Nigeria
Rice

Nigeria gained its independence from Britain in 1960 and established a parliamentary democratic system. One of the major conflicts that has characterized Nigerian politics is the conflict between the different regions of the country, each of which is dominated by a different ethnic group.

Initially, the Prime Minister was Abubakar Balewa, who had been in that office since 1957. He was a member of the Northern People's Congress (NPC), which in 1963 formed an alliance with the Nigerian National Democratic Party to create the Nigerian National Alliance (NNA/NCNC). According to Schlager and Weisblatt (2006: 993) "the first government of independent Nigeria in 1960 emerged as a coalition between NPC and the NCNC". According to Adamolekun and Ayo (1989, 159), "the 30 December 1964 elections changed the composition of government from a NPC/NCNC coalition to a NPC/NCNC/NNDP coalition". This is coded as a minor SOLS change on December 30, 1964.

In 1966, Balewa, along with most of the officials in the federal government, was assassinated by a group of military officers mainly from Southeastern Nigeria. They established a new military government under Johnson Thomas Aguiyi-Ironsi. This is coded a SOLS change, since the country becomes a pure military regime with this coup (Geddes). However, Aguiyi-Ironsi was assassinated later in the year by a group of northern military officers. The head of government then became Yakubu Gowon. This is coded a minor SOLS change, because while Aguiyi-Ironsi and Gowon were both military figures, they were supported by different regional/ethnic groups. Gowon remained in power until 1975, when he was displaced in a bloodless coup by his fellow military officers, led by General Murtala Muhammad. This is not a SOLS change. In 1976, Muhammad was assassinated in a failed coup attempt. He was replaced by his Chief of Staff, Lt. Gen. Olusegun Obasanjo. This is not a SOLS change.

Obasanjo's government pledged to return power to civilian hands. In 1977, a new constitution allowed for the formation of political parties. Elections were held in 1979, and Alhaji Shehu Shagari, a member of the National Party of Nigeria (NPN) was elected President. This is a SOLS change. Shagari won reelection in August 1983 (though with accusations of fraud), but was overthrown in a military coup in December of that year. This is a SOLS change. The new head of state was the leader of the Supreme Military Council, Major General Muhammadu Buhari. Buhari's government took steps to combat corruption in Nigeria, but was peacefully overthrown by another member of the SMC, Major General Ibrahim Babangida. This is not a SOLS change. Babangida was in power until 1993, when after many delays, his government finally allowed for free civilian elections.

The 1993 elections were seen to be Nigeria's fairest, and led to the election of MKO Abiola as President. However, before he could assume office, Babangida had the results annulled. Riots immediately broke out throughout Nigeria, and forced Babangida to hand over power to an interim government under the non-partisan Ernest Shonekan, who initially was supposed to govern until new elections were held in February 1994. This is not a SOLS change, as this was a temporary government. However, in November 1993, just three months after taking office, Shonekan was forced to resign by his Defense Minister, Sani Abacha. Abacha established

a military/personalist government, according to Geddes. As the previous government was classified as military, this is a minor SOLS change.

Abacha remained in power until 1998, when he was replaced by General Abdulsalami Abubakar. This is not a SOLS change. Abubakar freed almost all civilian political detainees, and finally allowed for elections to take place in 1999. Obsanjo, the former President (from 1976-77), who had been imprisoned for resisting the Abacha regime, ran as a civilian candidate from the People's Democratic Party (PDP), and won the Presidency. This is a SOLS change. Nigeria has been a democratic state from that point to the present day. Obsanjo was in office until 2007, when he reached his term limit. The new PDP candidate, Umaru Yar'Adua, won the elections of that year.

President Umaru Musa Yar'Adua died due to illness in 2010, and Vice-President Goodluck Ebele Azikiwe Jonathan became acting president until elections held in 2011 (Al Jazeera 2010). Jonathan won the presidential elections in April 2011 (BBC News 2011). In accordance with the coding rules, we code him as taking power when he became acting president. There is no SOLS change from Yar'Adua to Jonathan as both were from the same political party and Jonathan was an official in Yar'Adua's regime.

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