

Latvia

Rice

Latvia declared its independence in 1918, but fought over land with Germany and the Soviet Union until 1920. According to Plakans (1995, 199) a provisional government was created at independence in 1918 and the Constitutional Assembly was established for preparing a new constitution. We code the dem variable as zero for 1919 (an unspecified non-democracy) and thus we use a predesignated successor rule for 1919.

During this period, Karlis Ulmanis of the Latvian Farmers' Union (LZS, also known as the Agrarian Union) ruled from 1918 to 1919 as Prime Minister (PM) of the provisional government (Parrott 2002, 149). Ulmanis had to deal with rival governments that had been set up by "Baltic Germans" (led by Andrievs Niedra) and Soviet Russia (led by Peteris Stucka). Each of these governments was supported by military forces (Bleiere et al. 2006, 134), and in May 1919, Niedra's forces succeeded in taking Riga, the capital city. Ulmanis' government fled before the invasion, resulting in the non-partisan Oskars Borkovskis serving as "acting" Prime Minister (Cahoon 2000) from April 21-April 26 (no SOLS change). Niedra then briefly took over the Prime Ministership from April 26 to July 14, as the leader of the Latvian Landholder's Council (LZP). This is a SOLS change because Niedra was not Ulmanis' predesignated successor. However, Ulmanis' forces then succeeded in taking back Riga, and Ulmanis resumed office on April 1919. This should be coded as a SOLS change because Ulmanis was not Niedra's predesignated successor.

Regarding Latvia's regime type, Latvia is considered a parliamentary democracy from 1920 to 1933 (and we code the demo/parl variables for 1919 as zero). On May 1920, the Constitutional Assembly held its first session and selected Ulmanis to be a premier by election. Several sources describe this first session of the Constitutional Assembly as the end of the provisional government period (see John 2004, 56; Kortmann et al. 2006, V-4; Plakans 1995, 122; Robbers 2006, 513-14). Thus, we code this Ulmanis government in 1920 as a beginning of the parliamentary democracy in Latvia (it lasted until 1933), although the adoption of its new constitution was in 1922.¹

Note that the Library of Congress Country Study reports "Until 1934 Latvia had a system of democracy similar to that in Weimar Germany (1919-33). The use of proportional elections and the absence of any dominant party encouraged participation by more than forty different political parties. The 1931 parliament (Saeima) had representatives from twenty-seven parties. It is not surprising, then, that Latvia had eighteen different parliamentary governments with new combinations of coalition partners in fewer than fourteen years." We have not been able to find the content of these coalitions. Thus, we have coded no minor SOLS changes.

Ulmanis' government lost its parliamentary mandate in June 1921, and a new government was formed under Zigfrids Meierovics, also of the LZS (no SOLS change). This government lasted until January 1923, when it was replaced by another LZS government led by Janis Pauluks (no SOLS change). Pauluks' government only survived until June of that year, when it was replaced by another one formed by Meierovics (no SOLS change). In January 1924, Meierovics' government was replaced by one led by Voldemars Zamuels, the leader of the Party Democratic Center (DC) (SOLS change). The DC government was in operation until December, 1924, at which point it was replaced by another LZS government led by Hugo Celmins (SOLS

¹ POLITY does not have data before 1920. Latvia's POLITY score is 7 from Feb. 1, 1920 to May 17, 1934, although there are several individual spells.

change). Celmins' government lasted for one year, when it was replaced by another government led by Ulmanis (no SOLS change). This Ulmanis government lasted until May 1926, when it was replaced by another LZS government led by Artur Alberings (no SOLS change). Alberings' government survived until December of 1926, when a new government under Margers Skujenieks, of the United Latvian Social-Democratic Menshevik Worker's Party-Agricultural Worker's Union (ALSMSP-LS) took power (SOLS change). This government was in power until January 1928, when a DC government, led by Peteris Jurasevskis, took over (SOLS change).

The LZS regained control over the government in December 1928, once again led by Hugo Celmins (SOLS change). Celmins' second government lasted for almost three years, before it was brought down in March 1931 (supposedly due to "Ulmanis' intrigues" (Bleiere et al. 2006, 159)). Ulmanis then took over the office of Prime Minister from March-December 1931 (no SOLS change), before being replaced by Skujenieks, who was now leading the Progressive Union (PA—the new name for the ALSMSP-LS)(SOLS change). This government lasted until March 1933, when it was replaced by one led by Adolfs Blodnieks, of the New Farmers and Small Landowner's Party (JSP).

Blodnieks' government survived until March 1934, when it was overthrown in a coup led by Ulmanis. Ulmanis then established a personalist government (SOLS change)—which "separate[d] national policy from party politics...[with] the president fully in control of economics, policy and culture" (Bleiere et al. 2006, 173). The legislature was dissolved, and Ulmanis assumed full control over legislative powers, and all political parties including his own party were disbanded (Jungerstam-Mulders 2006, 52; Latvianhistory.wordpress.com). Ulmanis ceased to use his LZS party affiliation following the coup, another sign of a personalist government. Since we did not find clear evidence that LZS functioned as his political support base after 1934, we code his SOLS as Non-Party.

Ulmanis' authoritarian government remained in power until 1940, when Soviet Russia invaded and occupied Latvia. Ulmanis did not resist the invasion, and on 21 July, Latvia became a part of the Soviet Union. Latvia would be occupied by Nazi Germany from 1941-1945, but then resumed being a part of the USSR following World War II. Latvia would remain in this state until 1991, when it declared independence from the USSR.

Latvia, like other post-Soviet states, was moving towards independence as early as 1989 but formally achieved sovereignty as recognized by the USSR in 1991. At the time of independence, Ivars Godmanis was the Prime Minister, and he was a member of the Latvian People's Front (LTF), the independence movement turned political party.

In 1993, parliamentary elections were again held, and leadership passed to Prime Minister Valdis Birkavs. He was a member of the Union Latvia's Way Party (LC), and led a coalition of that party as well as the Latvia's Farmer's Union (LZS). This transition was coded as a SOLS change, as different parties came to power. In 1994, elections took Birkavs out of power and placed Maris Gailis in the prime minister's position. This was not a major SOLS change, as Gailis also belonged to the LC; however, it was a minor change as the LZS was dropped from the coalition and replaced with the Political Union of Economists (TPA).

In 1995, major change occurred. Andris Skelle was the next prime minister chosen after Birkavs, but he was not affiliated with any particular party. His ascension is coded as a SOLS change, however, because he took office not with backing from the LC and had an entirely different coalition. Skelle's government included the following parties: Democratic Party (DPS), LC, For the Fatherland and Freedom (TB), Latvian National Independence Movement and

Conservative Party (LNNK-ZP), LZS-LKDS-LLDP, and LV. This varied coalition lasted until 1997.

In 1997, Guntars Krasts became the Prime Minister. He was a member of the Fatherland and Freedom Party (TB-LNNK), necessitating a SOLS change. Krasts's coalition included members of the DPS, LC, LZS, and LKDS. This government held up until 1998, when Vilis Kristopans of the LC became the new prime minister. His government included members of the TB-LNNK as well as the New Party (JP). Like the previous administration, this government only lasted a year. In 1999, former Prime Minister Skele came back to power as a leader in the newly formed People's Party (TP), heading up a coalition containing the TB/LNNK and LC. On February 3, 1999, the Social Democrats (SD) joined the LC/TB-LNNK/JP coalition, signaling an additional minor SOLS change. In 2000, Andris Berzins became the Prime Minister as a member of the LC party, representing another SOLS change. His parliamentary coalition consisted of the TP, TB-LNNK, and the New Party (JP). This government lasted slightly longer than its predecessors, until 2002. Each of these transitions are coded as SOLS changes because the Prime Minister was always from a different party.

Elections in 2002 saw a serious reorganization of the government and a SOLS change. Einars Reps of the JP became prime minister, along with a coalition the TB-LNNK, a coalition between the LZS and the Latvian Green Party (ZZS), and Latvia's First Party (LPP). This government stayed on for two years.

2004 saw three governments in Latvia. In March, the government of Reps was ousted in favor of the new Prime Minister Indulis Emsis. Emsis was a member of the ZZS, so his administration was coded as a SOLS change. It included members of the TP and LPP as well. Because this government was unstable, it did not even last until the year's end; in December, Aigars Kalvitis became the new prime minister after another SOLS change, as he was a member of TP. His coalition included the ZZS, LPP, and JP.

In 2006, there is a minor SOLS change as the JP left the previous coalition and Kalvitis became the minority party government. In the next elections, Kalvitis formed a coalition with the People's Party (TP), Union of Greens and Farmers (ZZS), the First Party of Latvia (LPP), 'Latvia's Way' (LC) and 'For Fatherland and Freedom'/LNNK (this is another minor SOLS change).

In 2007, former prime minister Godmanis came back to power. He was leading the combined LPP-LC, and thus represented a SOLS change from the previous administration. The coalition that he led would also include the TB-LNNK, TP, and ZZS.

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Pre-1945 coded by Meera Krishnan (Rice) on 05/03/2011

Post-1945 coded by Graham West (Rice) on 07/06/2010

Pre-1945 revised by Ashley Leeds (Rice) on 07/17/2012

Pre-1945 revised by Naoko Matsumura (Rice) on 06/25/2013

Post-1945 updated by Mariana Rodriguez (Vanderbilt) on 9/19/2011

Combined by Matt DiLorenzo (Vanderbilt) on 08/01/2013

Edited by Andrew Wood (Rice) on 5/23/14