Armenia
Rice

Armenia gained independence in 1991, and held presidential elections later that year. 83 percent of the vote went to Levon Ter-Petrossian, a member of the Pan-Armenian National Movement (HHS) (United States Department of State 2010). Ter-Petrossian had been elected head of government in 1991, when the HHS first defeated the Communist party in legislative elections. From 1995 on, Geddes classifies Armenia as a personalist state. This could be due to the fact that those political parties that existed in Armenia were based around powerful individuals who had "mustered significant support and developed personal authoritarian leadership" (Payaslian 2007, 214).

Ter-Pertrossian was reelected in 1996, in elections whose results are disputed. However, in January 1998, he was forced to resign after public demonstrations related to his position on the Nagorno- Karabakh Armenian enclave in Azerbaijan. The presidency passed to the Prime Minister at that time, Robert Kocharyan. Though Kocharyan had no party affiliation, in the Armenian political system, the Prime Minister is appointed by the President. While the fact that Kocharian was Ter-Petrossian's PM, suggests he was a predesignated successor, it seems that Kocharian was involved in removing Ter-Petrossian from office. Right before Ter-Petrossian's ouster, there was a disagreement between him and his allies and the pro-Karabakh group to which Kocharian belonged and this forced the president to resign (Hughes and Sasse 2002, 154). Other allies of Ter-Petrossian also resigned, leaving Kocharyan in charge (Hughes and Sasse 154). Barrington (2006, 239) writes: "… Kocharyan was unwilling to compromise on Karabakh but astute enough to orchestrate the removal of Ter-Petrosyan from office." For these reasons we code a SOLS change at the beginning of Kocharyan's spell.

Kocharyan won the presidential election held in March 1998, and remained in power until April 2008. In February of that year, presidential elections were held. Though the elections were initially deemed fair, evidence later emerged of fraud, and protests broke out across the country. After a violent encounter between the protestors and the police, Kocharyan declared a state of emergency. When the state of emergency was lifted in April, Serzh Sarkisyan, a member of the Armenian Communist Party (HHK) took office as President. Although Sarkisyan and Kocharian had different sources of support there is no SOLS change because both were from the same clan and were close allies.

In 2015, a referendum was held to make changes to the constitution, most notably making the president a ceremonial figure and transferring political power to the prime minister (AFP 2015). The government supported a yes vote and were victorious (Grigoryan 2015). The changes to the political would not come into effect until 2018, when President Sargsyan's term would end (Grigoryan 2015). Opposition leaders decried the referendum as a way for Sargsyan to stay in power since he could not run for president due to term limits (AFP 2015).

On April 8, 2018, Sargsyan stepped down as president in accordance with his term limits (Weise 2018). Despite promises not to run for government office after stepping down, Sargsyan was nominated by his party for prime minister and was subsequently elected by the parliament (Weise 2018). Protests erupted following his election, eventually resulting in Sargsyan stepping

down as prime minister (BBC News 2018). Karen Vilhelmi Karapetyan took over as acting prime minister (BBC News 2018). Parliament later voted Nikol Vovayi Pashinyan, former opposition leader, as prime minister and Pashinyan won the snap elections held in December 2018 (Antidze & Mkrtchyan 2018). Because Karapetyan is an interim leader, she is not considered in determining SOLS changes. In 2018, Armenia transitions to a democracy, so we focus on the political affiliation of leaders to determine SOLS changes. Sargsyan and Pashinyan were from different parties. As a result, we code a SOLS change between Sargsyan and Pashinyan in 2018.

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