

## **Bolivia**

### **Vanderbilt**

Based on Polity (Marshall and Jaggers 2002), we consider the entire pre-1945 period non-democratic and our regional expert suggests that this period, with exception of short periods during which the military held power, should be considered an oligarchy. Referring to the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century Scully (1995, 400) writes: “the emergent tin elite quickly merged with the traditional land elite, forming a relatively coherent oligarchy that dominated the nations’ political and economic life until the 1930’s. Bolivia became a prime example of a formal democracy with legally limited participation. Literacy and property requirements excluded the Indian masses and most of the urban working class from participation in politics; political life was the preserve of a tiny upper class and a relatively small urban middle class.” Geddes (2003, 248) suggests that when more than 60% of the population is illiterate, we should code oligarchy. Indeed, the population of Bolivia was about two million at the time, and about 83,000 votes were cast in the 1917 presidential election, meaning less than 5% of the population.

The late 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> century was characterized by political competition between the Liberals and the Conservatives, which, however, operated within the oligarchic system. “The Liberal Party drew most of its support from the tin-mining entrepreneurs in and around La Paz, whereas Conservative governments had ruled with an eye on the interests of the silver mine owners and great landowners in Potosí and Sucre” (US Library of Congress 1989). The Liberal Party was in charge of government after it overthrew the Conservatives in 1899, but with World War I it started to face political challenges by the new Republican Party. Alexander (1982, 134) states that the period from 1899 when the PL seized power from the Conservative to 1920 were “the years when the tin oligarchy strengthened its hold on the Bolivian economy....after the 1920 coup of the Republican Party, the PL faded into little more than a paper organization.”

José Gutiérrez Guerra of the Liberal Party (PL) served as president from 1917 to 1920. In 1920, “Republicans seized the presidency in a bloodless coup in 1920” (US Library of Congress 1989) and Rosa Bautista Saavedra Mallea of the Republican Party (PR) became president. We do not code a SOLS change here, because both parties fundamentally represented the interests of the elite. Bethell (1986, 573) points out the strong political power in the business community, which eventually supported the Republicans and ended Liberal rule.

The Republican Party then went on to rule for 10 years, but it lacked cohesion. “The Republican Party split into several factions. One major opposing branch was led by Bautista Saavedra Mallea, who had the support of the urban middle class, and the other was led by the more conservative Daniel Salamanca Urey (1931-1934) (US Library of Congress 1989).” We code no consolidated autocratic regime type for Saavedra since his regime cannot be classified based on Geddes’ (2003) coding scheme. Although some sources suggest personalistic aspect of his time in office, the evidence is not strong enough.

Saavedra led Bolivia until 1925, when he wanted his preferred successor, Gabino Villanuevo, to take over. After Gabino departed from Saavedra's began to "espouse an independent political line", Saavedra annulled the election. Felipe Segundo Guzmán, PR, became "provisional" president (Cahoon 2013). Because this is the continuation of the oligarchy, this is not a SOLS change and we do not code him as interim. Saavedra ultimately let his party convince him to accept his former close ally and then rival, Mariano Hernando Siles Reyes (PR), as president. Siles had especially strong backing by young party members and the military (Smale 2010, 146). We code no SOLS change, as the oligarchy continued with Siles.

Throughout his time in office, Siles did try to assert some personal power relative to his party. Several sources point out the further splintering of the PR (as well as the PL) at that time (e.g., Di Tella 2005, 55). Alexander (1982, 142) also states that "soon thereafter [of a coup of 1920] the party began to erode internally over personal ambitions of its leaders". Indeed, Siles created his own Nationalist Party (see Bethell 1986, 576; Morales 2003, 97). Second, at the end of his term, Siles tried to continue in office beyond his presidential term. In the middle 1930s, he announced plans to have parliament elect him for a new term. He then handed the government over to a military junta to oversee his formal re-election (Bethell 1986, 577).

In 1930, when Siles tried to run for another term in spite of constitutional limitations on this he was overthrown by a military junta and Carlos Blanco Galindo, Mil, became president. The junta planned to return rule to civilians within 6 months (Hancock 2008, 102) so some consider this a provisional period. Because this is the continuation of the oligarchy, this is not a SOLS change and we do not code him as interim. Blanco Galindo's provisional government was in power until elections could be held in 1931.

The circumstances of these presidential elections were different, in that the three major parties in Bolivia—which represented the interests of the elites— agreed to run a common presidential slate, though each party then ran their own legislative slate of candidates (Klein 1969, 115). This led to the election of PR leader Daniel Salamanca Urey. According to Hudson and Hanratty (1989), Salamanca "was elected as a coalition candidate." We do not code a SOLS change as the oligarchy continues.

In 1934, Salamanca was forced to resign after the disastrous outcome of the Chaco war. He was forced out of office by the military and replaced with his Vice President General José Luis Tejada Sorzano (Chiozza and Goemans 2011, 29). This is not a SOLS change since Tejada had become VP as a result of the deal the parties had made to run together in 1931. Tejada was part of the oligarchic regime.

In the aftermath of the Chaco War, "a radical political coalition of veterans, unionized labor, organized peasant syndicates, and students groups emerged (Morales 2003, 109)." They were led by Colonel Toro and Colonel Busch, who favored military socialism. Toro and Busch

overthrew Tejada in 1936 and Toro initially took over as president. This is a SOLS change and we code the beginning of a military regime. Toro was supported by the military and the Republican Socialist and new Socialist parties and tolerated by the conservatives who hoped the changes would be economic rather than political (Morales 2003, 110). When Toro got under pressure from more conservative elements and he moderated his policies, he lost support from the military and his co-revolutionary Busch (Morales 2003, 11). In 1937 Germán Busch Becerra, Mil, supported by a “group of more radical officers” (US Library of Congress 1989) overthrew Toro to become president. This is not a SOLS change since the same radical military groups continued in power.

Busch committed suicide and in 1939 his chief of staff Carlos Quintanilla Quiroga, Mil, became provisional president (Cahoon 2013; US Library of Congress 1989). This is not a SOLS change, since Quintanilla was also a military leader and can be seen as last leader of the military regime of Busch. We thus also do not code him as interim.

After Busch’s suicide, “the leaders of the traditional parties hastily joined forces, forgetting past differences in favor of an arrangement call La Ortuño dancia, a name that reflected their general agreement on one fundamental point: to continue to maintain the status quo by wielding the power that had been temporarily snatched away from them by the short-lived government of German Busch (Andrade 1969, 10).” Quintanilla, who was promised the rank of Marshall did the traditional parties’ bidding. Upon demands by the political parties that Bolivia return to a “democracy” (or, the 1938 Constitution), he called elections in 1940. In those elections, the traditional parties all gathered around one presidential candidate, General Enrique Peñaranda, who was then elected to office. “Peñaranda's support came from the traditional parties, the Liberals, and the two wings of the Republicans, who had formed a concordancia to stem the growth of the movement toward reform (US Library of Congress 1989).” Even though Peñaranda was also a military man, his support base included more conservative elements, essentially the elites that been in charge of Bolivia prior to Busch’s coup. As Morales (2003, 117) writes: “After Busch’s death, the oligarchy and conservative parties seized control. Peñaranda can thus be regarded as a return to the oligarchic rule and is a SOLS change.

Peñaranda was never able to obtain the support of the more radical members of the military that had been in the Toro-Busch camp and other members of society also resisted Peñaranda (Morales 2003, 123). Eventually, the Nationalist Revolutionary Movement (MNR), founded in 1941 “by a small group of intellectual dissidents from the middle and upper classes” and Razón de Patria (Radepa), founded in 1934 by “reformist military officers” joined forces (US Library of Congress 1989).

The political situation in Bolivia was fragile, and by the end of 1943, the government was losing control over the armed forces (Klein 2003, 201). Given this instability as well as the fact that Peñaranda was supported by the traditional parties as a better alternative than the leftist

military leaders, despite that he was a career military officer, we code a non-specific regime for Peñaranda. Note that since no specific regime type starts with the death of Busch and the interim government of Quintanila Quiroga, we also code 1939 as a non-specific autocratic regime by our December 31 rule. So, the period of 1939-1942 is coded as non-specific autocracy. Thus we code the military regime as ending with Quintanila Quiroga. Therefore, we code a SOLS change for Quintanila Quiroga.

In 1943 the “Radepa-MNR alliance overthrew the Peñaranda regime” (US Library of Congress 1989) and Gualberto Villarroel López, Radepa-MNR, became president. According to Geddes, Wright and Frantz (2013), a single-party-military regime is put in place. This is a SOLS change. He stayed in office until July 1946 when he was assassinated. Temporarily, a new Junta assumed which appointed the judge Nestor Guillén Olmos as provisional ruler, and the next year Tomás Monje Gutierrez assumed as interim president until 1947 when a new constitution was established (Heenan and Lamontagne, 293; Pérez Herrero). New elections were called after the establishment of constitution. In this election, Enrique Hertzog (the Republican Socialist Unity Party: PURS) was elected as the new president of Bolivia. Geddes, Wright and Frantz (2013) code an oligarchy from July 21, 1946 when Nestor Guillén Olmos came to power (until May 16, 1951). By our rules, we do not code any SOLS changes during the period of oligarchy. Thus, the changes from Guillen to Monje, and then to Hertzog are not SOLS changes.<sup>1</sup> We also do not consider Guillen and Monje interim leaders.

Hertzog stayed in office until 1949 when he was replaced by a member of the same party and vice president Mamerto Urroliagoitia. This is not a SOLS change as he was also a PURS member and he was still in the period of oligarchy. Urroliagoitia persecuted leftist groups and when he called for elections in 1951, he did not allow these groups to participate. However, there were several demonstrations in the streets against these measures demanding more democracy. In this context, the nationalist candidate (the official) won the “elections” in 1951 fueling a series of protests. As a result, some days after the assumption of the new president, the president Urroliagoitia ordered the military to assume the political power in a new Military Junta lead by Hugo Ballivian. Geddes (2003) codes a military regime in 1951 and 1952. This is a SOLS change since the power now lies with the military rather than Urroliagoitia party.

Ballivian stayed in office until 1952 when leftist groups (mainly the MNR: Nacionalist Revolutionary Movement) organized a civil-military coup against the military regime. In April 1952, the coup was in progress in all regions of Bolivia except in La Paz, the capital city. General Ballivian took refuge in the Military College. After the civil-military coup, Hernan Siles Zuazo of the MNR assumed power as interim president (Nohlen, 157; Europa Publications 2004, 804). The ascendancy of Hernán Siles Zuazo for a week ultimately began a single party regime that would last until 1964, so we code his entry as a SOLS change. Siles Zuazo was replaced by

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<sup>1</sup> Also, Néstor Guillén Olmo and Tomás Monje Gutiérrez were interim leaders.

Victor Paz Estenssoro who was elected.<sup>2</sup> Paz Estenssoro was affiliated with the “first modern and broad-based political party was the Nationalist Revolutionary Movement (MNR)”, which after having been denied victory in the 1951 election brought down the Ballivian government (U.S. Department of State 2010). This is not a SOLS change, because the MNR regime starts with the interim rule of Zuazo.

The presidency of Paz Estenssoro inaugurated a 12-year period in Bolivia dominated by the MNR. Bolivia is coded as a single-party system between 1952 and 1964 by Geddes (2003). After Paz Estenssoro, Siles Zuazo took over, and then Paz Estenssoro again for a second term. So, neither of these changes is a SOLS change.

The MNR dominated this period because it was a coalition of different political forces, including leftist parties and unions. However, by the end of this period, the government of Paz Estenssoro was accused of being counter revolutionary. The peak of this crisis in the coalition was the resignation of the Vice President Juan Lechin, leader of the labor movement. After he left the government, there were massive street demonstrations, especially those fueled by the mining union, gathering thousands of people. The government reacted naming the General Rene Barrientos, who belonged to a rival group, as vice president with the purpose of preventing a civil coup.

Due to the popular pressure, Paz Estenssoro resigned and flew to Lima. Paz Estenssoro tried to hand power to the General Alfredo Ovando but it was immediately rejected because of his proximity to Paz Estenssoro. Ovando also looked to ally with another military group led by the General Rene Barrientos, but this attempt died quickly, and Barrientos assumed in November 1964 as chairman of the military junta. The transition from Paz Estenssoro to Barrientos is a SOLS change. Barrientos is not affiliated with the MNR. In fact, according to Geddes (2003), Barrientos’s assumption of power is the end of the MNR single-party regime and the beginning of a new personalist regime.

Starting in 1965 Barrientos incorporated Ovando in the government. He also left the office temporarily in order to run in presidential elections with the purpose of legitimize his government, and entrusted Ovando with the presidency as interim ruler from January to August 1966 (Mahler, 804; Bedregal, 216). Barrientos, as expected, won the 1966 presidential election, and ruled backed by the military until 1969 when he died suspiciously in a plane crash, and was succeeded by his vice president Luis Adolfo Siles Salinas. Siles Salinas was then overthrown by a military coup lead by Alfredo Ovando in September 1969.

Therefore, from 1964 to 1969 Barrientos was the real president of Bolivia, even if he shared power with Ovando in some years in order to achieve military backing, and even if he resigned to run for president, leaving Ovando as provisional president. After Barrientos died, the

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<sup>2</sup> Bolivia is not coded as a democracy by us during that time and not by Cheibub et al. (2010) either.

change from Barrientos to Siles Salinas is not a SOLS because Siles Salinas (FRB-PSD: Partido Socialista Democrática, member of FRB) was the pre-designated successor of Barrientos. However, the coup lead by Ovando is a SOLS change because this coup was lead by the military which tended to support Barrientos. Note that Geddes (2003) has Barrientos as leading a personalist regime, while the assumption of the presidency by Ovando after the coup is coded as establishing a three-year military regime.

Torres followed Ovando Candia in the presidency, and after him, Banzer Suarez assumed power in 1971 and inaugurated a military-personalistic regime. So, this change represents a minor SOLS change, because Banzer was part of the military, but he also inaugurated a personalistic regime and thus relied on a clique of close associates.

Banzer ruled Bolivia until 1978 but had to resign as a result of civil society (parties and unions) protests. As a result, he decided to call for presidential elections in 1978 when Banzer organized a notable electoral fraud, having more votes than the total number of voters, to assure the victory of his designated successor, General Juan Pereda. However, due to social protests against the election fraud, Pereda betrayed Banzer, denounced the election fraud, and organized a coup against the dictator. This coup inaugurated a period of extreme volatility in Bolivia. Pereda was followed by David Padilla belonging to a different wing in the military. After him, the Congress named Walter Guevara as interim president for just one year when he must call elections (Mahler, 804; Bedregal, 220). However, he was dismissed by the military and was replaced by the General Alberto Natusch until a new interim president was elected. Lidia Gueiler, president of the Chamber of Deputies, was elected as interim president for just one year again (Mahler, 804; Bedregal, 221), and also with the obligation to call for elections. Effectively, Gueiler called for elections and the UDP (Democratic People's Unity, a coalition of leftist parties) won, but the winner did not achieve more than 50% of the votes, thus the Congress had to decide who the president will be. Finally, the Congress could not decide because a coup in 1980 lead by the General Luis Garcia Meza. After that, military officers ruled Bolivia in 1982 elected Hernan Siles was democratically elected for a 4-year term.

In sum, since Banzer, all the rulers were military officers or transitory leaders. So, we follow Geddes (2003) and consider these governments and code no major SOLS change in this period until the election of Siles Suazo (MNRI: Nationalist Revolutionary Left Movement) when a democratic period was inaugurated. The change from Gueiler to Garcia Meza is a minor SOLS because before Gueiler Bolivia had a military-personalist hybrid regime, and when Garcia assumed, he inaugurated military regime.

The Siles Zuazo government faced a period of severe economic crisis in Bolivia. In order to gain more support for his government, he formed a coalition Cabinet which includes mostly leftist parties. He was barely able to finish his term in 1985. In Congress "an Alliance between the MNR and the leading left-wing groups, including the MIR, enabled Dr. Victor Paz

Estenssoro of the MNR to secure the presidency (which he had previously held in 1952-1956 and 1960-1964). The armed forces pledged their support for the new government” (Europa Publications 2004, 805).

After Paz Estenssoro, there were two leftist presidents: Paz Samora (MIR) and Sanchez de Lozada (MNR), followed by a rightist one: Banzer Suarez (ADN). In August 2001, Banzer Suarez resigned due to health problems. The Vice President Jorge Quiroga Ramirez assumed the presidency. So, this is not a SOLS change because Quiroga belongs to the same party.

On June 2002, there were presidential and congressional elections in which the former President Sanchez de Lozada won the first majority and after that was appointed as president by the Congress. In this election, Evo Morales, representing the leftist MAS (Movement towards Socialism) won unexpectedly the second majority with an anti free-market agenda. This change is a SOLS change because Sanchez de Lozada belonged to a different party from Banzer.

Due to a severe economic crisis and popular riots, the president Sanchez de Lozada had to resign on October 2003 and was followed by his Vice President Carlos Mesa Gisbert who did not have any party affiliation. We do not consider the MNR to be Mesa’s primary source of support. First, according to Webber (2010, 53), “Mesa owed his presidency to the mass left-indigenous mobilizations of September and October 2003 and took up variations on the key slogans of those mobilizations as his own. He promised, for example, to reform the hydrocarbons industry and to convoke a constituent assembly.” Considering that MNR was a right-wing grouping, it seems that Mesa did not rely on MNR’s support at least at the time when he was appointed to president by Congress.

Second, according to the Europa World Year Book (2011, 929) “Upon taking office, President Mesa appointed a Cabinet largely composed of independent technocrats, and notably restored the indigenous affairs portfolio abolished in February 2003.” This implies that he tried to differentiate his administration from previous administration based on MNR and tried not to use support from any political parties. Third, after Sanchez de Lozada resigned in October 2003, political power of MNR declined rapidly. According to Banks et al. (2011, 153), “the party was virtually annihilated in the 2004 municipal balloting. In the December 2005 poll it secured 1 Senate and 7 Chamber sets.” Because the MNR was no Mesa’s source of leader support, but was his predecessor’s, we code a SOLS change here.

Mesa tried to control and pacified the country, but he was unable to achieve these goals, and in 2005, he resigned and the Constitution established that the president of the Senate or the Congress is the constitutional successors. However, these two political leaders represented the more conservative and neoliberal faces, and they were repelled by the social movements, led by the coca movement whose leader was Evo Morales. In order to prevent a civil war, the president of the Supreme Court of Justice Eduardo Rodriguez Veltze (non-party) was appointed as the provisional president with the mandate to call immediately for presidential elections within 6

months (Kohl and Farthing, 309; Crabtree and Whitehead, 143). In December 2005, a new presidential election was celebrated in which Evo Morales (MAS) won, and assumed the presidency in January 2006.

In sum, the change from Sanchez de Lozada to Carlos Mesa is a SOLS change. Mesa is listed as non-party and led a non-political cabinet (U.S. Department of State 2010) who broke with Sanchez de Lozada's MNR. The change from Carlos Mesa to Rodriguez Veltze is not a SOLS change because Rodriguez was an interim president, but the change from Rodriguez to Evo Morales is a SOLS change, because Morales belongs to a different party than Mesa and in fact had led the demonstrations that brought the Sanchez de Lozada government down (U.S. Department of State 2010).

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