

Panama

Vanderbilt

Panama is considered authoritarian from 1919 through 1945. We lack Geddes' (2003) coding. According to the U.S. Department of State (2010): "From 1903 until 1968, Panama was a constitutional democracy dominated by a commercially oriented oligarchy." US Library of Congress (1987) confirm that "cleavages in the Liberal Party led to a new system of personalistic parties in shifting coalitions, none of which enjoyed a mass base. Politics remained the exclusive preserve of the oligarchy, which tended to be composed of a few wealthy, white families." These conditions in Panama 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. Panama was considered a non-democratic country from 1945 to 1989 when the third wave of democracy in Latin America took place. Since then Panama has had 20 years of uninterrupted democracy. According to Geddes (2003), Panama was a personalistic regime between 1949 and 1951. Also, she codes two military-personalist regimes from 1968 to 1988.

Our regional expert suggested coding oligarchy for the period of 1919-1930. While we acknowledge the dominance of the Partido Liberal (PL, or Liberal Party) in this period¹, 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. Since we code oligarchy for 1919-30, we do not code SOLS change.

Belisario Porras Barahona of the Liberal Party (PL) served as president from 1918 until 1920. In 1920 Porras Barahona, in order to run for another term, resigned as president in favor of Ernesto T. Lefevre, his third vice president "in order to fulfill the constitutional requirement that a candidate could not be holding office" (Baker 1966, 292; *Latin-American year book* 1919, 540). Lefevre, PL, took over as "acting" president (Cahoon 2009).² This is not a SOLS change. In October 1920 Porras Barahona won elections to take his place as president once again. This is not a SOLS change.

¹ 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.

² Lefevre is not a proper interim president, but a placeholder for Barahona who continues to wield power.

In 1924 Rodolfo Enrique Chiari Robles, PL, became president. This not a SOLS change. He also can be considered as Porras' pre-designated successor. "Unable to succeed himself in the presidency in 1924, Porras selected Rodolpho Chiari, a sugar baron and grandson of an immigrant, to take over the government (Clayton and Conniff [1999] 2005, 269)." While Porras believed Chiari to be weak, the later became a strong leader of the Liberal Party (Clayton and Conniff [1999] 2005).

In September 1928 the vice-president Tomas Gabriel Duque Gomez, PL, became "provisional" president (Hilton 1971, 129).³ Whether he is treated as provisional or regular president, this is not a SOLS change. He can also be considered a pre-designated successor of Chiari. In October 1928 Florencio Harmodio Arosemena Guillén, PL, became president. This is not a SOLS change as Arosemena owed his presidency to Chiari (Meding 2002, 157-8) as did Duque.

In January 1931 Harmodio Arias Madrid of the Acción Comunal (AC) and his brother Arnulfo Arias Madrid deposed Arosemena in a bloodless coup (Marley 1998, 638; US Library of Congress 1987). They were part of the Accion Communal movement, composed of middle class nationalists that opposed Arosemena accusing him electoral fraud, corruption, and too close relations to the U.S. (Leonard and Bratzel 2006, 55). After the coup, Harmodio Arias became "acting" president (Cahoon 2009; TIME Magazine 1931). This is not a SOLS change because he is an interim leader. Two weeks later Ricardo Joaquín Alfaro Jované, PL, Panama's ambassador to the United States and vice-president under Arosemena, returned to Panama to become acting president (Cahoon 2009) after the Panamanian Supreme Court disqualified all other competitors (Harding, xvi). This is a SOLS change. While Alfaro did play an interim role, 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" (Coniff, 2012: 187). We code non-specific autocratic regime for Alfaro.

³ Cahoon (2009) does not recognize Duque.

In 1932 Harmodio Arias, PLD, was elected president. This is a SOLS change. In 1936 the United State and Panama signed the Hull-Alfaro Treaty and Panama ceased to be a U.S. protectorate in 1939 when it was ratified by the U.S. (Leonard and Bratzel 2006, 56). In 1936 Juan Demóstenes Arosemena Barreati of the National Revolutionary Party (PNR), brother of former president Florencio Arosemena, became president. “The hand-picked candidate of outgoing president Harmodio Arias, Arosemena continued the nationalistic and populist policies of Arias (Henderson et al. 2000, 186).”

In 1939 Juan Demóstenes Arosemena died unexpectedly (Leonard and Bratzel 2006, 59) and Augusto Samuel Boyd Briceño of the PNR became president.⁴ Boyd also was Arosemena’s First vice president (Harding 2001, xvii). This is not a SOLS change. The National Revolutionary Party was founded by Arnulfo Arias, the brother of Harmodio Arias who had put Arosemena in office, and in the 1940 elections, Arias had the “overt support” of Boyd and made sure he would get elected (Leonard and Bratzel 2006, 58). Furthermore, Pérez suggests that “in 1940, Arosemena, used the same resources to ensure the election of his preferred successor, Arnulfo Arias, and thereby repay the favor done for him by President Harmonio Arias, who happened to be Arnulfo’s brother” (Pérez 2000, 122). Arnulfo Arias, PNR, won the 1940 elections to become president. This is not a SOLS change given the relationship between the Arias, Arosemena, and Boyd.

The 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, 41). Therefore, we code personalist regime for the period of 1932-40 (from the entry of H. Arias to the exit of A. Arias).

In October 1941, Arias was deposed by the National Police (US Library of Congress 1987) and Second Vice President Ernesto Jaén Guardia, Non-Party, became acting president (Cahoon 2009). This is not a SOLS change. Hours later the coup leaders replaced Arias with Chief Justice Ricardo Adolfo de la Guardia Arango, Non-Party, Ernesto Jaén Guardia’s brother (Harding 2001, xvii). This is a SOLS change. 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 President Ricardo de la Guardia was forced to resign because he was strongly tied to Washington. Therefore, the National Assembly appointed Enrique A. Jiménez

⁴ Cahoon (2009) lists an additional interim leader, Ezequiel Fernández Jaén, PNR, as acting president from 16-18 December. Archigos (Goemans et al. 2009) has not listed this person, so we do not include him.

(PL- Liberal Party) as provisional president (Cahoon 2009). Jimenéz stayed in office for more than 18 months, so, he is not considered as provisional according to our rules. He ruled the country until October 1948. Because Jimenez was not de la Guardia's pre-designated successor, the change from de la Guardia to Jimenéz is a SOLS change.

New presidential elections were held in 1948 in which the main candidates were the former president Arnulfo Arias and Domingo Diaz Arosemena for the government party (Liberal Party). Initially, it appeared that Arias won the elections, but after National Guard intervention, the Electoral Board changed the votes, and declared Diaz as the winner in a fraudulent maneuver. The change from Jimenéz to Diaz is not a SOLS change because Diaz was the pre-designated successor and they belonged to the same party.

One year later, Diaz Arosemena died in office. The vice-president Daniel Chanís assumed on July 1949 as acting president (Cahoon 2009) and then becomes regular leader. However, four months later, he was overthrown by the National Guard, and the second vice president, Roberto Chiari is named acting president on November (Cahoon 2009), but he also was forced out by the National Guard. In his place, former president Arnulfo Arias returned to power.

In sum, there are four leaders: Diaz Arosemena (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. After Diaz Arosemena's death, the change to Chanís and then to Chiari are not SOLS changes because as VP Chanis can be considered Diaz Arosemena's pre-designated successor and Chiari was interim. The transition from Chiari to Arias is a SOLS change because Arias was not the pre-designated successor of the former president and had in fact competed with him in the 1948 election. Also, Geddes (2003) codes a personalist government between 1949 and 1951.⁵

By 1951, Arias's government had become extremely autocratic. He jailed six former presidents for opposing and denouncing his plots. He also suspended the constitution and dissolved the National Assembly. In this context, the National Guard under Remón intervened again, deposed Arias from office, and placed vice president Alcibiades Arosemena as interim president for 17 months (Harding, 49; Harding, xviii). Therefore, this change is not a SOLS change.⁶

In 1952, new presidential elections were held in which National Guard Chief José Antonio Remón was elected president for the National Patriotic Coalition (CPN). "From

⁵ It is important to note that US Library of Congress (1987) suggest that really National Police Commander José Antonio Remón was in charge between 1948 and 1952: "Between 1948 and 1952, National Police Commander José Antonio Remón installed and removed presidents with unencumbered ease. Among his behind-the-scenes manipulations were the denials to Arnulfo Arias of the presidency he apparently had won in 1948, the installation of Arias in the presidency in 1949, and the engineering of Arias's removal from office in 1951" (US Library of Congress 1987). This might suggest that no SOLS change between Diaz Arosemena and Arias should be coded since they both depended on Remon.

⁶ 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.

several preexisting parties and factions, Remón also organized the CPN” (US Library of Congress 1987). Therefore, this change means a SOLS change since Remón was not Arias pre-designated successor and in fact had removed him from power. Also, GWF code a personalist regime from 1953-1955. Since Remon comes to power in 1952, we begin the personalist regime when Remon takes power.

Remón was assassinated in 1955 and his VP Guizado Valdés, also CNP, took office briefly. In fact Guizado was considered responsible for the assassination by some. “The first vice president, José Ramón Guizado, was impeached for the crime and jailed, but he was never tried, and the motivation for his alleged act remained unclear” (US Library of Congress 1987). Guizado was succeeded by the second VP, Ricardo Arias (also CNP). We consider neither of these transitions SOLS changes since they were both vice presidents and were part of the same party/coalition of parties as Remón. The CNP, Remón’s party, then assured that Ernesto de la Guardia (CNP), a member of the ruling oligarchy, would become president. We code no SOLS change here.

On October 1960, the opposition candidate Roberto Chiari was “elected” president for the National Liberal Party. So, the change from the last CPN president, de la Guardia Jr. to Chiari is a SOLS since Chiari cannot be considered de la Guardia’s pre-designated successor. As US Library of Congress (1987) states: “De la Guardia’s administration had been overwhelmed by the rioting and other problems, and the CPN, lacking effective opposition in the National Assembly, began to disintegrate. Most dissenting factions joined the PLN in the National Opposition Union, which in 1960 succeeded in electing its candidate, Roberto Chiari, to the presidency....Chiari had the distinction of being the first opposition candidate ever elected to the presidency” (US Library of Congress 1987).

Four years later, new presidential elections were held. As Gorvin (1989) states: “PLN retained the presidency in 1964 when Marco Aurelio Robles won 134,627 votes compared with 123,186 for Arias Madrid, now candidate of the Panamanian Party. Arias maintained that the elections had been rigged and demanded a recount, but the National Elections Board upheld the result.” As US Library of Congress (1987) argues: “Robles, who had served as minister of the presidency in Chiari’s cabinet, was the candidate of the National Opposition Union, comprising the PLN and seven smaller parties. After lengthy backstage maneuvers, Robles was endorsed by the outgoing president.” Therefore, this change is not a SOLS since Robles was Chiari’s pre-designated successor.

When Robles’ term ended in 1968, Arnulfo Arias of the PP (Panamenista Party, personalist Arias) was elected president. Arias was not Robles’ pre-designated successor as “Robles’ endorsement went to David Samudio of the PLN” (US Library of Congress 1987). Thus, this is a SOLS change. However, Arias was only in office for 10 days he was overthrown by the National Guard led by Boris Martínez and Omar Torrijos. They instituted a military dictatorship with Torrijos as formal leader and soon Torrijos exiled Martínez and assumed total control of the country, inaugurating a military-personalistic regime according to Geddes (2003). Thus this is an ABC scenario from the codebook.

This is how US Library of Congress (1987) describe the Panamanian system until Torrijos: “The multi-party system that existed until the coup d’état of 1968 served to regulate competition for political power among the leading families. Individual parties characteristically served as the personal machines of leaders, whose clients (supporters or dependents) anticipated jobs or other advantages if their candidate were successful. Of the major parties competing in the 1960s, only the highly factionalized PLN had a history of more than two decades. The only parties that had developed clearly identifiable programs were the small Socialist Party and the Christian Democratic Party (Partido Demócrato Cristiano: PDC). The only party with a mass base was the Panameñista Party (Partido Panameñista: PP), the electoral vehicle of the erratic former president, Arnulfo Arias. The Panameñista Party appealed to the frustrated, but lacked a clearly recognizable ideology or program.”

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 governed the country until his death in 1981 in an airplane crash. “He was succeeded immediately as Guard commander by the chief of staff, Colonel Florencio Florez Aguilar, a Torrijos loyalist” (US Library of Congress 1987). Torrijos (PRD) and Aguilar (Mil) did have different affiliations although they had the same SOLS. According to Lentz (1994, 622), Florez 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).

Florez was forced to retire after having completed 26 years of military service and he was replaced by his chief of staff “General Rubén Darío Paredes, who considered himself to

be Torrijos's rightful successor and the embodiment of change and unity (Torrijos had been grooming Paredes for political office since 1975)” (US Library of Congress 1987). Neither of these are SOLS changes since they both were a Commander of National Guard and ruled with support of the Torrijo’s clique and military.⁷

During Paredes’ time, Noriega became chief of staff of the National Guard. Paredes wanted to become President so he retired from the National Guard and Noriega took his place. US Library of Congress (1987) describe: “Many suspected that Paredes had struck a deal with Colonel Manuel Antonio Noriega Moreno, who had been the assistant chief of staff for intelligence since 1970, whereby Noriega would assume command of the Guard and Paredes would become president in 1984.” Noriega did not follow through on the deal, stating that he would not support any of the candidates for president. Noriega then installed his own personalist-military regime that lasted until 1990. Noriega was appointed by Paredes and both had military support but while Paredes was still a Torrijos loyalist, Noriega seems to have relied on his own clique in addition to the military. Thus we code a minor SOLS change here.

In 1988, deposed president Delvalle claimed that he is the legal president of the country, with the backing of the U.S. administration. In November that year, he formed a coalition with five opposition parties and announced a provisional government until new elections were held and Noriega was ousted as head of the armed forces. Due to U.S. pressures, presidential elections were held next year in which the opposition candidate Guillermo Endara Galimany won. However, Noriega rejected the results and declared null the election because foreign intervention (former U.S. president Jimmy Carter was in Panama as electoral observer). Moreover, in September 1989 Noriega dissolved the National Assembly and named Francisco Rodríguez as provisional president. In December 1989, U.S. troops invaded Panama in order to remove Noriega from office and install Guillermo Endara (pro-U.S) and elected as president. Noriega was arrested and sent to Miami and indicted on drug charges. As a result, Guillermo Endara assumed the presidency and started a democratic transition in the country. So, this change is a SOLS change.

Since then all presidents have been elected in fair elections and ended their terms constitutionally, alternating between presidents of the Democratic Revolutionary Party (PRD) and the Arnulfista Party (PA).

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⁷ 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 Paredes in 1982. However, we cannot systematically identify the difference between Torrijos’ and Paredes’ SOLS. In addition, we do not have a systematic way to treat similar cases in other countries in our dataset. Thus, we do not code a minor change here. Instead, we follow our pre-designated successor rules.

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Pre-1945 coded by Anna Carella in March 2010

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