Niger
Rice

Upon independence from France in 1960, Niger became a single-party state under the rule of Hamani Diori, the leader of the Nigerian Progressive Party (the only legal party until 1974). Diori was in power until 1974, when he was overthrown in a military coup, due to accusations of corruption and a severe drought (United States Department of State, 2010). The leader of the coup was Lieutenant Colonel Seyni Kountche, who then became the leader of the country. This is a SOLS change. Kountche was in power until his death in 1987, at which point leadership passed to his Chief of Staff, Brigadier General Ali Saibou This is not a SOLS change. Saibou made some democratic reforms, which then led to calls for democratic elections. In 1989, Saibou's SOLS changes from military to "MNSD" or Mouvement National de la Societé de Développement. There is only one leader: Seibou (1987-1993) this year. GWF code the country since 1975 to 1991 as a Military-Personalist hybrid (and code provisional until 1993). So we do not code a SOLS change here. According to Muller et al. (2011: 1052), Seubou was an army general who formed MNSD and was elected president of the Supreme Council of National Orientation, thereby becoming the sole candidate for election as head of state. He was credited with more than 99 percent of the votes, as was the single list of 93 MNSD candidates elected to the new National Assembly After a new constitution was written, elections were held in 1993, and led to Mahamane Ousmane, a member of the Democratic and Social Convention (CDS) becoming President. This is a SOLS change.

The government elected in 1993 was quickly paralyzed by rivalries from within, leading to acoup in 1996. The coup was led by Colonel Ibrahim Bare Mainassara, who led Niger into three more years of personalist rule. This is a SOLS change. Mainassara won a flawed election in July 1996 that ledto him being declared President. In 1999, Mainassara was overthrown and assassinated in a coup led by Major Daouda Wanke, also a member of the military. However, this is not a SOLS change because Wanke's government which "suspended constitution and announced a nine-month transitional plan that would culminate in the inauguration of an elected president" (Muller, 2011: 1049) is considered an interim/transitional government (see also The Guardian, 2004; United States Department of State, 2010). Since Mamadou Tandja was the first newly elected President after the end of a personalist rule, achange from Maniassara to Mamdou is coded as a SOLS change. The country in 1990 is coded as democracy, although since 1991 the country is coded as a democracy with mixed system. Wankecreated a new constitution, and held elections that were deemed free and fair. In October 1999, the newly elected President, Mamadou Tandja, a member of the National Movement for the Development of Society (NMSD) took office. This is a SOLS change. Tandja was reelected in 2004, and remains in power in the present day. It should be noted that in 2009, Tandja dismantled most of the democratic institutions in Niger and drafted a new constitution which extended his time in office by another three years, and stated that the President could run for unlimited terms.

In February 2010, a military coup led by Salou Djibo captured president Tandja and took control of the country (Smith 2010; Nossiter 2010). The military coup pledged to return the country to democracy and created a transitional government led by coup leaders with some civilian involvement (Al Jazeera 2010). By 2010, Niger is considered a non-democracy, so we

use the predesignated successor rule to determine whether a SOLS change occurred. The transition from Tandja to Djibo is coded as a SOLS change because Djibo was not Tandja's predesignated successor. Djibo led the military coup against Tandj, and stayed in power through the transitional government. The military-led transitional government organized elections in early 2011. The military did not actively support either candidate and opposition leader Mahamadou Issoufou was elected president (BBC News 2011). Issoufou's election marks a return to democracy for Niger. The election of Issoufou is coded as a SOLS change because he was not a candidate actively backed by the military.

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