Mauritania
Vanderbilt

Mauritania is coded as non-democratic throughout the observation period. Mauritania is coded as a personalist authoritarian regime from independence in 1960 until 2004; however, it is not one continuous regime, but rather a series of different personalist regimes. Moktar Ould Daddah is in power at independence. There is no SOLS change at independence. Parti Rassemblement Mauritian (PRM) was Daddah's party at the time of independence; the next year, in 1961, Daddah "decreed the end of multi-partyism and melded several smaller groupings into the Parti du people mauritanien (PPM)" (Pazzanita 1996, 576). There is no indication that PRM became part of PPM. This change from PRM to PPM is not a SOLS change because it is a pure personalist system.

Daddah rules uninterrupted until 1978, when there is a military coup with Mustafa Ould Salek taking power. Mustafa Ould Salek was actually appointed by Daddah during Mauritania's war against the Polisario Front, but he was then relegated when he disagreed with Daddah. He was supported by junior officers and the coup was bloodless. The transition from Daddah to Ould Salek is a SOLS change.

In 1979 power changes hands three times, from Salek to Ahmed Ould Bouceif, then to Ahmed Salim Ould Sidi (acting) and finally to Mahmoud Ould Louly. The first leader, Salek, rules with the help of the twenty-man Military Committee for National Recovery (CMRN). As a result of his policies, Salek loses international and then domestic support and is removed from office by Colonel Ahmed Ould Bouceif and Colonel Mohamed Khouna Haidalla who created the Military Committee for National Salvation (CMSN). We code a SOLS change for the leadership transition from Salek to Bouceif because Geddes codes a personalist regime from 1978 to 2005 and Salek and Bouceif were supported by different SOLS (CMRN and CMSN respectively). Also, while they were both military officers, Bouceif was not a Salek's pre-designated successor.

Shortly after taking power, Bouceif died in a plane crash and was succeeded by Sidi. There is little information regarding Sidi since he stayed in power only a few days but he appears to have been an interim leader. Thus, we code this neither as a SOLS change nor a SOLS change30. After Sidi, Haidalla appoints Colonel Mohamed Louly as President. The third leader transition, from Sidi to Louly, is not a SOLS change either because Louly was part of CMSN as was Bouceif, the leader in power prior to Sidi. In 1980 there is a leader transition from Louly to Mohamed Khouna Ould Haidalla. This is not a SOLS change because Louly had been placed in power by Haidalla and supported by the CMSN which was created by Haidalla and Bouceif. Haidalla infuriated the CMSN by purging ministerial ranks of opponents and trying to increase his personal power (Library of Congress, 1988).

As a result, in 1984 there is a leader transition from Haidalla to Maaouya Ould Sid'Ahmed Taya when Haidalla is removed in a bloodless coup d'etat by the CMSN (Military Committee for National Salvation) (Pazzanita 1999, 49). This should be coded as aSOLS change because Taya was not a Haidalla's pre-designated successor, while Haidalla and Taya were both members of the military. Since Geddes codes the country as a personalist regime until 2005, we follow our pre-designated successor rule here again. In 1992, in an effort to "civilianize" the military (N'Diaye 2006, 425), Taya created a political party called the Parti Républicain

Démocratique et Social (PRDS) and heralded the creation of the "Second Republic" (Pazzanita 1999, 50). This change does not represent a SOLS change because the country is coded as a pure personalist authoritarian regime for the duration of his rule.

In 2005 there was a bloodless military coup that brought Colonel Ely Ould Mohamed Vall to power hoping to usher in a true democracy as the Chairman of the Military Council for Justice and Democracy. This is a SOLS change because in 2005 the country is coded as a military authoritarian regime, which represents a break from Taya's personalist regime. Vall rules until 2007, when the country held seemingly democratic elections (The Economist, 2009) won by Sidi Mohamed Ould Cheikh Abdellahi. This year is coded as authoritarian and is missing regime type information from Geddes (1999) signaling that the authoritarian regime type was not established. However, Cheibub et. al. (2009) have provided a democratic regime type, which shows that the nature of this regime is somewhat in dispute. According to our coding rules, we use Polity as the authoritative source. Since Geddes codes the military regime as ending in 2007 and Ould Cheikh Abdellahi is neither military nor the pre-designated successor of Vall, we code this as a SOLS change.

In 2008, there is another military coup with Mohammed Ould Abdel Aziz taking power. Geddes has coded Aziz's regime a personalist regime. This is a SOLS change. Given that during this time period multiple leaders are in power, it is not entirely clear who the personalist leader during the time is. However, her 1999 book suggests that it is Taya. The 1999 book actually codes a personalist-military hybrid which makes sense given the early years of the regime. The U.S. Department of State (2010) background notes on Mauritania state that "Mauritania was under military rule from 1978 to 1992."

A deal made in June 2009 resulted in the military handing control over to an interim government to organize elections (Al Jazeera 2009). Abdel Aziz gave up the presidency and Ba Mamadou dit M'Baré was appointed interim president. Abdel Aziz ran in the presidential election and won. Mauritania is a non-democracy during this period, so we use the predesignated successor rule to determine SOLS changes. There is no SOLS change from Abdel Aziz to M'Baré because M'Baré was an interim leader. There is no SOLS change from M'Baré to Abdel Aziz because Abdel Aziz was the leader prior to the interim.

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