

Dominican Republic

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The Dominican Republic is considered authoritarian since the end of U.S. occupation in 1924 to 1945. Juan Bautista Vicini Burgos of the Liberal Party (Lib) served as president under occupation. With the end of occupation, Felipe Horacio Vásquez Lajara of the National Progressive Party (PNG) became president. This is a SOLS change because he was a political rival of the last regular leader's, Juan Isidro Jimenes Pereyra (Hartlyn 1998, 31; Wiarda and Kryzanek 1992, 31).

The U.S. Department of State (2011) speaks of a “democratically elected government” under Vásquez and, according to US Library of Congress (1989), Vásquez “took care to respect the political and civil rights of the population.” However, Vásquez was not willing to give up power, and actually, he extended his time in office beyond what was constitutionally allowed (US Library of Congress 1989). Indeed, 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. 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 Vásquez's time in office, the PNG was completely dominant. Vásquez 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 Vásquez held influence over the party, not the other way around, we code personalistic regime for him. Many sources mention the fact that he wanted to stay in power as a permanent dictator, but most of the personalistic events came later in his period (Roorda 1998, 35; Brown 1999, 29). Roorda (1998, 35) describes that Vásquez 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.

In 1930 Juan Rafael Estrella Ureña, apparently a pawn of Rafael Trujillo, “marched on the capital” and forced Vásquez to step down (US Library of Congress 1989). Ureña of the Republican Party (Rep) assumed the “provisional” presidency (Cahoon 2012; US Library of Congress 1989). We code this as a SOLS change because really Trujillo takes power at this time, even if initially informally. Later that year Trujillo, commander of the National Army and member of the Dominican Party (PD, personalist, authoritarian), “won” elections. As Geddes (2003, 52) explains, Trujillo was a military leader, but his rule should be considered personalist because it represents “the transformation of a military intervention into personal tyranny.” Accordingly, from 1931 through 1962 the country is considered personalist.

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). From 1963 to 1964, the Dominican Republic was a military regime, followed by a personalist regime under Balaguer from 1966 to 1978. From 1978 to 2008 this

country has been considered as a democratic one according to Polity IV (Marshall and Jaggers 2002) under a presidential regime, except between 1994 and 1995.¹

Rafael Trujillo ruled the Dominican Republic from 1930 until May 1961 when he was assassinated. There are three leaders in 1962: Balaguer (PD), Echavarria (Mil), and Filiberto Bonnelly (Republican Party: Rep). No SOLS change is coded when Joaquín Balaguer assumed the presidency, because he was just a puppet president of the Trujillo family, especially the sons and brothers of Rafael Trujillo who controlled the armed forces. US Library of Congress (1989) also calls Balaguer Trujillo's protégé: "As a protégé of the fallen dictator, however, he had neither a power base nor a popular following. Popular unrest, punctuated by a general strike, forced Balaguer to share power with a seven-member Council of State, established on January 1, 1962."

After only a few days of this Council was overthrown and air force general. Pedro Rodríguez Echavarría set up a junta (Alexander 1995, 210; Moya Pons 1998, 383). This is coded as a SOLS change that lasted less than 30 days since Echavarria ends Balaguer's government, which was a part of previous leader Trujillo's regime but he served only two days. On January 19, 1962, "less senior officers seized the general, deported him, and restored the council minus Balaguer, who had also been exiled" (US Library of Congress 1989).

Filiberto Bonnelly (Rep) took over as head of the State Council, which was conceived as a transitional government until new elections were held (Moya Pons 1998, 383; and TIME 1966). Lentz (1994, 231) agrees that Bonnelly's government was provisional and he prepared democratic elections in December. Therefore his leadership change is not coded as a SOLS change. In the elections held on December 1962, which we consider democratic, the Revolutionary Dominican Party (PRD) candidate Juan Bosch won. He took office in February 1963. The transition from Bonnelly to Bosch is a SOLS change since Bosch was supported by PRD voters and not the military like the last regular (though very short-term) leader Echevarria.

Opposition to Bosch grew quickly, and in September 1963 a general strike paralyzed the country for two days. As a reaction the military stages a coup d'état which installed a triumvirate under the presidency of Emilio de los Santos. However, De los Santos was replaced a few days later by Donald Reid Cabral from Civic National Union party (UCN). Geddes (2003) codes a military regime as being established in 1963 and lasting until 1965. The transition from Bosch (PRD) to de los Santos (Mil) is a SOLS change but the transition to Cabral (Mil) is not since they are part of the same triumvirate.

"The Triumvirate never succeeded in establishing its authority over competing conservative factions both inside and outside the military; it also never convinced the majority of

¹ Cheibub et al. (2010) continue coding a presidential system for 1994 and 1995 but according to our coding rules, the country is not considered democratic during these two years.

the population of its legitimacy” (US Library of Congress 1989). By 1965, the triumvirate was in the middle of a severe crisis that became a civil war.

A group of young reformist colonels instituted a “revolutionary military command” and declared José Molino Ureña as provisional president (Bell 1981, 93; Cahoon 2012). There were five leadership changes in 1965: Cabral (UCN), Molina Ureña (Mil, or PRD), Bartolome Benoit (Mil), Berreras (Mil), and Godoy (PRSC). Accordingly, the dates of these leader transitions are April 25, April 27, May 7, and September 3, 1965. Geddes’s military regime coding (2003) ends when Cabral is overthrown.

The disputes among several factions of the armed forces led to more chaos in the civil war: the Conservatives, who called themselves Loyalists, fought against the Constitutionals, who are the members of the PRD and Bosch supporters (US Library of Congress 1989). Basically there is an all-out conflict between the constitutionalists (allied with Bosch) and the loyalists (allied with Cabral). Ureña is a constitutionalist. Benoit is a loyalist. Both served for extremely short periods. Therefore, we follow the pre-designated successor rule and code the leadership change to Ureña and the change to Benoit as SOLS changes that lasted less than 30 days.

Following the U.S. Embassy intervention, the setup of a new military junta in May under the presidency of Bartolomé Benoit, Benoit was replaced within a few days by the General Antonio Imbert Barreras backed by the United States as interim president (US Library of Congress 1989). Therefore, no SOLS change is coded.

Even though a new government was formed, the two main Dominican factions of the armed forces still fought. The OAS intervened trying to separate both sides. In August an agreement was reached, setting up a provisional administration under Héctor García Godoy (Bell 1981, 95; Moya Pons 1998, 389). Therefore this is not coded as a SOLS change. García Godoy’s main task was to prepare the country for elections in 1966. In that election, not considered democratic by our coding rules, former president Joaquín Balaguer (Reformist Party: PR) won and was installed in office in July 1966.

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. 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. The leadership change in 1966 from García Godoy to Balaguer from the PRSC (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) is a SOLS change because Balaguer did not belong to the former triumvirate in which Cabral, the last regular leader, was president.

Balaguer (PRSC) was Dominican president for twelve years in which he installed a personalist regime. He was “elected” in 1970 and 1974 in elections marred by intimidation and the lack of competition since the Revolutionary Dominican Party (PRD) did not run. In the next elections in 1978, due to U.S. pressure, Balaguer was determined to respect the results of this free election, supervised by the OAS. There were rumors of a military coup when the first results were broadcasted in which the PRD candidate Antonio Guzmán won. However, Antonio Guzman Fernandez assumed power as a democratically elected president. This is a SOLS change since it ends Balaguer’s personalist regime and Guzman is from the opposition.

At the end of his term, the popularity of Guzmán evaporated due to the failure of his economic policy. In the election of 1982, Guzmán wanted to run again but other faction of his party (PRD) imposed Jorge Blanco as party candidate. Blanco was elected in May 1982. A depressed Guzmán feared the accusation of corruption, and finally in July 1982 he shot himself. He was immediately replaced by his Vice President Jacobo Majluta Azar, who led the country for a little more than a month until Blanco took over. Neither of these are SOLS changes since this is a democratic period and all leaders have the same party affiliation, though they are from different factions.

The next presidential election in 1986 marked the return of Joaquín Balaguer who stayed in office for ten years. This is a SOLS change since Balaguer came from a different, opposition party, the conservative PRSC (Social Christian Reformist Party). Balaguer was reelected in 1990, but this election was fraudulent because thousands of former military officers were given illegal IDs to cast their votes for Balaguer. While according to our coding the Dominican Republic is democratic until 1993, the final two years of Balaguer’s presidency are coded as non-democratic.

In 1996 new presidential elections, that are considered democratic according to our coding rules. The winner was the PLD (Dominican Liberation Party) candidate, Reyna. This is a SOLS change given the different party affiliation. Two more democratic elections, one in 2000 and one in 2004, brought about leadership changes that were associated with SOLS changes.

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Post-1945 coded by Arturo Maldonado (Vanderbilt) on July 29, 2010

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Pre-1945 revised by Naoko Matsumura on August 3, 2013

Post-1945 checked by Michaela Mattes on August 11, 2010

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

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