

Sierra Leone

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Sierra Leone is coded as a democracy from 1961 through 1967 and is autocratic for most of the remainder of the observation period, with the exception of 2001 and 2007-2008. Sierra Leone is considered a parliamentary democracy from independence in 1961 until 1967. During this time there is one leadership change in 1964, when Milton Augustus Strieby Margai of the Sierra Leone People's Party (SLPP) died and was replaced by his younger half-brother Albert Michael Margai, also of the SLPP (Bøås 2001, 707). This is not a SOLS change as both leaders had the same party affiliation. In 1967 elections were held, but the winner, Siaka Probyn Stevens of the All People's Congress (APC), was prevented from taking office by a military coup orchestrated by Brigadier David Lansana, Commander of the Republic of Sierra Leone Military Forces (RSLMF). The leader changes twice in this year, from Albert Margai to David Lasana, and then from Lasana to Andrew Terence Juxon-Smith. The first is a SOLS change since Margai's supporting coalition is the SLPP and Lasana's is the military; the second is not a SOLS change since Lasana and Juxon-Smith are both members of the military. Sierra Leone in 1967 is coded as a pure military authoritarian system.

In 1968 there is a leadership change from Juxon-Smith to Stevens when a counter-coup within the military imposed the 1967 election's result. This is a SOLS change as Stevens is a civilian, a member of the APC, and not a military officer. 1968 marks the beginning of a pure single-party regime under the APC that rules continuously until 1992. Stevens rules until 1985. In 1971 Stevens amends the constitution to create the Republic of Sierra Leone which changes the parliamentary democracy into a presidential republic (Pham 2004). Stevens' leader position changes from PM to President. This is not a true regime change or SOLS change since the country is a single-party authoritarian system at the time. In 1985 Stevens stepped down and his pre-designated successor (Hirsch 2001a, 31) Joseph Saidu Momoh, also of the APC, became president. This is not a SOLS change since the single-party system under the APC continues under Momoh. In 1992 there was a military coup by young officers and Captain Valentine Esegagbo Melvine Strasser takes power as Chairman of the National Provisional Ruling Council. This is a SOLS change since the single-party rule of the APC ends and Strasser is supported by the military. From 1992 to 1995, the country is coded as a military-personalist authoritarian system. In 1996 there are two leadership changes, when Julius Maada Bio conducts a bloodless coup to remove Strasser, and then when elections are held and Ahmad Tejan Kabbah of the SLPP wins and becomes president. Despite the coup, we do not code a SOLS change between Stasser and Bio as both are military figures. The transition from Bio to Kabbah is coded as a SOLS change since the military regime ends and a civilian, whose support base is the SLPP takes over. Geddes (1999) does not provide coding for Kabbah's rule, signaling that no clear type of regime is in place at the time. The country is coded as an autocracy for the duration; however, it is interesting to note that Cheibub et. al (2009) have coded Kabbah's rule as a presidential democracy. Indeed, he was the winner of elections; however, he did not have the monopoly of force while in office and ruled only with the aid of international peacekeepers (Hirsch 2001b, 149). Armed militants made government consolidation difficult. Kabbah tried to negotiate with the Revolutionary United Front (RUF), and eventually hired mercenaries to drive them to a compromise. Once the ceasefire was in place, the mercenaries were let go, and RUF went back to its violent rebellion.

Soon after, in 1997, there was another military coup, with Johnny Paul Koroma taking power as Head of the Armed Forces Revolutionary Council. He invited the RUF back to the capital and forced Kabbah into exile (Chege 2002, 155). This is a SOLS change since Kabbah, a civilian with support of the SLPP is replaced by a military leader and a junta government whom Geddes considers to lead a personalist regime. The new personalist regime ends when Koroma is removed from office a little less than a year later. In 1998, the British and Nigerians were successful in returning Kabbah to power. This is another SOLS change. Fighting with the RUF continued. The Lomé Peace Agreement was reached in July 1999 and the end of the ten-year conflict was officially declared in 2002. Elections were held in 2002 and the incumbent, Kabbah, was reelected. (Note that according to our coding the country remains a non-democracy but Cheibub et al. code it as a presidential democracy.) Kabbah remained in power until 2007. 2007 and 2008 are coded as democratic with a presidential system. Presumably this is the case because in 2007 free and fair presidential elections occurred and power was peacefully transferred from Kabbah of the SLPP to Koroma of the All People's Congress (APC). This is a SOLS change since the two leaders were supported by different parties and Koroma had been clearly opposed to Kabbah earlier. Koroma rules through 2008.

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