

*Cursus Honorum:*  
Personal Background, Careers and Experience of  
Political Leaders in Democracy and Dictatorship,  
1960–2010  
Codebook

Alexander Baturó  
Dublin City University  
alex.baturó@dcu.ie

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## Introduction

The data include various details about national political leaders from 1960–2010, their personal background, experience in politics, careers and significant posts prior to their tenure, and details about their time in office, among other things. The data are described in detail in Alexander Baturo. 2016. “Cursus Honorum: Personal Background, Careers and Experience of Political Leaders in Democracy and Dictatorship — New Data and Analyses. *Politics and Governance* 4(2): 138–157.

As explained in the paper, the title of *Cursus Honorum*, i.e., career ladder in Latin, is chosen partly to honour the groundbreaking Archigos dataset on political leaders developed by Goemans et al. (2009) in which *Archigos* is the Greek term for ruler, but also because it describes the key aspects of the data that distinguish it from other data sources on political leaders. i.e., it accounts for various aspects of political careers of leaders over long periods of time prior to assuming political office and even after.

The data include more than 50 various indicators pertaining to personal background, such as previous career and significant posts prior to assuming office, number of years in formal politics, educational background, whether they were ever jailed, the military rank of current or former military officers, indicators pertaining to their time in office and entry and exit from that office, as well as post-leadership career.

## Applications

The *Cursus Honorum* data were mainly collected from 2009–10 (updated in 2012–14), and several variables from the data set (*Cursus Honorum* Version 1) first appeared in Alexander Baturo. 2014. *Democracy, Dictatorship, and Term Limits*. Ann Arbor, MI: Michigan University Press, specifically in Chapters 4 and 7 to investigate post-office careers of presidents in different political regimes and whether presidents’ personal background was factored in in the explanation of democratic breakdown.

The present version of the data has been used to study post-tenure careers, the rotation in office norm and democratic consolidation in Alexander Baturo (forthcoming). “Democracy, Development, and Career Trajectories of Former Political Leaders.” *Comparative Political Studies*, as well as the “revolving door” problem in Alexander Baturo and Slava Mikhaylov. 2016. “Blair Disease? Business Careers of the Former Democratic Heads of State and Government. *Public Choice* 166: 335–354.

## Note on Sources

As described in the paper, the sources used include country political histories, leaders’ biographies, reference works, government websites, newspaper archives, book references, such as Bienen and van de Walle (1991) or Lentz (1994), as well as web references, such as [www.rulers.org](http://www.rulers.org), [www.worldstatesmen.com](http://www.worldstatesmen.com), historical dictionaries, e.g., <http://www.hls-dhs-dss.ch/>, Zarate (2011). The indicators vary in their reliability, e.g., political career or prior political post are generally reliable because such facts are usually reported by the majority of bibliographic sources and are not subject to interpretation. In case of

other variables, such as number of years in formal politics, a certain degree of subjectivity is unavoidable. I would be grateful if users can inform should they notice any errors or omissions.

## Structure

The dataset includes 1,500 political leaders in office from 1960–2010 period, including interim leaders, in all countries (except small island nations), in democratic and non-democratic regimes. The data are available with leaders as units of observation and in TSCS format, where if there is more than one leader per year a leader with longer tenure that year is included that year.

Rulers' names and time in office indicators correspond to those in *Archigos* dataset, with additions in 2005–10 and revisions whenever required. For convenience, several variables that appear in *Archigos* (e.g., *entry* and *exit*) are additionally included. All other indicators are collected under *Cursus Honorum* data collection.

## Variable Codebook

### Leader and Country Identifiers and Dates

*Country*, *iso3n*, *ccode*, *idacr* are common country identifiers.

*Ruler*: the name of the effective chief executive. The predominant majority of leaders in 1960–2004 are included from the *Archigos*. Leaders in office in 2005–10 are additionally included by the author. If the same individual assumes office again in non-consecutive terms, e.g., Kerekou of Benin in 1972–91 and in 1996–2006, such ruler is included multiple times with different identifiers.

*Ruler unique*: ruler indicator that does not distinguish between different spells in office of the same individual, e.g., it codes Kerekou in both spells, in 1972–91 and in 1996–2006, as Kerekou.

*Starty*, *endy*, *startdate*, *enddate*: The dates of the leader's entry into office and exit from office. If a leader came to power prior to 1 January 1960 but exited after 1 January 1960, or if a leader entered office prior to 31 December 2010 and is still in office after that date, such leaders are also included. I additionally include several variables from *Archigos*, e.g., *leadid* and *obsid* – leadership spell identifiers; I do not assign new identifiers for leaders in power in 2005–10.

### General Indicators

*Born in year (bornin)*: A year of birth.<sup>1</sup>

*Age at entry into office (entryage)* and *Time in office, years (timeinoffice)* are calculated from

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<sup>1</sup> Available for all rulers but Bonifacio Ondo Edu of Equatorial Guinea (1963–68) who is reported to have been born in 1920s by two sources, coded as 1925 (middle year for that decade) in the data.

their dates in office and *Born in year* variables.

*Gender*: whether the ruler is female or male.

*Political family (polfamily)*: Coded as 1 if a leader is a member of prominent political family or dynasty, where members of leader's family had occupied the highest national political posts in the past, whenever possible to ascertain, 0 otherwise.

*Ever been imprisoned (jail)*: Coded 1 if leader is known to have been in a jail any time prior to assuming the highest political office, excluding short detentions for minor misdemeanors, e.g., violations of public peace.

*Family background (familyclass)*: whether leaders come from upper, middle, or working/lower-middle class families, based on the professional and socio-economic background of their parents. In some cases family class origins are difficult to ascertain, however.<sup>2</sup> For example, in the context of Sub-saharan Africa, particularly in the colonial period, the meaning of family class background is very different from that in industrialized nations. Therefore, whenever possible, equivalent class categories were gauged in the context of social hierarchy, e.g., the family of the village chief or that of the missionaries was assigned into "middle" category.<sup>3</sup>

*Revolutionary or opposition (revopposition)*: Coded as 1 if a leader has background in a revolutionary movement, or in political opposition in a non-democratic regime or involved in an anti-colonial struggle, or whether he or she was a trade union activist in a non-democratic regime.

## Education Details

*Education, detail (description) (educationlldetail)*: describes various educational details, not categorized.

*3rd-level education (unieducation)*, university (third-level) education: Coded 1 if completed third-level (university or equivalent) education. NB Education of military officers: coded as third-level education if attended undergraduate-degree granting institutions (e.g., Saint-Cyr, soviet third-level military schools following the late 1950s transition of two-year (non-third-level) military schools into four-year higher education institutions, etc).

*Education first (educationfirst)*: the field of of third-level education, detailed 48 categories, e.g., classics; liberal arts (others); business administration; military academy, West Point; military academy, Saint-Cyr; military academy, Sandhurst; military academy, others, etc.

*Education second (educationsecond)*: the second field of of third-level education if ruler has more than one fields, same as *educationfirst*.

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<sup>2</sup>Also, in 17 per cent of observations (253 leaders out of 1,501) bibliographic sources do disclose family social origins or father's profession explicitly and therefore family status was imputed based on other available information about leaders' younger years. There is an auxiliary indicator, *how certain, family* to mark these observations so one can recode them as missing instead.

<sup>3</sup> *Family background* was additionally collected to account for the likelihood of independent personal wealth in Alexander Baturo (forthcoming). "Democracy, Development, and Career Trajectories of Former Political Leaders." *Comparative Political Studies*.

*Education detail (educationdetail)*: the field of third-level education, categorized into 14 categories: degree, unknown, agriculture or agronomy, economics, education, engineering, humanities, law, marxist philosophy/party school, medicine, military and staff colleges, political science, psychology, science, theology.

*Education detail, second (secondeducdetail)*: the second field of of third-level education, categorized in the same manner as *educdetail*.

*Law degree (lawyer)*: Coded 1 if university education is in law, 0 otherwise.

*Ph.D. degree (phd)*: Coded 1 if holds a doctorate, excluding honorary doctorates, e.g., Alberto Fujimori of Peru does not hold a Ph.D. despite being a university academic prior to presidency, only a honorary phd, therefore coded as not having a doctorate.

*Foreign education (foreignedu)*: Coded 1 if a third-level education is received in a foreign country. Coded as 1 even if a leader of the former colony received his or her education in a former colonial center, or part of colonial empire that belonged to the same country at the time.

*Western education (westeduc)*: Coded 1 if university education received in North America, Western Europe or Australia. Rulers of Western countries are coded as 0s on this indicator. If a foreign education was received in another foreign but non-Western country, it is re-coded as 0. If rulers receive education in Western countries at the time when these countries are metropolia of the colonies leaders come from, still coded as 1.

*Soviet education (soveduc)*: Coded 1 if university education, fully or partially, has been received in USSR or a Soviet satellite country during the Cold War. Soviet, former Soviet or Soviet satellite leaders that received their education in their home countries are coded as 0; if leaders of Soviet satellite (but not Soviet or former Soviet) countries received education in the former Soviet Union, they are coded 1 however.

## **Prior Career Details**

*Career, detail (description) (careerdescribe)*: this variable simply describes the details of the most significant political office or offices held by the leader, or the overall career, not categorized.

*Prior career, categories (career)*: a primary career before assuming office, 16 categories: academic, businessman, career military/security, civil servant or diplomat, governor or mayor, international development or EU, journalist, judiciary, lawyer, legislative/party career, mayor of capital city, ministerial appointments, priest, rebel or career revolutionary, ruler's relative, trade unionist.

*Prior career, categories 2 (career2)* — if *career* is impossible to define in one category, *career2* is additionally categorized as another career, same categories as in *career*.

*Prior significant post, categories (priorpost, priorpost2, priorpost3)*: these indicators provide additional details of political experience, specifically, significant political posts occupied by a leader prior to assuming office, e.g., finance minister, defence minister, a member of the politburo, or a head of royal military household, etc. From three posts variables one can also ascertain whether a current leader is a designated successor of a previous ruler, or the degree of affinity with a previous ruler, e.g., whether the current ruler is a close relative

of the previous ruler, such as son, daughter, wife, nephew/niece, son-, daughter-, brother-in-law.

*Years in formal politics (formalexperyears):* Years in formal politics prior to assuming the highest political office, number of years. Only years in official politics are counted, such as being a member of parliament, cabinet minister, a province governor or a city mayor, or a member of a sub-national parliament.

*Years, including in civil service (experienceyears):* Years in politics prior to assuming the highest political office, including years in civil service, also colonial service or political service in the former colonial or metropolitan institutions, such as the membership of the French National Assembly, French Union Assembly, local colonial assembly between 1946 and the time of independence in the former French colonies, or the secretary of the republican Communist party in the Soviet Union, for example. Years in opposition, revolutionary movement are also counted whenever possible. all political experience, or years of party membership or anti-colonial struggle and any other political-related and revolutionary activity. joining the party, movement, secretary of regional communist party branch, etc.

*Previous spells in office (prevtimesinoffice):* 1 if leader occupied the highest political posts in the past.

*Prior academic career (academic):* Coded 1 whenever a leader pursued academic career professionally for a significant period of time.

*Business career:* Coded 1 if leader had a nationally prominent business or entrepreneurial career prior to assuming office, whenever possible to determine those whose companies employed at least 1,000 employees, or if confirmed by at least two media or bibliographic sources that leaders had nationally prominent business interests in private life. Examples include such leaders as Berlusconi of Italy, or Thaksin of Thailand. Business career includes private law practice.

*Career politician (careerpol):* Coded as 1 if leader is primarily career politician, as ascertained from years in formal politics and prior career categories.

## **Military Career Details**

*Military rank (militaryrank)* the highest military rank that a ruler obtained prior to assuming office. If a ruler is a retired officer at the time of assuming office, then the rank at the time of retirement from the military whenever such data are available. Ranks bestowed on leaders while in office are not counted, only ranks received prior to office as a head of state or government.

*Military rank (NATO equivalent) (natomilrank):* the equivalent of the highest obtained rank, according to the NATO classification, from OR-4 to OF-10: OF-1 is lieutenant; OF-2 is captain; OF-3 is major; OF-4 is lieutenant-colonel; OF-5 is colonel; OF-6 is brigadier general (generally, any 1-star general, including major-generals and rear-admirals); OF-7 is generally any 2-star general or admiral that can be called division general, lieutenant (2-star) general, or brigadier-general (Argentina) or major (2-star) general in some militaries; OF-8

is division (3-star) general or lieutenant (3-star) general or colonel-general (3-star);<sup>4</sup> OF-9 is any 4-star general, usually army general or in some cases lieutenant-general;<sup>5</sup> OF-10 is a field marshal or a 5-star general. Finally, while there is no NATO classification on further ranks, two *generalissimo* in the dataset, Franco of Spain and Chiang Kai-shek of Taiwan, are entered as OF-11.

*Top NATO rank (topmilrank)*: the top military rank in the national military. Included in order to gauge the relative rank of the leader in military hierarchy. While the top military rank is valid for established militaries, it is however difficult to gauge in case of militaries in newly independent nations where, for example, in Iraq, brigadier general (OF-6) in early 1960s could have been the highest rank attained by the Iraqi officers. This indicator should be used with caution in cases of military hierarchies in newly independent states where it is not always clear what was the highest existing military ranks at the time of independence.

## General Details about Time in Office

*Collective leadership (multiplehead)*: Coded as 1 if leadership is collegial, e.g., Barrientos Ortuna and Ovando Candia (1964–66) in Bolivia, or a collective presidency of Switzerland, or SFRY in 1980–88.

*Father of the nation (nationfather)*: Coded as 1 if leader is first effective national leader at the time of independence.

*Political outsider (outsider)*: Coded as 1 if prior to assuming office a leader can be arguably regarded and seen as an outsider to the existing political system, e.g., he or she did not occupy any significant political post, in executive or legislative branches, or sub-national government, and instead came from non-political background, e.g., university academic, journalist or businessman. Only leaders that assume office via constitutional means are coded as outsiders, e.g., leaders of military coups are not coded as outsiders.

*Interim*: Coded 1 whenever the leader enters office specifically and explicitly as an interim, temporary leader, typically following the death, incapacity or resignation of the preceding leader and remains in that office for a short, typically shorter than a year, duration, and resigns following the expiration of that period, e.g., house speaker or supreme court judge assuming the functions of the head of state.<sup>6</sup> In monarchies, a regent that serves shorter than

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<sup>4</sup>As OF-6, brigadier general (1-star general) is generally equivalent to major-general (1-star general). Lieutenant-general (3-star general) in most militaries is categorized as OF-8, however OF-8 is equivalent to colonel-general in USSR and its satellites prior to 1989 (where lieutenant-general is a 2-star general). Since 1943, colonel-generals in USSR have worn three stars on their shoulder straps, so Pettibone compares this rank to the US lieutenant general (Pettibone 2009, 905).

<sup>5</sup>Similar adjustments are made for other countries, for instance, lieutenant-general is the highest obtainable rank in the Argentine military, therefore it is categorized as OF-9.

<sup>6</sup>For example, the senate speaker Rogombe of Gabon has assumed the office of the interim head of state for four months in Gabon after President Bongo died on 8 June 2009, only to return to her previous post in the Senate when the new ruler was sworn in on 16 October 2009. Likewise, a ruler is coded as an interim leader whenever a military ruler that assumed power shortly declares that democratic multiparty elections are to be held and that ruler excludes himself from such elections (e.g., General Abraham of Haiti in 1990). If

one year is also regarded as interim.

*Leader's political party (description) (party)* and *Communist (extreme left) party (comparty)*: party is the name of a political party that a ruler belongs to whenever this information is available; *comparty* is coded 1 if a ruler's party is Communist, Marxist-Leninist, Maoist, etc.

*Entry type, categories (entrytype)*: the type of entry into office, categories: 1) *election* — leader assumes office as a result of a popular election; 2) *selected in parliament* — leader assumes office as a result of an indirect election, by parliament. In presidential regimes this category differentiates between leaders elected directly or indirectly. In parliamentary regimes: if a leader of a party or coalition becomes prime minister (PM) directly after winning parliamentary elections, even if a coalition negotiation followed those elections, such a leader is defined as coming to office via *election*. If a leader assumed the post of PM mid-term however, whether by replacing the previous PM after the latter resigned or was forced to resign, or whether he or she won a leadership contest within his or her political party or coalition (e.g., John Major of UK thus replacing Margaret Thatcher in 1992), or whether he or she replaced a previous coalition with a new one — he or she is coded as *selected in parliament*.<sup>7</sup> 3) *civil war or revolt* — a leader comes to office after prevailing in civil war or leading a successful revolt or protests against the previous leader, e.g., Museveni of Uganda (1986–); 4) *constitutional succession* — whenever a vice president assumes office in the process of constitutional succession; 5) *coup* — a leader takes office as a result of military or civilian non-constitutional seizure of power, e.g., Kenan Evren of Turkey in 1980;<sup>8</sup> 6) *selection*: leader assumes office as a result of an elite selection, usually this category appears in non-democratic regimes only. A ruler is entered in this category primarily whenever such leader is selected without elections, whether direct or indirect, such as chosen by members of the military junta, at the politburo meetings, etc.; 7) *royal succession* — whenever a ruler assumes office as a result of monarchical succession, in monarchies; 8) *dedazo* — a variant of *selection* — whenever a leader assumes office as a result of explicit choice of the preceding ruler, e.g., the majority of Mexican presidents prior to 2000. This category can be collapsed together with *selection* if required. 9) *foreign installed* — whenever ruler is installed by, or with significant assistance of, a foreign power, e.g., Babrak Karmal in 1979, Najibullah in 1986 and Hamid Karzai in 2001 — all in Afghanistan. If a foreign power provides a significant assistance during civil war or revolt to a particular leader, and that leader prevails, he or she is coded as taking office as a result of civil war however. 10) *interim* — interim ruler, explained as above.

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a vice-president assumes office in the process of constitutional succession and serves the remainder of his predecessor's term that is longer than one year, it is not coded as interim (e.g., Gerald Ford (1974–77) of the USA). One can also cross-validate this indicator with *entrytype* (see below) categories of interim and of constitutional succession: one can collapse a constitutional succession together with *interim* if needed.

<sup>7</sup>The difference between *election* and *selected in parliament* in a case of prime ministers in parliamentary regimes therefore is often conceptually blurred. One can collapse these two categories as one category if necessary, since leaders that are *selected in parliament* almost always are previously elected into that parliament as MPs in general elections.

<sup>8</sup>However, Honaker's replacement in 1989 is coded not as a coup but more of a resignation forced by elites. See *exittype* below.



*Entry type, categories 2 (entrytype2)*: rulers can be additionally coded on this category if impossible or difficult to assign a single category to a type of entry, e.g., a leader can assume office via *selection* as a result of civil war simultaneously with the war for independence. Likewise, a ruler can come to office through the process of a *constitutional succession* and a *coup* at the same time. Consider Arosemena Monroy (1961–63) Ecuador who takes office following the previous leader being ousted in a coup. Arosemena Monroy is a Vice President (hence *constitutional succession*) who also rebelled against his president.

*Exit type, categories (exittype)*: the type of exit from office, categories: 1) *civil war or revolt* — whenever a leader loses offices as a result of losing in a civil war or revolt; 2) *coup* — as a result of an overt coup; 3) *died in office* — whenever a ruler dies or severely incapacitated in office. In the majority of cases this category is a death in office, with few exceptions being whenever a leader was so severely incapacitated that he could not continue in office, e.g., Ariel Sharon of Israel in 2006 or Salou Djibo of Niger in 2010; 4) *killed* — a ruler is assassinated in office, or is overthrown and executed shortly after; 5) *lost elections* — whenever a leader stands for elections and is not re-elected; 6) *replaced by foreign* — overthrown by foreign power; 7) *step down/resign* — a leader can depart office for various reasons — as long as the leader departs in an orderly manner, whether because he lost the vote of confidence in parliament, chose to step down for personal reasons, health reasons, whether genuine or not, lost the parliamentary party leadership vote — all of these eventualities are categorized as *step down/resigned*. Even if a leader is impeached in a constitutional procedure, or a leader is forced to resign by another party (e.g., as Prime Minister Georgios Papadreu (1964–65) was in a dispute the dispute with the king Constantine, such leaders are still categorized as *step down*; 8) *term limits* — complies with (consecutive) term limits and steps down, can be collapsed with *step down/resigned* category.

## **Career and Fate after Leaving Office**

*Term limits (termlimit)*: applies to presidents that completed their term(s) and could not run again ever whether for an immediate or non-immediate consecutive term. This is different from *term limits* category in *exittype* variable therefore that only accounts for an immediate ban on re-election. If a leader completes a single term, not eligible for immediate re-election but eligible for non-consecutive one (typically, after one interim term), such leader is coded as 0 on *termlimit* as in principle such leader can remain in politics and run again in the future.

*Post-career, categories (description) (postcareerdetail)*: a detailed description of career that leader pursues after office, non-categorized.

*Post-career (postcareer)*: career after leaving office, categorized. There are 21 categories including death in office or retirement. The categories are: ambassador, arrested and/or imprisoned, business, civil servant, died/incapacitated in office, exile, governor/mayor, higher post: president in parl., etc, in office, intergovt/IO, killed, killed in office, legislator, military officer, cabinet minister, non-profit or academic, politics, various, pols: party leader, ran again, etc, rebel, retired.

*Post career 2 (postcareer2)*: if impossible to assign a particular category, e.g., a leader pur-

sues business career and at the time engages in non-profit activities, this additional variable codes such a ruler in another significant category. If a former ruler presides over his or her own nonprofit foundation or even retires from public life altogether, nothing precludes this individual from a corporate board membership that can be very lucrative. Paul Martin (2003–6) of Canada served as a legislator as well as worked on various non-profit national and international initiatives at the same time. This ruler therefore has two post-career categories: politics and non-profit.<sup>9</sup>

*Post career, categories (postcats)*: post career after leaving office, more general categories, excluding rulers that were still in office in 2010, died or killed in office: business career; politics, various; intergovernmental international organization; non-profit or academic career; civil servant, various; primarily retired.

*Age at exit from office (exitage)*: age in the last year in office.

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<sup>9</sup>If the biographic sources indicate that former presidents pursue several activities after leaving office, I tried to ascertain whether they predominantly engaged in one or the other.