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Armenia is coded as a democracy from independence in 1991 until 1995 and then again from 1998 through 2002. Cheibub et al. code Armenia as a mixed presidential-parliamentary democracy for the whole time period. Geddes, however, considers the country a personalist autocracy starting in 1994.

Levon Hakobi Ter-Petrosyan of the Hayots Hamazgain Sharzhum (HHS) (also known as the Armenian National Movement, or ANM) served as president at the time of independence until 1998. There is no SOLS change at independence. For a portion of his rule, from 1995 until 1998, the country is coded as an authoritarian regime. This is likely due to a 1995 constitutional referendum that granted sweeping powers to the president. The same year, National Assembly elections were held under non-democratic conditions. The principal opposition party was banned, the media was censored by the ruling party, voters were coerced, and other electoral rules were violated (Hovannisian 1996). Petrosyan was reelected in the following year, in 1996. In 1998, he "resigned following mass defections from the ANM and the resignation of key officials in protest against his gradualist approach in negotiations over control of Nagorno- Karabakh, the Armenian enclave in Azerbaijan" (Library of Congress). Petrosian's Prime Minister Robert Kocharian, Non-Party, was elected 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.

From 1998 until 2003 the country is once again considered a democracy according to our coding rules. Then, from 2003 until 2008, still under Kocharian's presidency, the country is once again considered a personalist autocracy. Kocharian was reelected in 2003 by non-democratic means. As Freedom House (2004) explains, "the election fell short of international standards for democratic elections, with the voting, counting, and tabulation processes showing serious irregularities. Other problems noted included media bias in favor of the incumbent and political imbalances in the election commissions." Moreover, they continue, opposition supporters who demonstrated the results "were sentenced in closed-door trials to two weeks in prison." This is not a SOLS change, although it does represents a shift in power in favor of the president, Kocharian.

In 2008, Serzh Sarkisyan of the Hayastani Hanrapetakan Kusaktsutyun (HHK) became president. He had been serving as PM since 2007. According to Freedom House (2009), "The slanted media environment afforded Sarkisian, the chosen successor of outgoing president Robert Kocharian, a dominant position in communicating with the public during and after the 2008 presidential election campaign." "The two men are leaders of the so-called Karabakh clan, which critics claim is given preferential treatment within government circles." Both leaders were from Nagorno-Karabakh and according to Radio Free Europe (2008), Kocharian continued to

exert influence over Sarkisyan's government even once he was out of office. In a recent book Bunce and Wolchik (2011) argue that both are from the same clan and that Sarkisyan is Kocharian's chosen successor that came to power through elections. Accordingly, this is not a SOLS change.

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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Coded by Anna Carella 10/5/2010
Checked by Michaela Mattes 11/01/2010
Updated by Matt DiLorenzo 07/21/2012
Revised by Bryan Rooney 10/17/2012
Edited by Andrew Wood (Rice) on 5/22/14
Edited by Kristin Bryant to include information about 2009-2018 period coded by Alex Pugh on 08/08/2020