

Niger

Rice

Upon independence from France in 1960, Niger became a single-party state under the rule of Hamani Diori, the leader of the Nigerian Progressive Party (the only legal party until 1974). Diori was in power until 1974, when he was overthrown in a military coup, due to accusations of corruption and a severe drought (United States Department of State, 2010). The leader of the coup was Lieutenant Colonel Seyni Kountche, who then became the leader of the country. This is a SOLS change. Kountche was in power until his death in 1987, at which point leadership passed to his Chief of Staff, Brigadier General Ali Saibou. This is not a SOLS change. Saibou made some democratic reforms, which then led to calls for democratic elections. In 1989, Saibou's SOLS changes from military to "MNSD" or Mouvement National de la Société de Développement. There is only one leader: Saibou (1987-1993) this year. GWF code the country since 1975 to 1991 as a Military-Personalist hybrid (and code provisional until 1993). So we do not code a SOLS change here. According to Muller et al. (2011: 1052), Saibou was an army general who formed MNSD and was elected president of the Supreme Council of National Orientation, thereby becoming the sole candidate for election as head of state. He was credited with more than 99 percent of the votes, as was the single list of 93 MNSD candidates elected to the new National Assembly. After a new constitution was written, elections were held in 1993, and led to Mahamane Ousmane, a member of the Democratic and Social Convention (CDS) becoming President. This is a SOLS change.

The government elected in 1993 was quickly paralyzed by rivalries from within, leading to a coup in 1996. The coup was led by Colonel Ibrahim Bare Mainassara, who led Niger into three more years of personalist rule. This is a SOLS change. Mainassara won a flawed election in July 1996 that led to him being declared President. In 1999, Mainassara was overthrown and assassinated in a coup led by Major Daouda Wanke, also a member of the military. However, this is not a SOLS change because Wanke's government which "suspended constitution and announced a nine-month transitional plan that would culminate in the inauguration of an elected president" (Muller, 2011: 1049) is considered an interim/transitional government (see also The Guardian, 2004; United States Department of State, 2010). Since Mamadou Tandja was the first newly elected President after the end of a personalist rule, a change from Mainassara to Mamdou is coded as a SOLS change. The country in 1990 is coded as democracy, although since 1991 the country is coded as a democracy with mixed system. Wanke created a new constitution, and held elections that were deemed free and fair. In October 1999, the newly elected President, Mamadou Tandja, a member of the National Movement for the Development of Society (NMSD) took office. This is a SOLS change. Tandja was reelected in 2004, and remains in power in the present day. It should be noted that in 2009, Tandja dismantled most of the democratic institutions in Niger and drafted a new constitution which extended his time in office by another three years, and stated that the President could run for unlimited terms.

References

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