding 2006, 41). Therefore, we code personalist regime for the period of 1932-1940 (from the entry of H. Arias to the exit of A. Arias).

The coup, which was supported by the large commercial powers in Panama, the military, and other groups, led to Arias going into exile in Argentina. For a few hours on October 9, the day of the coup, the non-partisan Ernesto Jaén Guardia served as acting president. This is not a SOLS change. He was then replaced with Ricardo de la Guardia Arango, who was politically independent, but allied Panama with the United States for the duration of World War II, and this is a SOLS change. De la Guardia was not popular in Panama and does not appear to have had a party network or strong military ties. He was Justice Minister under Arias. He did have the strong support of the United States. Perez (2007, 68) reports that the U.S provided weapons and training for the national police to bolster De la Guardia’s position in Panama. It is hard to classify his SOLS or his type of regime. While De la Guardia seems to have been supported by the oligarchy, he was even more supported by the U.S. Thus, we code no specific autocratic regime type for him. He remained in office until June, 1945.

In 1945, the current leader, De la Guardia, got into conflict with the National Assembly that ultimately resulted in his ouster and replacement by a newly elected president named Enrique Jiménez. Because Jiménez was not the pre-designated successor of de la Guardia, his rule is coded as a SOLS change. In 1948, Domingo Díaz Arosomena was appointed to the presidency as a member of the Liberal Party (PL). His election was not coded as a SOLS change; the fact that he was chosen by the National Assembly indicates that he was basically a pre-designated successor. However, he resigned a year later due to health complications. 1949 was a turbulent political year for Panama. There are four leaders: Diaz Arosomena (PL), Chaniz Pinzon (PL), Roberto Chiari (PLN), and Arias A (PRA). Correspondingly, the dates for these changes are specified on July 28, November 11, and November 25, 1949.

Daniel Pinzón stepped up to fulfill the rest of Arosomena’s term, also a member of the PL. This is not a SOLS change. However, the military under the leadership of Commander José Remon, forced Pinzón to resign in November. For a brief period of five days, Roberto Remón Chiari took office as the interim president, which is not a SOLS change either, until Arnulfo

Arias of the Authentic Revolutionary Party (PRA) was installed with the military's aid. This leadership change was a new SOLS change, as Arias soon embarked on his own personalist regime with different backing than Arosemena and Pinzón.

Arias served as president until 1951, when his extremely autocratic personalist regime caused Commander Remon to force his resignation. Arias's Vice President Alcibíades Arosemena took over after the former's resignation. This was coded as not a SOLS change because, though Geddes (2003) does not code this year as an extension of Arias's personalist regime. Arosemena was the closest he had to a pre-designated successor.<sup>2</sup> By 1952, however, Commander Remon decided to remove Arosemena from office and run for president, ultimately installing himself as the new leader. This is coded as a SOLS change because Remon chose had organized a new political party, the National Patriotic Coalition (CPN). GWF code a personalist regime from 1953-1955. Since Remon comes to power in 1952, we begin the personalist regime when Remon takes power.

Remon's rule ended with his assassination in 1955. His vice president, José Guizado, served as president from January to March of that year. However, he was soon impeached on dubious charges and removed from office. The second Vice President, Ricardo Arias Espinosa, then took over as president. None of these changes are coded as SOLS changes because these men were in the line of succession and in the CPN, they must be considered pre-designated successors.

1956 saw elections, and the CPN candidate Ernesto de la Guardia won the presidency. Four years later in 1960, under pressure of civil unrest, the CPN lost elections to the chief opposition group, the National Liberal Party (PLN). Roberto Chiari became the new president, signaling a SOLS change. Again, this is based off of the pre-designated successor rule. More elections occurred in 1964, and Marco Aurelio Robles took office as president under the PLN. No SOLS change is coded as he was from the same party as Chiari.

1968 was another turbulent political year for Panama. Supporters of former president Arnulfo Arias felt that the 1964 elections were rigged, and a political process to impeach Robles began. Though the National Assembly attempted to impeach and depose the current president, he relied on the Supreme Court and National Guard to keep himself in power. Elections occurred in May, and Arias was chosen as president; though other government bodies protested, the National Guard's support allowed him to assume office. As a member of the Panameñista Party (PP), his ascension was coded as a SOLS change that lasted less than 30 days, because Arias took office in October, but found himself sacked almost immediately when he tried to make sweeping reforms as well as changes in the leadership of the National Guard. By October 12, a military junta was in charge of the country, the leader of which was effectively National Guard Commander Omar

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<sup>2</sup> Note: however, given the fact that Arosemena changed his support group by excluding the more leftist and populist elements of the Ramon group, we may code a minor SOLS change with Arosemena. However, for now we code no SOLS change with Arosemena based on our pre-designated successor rules.

Torrijos. This rise of a military-personalist regime that would last to 1982 was coded as a SOLS change.

Torrijos Herrera SOLS is “Mil” until 1977. He was a commander of the National Guard, which became an official government both under the new constitution in August of 1972. Lentz (1994, 622) describes that “he was granted full civil and military powers in a referendum on September 12, 1972 and became chief of government and supreme leader of the Panamanian Revolution.” Geddes (2003) codes Panama as a Military-Personalist-Hybrid regime from 1968 to 1988. However, situation in Panama changed in 1977. After the ratification of the Torrijos-Carter treaty (signed in 1977), the military government announced a liberalization process that would culminate in free and open presidential election in 1984. Schlager et al. (2006, 1004) describes this situation as “during the liberalization process political parties were legalized and allowed to operate, political exiles were allowed to return, and the powers that Torrijos has been given by the 1972 Constitutional Reforms expired.” During this time, PRD was founded in 1978 by Torrijos in order to lead the liberalization process. “The party represented middle and popular sectors that has been incorporated in to politics during the “Revolutionary Process” initiated by the National Guard after the 1968 coup” (Schlager et al. 2006, 1045). Considering the fact that PRD represented for the interest of particular sector in Panamanian society and there were several political parties competing, we should better to code PRD as Torrijos SOLS starting in 1978 to emphasize the role of his party instead of military as a whole.

Torrijos stayed in power as the heavyweight decision maker in Panamanian politics until his death in 1981. Upon his death, he was succeeded as Commander of the National Guard by Colonel Florencio Flores Aguilar. Aguilar is coded as part of Torrijos’s regime, and thus there is no SOLS change written as he was a staunchly loyal supporter of the former leader. Torrijos (PRD) and Aguilar (Mil) did have different affiliations although they had the same SOLS. According to Lentz (1994, 622), Flores Aguilar was a colonel in the National Guard when he was selected to succeed Torrijos as commander after his death. He was not granted the full powers that were exercised by Torrijos, as his powers were limited by the general staff of the National Guard. Aguilar was supporter of the former leader, Torrijos. Since he was a colonel although his actual power was limited, it should be appropriate to code his SOLS as “Mil” (not Unknown).

Aguilar’s influence lasted until he was forced into retirement in 1982. Darío Peredes took over as Commander of the National Guard upon Aguilar’s resignation. However, in a substantive sense, both Aguilar and Peredes were same in their SOLS. Both of them were a Commander of National Guard and they ruled with the support of the Torrijos clique and military. Therefore, no SOLS change is coded.<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>3</sup> Note: given the fact that the military became stronger relative to the initial Torrijos’ support coalition composed of a broad non-elite group to a military group, it might be appropriate to code a minor SOLS with Peredes in 1982. However, we cannot systematically identify the difference between Torrijos’ and Peredes’ SOLS. In addition, we do

In 1982, revisions to the constitution meant to separate the military from the government in Panama decreed that no one could run for office if actively a member of the guard. In order to attempt to run for the presidency, Peredes resigned his post from the National Guard. However, once he was out, the new Commander, Manuel Norriega, withdrew his support and Peredes was essentially shut out of government. Norriega installed his own personalist-military regime that lasted until 1990. Although Norriega was appointed by Paredes and he had military support as Paredes did, unlike Paredes who was a Torrijos loyalist, Norriega seems to have relied on his own clique in addition to the military. Hence, we should code a minor SOLS change here.

Norriega promptly began to consolidate power, and embarked on a brutal autocratic regime that involved serious human rights violations. In 1989, the United States intervened to remove him from power. After Norriega's capture, the election results from 1989 came into effect and the elected president, David Endara Galimany, took office as the effective decision maker; the country was now on track for democracy. There is a discrepancy in this leadership change: the spreadsheet, which claims that Galimany took power in January of 1990, differs from most sources, which claim he was in charge on 20 December 1989. As Galimany was a member of the Arnulfista Party (PA) and the regime obviously changed significantly, this transition was coded as a SOLS change.

Since Norriega's defeat, Panama has been a democracy swaying back and forth between two parties. After Galimany's term expired in 1994, Ernesto Balladares won election with the backing of the Revolutionary Democracy Party (PRD). This was coded as a SOLS change. Then, in 1999, a SOLS change occurred back to the PA when Mireya Moscoso was elected. Finally, in 2004, power shifted one last time back to Martín Torrijos and the PRD, signifying the final SOLS change before 2008.

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not have a systematic way to treat similar cases in other countries in our dataset. Thus, we do not code a minor SOLS change here. Instead, we follow our pre-designated successor rules.

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