

El Salvador

Vanderbilt

El Salvador is considered authoritarian from 1919 to 1984. Geddes, Wright, Frantz (2013) code it as a military-personalist regime starting in 1931. The years 1913-1929 were “referred to as the Melendez-Quinonez dynasty because of the two related families that held the presidency. Those families ranked among the largest coffee producers” (Burns 1984, 304). From 1949 through 1982, El Salvador has a single-party-military hybrid regime, followed by an indirect military regime from 1983 to 1994.

“When an assassin felled President Manuel Enrique Araujo in 1913, Vice-President Carlos Melendez assumed the presidency as the constitution provided and then won the presidency in his own right during the elections the following year. In 1919, his brother, Jorge Melendez, succeeded him for four years, followed by his brother-in-law, Alfonso Quinonez Molina, for another quadrennial. This tightly knit family political dynasty demonstrated the ease incumbent presidents enjoyed in manipulating elections to select their successors” (Burns 1984, 304). “Araujo’s death [in 1913] ushered in a brief period of modified dynastic rule, whereby President Carlos Melendez named his brother Jorge as his successor; Jorge in turn tapped his brother-in-law, Alfonso Quinonez Molina, to succeed him. The Melendez and Quinonez clans were two of the most powerful among the ranks of the Salvadoran oligarchy” (US Library of Congress 1988).

We code 1919 to 1927 as personalist. Carlos Meléndez Ramírez of the Partido Nacional Democrático (PND) was president in 1919. In 1919 Carlos’ brother Jorge Meléndez Ramírez, PND, became president. This is not a SOLS change. In 1923 Jorge’s brother-in-law Alfonso Quiñónez Molina, PND, became president. This is not a SOLS change.

In 1927 Quiñónez Molina’s “designated successor” (US Library of Congress 1988) Pío Romero Bosque “Don Pío,” PND, became president. While Quiñónez Molina had picked Romero Bosque, the latter “turned on Quinonez, exiling him from the country, and sought to exclude other members of the elite from the government” (US Library of Congress 1988). Given that Romero Bosque “decided to break with the dynastic clan system of the Melendez-Quinonez families and its repressive patronage system of governance” (Almeida, 37), we code a SOLS change here. Romero worked to open up the country, and was responsible for facilitating the free elections of 1931 (Moodie 2011, 23; White 2011, 72). Therefore, we do not code him as a continuation of the personalist regime even though he is a predesignated successor. Instead, we code no consolidated autocratic regime for him.

In 1931 Arturo Araujo Fajardo of the Labor Party (Partido Trabajo/PT) became president in “the freest [elections] held in El Salvador up to that time” (US Library of Congress 1988). Araujo was not the candidate favored by Romero Bosque (Gould and Lauria-Santiago 2008, 60-61). Therefore, this is a SOLS change.

In December 1931 Araujo was ousted in a coup, which “represented the first instance when the Salvadoran military took direct action as an institution” and “ushered in a period of direct and indirect military rule that would last for fifty years” (US Library of Congress 1988). Geddes, Wright, and Frantz (2013) code a military personalist. This is a SOLS change.

General Maximiliano Hernández Martínez, Mil, who had been Araujo’s vice president, became president. In 1934, when Hernandez Martinez competed in elections, he turned over the presidency to A.I. Menendez for six months and then resumed the presidency (Krehm 1999, 62). These are not SOLS changes. Hernández Martínez was never popular with the oligarchy and when he increased export taxes and then tried to prolong his term without an election, he faced opposition. “The coalition that united in support of his overthrow was a somewhat eclectic one: civilian politicians, pro- Axis military officers, businessmen and bankers (who objected to the government's limited economic restrictions), and irate coffee producers” (US Library of Congress 1988). Hernández Martínez ultimately had to resign. Andrés Ignacio Menéndez, Mil, then became president. This is not a SOLS change since Geddes et al. code the same military/personalist regime as continuing. In October 1944 Menéndez was “turned out of office by the military” (US Library of Congress 1988) and Colonel Osmín Aguirre y Salinas, Mil, became president. This is not a SOLS change, either, since Geddes et al. code the same military/personalist regime as continuing. In 1945 Aguirre staged elections to ensure the victory of General Salvador Castañeda Castro, Mil. The independent parties withdrew with allegations of fraud and threat. The leadership change to Castaneda Castro is not a SOLS change since he was also a member of the military as his predecessor.

On December 14 Castañeda Castro is overthrown by a coup which installed a Revolutionary Council (Consejo de Gobierno Revolucionario) which was headed by Colonel Manuel de Jesus Cordova, Oscar Osorio Hernández, and Óscar Bolaños. One of the instruments they created was the Revolutionary Party of Democratic Unification (Partido Revolucionario de Unificación Democrática - PRUD), a political party designed to consolidate the regime and build mass support for its policies. Therefore, according to Geddes, Wright, and Frantz (2013), this coup was the start of a new military-single-party regime. However, the PRUD was not created until September 1950, so we do not code the PRUD as part of the SOLS from 1948 to 1950, despite the fact that the country is coded as a single-party hybrid regime, Therefore for 1984, we think it is unnecessary to code this party in the government SOLS, we code the leadership change as Mil, Mil. Given our coding rules, we code the transition from Castaneda Castro to Jesus Cordoba, the first leader of the new regime, as a minor SOLS change.

After Miguel de Jesus Córdova (Mil), Oscar Osorio Hernández (Mil) followed in 1949, and then Óscar Bolaños (Mil), and then again Osorio Hernandez (Mil/PRUD) in 1950. A number of other leaders took power until the regime ended in 1984. None of these leadership changes are coded as SOLS changes. There is a leadership change in 1961 from Castillo to Portillo. The government continued to be classified as a military-single party hybrid. The issue here is a

disagreement about a SOLS for the second leader (e.g., whether it is Mil or Mil/PCN). According to the Cahoon (2009), the second leader Colonel Portillo was not a member of particular party. Instead, he headed the Civic-Military Directory (from January 25, 1961 to January 25, 1962), which is not a name of political party but a name of certain period of military junta. Although PCN (Party of National Conciliation, center-right) was established in 1961 by Adalberto Rivera, it is from 1962 when Rivera was elected as a president that PCN became influential and controlled elections and government with its close tie with military. (see Schlager et al. 2006, 405 for more information). Therefore, we should not list PCN as an important component of government in 1961. In 1962, there were three leaders: Portillo (Mil), Rodolfo Cordon (Non-party), and Rivera (PCN). As mentioned, the PCN became influential when Rivera (a founder of PCN) was elected as a president. Therefore, only the third SOLS should be coded as “Mil/PCN.”

Rivera was in power until 1967, when he was replaced by Fidel Sanchez Hernandez, also a member of the military, which is not a SOLS change. In 1972, presidential elections were held, in which Sanchez Hernandez was not a candidate. Initially, it appeared that the candidate of the opposition parties, who had united to form the National Opposing Union, was going to win; however, the military put a stop to the elections and declared that its PCN candidate, Arturo Molina Barraza, was the victor. This is not a SOLS change. Molina remained in office until 1977. After elections marred by fraud, Molina was replaced by the PCN candidate, Carlos Humberto Romero Mena, which is not a SOLS change. In 1979, Romero was overthrown by a military coup led by Colonel Adolfo Arnoldo Majano Ramos. The government remained a military-single party hybrid, and therefore, this is not a SOLS change, although we do code a shift in SOLS from Mil/PCN to Mil.

The government remained a military-single party hybrid, and therefore, this is not a SOLS change, although we do code a shift in SOLS from Mil/PCN to Mil. In 1980, the junta attempted to balance the government by incorporating one of the former opposition parties, the Christian Democratic Party (PDC). This was done by making the PCD’s leader, José Napoleon Duarte Fuentes, the president of the Revolutionary Military Junta, which signifies a shift in SOLS from Mil to PDC. Yet, Geddes, Wright, and Frantz (2013) continue to code the same single party/military system, so we do not code a SOLS change.

After an intervention from the U.S., non-partisan Álvaro Alfredo Magaña Borja was named president in 1982, signifying a shift in SOLS from PDC to non-party. Technically, Magaña is listed as “provisional.” However, he was in office from 1982-1984, which exceeded the eighteen-month restriction on provisional leaders. Geddes, Wright, and Frantz (2013) classify El Salvador as a military-single party system until 1982, and code an indirect military system from 1983 to 1994. Thus, we code a minor SOLS change with Magaña Borja.

According to our coding rules, El Salvador is coded as a democracy starting in 1984 and we code SOLS changes from non-party to PDC when new presidents with different party affiliations than their predecessors assume office. However, the coding of the period between 1984 through 1994 may be problematic. In May 1984 presidential and congressional elections were held, and Napoleón Duarte won elections as a candidate for the PDC. However, these elections took place in a controversial context, marked by the internal war and the intervention of the U.S. administration into Salvadorian politics. Because of these reasons, the 1984 election meant an escalation in the war, and a leading role of the military. Indeed, Geddes, Wright, and Frantz (2013) code this period as a regime marked by the indirect intervention of the military in politics. In addition, there were competitive elections, but leftist parties were banned.

In 1994 there were general elections in which all political forces could participate. The main party, ARENA, won both the presidential elections and the majority in the Congress. Furthermore, the Farabundo Marti Front of National Liberation (Frente Farabundo Marti de Liberacion Nacional: FMLN, ex guerrilla) emerged as the second most powerful political force in the country. The FMLN gained recognition as a legal political party and cooperated with the CD in supporting Rubén Zamora as a joint presidential candidate.

Since 1994 constitutional presidents have taken office in regular elections, and after Duarte all presidents have belonged to the ARENA party. So, all these president changes belonging to ARENA party do not mean SOLS changes.

References

- “El Salvador.” 2012. U.S. Department of State.
<http://www.state.gov/outofdate/bgn/elsalvador/196850.htm> (August 31, 2013).
- Almeida, Paul. 2008. *Waves of Protest: Popular Struggle in El Salvador, 1925-2005*. Minneapolis, MN: University of Minnesota Press.
- Burns, E. Bradford. 1984. “The Modernization of Underdevelopment: El Salvador, 1858-1931.” *Journal of Developing Areas* 18(3): 293-316.
- Cahoon, Ben. 2009. “El Salvador.” *Worldstatesmen.org*.
http://worldstatesmen.org/El_Salvador.html (August 31, 2013).
- Geddes, Barbara, Joseph Wright, and Erica Frantz. 2013. “New Data on Autocratic Breakdown and Regime Transitions.” <http://dictators.la.psu.edu/pdf/gwf-code-book-1.1> (August 30, 2013).

Gould, Jeffrey and Also Lauria-Santiago. 2008. *To Rise In Darkness: Revolution, Repression, and Memory in El Salvador, 1920-1932*. Durham: Duke University Press.

Krehm, William. 1999. *Democracies and Tyrannies of the Caribbean in the 1940's*. Toronto: Lugus Publications.

Lindvall-Larson, Karen. 2000. *Latin American Election Statistics: A Guide to Sources*. University of California, San Diego.
<http://libraries.ucsd.edu/locations/sshl/resources/featured-collections/latin-american-elections-statistics/dominican-republic/elections-and-events-18921914.html> (August 31, 2013).

Moodie, Ellen. 2011. *El Salvador in the Aftermath of Peace: Crime, Uncertainty, and the Transition to Democracy*. Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press.

Nohlen, Dieter, ed. 2005. *Elections in the Americas: A Data Handbook. Vol I: North America., Central America and the Caribbean*. New York: Oxford University Press.

Schlager, Neil, and Jayne Weisblatt, eds.; and Orlando J. Pérez, consulting ed. 2006. *World Encyclopedia of Political System and Parties*. 4th Edition, Volumes 1-3. Facts on File Lincarity of World History.

US Library of Congress. 1988. "A Country Study: El Salvador." <http://lcweb2.loc.gov/frd/cs/svtoc.html> (August 31, 2013).

White, Christopher M. 2009. *The History of El Salvador*. Westport, CT: Greenwood Press.

Pre-1945 coded by Anna Carella in February 2011

Post-1945 coded by Arturo Maldonado (Vanderbilt) on July 8, 2010

Pre-1945 revised by Michaela Mattes on July 30, 2012

Pre-1945 revised by Naoko Matsumura on August 4, 2013

Post-1945 checked by Michaela Mattes on July 15, 2010

Post-1945 updated by Mariana Rodriguez on February 14, 2012

Post-1945 updated by Naoko Matsumura on June 13, 2012

Combined by Ahra Wu (Rice) on September 7, 2013

Revised by Michaela Mattes on September 13, 2013

Revised by Andrew Wood on March 4, 2014

Edited by Andrew Wood (Rice) on May 23, 2014

Revised by Ashley Leeds on September 23, 2014