

Dominican Republic

Rice

The Dominican Republic, like many countries in the Latin American region, was under heavy influence from the United States that culminated in its occupation by the latter beginning in 1916. During this occupational period, Juan Bautista Vicini Burgos of the Liberal Party (Lib) served as president.¹ American troops withdrew from the Dominican Republic in 1924, leaving behind a government under the leadership of Horacio Vasquez Lajara, a member of the National Progressive Party (PNG).

Note that Archigos (Goemans et al. 2009) lists Vasquez as leader beginning January 1, 1925, but other sources including Cahoon (2012) list him as becoming president July 12, 1924, which is what we code. He is in office when the Dominican Republic regains its independence according to Correlates of War (2011) on September 29, 1924. This is coded as a SOLS change, since Vasquez was elected in an election conducted under occupation, whereas a military leader had overthrown the prior government prompting intervention (US Library of Congress 1989).

Vasquez's government is not easy to categorize. The Dominican Republic was comparatively democratic at the time, and the Vasquez government worked hard to provide public goods, building roads, etc.² Vasquez was not willing to give up power, however, and extended his term. In the Dominican Republic at that time, "party politics continued to be viewed as the road to power to satisfy political ambitions" (Moya Pons 1998, 346). Though other parties did exist in the Dominican Republic during Vasquez's time in office, the PNG was completely dominant. Vasquez was seen to be the only leader who could keep his party united, and therefore, he stayed in power (Moya Pons 1998, 349). Since the Vasquez held influence over the party, not the other way around, we code personalistic regime for him. Indeed, many sources mention the fact that Vasquez unconstitutionally extended his own term and wanted to stay in power as a permanent dictator, but most of the personalistic events came later in his period. (Brown 1999, 29; Roorda 1998, 35). Roorda (1998, 35) describes that Vasquez laid the groundwork to succeed himself for another six-year term in 1930, again in violation of the Dominican Constitutions, and exhibited an imperial tendency and tread toward one man government.

During the six years that Vasquez was in office, the Dominican Republic also saw the rise of another powerful political player: Rafael Trujillo y Molina, the chief of the Army. In 1930, after undergoing a kidney transplant, Vasquez was forced from office through a complex plot organized by Trujillo and other political opponents. In February 1930, Trujillo, along with politician Rafael Estrella Ureña, who was a member of the rival Republican Party, led a coup. Vasquez decided not to fight back, and resigned on March 2, 1930, leaving the presidency to

¹ Archigos (Goemans et al. 2009) does not list him.

² However, Polity IV (Marshall and Jaggers 2002) codes the country with a democracy score of 1 and autocracy score of 4, so it is not really borderline democratic.

Estrella Ureña. This is a SOLS change. He had been forced to make third-in-line for the Presidency prior to his (and the vice-president's) resignation. However, shortly after he took office, "it became evident that the chief of the army was in command and that the new president was little more than his puppet" (Moya Pons 1998, 355). At this point, in fact, Geddes (2003) begins to code the Dominican Republic as a personalist state, ostensibly under Trujillo.

This is due to the fact that by May 1930, Trujillo had convinced the political parties that had backed Estrella Ureña to switch their support to him. He won the presidential elections of that month, and took office in August. Cahoon (2012) lists his SOLS as being the military and the Dominican Party (PD), though, again, Geddes (2003) codes his regime as personalist (the PD was created after the election). In 1938, Trujillo allowed for his vice-president at the time, Jacinto Peynado y Peynado to be elected president as the PD candidate, but Trujillo continued to be the actual ruler of the country (Moya Pons 1998, 370). This is not a SOLS change, as Peynado y Peynado would obviously be Trujillo's pre-designated successor, and also because the former was serving as a figurehead. Peynado died mid-term, in 1940, and was replaced by his vice-president, Manuel de Jesus Troncoso de la Concha. For some reason, possibly because Trujillo was still in control overall, the spreadsheet does not list these two individuals as having been in office. Trujillo again assumed the presidency in 1942, and this time remained in office until 1952, when he named his brother, Héctor Trujillo as his proxy successor. Rafael Trujillo was assassinated in 1961, and his family fled the country shortly thereafter.

Note that from 1945 to 1978 the Dominican Republic is considered non-democratic, except for one year, 1962 in which it is coded, contrary to Cheibub et al. 2010, as a presidential democracy (Schlager et al. 2006). There are three leaders in 1962: Balaguer (PD), Echavarría (Mil), and Filiberto Bonnelly (the Republican Party: Rep). Joaquín Balaguer was Trujillo's puppet president at the time of his assassination, and he became the effective leader after the Trujillo family fled. His regime was consequentially not coded as a SOLS change for this reason. While the government was reorganizing into a council consisting of Balaguer as well as several of Trujillo's assassins, Air Force General Pedro Rodríguez Echavarría staged a coup and for two days headed the country with the backing of the military. This change is coded as a SOLS change that last less than 30 days. Echavarría was deposed on January 19, 1962 by lesser officers, and Filiberto Bonnelly came to power with the backing of the Republican Party. According to Lentz (1994, 231) his government was provisional and he prepared democratic elections in December. Therefore we do not code a SOLS change here.

Bonnelly was president until 1963. Juan Bosch won the next elections as a member of the Dominican Revolutionary Party (PRD); his rule was coded as a SOLS change. He was overthrown by a military coup in September, which is another SOLS change, when the government came into the hands of Emilio de los Santos and the National Civic Union (UCN). A few months later, De los Santos resigned, and Donald Reid Cabral stepped up. This is not a SOLS change.

Cabral's regime ended in 1965 in a popular uprising by Bosch supporters supported by a leftist faction of the military. There were five leadership changes in this year: Cabral (UCN), Molina Urena (Mil, or PRD), Bartolome Benoit (Mil), Berreras (Mil), Godoy (PRSC). The revolution placed Rafael Molina Ureña in power in April, with the backing of the military. Ureña's regime was coded as a SOLS change that lasted less than 30 days. Regarding the SOLS for Molina Ureña, there is some room for confusion partly because of coding difficulty for political instability during 1965. In other words, the issue is about to what extent we should consider a military penetrated into government. Ureña was a member of Juan Bosch's PRD and a party of pro-Bosch forces. However, as Lentz (1994, 232) describes, "Molina's supporters realized they could not resist a full military assault," Molina's actual power seems limited. In addition, he was a provisional president for just two days: from April 25, 1965 to April 27, 1965. Cahoon (2012) codes Ureña's provisional government's SOLS as PRD. Therefore, we code Ureña's SOLS as PRD, but not code a regular SOLS change.

Ureña was followed by several military governments that took control as the revolution bordered on civil war. Bartolomé Benoit was the next military installed leader, who served for a week in May. This short term leadership change is also coded as a SOLS change that lasted less than 30 days. Antonio Barrera, also with the military as his SOLS, then took charge of a reconstructive government, which was in power until the end of August. Given the provisional nature of this government, no SOLS change is coded.

In August 1965, a provisional government under the charge of Héctor Godoy took charge while elections were organized. He was called to serve as a provisional president until election could be held. Hence, no SOLS change is coded. Lentz (1994, 233) describes that "Godoy was considered a moderate and was viewed with distrust by both the rebels and the military. His affiliation is PRSC but his main task was a preparation for new election.

In July 1966, Joaquín Antonio Balaguer was successfully elected president, backed by the PRSC, or the PR (SOLS change). According to Cahoon (2012), PRSC and PR are the same party. However, as of 1966, it is appropriate to use PRSC since it was 1985 when PRSC changed its name to PR. Balaguer and the PRCS remained in power until 1978. Elections in 1978 were almost falsified, but U.S. intervention led to the fair announcement of Silvestre Antonio Guzmán as the new leader of the Dominican Republic under the PRD. This transition was coded as a SOLS change.

Guzmán ruled until taking his own life in 1982. The Vice President Jacobo Azar took over and served the remainder of his term. This was obviously not a SOLS change. In the next election, Jorge Blanco won control of the government. There was no SOLS change in that instance either, as he was also a member of the PRD.

1986 brought a new man and a new political party to power in the Dominican Republic. Former President Joaquín Antonio Balaguer was elected, as a member of the Social Christian Reformist Party (PRSC). He stayed in power for ten years.

In 1996, generally free and fair elections saw Leonel Fernández Reyna of the Dominican Liberation Party (PLD) elected to the presidency. This represents a SOLS change. In 2000, another SOLS change occurred when PRD candidate, Hipolito Mejia, won the presidency. Finally, in 2004, one last SOLS change was made when former President Reyna was reelected as a member of the PLD once again.

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