

# Dominican Republic

(Dominican RepublicRN1.2)

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This is one of a set of “random narratives” to complement our statistical findings in regard to civil war onsets. This is a draft of June 27, 2006; comments welcome.

## Introduction

Our statistical model (as reflected in the Table) divides naturally the post World War II history of the Dominican Republic into four eras. The first is the final sixteen years of the brutal Trujillo dictatorship, a period that had a low probability of a civil war onset, in part due to its stability and autocracy. Indeed no onset occurred. The second era is the period of anocracy and instability in the wake of the dictator’s assassination. Here our model predicts a civil war onset, and by the criteria of most analysts, there indeed was a civil war in 1965. Careful examination of the historiographical record, however, leads us to revise our coding. Although enough people were killed in the revolutionary events of May 1965, there is no evidence that at least 100 people were killed on the government, or “loyalist” side. Therefore, this era should now be coded as a false positive – where there was a high probability of civil war, but no civil war onset. The third era is from the mid-1970s to 1994 when the probability of civil war plummets, and no civil war occurs. The fourth era, from 1995, we see instability and anocracy returning, and the probability for civil war increases, though it is still below the world average. But despite this increased probability, there are no signs of a civil war onset.

Overall, the sum of the probabilities for a civil war onset over Dominican Republic’s fifty-three years in our dataset is .83, and the fact that we report one questionable onset is fully within the range of our predictions. That the near onset occurs during a period in which the probability for onset reaches about three percent (about twice the world average) suggests that it was indeed anocracy and instability (under conditions of low GDP/cap) that brought the country to near civil war. However, the lesson learned from this narrative is that outside protection can serve as a substitute for a strong state in deterring civil wars. The Roosevelt Corollary to the Monroe Doctrine, as will become apparent in this narrative, helps explain why an onset of violence in 1965, the spark for a civil war in most places, was quickly cauterized, and why other attempts to challenge state authority with local militias could not get off the ground.

## A Short History

Kearney (1985) sums up his history of the Dominican Republic with the phrase “hard times and bad breaks.” No wonder. The republic suffered from exploitative colonization by the Spanish; by Haitian invasion and rule (1822-44); by totalitarian rule by Trujillo; by a “bloody civil war of 1965” and the humiliation of a U.S. invasion; and by Hurricanes David and Frederic in 1979 that killed 1000, and left 400,000 homeless. Here we will elaborate on that a bit, but Kearney’s essential story is correct.

On his first trip to what would become the Americas, Columbus landed on Hispaniola (today’s Dominican Republic and Haiti) in 1492.<sup>1</sup> Enchanted by its beauty and peacefulness, Columbus and subsequent Spanish officials turned Santo Domingo into Spain’s New World capital. A stylish medieval city was constructed befitting a colonial center. But once the Indian population was decimated, and cheap labor gone, most Spaniards moved away, leaving but a legacy of a golden age, as well as a rigid racial class structure. No longer important for its imperial interests, one-third of the island (Hayti) was ceded to France in 1697. In 1795, the rest of the island was ceded to France as well.

In this era, the Hayti colony was prospering in sugar and cotton (with a population of 520,000), while the eastern two-thirds of the island was a backwater, with less than 100,000 people living on it. However, with Toussaint’s rebellion in Haiti, British forces helped the Spanish in driving Haitians to the west and in the period 1809-21, Hispaniola was restored to Spanish administration, but only for a short moment, as Dominicans quickly declared their two-thirds of the island as independent. This induced the Haitians to sweep in, leaving a trail of killing. Haitian revolutionaries occupied the country from 1822-44, freed the slaves, but faced a reluctant population. Dominicans were repelled by the Haitian revolutionaries, but they were attracted to an independence movement under the romantic vision of Juan Pablo Duarte. With financial backing from Venezuela, he attacked the Haitian garrisons and in 1844, he declared the Dominican Republic independent. He had the vision to undermine colonial rule, but not the power to rule a new republic. Duarte was sent into exile by two generals, with Pedro Santana declaring himself dictator, and together with Buenaventura Báez, began an “era of the dual caudillos”, as they ruled by alternation as dictator, and through puppets as well, for forty-five years. Under financial crisis in 1861, and continual threat by Haiti, Santana tried to reinsert the country into the Spanish empire, but this project failed with an independence movement led by Gregorio Luperón, and Santana died in disgrace. Báez assumed the presidency (for the third time), but he too was defeated by Luperón. His defeat was only temporary, as he returned to power again in 1866, and negotiated a treaty that would have annexed Dominican Republic to the U.S. This audacious move led to the overthrow of Báez for the fourth time. Báez’s fifth presidency led to yet another rebellion, but this time he pilfered the national treasury and escaped to Puerto Rico, leaving his country in chaos. In 1882 Ulises Heureaux took power and built the infrastructure for a modern repressive state, but he was assassinated in 1899. His assassins couldn’t create order and from 1899 to 1906 there was factionalism and infighting.

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<sup>1</sup> . The summary of pre Word War II Dominican history is based largely on Wiarda and Kryzaneck 1982.

It was amid this chaos that in 1905 U.S. President Theodore Roosevelt proclaimed the infamous “Corollary” to the Monroe Doctrine, and took control over the republic’s custom’s house, assuring 55 per cent of revenues to the U.S. to pay off debts. This receivership agreement was ratified in 1907 and it legitimated in Santo Domingo a colony of U.S. administrators. But political instability continued and during World War I, President Wilson recognized the need to stave off German influence. When President Juan Isidro Jiménez was impeached by the Dominican Congress, an action that set off a local rebellion, Wilson sent the U.S.S. Dolphin on the northern coast, unloaded troops, and they remained on the island for eight years. The Marines created a Dominican National Guard, the seed of a national army, and Rafael Trujillo Molina was recruited into this Guard in 1919 at the age of 28. Although the Americans brought new roads and improved public health, there was a rebellion in the east (the sugar areas). After World War I, the U.S. lost interest, and in the early 1920s, the U.S. Marines enhanced the quality of the guardia while they transferred power to Dominicans through elections. In 1924, with the election of General Vásquez as President, the Marines left. By 1928 Trujillo became the chief of the guard, and turned it into a private army.

In 1930, with the economy in depression, and President Vásquez in ill health, a revolution was launched in Santiago. Trujillo, as head of the Marine trained guard, gave arms to the rebels and assured them of his support. After Vásquez was toppled, Trujillo tricked the rebel leader Rafael Estrella Ureña to run only for Vice President, allowing him to run for President, meanwhile using his militias to slay potential opponents. Trujillo won the election with more votes than there were eligible voters. He ruled with similarly deceptive tactics for thirty-one years, and was President in 1945 when our dataset begins.

### **The Second Half of the Trujillo Era: No Civil War Onset 1945-61**

Trujillo ruled under the protection of the U.S. (ceding Americans economic power in the island) and with a powerful repressive apparatus. Over the years, he cultivated U.S. politicians, with lobbying and campaign contributions, and won support of Catholic leaders (for his anti-communism) and Jewish leaders (for his openness to Jewish refugees in WWII).

To be sure, not all was peaceful in Dominican Republic during Trujillo’s reign. There were many attempted coups against Trujillo over three decades, the best known was the Cayo Confites expedition in 1947, organized by Juan Bosch, a young exile in Cuba, but it was suppressed through U.S. pressures. In 1959, exiles landed in Constanza in an attempted coup, but Trujillo had them captured and executed. This failure led to a clandestine student and young professional organization called the “June 14<sup>th</sup> Movement” (Moreno, 1970, 15-16).

However, there was no civil war onset. With a firm autocracy governing a relatively small population (1.889 million in 1945), it was possible for Trujillo to build alliances in every village, with his agents’ ears close to the ground. Ruthless tactics

against enemies combined with excellent information about the population (afforded by low population) made civil war onset improbable.

### **Onset of a near Civil War in 1965**

Trujillo was assassinated by members of his inner circle in 1961. Post-Trujillo, there was no “leader who could hold the country together” (Wiarda and Kryzanek 1982, 39). Trujillo’s son, Ramfis, could not maintain the system. The U.S. was putting pressure on him, and on Joaquín Balaguer (who periodically served as president under Trujillo), to democratize. Balaguer allowed the return of exile groups and the formation of opposition parties. A National Civic Union (UCN) emerged representing the business community. The PRD was a social-democratic alternative founded by Juan Bosch while in exile. The June 14<sup>th</sup> Movement attracted youth who identified with Castro. By November 1961, political pressure intensified, both from the U.S. and from the new political forces. In fear, the Trujillo family fled, stealing most of what was left in the national treasury. Balaguer helped restore order by creating the Council of State, made up of conservative luminaries. Two weeks after the Council met, a military coup dissolved the Council. Two days later a countercoup restored the Council (still made up mostly of the business community), but forced Balaguer into exile, yet got U.S. support. This ushered in a period of instability and anocracy.

The Council prepared for elections in December 1961, and the more left-leaning PRD defeated the UCN by a 2-1 margin. Newly elected president, Juan Bosch, immediately ran into strong opposition from the Church, from the business elites, and from the U.S. as he tried to fulfill his social democratic promises. The opposition was able to unite by attaching the label “communist” on to Bosch. Bosch went on TV on July 16, 1963 to report that the military was spreading rumors that the government had engaged in embezzlement, that it had made secret alliances with communists, and that it was plotting an armed rebellion in the streets to take attention away from the economy. A failed coup plot ensued. It was followed by a strike of business and shop owners to protest against government complicity with communism. As presaged by their propaganda campaign, the military finally interceded with a coup on September 25, led by ten generals and fifteen colonels (Moreno 1970, 19) – but staged by Col. Elías Wessin y Wessin. It drove Bosch into exile. Donald Reid Cabral, a businessman, was installed as the new president.

Although the coup was bloodless, it did not bring political stability. By the end of 1964, four different groups were involved in coup plots; (1) the Constitutionalists, seeking to restore Bosch; (2) a grassroots army group, led by Capt. Peña Taveras; (3) a group headed by Col Neit Nivar Seijas, in support of Balaguer (Seijas was found out and sent into exile); and (4) a group headed by Nicolás Silfa, a former PRD leader. All this shows that the so-called Triumvirate leading the country, headed by Reid, had little support for its rule (Moreno 1970, 26).

In 1965 with promised elections on the horizon, President Reid signaled that he would cancel them. Shortly thereafter, on April 24, a group of colonels acting in concert

with PRD leaders took control over the Army Chief of Staff. A mixed bag of politicians and military folk took part, and they unleashed considerable mass support. For one, PRD leaders seized Radio Santo Domingo and urged the people to take to the streets; and constitutionalist officers passed out arms to thousands of civilians, and this brought in the urban lower class to participate in the battle. In response, Reid resigned and went into hiding, and the constitutionalists named José Molina Ureña as provisional president. But assembled crowds were demanding an immediate transfer of power to Bosch, and the military supporters of the coup were unwilling to hand over power to Bosch.

The military was divided, but quickly moved to resist, and planes from an air base in San Isidro bombed the National Palace and constitutionalist military encampments. Col. Wessin y Wessin (who had led the first coup against Bosch) was a leading resister, and he reported that Air Force Chief of Staff Juan de los Santos was forced at gunpoint to order his planes to attack. Of great importance to military boldness was that the U.S. Embassy encouraged officers to resist the rebellion, as the U.S. feared overall a communist rebellion, and had no desire to see Bosch return to office. The U.S. embassy turned down requests of the PRD for help, accusing them of being soft on communists. Popular mobilization was anathema to an America that feared another Castro in its neighborhood.

While many PRD leaders ran into exile, the constitutionalists (who controlled Radio Santo Domingo) got people to go into the streets, confront Wessin's tanks, and to raid police stations for arms. On April 27, the revolution had not spread to the countryside or any other city outside the capital, but the rebellion was deepening in Santo Domingo. The Constitutionalists created 117 commando posts in the city that housed 5,000 trained civilians (Moreno 1970, 42). In response, the Dominican air force dropped bombs from airplanes, machine-gunning citizens in the streets, causing casualties. The tide was against them, as mobilization of the constitutionalists was broadening. Thus began what most analysts consider a civil war. But at the verge of constitutionalist victory, the U.S. Embassy asked for U.S. troops, and the 82<sup>nd</sup> airborne quickly arrived and restored order, remaining in Dominican Republic for seventeen months (Slater 1970, chap. 2).

### **Was The 1965 “Revolution” a Civil War?**

Area experts do not fully agree on how to code the violent events that took place mostly in Santo Domingo in the spring of 1965. The leading American authority calls it a “crisis” (Lowenthal 1972, chap. 2). Theodore Draper (1968) calls it a “revolt”. Jerome Slater (1970) and Howard Wiarda and Michael Kryzanek (1982) call it a “revolution”. However, given that the canonical number of deaths in the street battles is 2,000, and that the conflict pitted militias of insurgents (the constitutionalists) against an army that controlled the state (the loyalists), the events fit standard definitions for civil war onset.

However, there is no clear evidence that the loyalists took at least 100 casualties, thereby not fully meeting one of our criteria for a civil war. Moreno (1970, 29) writes that the navy and the police force reversed their decisions to side with the rebels and joined

forces with the generals to crush the uprising. "Casualties," he says without giving figures, "were heavy on both sides." However, in a footnote (p. 198), he provides an eye-witness account claiming that the 2,000 reported dead were "mainly from the air force strafing of the Duarte Bridge." This strongly implies that the government did not take 100 casualties.

There are no hard data in Wiarda and Kryzanek (1982) on casualties. This work does report (on p. 43) on the strafing of the rebel strongholds, especially on the Duarte Bridge "where weakly armed civilians repelled the efforts of the military tanks... The early fighting inflicted great loss on the constitutionalists who could not control the skies and were often cut down by the tanks... on April 28, the popular forces drove the military back and seemed on the verge of defeating it." But no casualty figures are reported.

In cables from the Department of Defense and the Department of State, the estimated casualties from the strafing on the Duarte Bridge on April 26 was 100-200. There were reported twenty U.S. servicemen killed, and a handful of Dominican officers were killed by rebels. While obviously incomplete, the data still do not approach a 1,000-death figure.<sup>2</sup> In sum, without more data, we should consider the Haiti coding for 1965 a probable "false positive", or re-classified as a "near civil war".

### **The Emergence of Democracy: 1966-1994<sup>3</sup>**

In the post-crisis election, Bosch and Balaguer fought a contentious battle. Bosch's campaign raised the specter of post-election violence. Taking advantage of fear, Balaguer offered reconciliation, which won him support in the rural areas, among women, and among the business elites. In the election held on July 1, 1966, Balaguer won with 57 percent of the vote and his Reformist Party (Partido Reformista--PR) won majorities in the Congress.

Balaguer held the presidential office for twelve years. Although hardly noticed during the Trujillo regime, he showed skill in maintaining authoritarian power. Even though as a conservative he theoretically safe from coups, he headed off military opposition by rewarding loyal officers, purging those whom he feared, and rotating everyone's assignments regularly. He dealt with his civilian opponents through selective repression by the National Police. Intimidation was his principal strategy for reelection in 1970 and in 1974. The PRD, the only opposition party that had a chance of winning, boycotted both elections in part due to fear that they would be attacked by Balaguer's police.

For most of his twelve-year incumbency, the Dominican economy expanded at a record rate, fueled by high prices for sugar. But the late 1970s brought recession, and the

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<sup>2</sup> . See United States, National Security Council, Files and Histories (1964-69), Crises in Panama and the Dominican Republic, microfilm, see especially frame 74 on reel V and frame 122 on reel VI.

<sup>3</sup> . The summary of Dominican politics from 1978-86 is based largely on Richard A. Haggerty, ed. 1989 Dominican Republic: a country study (Washington: D.C.: Federal Research Division, Library of Congress) <http://lcweb2.loc.gov/frd/cs/dotoc.html#do0027>

consequences of the downturn were blamed on the president. Balaguer faced sudden pressures, both foreign and domestic, to democratize. The PRD, sensing a popular frustration with Balaguer and with suggestions of support from U.S. President Jimmy Carter, decided to contest seriously for the presidency in the 1978 elections, nominating Silvestre Antonio Guzmán Fernández. A high turnout (some 70 percent of the registered voters) implied that the people felt secure in voting, and this worked to PRD's benefit. Early returns confirmed this, as Guzmán enjoyed an early lead. Fearing the consequences of a PRD victory, military units occupied the Central Electoral Board and impounded the ballots. But direct intervention by the Carter administration, backed up by a naval deployment, compelled Balaguer to recall the troops and allow the counting of ballots to continue. It took two weeks before Guzmán's victory was declared as official.

Guzmán, despite leading a party seeking major social and economic changes, brought few radical changes. To be sure, he nationalized public transport and increased the minimum wage. But his avid supporters wanted more. He held back for several reasons. First, he sufficiently feared the conservative military to avoid the possibility of a coup. Second, upon coming to power, he was confronted with the economic realities of declining sugar prices and sharply rising oil prices. Third, as a wealthy cattle rancher, he may not have been as leftist as his rhetoric. Finally, he was restrained in part due to the electoral anomaly in which the PRD was declared victorious in the races for the presidency and the Chamber of Deputies (the lower house of Congress), but in which the Central Election Board announced that Balaguer's PR won a majority in the Senate, giving the PR a legislative veto. In light of these factors, Guzmán went the route of politically unpopular austerity policies that substantially raised the retail price of gasoline. These measures coincided with the economic catastrophe that came in the wake of Hurricane David in August 1979.

The Guzmán administration took power democratically, and participated in elections in 1982 that were free and fair. Despite the austerity measures, his party's candidate, Salvador Jorge Blanco, won the election. Jorge's leading opponents included the PR candidate Balaguer and Bosch, who had split from the PRD and had formed his own party, the Dominican Liberation Party (Partido de la Liberación Dominicana--PLD).

President Jorge was implicated in corruption charges, and losing popularity in any event due to the economic austerity program that he inherited. For the next elections in 1986, Jorge's now-divided PRD nominated Majluta, Guzmán's vice president, who four years earlier was interim president (after Guzmán committed suicide). Majluta was Lebanese by ethnicity, a PRD cadre, and a businessman with a shady reputation. Balaguer contested this election, and won with 41 percent of the vote to Majluta's 39 percent. Another former president, Bosch, candidate of the leftist PLD, received 18 percent. Not only were the elections free, but there was also a change in the party of power (without foreign intervention).

### **From Anocracy to Democracy: Violence but no Civil War**

Let us now look at the post-1965 era from the point of view of Dominican Republic's susceptibility to civil war violence. After the events of 1965, the Polity dataset ranked the Dominican Republic a -3, a mild (anocratic) level of autocracy, and it remained with this score until 1978 (with a +6 score), with a rapid change ending anocracy but (by our coding rule) opening a three year reign of instability. During this period the GDP/cap. nearly doubled. Our model assesses the probability of civil war at .03 in the wake of the civil war, nearly double the world average. With the move to democracy in 1978 (and thus instability replacing anocracy), the probability of an onset is .016. But, by 1983 when instability and anocracy are both at zero, the probability for an onset plummets to .01, well below the world average. Through this period, consistent with our model, there was no civil war onset.

But political violence simmered throughout this period, especially after 1978 and through the 1980s, even as our predicted probabilities for a civil war onset decline.

The PRD came back into power in 1978. Despite its populist program, the following year, with the oil crisis, the government raised prices on fuel, and the unions declared a strike that was countered by government repression and violence. In May 1980, with new price rises, riots ensued, this time all over the country, and in five days of sporadic violence, 4 persons were killed and 16 suffered from bullet wounds (Cassa and Murphy 1995, 87).

President Jorge was inaugurated in August 1982 and faced a financial crisis, and was forced to accept IMF conditionality for a bailout. Oil prices skyrocketed, and sugar prices plummeted. To avoid worse riots and social upheaval, President Jorge on May 19 suspended IMF negotiations. IMF officials, fearing greater rioting, became flexible. Yet the outlook, politically and economically, was one of "gloom" and imminent violence (Diederich 1984). Indeed this assessment was correct.

After the PRD victory in 1984, within a couple of months, and justifying Polity's score of +6 on the democracy scale, 100 new unions were certified by the Labor Ministry. This was followed by a growth in business associations that "became open for severe attacks on the administration." The lack of success by the unions in wage bargaining with the government led them to take to the streets in the direction of riots and general strikes. In 1984 there were 103 protest movements; in 1986, the figure was 293 (Espinal 1995, 69-71).

In this same period – President Jorge's early days in office – a popular movement erupted, lasting three days, with tens of thousands of youth taking to the streets. The second day of these riots was the 19<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the 1965 revolution, and this added symbolically to the riots that killed fifty-five. The trade unions declared a strike that was already in effect, using language such as "imminent revolution" and tried to become the principal negotiators with the government (Cassa and Murphy 1995, 87-89; Diederich 1984).

In the 1986 election, Balaguer defeated the PRD. Balaguer adopted a more nationalist program that defied the spirit of the IMF at least until 1989 when his administration ran out of foreign currency to cover oil imports. The political fallout was huge (especially with 100% rise in gas prices), but he was able to win (through some fraud) the 1990 election (Espinal 1995).

With the failure of the unions to get remedies, the popular organizations took the helm in anti-government protest, and in 1988 a Confederación Nacional de Organizaciones Populares was formed, and it called for a national strike. The government refused to recognize this CNOP, and this led to tensions and fears of violent confrontations. Oddly, business associations (that wanted less government regulation, while CNOP wanted more) agreed to support the strike, but labor unions found reasons to object (one wanted to show support for government; another feared that CNOP would threaten its control over the working classes). The strike in June 1989 was widely supported but with little violence. In the next six months, the number of strikes declined, due to limited success.

The key to the post civil war era in Dominican Republic is that of a society on the brink of violence in a weak economy that periodically set a well-organized labor force against the police power of the state. As Espinal sums up, “social protest was a key feature of Dominican politics in the 1980s” (Espinal 1995, 73-75). Low-level violence was a regular feature of the confrontations between police and labor, but the former was able to contain this violence such that it did not expand to civil war proportions.

### **The Current Era: Rising Probability of Onset with New Instability**

The mid-1990s brought first instability and then anocracy, bringing Dominican Republic to just under the world average for a civil war onset. Despite the greater susceptibility to a civil war onset, politics continued in the mid 1990s onto the 2000s more or less as it did in the 1980s – periodic collective violence but no approximation of a civil war.

In May 1990 Balaguer, then eighty-four years old, was narrowly reelected, beating Juan Bosch, who was only eighty-one. While in a comradely rivalry for decades, the 1989 election, in which Bosch had been sure he would win, led him to reject the results as fraudulent. He then encouraged civil disobedience, particularly by the trade unionists who were his main supporters. Several large strikes ensued. The *deulo cívico* (civic mourning) in August protested Balaguer’s inauguration, and left fourteen people dead and hundreds were arrested. In November coup rumors abounded, and people filled the streets, calling for Mr Balaguer's resignation (The Economist, February 16, 1991, “Dominican Republic: Running Dry”; death figures from Cassa and Murthy 1995, 91-92).

The 1994 elections were a repeat of those in 1990 in terms of social tensions. Opposition leader Pena Gomez threatened that lawmakers would paralyze the country and refuse to take their seats if incumbent Joaquin Balaguer were proclaimed winner of

the presidential elections (Ricardo Rojas Leon, Associated Press, "Pena Gomez Threatens to Paralyze Dominican Republic to Protest Vote" June 7, 1994).

"The Dominican Republic," as reported in "Latin America Weekly Report" (July 27, 1995) "seems to be falling apart at the seams. Over the last couple of months, barely a week went by without social discontent erupting in demonstrations that, more often than not, ended in clashes with an increasingly trigger-happy police. A minister has been dismissed from his post for calling openly for a rebellion against the elections scheduled for 1996. All this took place against the backdrop of a severe power shortage that left Dominicans without electricity for up to eighteen hours at a time. In mid-July, agriculture minister Luis Toral (who was also organisation secretary of the ruling Partido Reformista Social Cristiano, PRSC), issued a public call for a 'civic protest' which would lead up to a boycott of the presidential elections."

On November 11, 1997, The Associated Press reported on a failed strike in Dominican Republic. The article described "Soldiers guarded markets, buses and key intersections Tuesday, allowing thousands of Dominicans to ignore a strike call by activists demanding higher wages and an end to chronic power cuts. Thousands more chose to stay holed up in their homes, and many businesses and schools in Santo Domingo and other cities were closed or opened late." But all was not peaceful. "Several clashes were reported, including the shooting death of a 20-year-old protester."

On December 12, 2001 according to *Deutsche Presse-Agentur*, "A leading politician in the Dominican Republic was seriously injured when he was shot four times, police said Wednesday. Dario Gomez, senator with the ruling Revolutionary Dominican Party, was shot by four men Tuesday night, law enforcement authorities said. Gomez's chauffeur was also injured in the attack, the motive of which was unknown." On November 12, 2003, *Deutsche Presse-Agentur* ("Six Killed in Dominican Republic Clashes") reported on a general strike organized to protest the government's economic policies. "From early in the morning, protesters in Capotillo set tyres on fire and blockaded streets. The entire neighbourhood was surrounded by soldiers carrying rifles and wearing camouflage and face paint. Soldiers entered Capotillo several times Tuesday as well as other districts of Santo Domingo to disperse protesters with tear gas and rubber bullets. If Capotillo residents moved in groups, soldiers immediately opened fire to disperse them. Santo Domingo was virtually paralyzed by the strike, with scant transit, the closure of private and public schools and the opening of few shops. The strike was called by several dozen unions, small parties and civilian groups to protest high inflation, the devaluation of the local currency and electricity rationing. Another death that occurred Tuesday was of Humberto Rosario, 20, killed during clashes between activists and soldiers in Bonaio, 85 kilometres northwest of Santo Domingo, union leader Victor Geronimo told *Deutsche Presse-Agentur*. Geronimo said police and military troops also killed another activist in Higüey, 150 kilometres east of the capital."

On December 29, 2003, *The New York Times* editorial read: In the late 1990's, the Dominican Republic had the fastest-growing economy in Latin America. Fueled by tourism, manufacturing and money sent home by Dominicans abroad -- many of them in

New York -- the economy grew nearly seven percent a year. Today that economy is in collapse. Protests are common, and at least eight people were killed during a strike in November.

On January 6, 2004 a *Deutsche Presse-Agentur* analysis by Adalberto Grullon reported that the year that just ended would be remembered in the history of the Dominican Republic as one of the island nation's worst. The report described two national strikes, hundreds of layoffs and demonstrations across the country that occurred in 2003 against the government's economic policies. In addition to the sixteen people who died in the demonstrations, the report noted that the protests aggravated the economic and political picture of the country and many feared the complete breakdown of institutional structures.

On January 29, 2004 a report in *Deutsche Presse-Agentur* noted that at least five people were killed and dozens wounded on the second day of a 48-hour general strike called by unions in protest over the Dominican Republic's grave economic crisis. A police report claimed that three civilians died in clashes between protesters and security forces in Santiago, San Pedro de Macoris and the capital Santo Domingo. "We are not trying to subjugate anyone, nor is it a war. We are fulfilling our constitutional duty," said army chief Jorge Radhames Zorrilla Ozuna. Skirmishes in poor neighborhoods in different parts of the country, the report also noted, left more than fifty wounded.

Low-level street violence, organized as a protest against state economic policies became nearly ritualized in Dominican politics, but unlike 1965, they never escalated into (near) civil war proportions.

## **Explanations for Absence of a Full Civil War**

### **Racial Divide**

The relationship between ethnic heterogeneity and civil war onset, for which we see no direct line of causation, remains in the historiography of many countries consequential for understanding many of the political dynamics. Dominican Republic is by our scale one of the most homogeneous countries in the world, with an ethnic fractionalization score of .0369888. Ethnic homogeneity was assured when in the course of early colonization, the native Indian population was decimated. The mixture of Spaniards and African laborers created a two-thirds mulatto population. Virtually all Dominicans speak Spanish as their mother tongue, and most with a Castilian dialect. About 98 percent are Catholics (Wiarda and Kryzanek 1982, 16). Perhaps this homogeneity can account for the cauterization of violence keeping the Dominican Republic from full-scale civil war?

On the other hand, there is a subtle and deep racial divide. The country has been led economically and politically by its "purer" white Hispanics. This divide, a tacit but deeply felt cleavage, came out in the open during the elections of 1996, fought between Leonel Fernandez Reyna and Jose Francisco Pena Gomez. In this election, according to

Deutsche Presse-Agentur (May 17, 1996), "a black political activist working for Balaguer's governing PRSC party was shot dead at a polling booth about 200 kilometres west of Santo Domingo. Reports suggested he was murdered in a racial attack."

Larry Rohter reporting in *The New York Times* (July 1, 1996) described the next stage of violence. "Mr. Pena Gomez," in contrast to Mr. Fernandez Reyna, "is a veteran politician and firebrand orator in the Latin American tradition who portrays himself as the target of a racist plot organized by his opponent's main ally." Indeed, "If elected, Mr. Pena Gomez, 59, a former elementary school teacher and radio sports announcer, would be the first black Dominican to serve as President in this century. Born in the northwestern province of Valverde, Mr. Pena Gomez was separated from his parents as a newborn when the Trujillo dictatorship massacred some 15,000 Haitians and Dominicans of Haitian descent in 1937. Various biographies and news reports say Mr. Pena Gomez's father, August Vincent, was killed and his mother fled to Haiti.

"At the time of the 1937 massacre," Rohter's report continues, "Mr. Balaguer was the Foreign Minister of the Trujillo dictatorship and is said by Dominican historians to have overseen the killing of the Haitians. The enmity between the President and Mr. Pena Gomez is deep and longstanding, and Mr. Balaguer, author of a notoriously racist tract called "The Island in Reverse," has repeatedly urged his followers to vote for "the authentic Dominican" and avoid "unstable" candidates.

"Mr. Fernandez has rejected all charges of race-baiting, saying it is Mr. Pena Gomez who is playing the race card demagogically. His opponent's objective, Mr. Fernandez argued, is to create sympathy for himself abroad as a victim of bigotry and lay the groundwork for a challenge to the outcome if he loses.

"This is not some competition between Robert Redford and Nelson Mandela," Mr. Fernandez scoffed during a recent interview. "Look at me. I myself am not white. The population in this country is predominantly mulatto, and I too am a mixture of white and black. So how can anyone talk of a racist campaign?" (Larry Rohter, *The New York Times*, July 1, 1996).

After the balloting, Mr. Pena Gomez reluctantly conceded defeat. He complained bitterly of being subjected to what he called "the most abject insults and vexations" and vowed not "to renounce our duty to continue fighting for the installation of democracy in our country." But he also said he would not challenge the result. "In life, you have to learn to win and to lose," said Mr. Pena Gomez. "We respectfully accept this verdict (Leonel Fernandez Reyna, *The New York Times*, July 2, 1996).

Here is a case with a low EFL score, a deep racial cleavage, yet entrepreneurs of violence have refrained from exploiting this cleavage for purposes of challenging state authority. This case helps us understand why the ELF scores are so poorly connected to the probability of civil war onset. On the one hand, the ELF does not pick up the racial divide as a sign of heterogeneity; on the other hand, even if it did, it would not be useful in understanding the pattern of violence in the Dominican Republic.

We turn now to variables that appear to be consequential to explain the civil war outcomes in the Dominican Republic.

### **GDP/cap**

In 1965, the GDP/cap was less than \$250 (Slater 1970, chap. 2), and in our dataset in the bottom one-third of the countries in the world. But as the narrative makes clear, low GDP was a condition that kept many working-class Dominicans on the edge of respectability. Economic downturns, or policies to promote austerity, had immediate and deleterious affects on the population. Riots regularly ensued when austerity measures, implemented because of the fiscal crisis of the state, were put in place. But these riots were (for the most part) contained. And even in 1965, rioters were insufficiently armed to counter the massacres of the state army, such that it is dubious as to whether even 100 state soldiers were killed. Low GDP, by itself, seems unequal to the task of accounting for the near civil war of 1965, or the fact that violent outbursts over the past thirty years have not escalated into a civil war.

### **Urban Society**

Part of the explanation for the lack of escalation is that in the past generation, the Dominican Republic, despite its poverty, has become a largely urban society. In the 1970s, urbanization was rapid and more than fifty percent of the population lived in the cities. To be sure, 16.4 percent of the area is mountainous, with four parallel mountain ranges (called cordilleras) flowing from the northwest to the southeast, chopping up the country. But few live in the mountains (Wiarda and Kryzanek, pp. 7, 10). And few live in the once-rich agricultural areas that produced so much sugar for centuries. Indeed, agrarian protest has been on the decline, and perhaps due to the proportion of the population in these sectors due to urbanization (Cassa and Murphy 1995). Or course, the fact of urbanization (which makes insurgency less likely to succeed) cannot explain lack of civil war onset – we still need to know why the disaffected populations, as they did in 1950s Cuba, did not hide in the mountains.

### **Strong Army**

Consider the following reports in the literature on contemporary Dominican politics.

- In the wake of the coup of 1963 in which Juan Bosch was deposed by the military, a group of middle-class students of the June 14<sup>th</sup> movement went to the mountains with their leader, Dr. Manolo Tavárez Justo, but as Moreno notes (1970, 22, fn. 2), “this small group was soon exterminated by the army.”
- After the Americans put out the flames of civil war in 1965, on August 31, Héctor García-Godoy was sworn in as Provisional President. During his rule, over the

course of the next year, some 250 rebel commandos were assassinated without the law proving the identity of a single assassin (Moreno 1970, 45).

- In May 1990, after the fraudulent elections that gave Joaquín Balaguer a victory, inducing a wave of strikes, the police threatened open fire, and as reckoned earlier, fourteen were killed. This reaction scared the protesters, and the Collective of Popular Organizations, the most radical group, was forced to retreat. “It became clear during this strike that the government was able to withstand protest because it had a monopoly of force.” After this, the notion of a popular movement waned, and calls for strikes generally fell through (Cassa and Murthy 1995, 91-92).

- On July 27, 1995, the *Latin America Weekly Report* noted that “Apart from the growing frequency with which protest demonstrations had been met with gunfire, there had been a string of incidents which suggested that the police were getting completely out of control: a youth shot when a policeman was squabbling with his girlfriend; a security officer shot for trying to stop a policeman from beating his wife; a police patrol 'executing' a suspected thief. The authorities felt compelled to do something when the public was treated to filmed evidence of the cold-blooded murder of a journalist by a policeman during a traffic incident... There are about 30,000 military and 23,000 police on active duty – plus about as many again who have left the forces but retain their credentials and weapons.”

- On the strike of November, 2003 (in *Deutsche Presse-Agentur*, November 12, 2003, “Six Killed in Dominican Republic clashes”), “Before the strike began the army carried raids and check points to disarm the civilian population. More than 600 people were detained, the army said.”

These cases suggest that despite the low GDP, the Dominican army and police are coherent organizations that are not afraid ruthlessly to confront opposition. They have successfully sent a signal to potential opposition forces that low level insurgencies would be repressed without compunction. Here is an example of a strong state in a weak economy able to cauterize civil war.

### **Value of the State**

A note on the value of the state. On the one hand, the state is strong in that it is the major employer in the country. As noted by the *Economist* (February 16, 1991, “Dominican Republic: Running Dry”), Mr Balaguer packs the public payroll; of the three million in employment in the country, 300,000 work for the government. On the other hand, with a state that distributes so much largesse (and so many jobs) the “prize” for capturing it should be high. Therefore, the value of the state should both increase the incentive for a disaffected group to seek the control of the state, and decrease the number of people willing to support a military assault on the state.

### **Open Migration**

The United States clearly had a role in regulating violent conflict in Dominican Republic ever since the Roosevelt Corollary. For one, it has for a long time been a migratory outlet for young Dominican men who otherwise would be likely recruits for an insurgency. Larry Rohter (*New York Times* July 2, 1996) interviewed Leonel Fernandez after his presidential victory in 1996. The president told the reporter that he planned to implement economic policies that would diminish the flow of illegal Dominican emigrants to the United States. He said "a policy of repression" on the part of the United States would not work and called on Washington to encourage investment and other measures that would make this country grow. "At its root, this is an economic and social problem," he said of the migratory flow of more than a million Dominicans to the United States over the last 30 years." Indeed, many of those million emigrants would have been potential recruits for a civil war, and U.S. migration policies thereby mitigated armed pressure on the Dominican state. But there is more!

### **The U.S. Protection Racket**

As Kryzaneck (1979, 51) writes, "No other Latin American country ... has had its history so dominated by the actions or reactions of United States policy-makers." The author notes that since Teddy Roosevelt, the U.S. has had a series of "successful" interventions in the Dominican Republic, successful meaning that the interventions worked to fulfill goals of the president of the U.S.

President Franklyn Delano Roosevelt reportedly said of Trujillo, "He may be an S.O.B., but at least he's our S.O.B." Not till the Cuban revolution and Nixon's riot-inducing reception in Latin America did Washington begin to recognize the underlying social discontent. Worse, Trujillo became a menace to other American interests. Trujillo organized the attempted assassination of Venezuela President Rómulo Betancourt. In response, the U.S. got the OAS to impose sanctions on Trujillo, cut its sugar purchases, and used other measures to depose the man Undersecretary of State C. Douglas Dillon called "a tyrant, a torturer and a murderer." The U.S. was clearly seeking to manage the transition without facing a communist upheaval. It sought to get a successor to Trujillo before communists overthrew him (Slater 1970, 6).

After Trujillo's assassination, the OAS (with U.S. fearing a Castro-ite replacement) had a four-nation committee to oversee the governance of the Dominican Republic, under a moderate Trujillo-ite Joaquín Balaguer. Balaguer was less threatened by communists, however, than by members of the Trujillo family. A coup plot by them was squelched by Dean Rusk, and family members fled the country.

The U.S. then demanded an election, sponsoring the Unión Cívica Nacional (UCN), a conservative anti-Trujillo party. But in the election, the UCN was defeated by Juan Bosch, an intellectual who associated with the political left, and in 1961 returned to the island to form the Partido Revolucionario Dominicana (PRD). President Kennedy welcomed the result as a showcase for the Alliance for Progress. But the new ambassador, John Bartlow Martin, wrote dispatches that were highly critical of Bosch, both personally, and due to perceived communist leanings.

U.S. disenchantment with Bosch encouraged Dominican plots to overthrow him. In September 1963, despite Martin's attempt to suppress it (though U.S. military attachés were probably more encouraging to the officers), a military coup deposed and sent him into exile. The U.S. refused to protect him in the final hours. The U.S. held back recognition for a while, "demanding" democratic restoration, but by December relations were normalized without any political change, and Donald Reid Cabral became leader of the now-recognized junta (Slater 1970, chap. 1). The military, however, was encouraged by the U.S. Embassy to resist the rebellion in 1965, as the U.S. feared overall a communist rebellion, and had no desire to see Bosch return to office (Slater, 1970, chap. 2). And at the verge of constitutionalist victory, the U.S. Embassy asked for U.S. troops, and the 82<sup>nd</sup> airborne quickly arrived and restored order, remaining in Dominican Republic for seventeen months. The revolution, in the view of Slater (1970, 33), was crushed by an outside power [the U.S.].

Indeed, the U.S. directly undermined the rebel cause, and managed its surrender. Antonio Martínez Francisco, a leading party member in PRD, sought U.S. mediation in the April days of the armed rebellion. He went to the Mexican Embassy, and received a call there from the U.S. Embassy asking him to come to chat with the U.S. Ambassador. A car was sent to escort him, but it was a trap, and he was forced at gunpoint to read an appeal for surrender over the radio. The rebels, once the U.S. troops landed, had no illusions about military confrontation with the U.S. army; but they thought they would have political leverage given mass support (Moreno 1970 31-4).

A mirror image of 1965 took place in 1978. At this time, President Carter intervened. The Dominican voters in 1978 faced not so much the question of whether Balaguer should be replaced but whether the military would allow the democratic process to work. Antonio Guzmán of the PRD was well known, a reform minded millionaire, cautious, popular with workers, and perhaps the only figure who could beat Balaguer. President Carter at the signing of the Panama Canal treaty heaped praise on Balaguer, but in a subtle way forced him to commit to an open election (by calling him a great democrat). But American observers noted that the military and police were deterring Guzmán's people from operating freely, by jamming their radio stations and burning down local PRD headquarters, by blocking voting registration for likely-PRD voters, and having leading military officers make threatening suggestions as to what would happen if PRD won – all this done without any complaints raised by the OAS or the U.S.

On election day, with Guzmán showing early lead, at 4AM during the counting, military units raided the Central Electoral headquarters and confiscated the ballot boxes. The U.S. ambassador tried to meet with Balaguer, but he refused. Carter demanded that the ballot counting be allowed to go on, under threat of losing economic and military aid. With this pressure, and after consulting with the military (which was against yielding to the pressure by the U.S.), Balaguer ordered that the counting be continued.

The government delayed announcing the vote count, but the pressure was intense and there was a "very real threat of violence"; the government then released the data

showing a Guzmán victory. But the military was able to get the electoral board to alter the vote on the Senate, and this apparent act of fraud was upheld by the Dominican Supreme Court. The outgoing government also passed several military statutes that put the National Investigation Department under control of the armed forces rather than the government; denied the civil courts jurisdiction over military matters; and gave the military the right to decide which exiles could return to the island. Yet it was the Republic's first peaceful and democratic change in leadership.

All this had the effect of making the U.S., and not the Dominican military, the "ultimate guarantor of sovereignty." [Though Carter, by allowing the military to bugger the Senate vote tallies, mollified the Dominican military, giving them something, so he did not test fully America's power to choose the government in the Dominican Republic]. When José Francisco Peña Gómez, the PRD general-secretary announced after the election that the PRD would open ties with Cuba, Guzmán, recognizing that he owed Carter for his presidency, quickly exiled Peña for a year. Thus he recognized the U.S.'s "supra-sovereignty" (Kryzanek 1979).

The supra-sovereignty continued through the 1990s. "The United States has rejected the decision of the Central Electoral Board (CEB) of the Dominican Republic which declared Joaquin Balaguer the winner of the country's controversial May 16 presidential election, and Washington has called for new elections." So reported the IPS-Inter Press Service, on August 3, 1994 ("Dominican Republic: U.S. Calls for New Elections").

This event and the events going back to Teddy Roosevelt provide a coherent explanation of why there has been no full-scale civil war in post World War II Dominican Republic. Potential insurgents in the Dominican Republic understand that America has an excellent surveillance system overseeing its politics, and a great interest in preventing chaos or anti-capitalist revolution. Furthermore, in control over the republic's national finances, and able to cut off migration flows, the U.S. has many tools for control. Especially after Castro's victory in Cuba, the U.S. has been especially careful to monitor potential rebellion. Knowing that the U.S. would come in with overwhelming power, no revolutionary movement has a chance to succeed. And the military knows that it cannot repress too heavily the civilian population, or the Americans will depose that leader and choose a successor. The major explanation for the peace in Dominican Republic is a strong military (created of course by the U.S. occupation authorities) that is ruthless, and a world power interested in cauterizing rebellion.

### **But why then a near Civil War? Anocracy and Instability**

After the fall of Trujillo, the Dominican Republic fell into a period of instability and anocracy. From all accounts of the period from the fall of Trujillo to the outbreak of the near civil war, United States policy was incoherent (see especially Lowenthal 1972). President Kennedy played a role in undermining Trujillo, but did not act decisively to install a successor. A half-hearted attempt to support democracy ensued. The Johnson administration had no clear post-Trujillo vision to implement, and its ambassador was

torn between the rights of the constitutionalists and fears of a Castro-like revolution. Under conditions of unclear signals from the U.S., the weakness of the military regime gave an opening to the constitutionalists to arm. Thus the quasi-democratic quasi-authoritarian regime in the republic acted as an invitation for insurgency, under the condition of weak signals from the U.S. Without a variable picking up on U.S. commitments to cauterize rebellion, the anocracy and instability variables correctly captured the moment in the mid 1960s when civil war was most likely.

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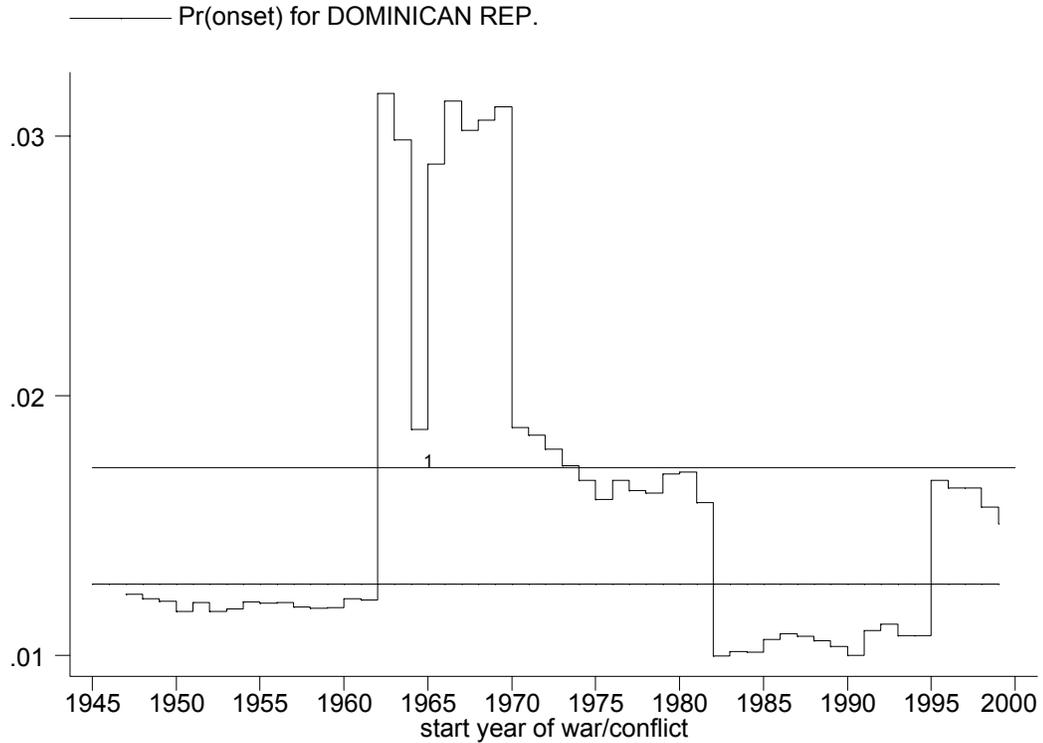
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cname	year	pr	gdp~1	pop	mtn~t	Oil	ins~b	anocl
DOMINICA	1945	.	.	1889	16.4	0	0	0
DOMINICA	1946	.	.	1935	16.4	0	0	0
DOMINICA	1947	.0123282	.668	1982	16.4	0	0	0
DOMINICA	1948	.0121618	.731	2036	16.4	0	0	0
DOMINICA	1949	.0120534	.782	2095	16.4	0	0	0
DOMINICA	1950	.0116566	.911	2435	16.4	0	0	0
DOMINICA	1951	.0120004	.949	2514	16.4	0	0	0
DOMINICA	1952	.0116645	1.065	2594	16.4	0	0	0
DOMINICA	1953	.0117652	1.065	2674	16.4	0	0	0
DOMINICA	1954	.0120203	1.024	2753	16.4	0	0	0
DOMINICA	1955	.0119816	1.059	2833	16.4	0	0	0
DOMINICA	1956	.0119875	1.082	2939	16.4	0	0	0
DOMINICA	1957	.0118291	1.155	3044	16.4	0	0	0
DOMINICA	1958	.0117839	1.197	3149	16.4	0	0	0
DOMINICA	1959	.0117954	1.223	3254	16.4	0	0	0
DOMINICA	1960	.0121328	1.163	3325	16.4	0	0	0
DOMINICA	1961	.0120804	1.195	3421	16.4	0	0	0
DOMINICA	1962	.0328201	1.143	3520	16.4	0	1	1
DOMINICA	1963	.0309544	1.354	3622	16.4	0	1	1
DOMINICA	1964	.0191565	1.439	3727	16.4	0	1	0
DOMINICA	1965	.029987	1.504	3835	16.4	0	1	1
DOMINICA	1966	.0136163	1.271	3945	16.4	0	1	1
DOMINICA	1967	.031322	1.414	4060	16.4	0	1	1
DOMINICA	1968	.0317436	1.396	4178	16.4	0	1	1
DOMINICA	1969	.0322608	1.369	4298	16.4	0	1	1
DOMINICA	1970	.0189354	1.464	4423	16.4	0	0	1
DOMINICA	1971	.0186519	1.536	4548	16.4	0	0	1
DOMINICA	1972	.0181132	1.652	4672	16.4	0	0	1
DOMINICA	1973	.0174513	1.792	4797	16.4	0	0	1
DOMINICA	1974	.0168968	1.916	4922	16.4	0	0	1
DOMINICA	1975	.0161546	2.079	5048	16.4	0	0	1
DOMINICA	1976	.0168897	1.961	5175	16.4	0	0	1
DOMINICA	1977	.0164923	2.057	5301	16.4	0	0	1
DOMINICA	1978	.0163855	2.098	5429	16.4	0	0	1
DOMINICA	1979	.0173773	2.092	5561	16.4	0	1	0

DOMINICA	1980	.0174358	2.102	5697	16.4	0	1	0
DOMINICA	1981	.0162541	2.343	5837	16.4	0	1	0
DOMINICA	1982	.0099413	2.285	5982	16.4	0	0	0
DOMINICA	1983	.0101021	2.256	6129	16.4	0	0	0
DOMINICA	1984	.010082	2.283	6275	16.4	0	0	0
DOMINICA	1985	.0105657	2.157	6416	16.4	0	0	0
DOMINICA	1986	.0107883	2.111	6554	16.4	0	0	0
DOMINICA	1987	.0106824	2.16	6688	16.4	0	0	0
DOMINICA	1988	.0105002	2.231	6820	16.4	0	0	0
DOMINICA	1989	.0103025	2.307	6948	16.4	0	0	0
DOMINICA	1990	.0099547	2.43	7074	16.4	0	0	0
DOMINICA	1991	.0108876	2.166	7197	16.4	0	0	0
DOMINICA	1992	.0111338	2.111	7321	16.4	0	0	0
DOMINICA	1993	.0106987	2.25	7545.18	16.4	0	0	0
DOMINICA	1994	.010705	2.274	7685.48	16.4	0	0	0
DOMINICA	1995	.0168624	2.326	7823	16.4	0	0	1
DOMINICA	1996	.0165705	2.396	7963.58	16.4	0	0	1
DOMINICA	1997	.0168061	2.525	8107.29	16.4	0	1	0
DOMINICA	1998	.016059	2.683	8254.2	16.4	0	1	0
DOMINICA	1999	.0154037	2.829	.	16.4	0	1	0

Variable	Obs	Mean	Std. Dev.	Min	Max
pr	53	.0155884	.0063995	.0099413	.0328201
gdpenl	53	1.717566	.5775372	.668	2.829
pop	54	4782.402	1906.173	1889	8254.2
mtnest	55	16.4	0	16.4	16.4
Oil	55	0	0	0	0

instab	55	.2545455	.4396203	0	1
anocl	55	.3272727	.4735424	0	1

Variable	Obs	Mean	Std. Dev.	Min	Max
pr	1175	.0138192	.0097621	.0003637	.0692507
gdpenl	1175	2.863283	1.86085	.562	11.738
pop	1187	13595.62	24721.73	621	165873.6
mtnest	1210	22.25446	17.80127	0	57.59999
Oil	1210	.1363636	.3433162	0	1

instab	1210	.1950413	.3963963	0	1
anocl	1210	.3570248	.4793203	0	1

Variable	Obs	Mean	Std. Dev.	Min	Max
pr	6327	.0167842	.0232433	3.19e-10	.5059608
gdpenl	6373	3.651117	4.536645	.048	66.735
pop	6433	31786.92	102560.8	222	1238599
mtnest	6610	18.08833	20.96648	0	94.3
Oil	6610	.1295008	.3357787	0	1

instab	6596	.1464524	.353586	0	1
anocl	6541	.2256536	.418044	0	1