



Nuovi Autoritarismi e Democrazie:
Diritto, Istituzioni, Società

Who Holds the Power? Political Succession & Authoritarian Regimes in Africa (1990-2020)

*Federico Battera**

Abstract

The paper analyzes and describes continuities of authoritarian regimes in Africa since the return to multipartism by classifying cases which have been stable in the authoritarian form in the last thirty years. Special attention is devoted to political successions, whether these are ruled by a party and/or the military or took the form of dynastic ones. In particular, the existence of collegial control on personal power is presented as an important way of ensuring continuities of party and/or military hegemony over the authoritarian regime. Collegial control may also strengthen the stability of the regime in its authoritarian form. However, it is not excluded that a moderate degree of personal power may also be helpful in ensuring stability if combined with collegial control as it helps in limiting factionalism.

Keywords: authoritarianism, political succession, personal power, collegial power, military power

SOMMARIO: 1. Introduction. 2. Political Succession in African Authoritarian Regimes: Between Personal & Collegial Power. 3. The Selection of Cases and their Temporary Classification. 4. The Uncertainty of Dynastic Successions. 5. Personal Power and Collegial Power: Re-Classifying Authoritarian Types. 6. Conclusions: Succession and Stability.

* Associate Professor of African Political Systems at the Department of Political and Social Sciences, University of Trieste, Italy. The essay was submitted to double blind peer-review. Member of the Editorial Staff who oversaw the essay: Laura Alessandra Nocera.

1. Introduction

Authoritarian regimes rely on broad coalitions of interests (i.e. ‘power coalitions’) made by a strongman and his/her family, a hegemonic party, bureaucracies, leading entrepreneurs and security apparatuses¹. There are many variations across Africa as far as the role, the weight and the importance of these pillars within power coalitions. While it is agreed that personal power and strongmen are believed to be of crucial importance in defining authoritarian rule across the continent², here is argued that structures of collegial power must not to be ignored. In particular, the paper focuses on two: security apparatuses (the military) and dominant parties. The importance of these organizations may emerge when personal power weakens as the strongman in power approaches age limits, except when during tenure his/her personal power had adversely impacted on the autonomy of the party and the military. The latter condition comes commonly with the emergence of a powerful family which surround the strongman.

The aim of the paper is therefore to: a) identify and discuss in which conditions structures of collegial power remain important determining a non-dynastic succession; and, b) ascertain whether successions ruled or controlled by a structure of collegial power are more likely to remain stable authoritarian avoiding or limiting regime crisis.

Regimes are observed within a time span which dates back to 1990 and covers thirty years up to 2020. The time span is ample enough to allow the identification of trends, changes, continuities and eventual oscillations from one authoritarian type to another. Within such time span political successions serve as proof-testing. By focusing on succession is possible to clearly find who holds the real power, whether an organization or a dynasty. It is not a chance that many regimes that has been labeled in the past as ‘personal’ have revealed during crisis of succession how fragile was in fact personal power while facing far more sturdy organizations such as professional armies or established parties.

The article contributes to the debate on authoritarianism by analyzing the many variations and cases that have been observed. These will be regrouped and classified according to the incidence of personal and/or collegial power provided by organizations such as armies and/or parties. While it is agreed that personalism is a continuous trait among regimes long-lasting dominated by strongmen³, as Geddes⁴ it is possible to identify regimes where personalism greatly prevails on established organizations. Combining the two – personal and collegial power – can give us much more understanding of the

¹ D. Acemoglu, G. Egorov, K. Sonin. *Coalition Formation in Non-Democracies*, in *Review of Economic Studies*, No. 4, 2008, 987–1009.

² Since Jackson and Rosberg (*Personal Rule in Black Africa*, University of California Press, 1982), this issue has attracted a vast literature.

³ M. Wahman, J. Teorell, A. Hadenius. *Authoritarian Regime Types Revisited: Updated Data in Comparative Perspective*, in *Contemporary Politics*, No. 1, 2013, 19-34.

⁴ B. Geddes, *What Do We Know about Democratization after Twenty Years?*, in *Annual Review of Political Science*, No. 1, 1999, 115-144.

differences among authoritarian regimes and their resilience.

2. Political Succession in African Authoritarian Regimes: Between Personal & Collegial Power

Since after independence up to the beginning of the 1990s, authoritarianism in Africa attracted a vast literature, which however tended to focus more on case studies than approaching the issue in comparative terms. Furthermore, with one notable exception⁵, few focused on the modalities of succession within authoritarian regimes. If we consider that succession is the best test for measuring regime long-lasting robustness⁶ this seems puzzling. Reasons must be found in two opposite trends, which applied to two distinct groups of countries: a) in many cases, political stability was assured by personal power. Such fact became paramount in the 1980s⁷ and in certain cases personal power was so strong that survived attempts of democratization in the 1990s; b) in other cases, a series of coups and countercoups marked the post-colonial trajectory of other states. While the first group enjoyed relative stability under durable personal regimes, the other was characterized by continuous instability, with only some achieving later the stability of the former group under the same modalities, i.e. by concentrating power into a single man.

Generally, bureaucratic organization such as parties⁸ or armies were considered having fallen under the same personal dominance – “neo-patrimonialism” could be largely considered as a synonym – and consequently having lost any autonomy or capacity⁹. Regular succession – i.e. the transfer of power within the same regime – was therefore widely considered an exception. Hughes and May¹⁰ was probably the only one contribution that tried to find whether regular – “orderly” – succession actually happened, listing sixteen cases (nineteen if we include North Africa),

⁵ A. Hughes, R. May, *The Politics of Succession in Black Africa* in *Third World Quarterly*, No. 1, 1988, 1-22.

⁶ J. Blondel, *World Leaders*, Sage, 1980, 83-85.

⁷ R.H. Jackson, C. Rosberg, *Personal Rule in Black Africa*, cit.

⁸ On the contrary, parties have attracted notable attention by those initially interested in authoritarian transition such as J.S. Coleman and C. Rosberg (*Political parties and national integration in tropical Africa*, University of California Press, 1964) and A.R. Zolberg (*Creating Political Order: The Party-States of West Africa*, Rand McNally, 1966).

⁹ T. Mkandawire, *Neopatrimonialism and the Political Economy of Economic Performance in Africa: Critical Reflections*, in *World Politics*, 2015, 1-50. According to J.F. Médard (*The Underdeveloped State in Africa: Political Clientelism or Neo-patrimonialism?*, in C. Clapham (Ed.), *Private Patronage and Public Power: Political Clientelism and the Modern State*, Frances Pinter, 1982, 162-189) “neo-patrimonialism” is understood as the “privatization of the public”. Personal relations are consequently the prevailing trait of neo-patrimonial power. Neo-patrimonialism is largely looked as adverse to both political and economic development. Exception is represented by more recent literature on the so-called “developmental patrimonialism”. See on this, Tim Kelsall, David Booth, Diana Cammack and Frederick Golooba-Mutebi, *Developmental patrimonialism? Questioning the orthodoxy on political governance and economic progress in Africa*, Africa Power and Politics Programme (APPP) Working Paper, No. 9, 2010.

¹⁰ A. Hughes, R. May, *The Politics of Succession in Black Africa*, cit.

which, contrary to their own expectations were not a bad result¹¹. By orderly succession they meant one that respected some legal requirements. They concluded that when it occurred that «[...] must be seen as encouraging and a move in the direction of a [...] self-perpetuating process of leadership change within what Huntington terms 'political institutionalization [...]»¹². In other words, they found that regular succession ruled by organizations that retained some form of collegial power could be conducive to some form of regime's institutionalization – i.e. “stabilization”. The paper was published very few years before democratization had begun and authoritarianism started to be perceived as illegitimate and the issue rapidly overcome. Indeed, by the beginning of the 1990s many of these regimes did not survive or endured severe crisis marked by political instability, if not, civil wars. However, some managed to survive either, by allowing some kind of controlled multipartism, just remaining authoritarian yet, and, some managed to survive also crises of succession thanks to functioning organizations, being them a party, an army, or both, or by resorting to effective personal networks. Still in literature, the role of parties, in ensuring continuity of authoritarian rule in Africa does not deserve an adequate consideration with some notable exceptions¹³. The same about armies. With the exception of Northern Africa, where military regimes are still characterized by powerful security apparatuses¹⁴ which rule behind the screen of civilian governments¹⁵, military power in Sub-Saharan Africa attracted a certain attention only before regimes' transformation in the 1990s, but contrary to Latin America where military juntas were the rule, in Africa, most of the military that had staged coups have created their own party or suffered the same “neo-

¹¹ A. Hughes, R. May, *The Politics of Succession in Black Africa*, cit., 3. This means about one third successions. A data consistent with that which is found in R.M. Govea and J.D. Holm, *Crisis, violence and political succession in Africa*, in *Third World Quarterly*, No. 1, 1998, 129-148.

¹² A. Hughes, R. May, *The Politics of Succession in Black Africa*, cit., 21.

¹³ See: B. Magaloni, *Credible Power-Sharing and the Longevity of Authoritarian Rule*, in *Comparative Political Studies*, No. 4/5, 2008, 715-741; S. Levitsky, A. W. Lucan, *The Rise of Competitive Authoritarianism*, in *Journal of Democracy*, No. 2, 2002, 51–65; Y.L. Morse, *Electoral authoritarianism and weak states in Africa* in *International Political Science Review*, No. 1, 2018, 114-129; A. Meng, *Constraining Dictatorship. From Personalized Rule to Institutionalized Regimes*, Cambridge University Press, 2020. M.V. Svoboda, *The Politics of Authoritarian Rule*, Cambridge University Press, 2012, could be included in the list if his African cases were not considered as mainly fallen into the category of “established autocracies”, where precisely «[...] the dictator has effectively eliminated the ruling coalition, whose support is no longer necessary for his survival». (cit., 61). Finally, G. Carbone, A. Pellegata, *Researching the dynamics of leaders' replacement: The Africa Leadership Change (ALC) dataset*, in *European Political Science*, No. 2, 2018, 187–210, provide with a useful dataset on successions which are classified whether electoral, non-electoral or violent. They found that, generally, multiparty reforms of the 1990s regularized the way in which African rulers access and are removed from office. This had a certain impact also on some authoritarian regimes.

¹⁴ See, E. Bellin, *The Robustness of Authoritarianism in the Middle East: Exceptionalism in Comparative Perspective* in *Comparative Politics*, No. 2, 2004, 139–157.

¹⁵ See S.A. Cook, *Ruling but Not Governing: The Military and Political Development in Egypt, Algeria and Turkey*, The John Hopkins University Press, 2007.

patrimonial” transformation. The army was considered as a mean of obtaining power rather than an organization able to create a different type of regime¹⁶. Such regimes fell under what Geddes et al. refer as those led by a military strongman “unconstrained by other officers”¹⁷. These were men who came to power by controlling the army but thereafter showed sufficient autonomy from those who brought them to power by weakening the same army in order to prevent possible further coups¹⁸. The list was long and mainly referred to the past, although we still found trajectories of this type. When this condition happens, such regimes have been considered personalistic given that the army is weak and regime robustness relies on specialized units totally controlled by the strongman and recruited according to loyalty more than merit. On the contrary, regimes will be considered military controlled only when they follow Finer’s argument, i.e. those acting «[...] entirely or predominantly at their (i.e. the military) command»¹⁹.

Single party, with the major exception of Eritrea, no longer exists. Authoritarianism of today rather takes the form of a *façade* multipartism where once single-parties are now dominant parties which tolerate political pluralism to the point of not endangering those in power²⁰. Elections in a similar setting are not free and fair enough to permit opposition parties to win even when such parties are robust and popular. Routinized selection within the party elite sanctioned by controlled election, in a process similar to those observed by Hughes and May²¹, may then ensure continuity of party dominance. On the contrary, excessive personalism hampers the functioning of such parties and their autonomy. Parties became an instrument of a strongman and his “family” to the point that hereditary regimes are put in place; a very well-known trend also in Africa²². An interesting point is however not only when and under which conditions well poised hereditary

¹⁶ See among the many: P. McGowan, T.H. Johnson, *African Military Coups d’État and Underdevelopment: A Quantitative Historical Analysis* in *The Journal of Modern African Studies*, No. 4, 1984, 633-666; S. Decalo, *Coups and Army Rule in Africa: Motivations and Constraints*, Yale University Press, 1990; and J.C. Jenkins, A.J. Kposowa, *The Political Origins of African Military Coups: Ethnic Competition, Military Centrality, and the Struggle over the Postcolonial State*, in *International Studies Quarterly*, No. 3, 1992, 271–291.

¹⁷ B. Geddes, J. Wright, E. Frantz, *Autocratic Breakdown and Regime Transitions: A New Data Set*, in *Perspectives on Politics*, No. 2, 2014, 313-331.

¹⁸ An alternative option is that to resort to an “ethnic army”. The result is the same. See K.A. Harkness, *Military loyalty and the failure of democratization in Africa: how ethnic armies shape the capacity of presidents to defy term limits*, in *Democratization*, No. 5, 2017, 801-818, and P. Roessler, *The Enemy Within: Personal Rule, Coups, and Civil War in Africa*, in *World Politics*, No. 2, 2011, 300-346.

¹⁹ S.E. Finer, *The Man on Horseback*, Pall Mall, 1962, 149.

²⁰ Dominant party must here be intended as the “authoritarian dominant party” of the classification by G. Sartori, *Parties and Party Systems: A Framework for Analysis*, ECPR, 2005, 232. «[...] The authoritarian dominant party does not allow for competition on an equal basis and alternation in power is only a theoretical possibility» (M. Boogaards, *Counting parties and identifying dominant party systems in Africa*, in *European Journal of Political Research*, No. 43, 2004, 178).

²¹ *The Politics of Succession in Black Africa*, cit.

²² See, J. Brownlee, *Hereditary Succession in Modern Autocracies*, in *World Politics*, No. 4, 2007, 595–628.

successions happen but why they did not realize. After Brownlee's article some cases of the latter also occurred²³. Expected dynastic succession did not succeed because something else intervened. Generally, this was the army or a military strongman with the support of the latter²⁴. Such political role of the armies in ensuring continuity and stability to regime in place, largely studied in Middle Eastern and North African studies²⁵, has been less investigated for Sub-Saharan regimes, yet it could be observed for those regimes led by parties which came to power after staging a successful *guerrilla*. In these parties an organic symbiotic relationship between a civil and a military wing in the party may survive post-war transition, to the point that the civil and military are "fused". Such symbiotic relationship was observed by Perlmutter and LeoGrande in the communist regimes of the Cold war²⁶. Such assumptions can be extended to those African parties which derived from Marxist guerrilla movements and/or were influenced in a way or the other by Maoism as an ideology or as an instrument of organizing guerrillas, even if Marxism was later abandoned.

Such movements have recently attracted an important literature²⁷, but all these works mainly point on the consequences of war legacies that had brought such parties in power and the weak perspective of democratization, less on the intricacy of relations between a political direction and the military wings within movements²⁸. Something that is not easy to uncover, but as it is here stressed, plays a crucial role in determining regime stability and its resilience.

²³ *Hereditary Succession in Modern Autocracies*, cit.

²⁴ The political role of armies is generally found in Middle Eastern literature, which covers Northern Africa, but not so much in that devoted to Sub-Saharan Africa.

²⁵ See: S.A. Cook, *Ruling but Not Governing*, cit.; P. Droz-Vincent, *From Political to Economic Actors: The Changing Role of Middle Eastern Armies*, in O., Schlumberger (Ed.). *Debating Arab Authoritarianism: Dynamics and Durability in Nondemocratic Regimes*, Stanford University Press, 2007, 195–214.

²⁶ A. Perlmutter, W.M. LeoGrande, *The Party in Uniform: Toward a Theory of Civil-Military Relations in Communist Political Systems*, in *The American Political Science Review*, No. 4, 1982, 784. "The Party in Uniform" focused on the case of China and Cuba. In the Chinese case such symbiotic relationship is more evident while in the case of Cuba the guerrilla movement pre-existed to the Marxist party and the military wing prevailed.

The party in China managed not only to survive the end of Communism but have also routinized succession through established party and constitutional rules. See Jing Huang, *Institutionalization of Political Succession in China: Progress and Implications*, in Cheng Li (Ed.). *China's Changing Political Landscape: Prospects for Democracy*. Brookings Institution Press, 2009, 80-97, although forms of collegial power do not exclude the persistence of factional game (J. Mulvenon, *The King Is Dead! Long Live the King! The CMC Leadership Transition from Jiang to Hu*, in *China Leadership Monitor*, No. 13, 2005, 1–8).

²⁷ See: C. Clapham, *From Liberation Movement to Government: Past legacies and the challenge of transition in Africa*. Discussion Paper 8/2012, The Brenthurst Foundation; R. Southall, *Liberation Movements in Power: Party and State in Southern Africa*. James Currey, 2013; T. Lyons, *The Importance of Winning: Victorious Insurgent Groups and Authoritarian Politics*, *Comparative Politics*, No. 2, 2016, 167–184; R. Berketeab ((Ed.). *National Liberation Movements as Government in Africa*. Routledge, 2018.

²⁸ It is not a case that differences between military and civilian wings were noticed and underlined by expert of the Burundian case. See, G. Rufyikiri, *Failure of rebel movement-to-political party*

Definitively, the unresolved question is who holds the real power.

3. The Selection of Cases and their Temporary Classification

Cases have been selected as follows. First, regimes were classified as “authoritarian” when they did not meet some minimum standards of fairness and freedom during elections. Since regimes were observed along a timespan of thirty years (1990-2020), the lack of fairness and freedom must cover the entire timespan. Second, while freedom during before and after elections was deemed a necessary requirement to be excluded from the list, fairness of elections was judged less indispensable when elections determined a government change. For example, this was the case of Zambia in 2011 and 2021, where opposition won the elections notwithstanding a general condition of unfairness. For this reason, hybrid regimes have not been considered²⁹. “Competitive authoritarian” regimes have rather been considered “defective” authoritarian regimes – i.e. less capable coercive regimes – but still authoritarian³⁰. Third, it was taken into consideration only regimes where a viable state does exist. Cases as Libya or South Sudan were therefore excluded.

For other cases, the timespan can be shorter, since only the last regime has been considered. For example, Burundi moved from one to another authoritarian regime, led by different parties. In this case, timespan starts in 2005 when the CNDD-FDD (Conseil national pour la défense de la démocratie-Forces pour la défense de la démocratie) assumed power. The same considerations were applied to Congo (Republic of). Since the “democratic” interlude under Lissouba (1992-97) was closed to 1990, it was decided to start the timespan in 1997, although Sassou Nguesso already ruled between 1979 and 1992.

Doing as such nineteen cases has been identified. They are listed in table 1.

transformation of the CNDD-FDD in Burundi: an issue of balance between change and continuity, Working Paper/2016.11. Institute of Development Policy and Management, University of Antwerp; J. Speight, K. Wittig, *Pathways from rebellion: Rebel-party configurations in Côte d’Ivoire and Burundi*, in *African Affairs*, No. 466, 2018, 21-43.

²⁹ Classification relies only on qualitative sources, through observation, primary (local press, blogs, etc.) or secondary sources (case studies), which are abundant. Datasets on regimes like Freedom in the world or Varieties of democracy were not entirely discarded, but both posed problems of classification, in particular for those countries that did not satisfy full democratic standards of fairness.

³⁰ Conversely, a regime is a democracy, may be a defective one as probably most of the African democracies, when political pluralism is admitted and generally protected. “Defective authoritarian regimes” share analogies with the “De facto single-party state” of Sartori (cit., 232), which according to him denoted a lower degree of coercion.

The decision to include ambiguous cases was complicated for some. The most ambiguous one was likely to be Mozambique. Mozambique enjoyed a favorable literature at the beginning of its transition towards multi-party system in 1994 which however changed in the last decade (see, M.A. Pitcher, *Mozambique Elections 2019: Pernicious Polarization, Democratic Decline, and Rising Authoritarianism*, in *African Affairs*, No. 476, 468-486). It could be interpreted as a case of sliding towards authoritarianism if we accepted that it had reached, at a certain stage, sufficient democratic standard, which was probably never the case.

TAB. 1 – AUTHORITARIAN CASES BETWEEN 1990 AND 2021

CASES	RULERS	CAUSES OF END	OUTCOME
Algeria	Bouteflika (1999-2019)	dismissed by the army	New civilian ruler with the approval of the army
Angola	Dos Santos (1979-2017)	dismissed by the party (and the army)	New <i>civilian</i> ruler (of the same party)
Burundi			
Cameroon	Biya (1982-)		
Chad	Idriss Deby (1990-2021)	death	Father-to-son succession
Congo	Sassou Nguesso (1979-92; 1997-)		
Djibouti	Aptidon (1977-99) Guelleh (1999-)		Family succession
Egypt	Mubarak (1981-2011)	dismissed by the army	New military ruler
Eritrea	Afwerki (1991-)		
Ethiopia	Zenawi (1991-2012)	death	succession ruled by the party (and the army)
Gabon	Omar Bongo (1967-2009)	death	Father-to-son succession
E. Guinea	Obiang (1979-)		
Mozambique			
Rwanda	Kagame (1994-)		
Sudan	Al-Bashir (1989-2019)	dismissed by the army	Transition (and civil war)
Tanzania			
Togo	Eyadéma (1967-2005)	death	Father-to-son succession
Uganda	Museveni (1986-)		
Zimbabwe	Mugabe (1980-2017)	dismissed by the army	New <i>civilian</i> ruler (of the same party)

In the second column, it is possible to identify the name of rulers that ruled over the country for at list twenty years. They could be considered as having accumulated enough personal power. Prima facie, they could be considered as personal regimes, as they were treated as such in most of the literature of the past. Regimes as those of Mugabe or Mubarak were classified as “autocracies” or “personal regimes” which was partially true if their downfall demonstrated the powerful organization which ruled over their succession. In both cases was the army although some important distinctions must be done: the army in the Zimbabwean regime is “fused” with the party (the ZANU-PF; Zimbabwe African National Union – Patriotic Front)³¹ while, in the other, since Sadat the army and the party were largely autonomous organizations. This first distinction helps to predict the outcome of the two political succession. The former was characterized by continuity – the army removed the strongman replacing him with the Vice-President of the Republic (but former Minister of Defence) – the latter by a revolutionary interlude where the dismissal of the strongman led to the collapse of the dominant party and the return of the army in power after two years (2013).

All cases under scrutiny were therefore characterized by a significant amount of personalism, with the exception of three: Burundi, Mozambique and Tanzania. We can add to this Ethiopia, which, at least after the death of Zenawi underwent the same trend. In all, succession has been regular and routinized by the party in power (within the timespan four regular succession occurred in Tanzania), with the partial exception of Burundi, where Nkurunziza extended to a third mandate his tenure in 2015 escaping a coup attempt in the same year thanks of his control on the security apparatus and finally dying of COVID-19 in 2020. However, the succession to Ndayishimiye, a leading member of the party in power, had his endorsement even if it went not without disputes within the party. We could certainly classify these regimes are prevalently ruled by a certain degree of collegial power, which does not exclude the existence of factionalism within the party/military and of personalism. In at least two of this group – Ethiopia and Burundi – the military dimension remains important³².

Let concentrate therefore on the third and fourth columns where more information is given on the modality of succession that occurred when the mandate of the strongman ended and its outcome.

These columns provide us with further interesting information:

a) In three cases a father-to-son succession occurred. In one of these cases (Chad) both father and son are military men. We can certainly add a fourth case (Djibouti) where the succession already occurred (in 1999) within the same large family (the nephew succeeded to the uncle)³³.

³¹ On the influence of the army on the party, see B.-M. Tendi, *The Army and Politics in Zimbabwe. Mujuru, the Liberation Fighter and Kingmaker*. Cambridge University Press, 2020.

³² On the role of the armed wing of the TPLF within the EPRDF regime see International Crisis Group, *Ethiopia After Meles*, Africa Briefing No. 89, August 2012.

³³ On Djibouti, see P. J. Schraeder, *Ethnic Politics in Djibouti: From 'Eye of the Hurricane' to 'Boiling Cauldron'*, in *African Affairs*, 1993, No. 367, 203-221.

b) In five cases the army played a leading role in determining the modality of succession and the outcome. In one case (in Angola), their role was ambiguous since the army is fused with the party (MPLA; *Movimento Popular de Libertação de Angola*) and formally it was the president Dos Santos who ‘spontaneously’ stepped down favoring his minister of National Defence³⁴. In this as in the Zimbabwean case the new ruler is a *civilian*, but the italic in the table point to the fact that the profile of the new rulers is that of former security men. The case of Egypt has no ambiguity of the kind. The succession was managed by the army and finally resulted in a military man in power. That this result was not given for sure in 2011³⁵, does not change the overall picture: although the Mubarak regime was certainly a personal regime the army continued to rule. The same could be said of the Algerian regime under Bouteflika. This was a military regime formally led by a civilian president.

By looking at succession, it is possible to retrospectively test those that actually control authoritarian regimes, whether a party an army or both, or a family. This is of particular importance for those regimes as Egypt or Zimbabwe that could be easily classified by personalism if their strongman had not been pressed to resign.

By summarizing, as far as this issue is concerned four main types of succession could be identified:

a) successions which have been *routinized within the dominant party*. The party at the end of the second-term in office of the President selects the successor and formalized it by presidential controlled elections. Tanzania, Mozambique, and Ethiopia fit within this group. To the latter two cases, “in accordance with the military” could be added, just to point to the importance of the military component within the party in power – the FRELIMO (Frente de Libertação de Moçambique) and the EPRDF (Ethiopian People’s Revolutionary Democratic Front). In this first group, I consider the party as the main actor of the regime. Its relevance within the regime is more important than that of the military or could reach a sort of parity, in the case of Ethiopia. I had doubts also about Mozambique³⁶, but I think this case approaches that of Tanzania more than the second group.

b) The second group is made up of those cases where succession was *ruled by the party and the military*. The latter has been put under brackets because the military acts behind the curtain of the party which formally took the decision (as in

³⁴ There is still no certainty about the “deal” that brought Dos Santos and his family to renounce to power, but the military background of Lourenço, the new president, and his choices to rely on an inner circle made of powerful securocrats (see B. Augé, *Angola under Joao Lourenço. Who are the new players of MPLA State*, Notes de l’Ifri, Ifri, December 2019), militate in favor of a military hand behind the MPLA decisions. Provincial governors are often of military background. This gives military men a strong grip on local government.

³⁵ See D.H. Kinney, *Sharing Saddles: Oligarchs and Officers on Horseback in Egypt and Tunisia*, in *International Studies Quarterly*, 2021, 1–16) on this point.

³⁶ These doubts stem from the leading political role within the party and the government played by former military men such as Guebuza, who held the President office from 2004 to 2014. These doubts have furtherly been strengthened recently as the current President, Nyusi, is said to pursue a third term in office with the support of the Chipande faction within the military.

Angola 2017). However, in these cases the military IS the main actor. In such cases the army and the party are ‘fused’ together, meaning that even if the two are formally distinct still crucial members of the army sit in the party executive committees (ECs) or exert enough influence on the party leadership. Since in all of these cases (three, Burundi, Zimbabwe, Angola) the party stems from a guerrilla movement, the military branch was called to play also a political role. Not only such role survived after the movement seized power but the military has generally circumvented attempts by the civil wing to control them. Sometimes, as in Zimbabwe 2017, the military wing ‘forces’ the civilian president to resign; in other cases (Angola 2017), the president spontaneously resigns, and the party ‘freely’ chose a military man among its top leaders.

c) Two cases have been found in the third type. This is made of cases where the *military acts directly to rule over a transition*. In these cases, a dominant party existed but actually played no role and was sacrificed under public protests against the regime. The party dissolved, as in Egypt, or was reduced to an ancillary role (Algeria), clearly revealing that the military WAS the only actor. That in one case – Egypt – a military man again returned to directly vest the Presidency, and in the other a civilian president was chosen by the army are variations on a common theme³⁷.

d) The fourth type is made of those cases where a *dynastic succession* occurred. It is the case of Djibouti, Togo, Gabon and Chad. These successions show some variations. In the case of Togo, the son succeeded to his father who was a military man. In the cases of Djibouti and Gabon, the nephew and the son succeeded to the uncle and the father who were not military men³⁸. In the case of Chad, a military man succeeded to his father who was also a military man. In all three cases, a dominant party existed, but it is clear that in the case of Chad the army plays a pivotal role which has no match in the other cases³⁹, perhaps with the exception of Togo.

Dynastic successions are those that reveal the pervasive role of families in power and their ability to manipulate and control a party and an army. These cases approach the Linz and Stepan model of sultanistic regimes⁴⁰. However, some distinctions can be made. In the cases of Gabon and Togo, the family does not dominate any arena – the economy, the civilian, the political, etc. – since a robust civic opposition does also exist. So, it is hard to look at them as weak institutionalized systems. This is rather the case of Chad. In Chad, the army, very small but highly efficient, is made of co-ethnic to the Déby family. Idris Déby had

³⁷ See F. Battera, *Variations among North African Military Regimes. Algeria and Egypt Compared*, in *Contemporary Arab Affairs*, No. 3, 2021 55–78, on this issue.

³⁸ On Gabon, see D. Yates, *The Dynastic Republic of Gabon*, in *Cahiers d'études africaines*, No.234, 2019, 483-513.

³⁹ After the death of Idriss Déby, who was killed in action on April 2021, the President of the National Assembly was supposed to replace him, but the Parliament was dissolved and a Transitional Military Council nominated his son, Mahamat Déby, acting President.

⁴⁰ J.J. Linz, A. Stepan. *Problems of Democratic Transition and Consolidation. Southern Europe, South America, and Post-Communist Europe*, The John Hopkins University Press, 1996.

several wives in his life, divorces and marriages. The frequency of these matched the frequency of changing alliances and enmities between his clan – the Bidayat – and others, with many members of even his own ethnic group – the Zaghawa – who enter and exit the army, routinely joining the opposition or re-entering into the “family” clique⁴¹. A party does actually exist– MPS (Mouvement patriotique du salut) – but is to be considered as the family instrument to co-opt and enlarge the inner power circle made of a tiny ethnic group that monopolizes the army and controls the core business, while less important businesses are left to members of other ethnic groups.

Dynastic successions are consistent with an important personal power. However, a high concentration of power in one hand does not necessarily ends in a dynastic succession when robust organizations can control the process avoiding successions of this type. This is the real point. Dynastic successions in cases like Togo, Djibouti and Gabon demonstrate how deep was the family control on the party even if the latter (and the army, in the case of Togo)⁴² could have facilitated such kind of succession in order to avoid that the coalition stability could be put in danger by ambitious rivals within the party and the army⁴³. The fact that these are small countries with a small or tiny population eased the task.

Problems arise for those cases that still have to go under a process of succession. They are six. All these are cases of long-standing presidencies, the longest E. Guinea (since 1979), the shortest Rwanda (since 1994) or Congo (since 1997), if we not consider his first tenure (1979-92) before the failed transition of 1992. For these cases no test of succession has happened so far. However, it is possible to grasp trends or find in the past some antecedents which may give us some leads of a possible direction.

4. The Uncertainty of Dynastic Successions

As far as the six cases left apart, let first look at their previous experiences. Three at least experienced already a succession where a certain continuity can be found. This is not the case of Uganda, Rwanda and Eritrea. These are three completely new regimes which resemble each other's. They all came out after a civil or liberation war, led by a Maoist movement. They all resemble the second group (see above) made of cases like Burundi, Angola and Zimbabwe, where a certain degree of ‘fusion’ between a military and a civilian branch is maintained. This is at its extreme in Eritrea, which is the only one-party system of the list and more blurred in the other two were formally the military and the party are maintained distinct.

⁴¹ M. Debois, *Living by the gun in Chad: armed violence as a practical occupation*, in *Journal of Modern African Studies*, No.3, 2011, 409-428.

⁴² A. Banjo, *The Politics of Succession Crisis in West Africa: The Case of Togo*, in *International Journal on World Peace*, No. 2, 2008, 39.

⁴³ «[...] hereditary succession does not guarantee a peaceful succession [...]. Nevertheless, it seems to be more peaceful than other methods». G. Tullock, *Autocracy*, Kluwer Academic Publishers, 1987, 162.

The last three bear some continuity with the ruler of the past. Biya came in power in 1982 after Ahidjo and the succession was ruled by the party⁴⁴. The same could be said about Congo, since Sassou Nguesso came to power for the first time in 1979 from the party already in power (the PCT - Parti congolais du travail). Whether this was a plot by the Military Committee within the party has not much importance⁴⁵. Succession came under a certain regime continuity. In part the same could be said about Obiang in E. Guinea. It is true that Obiang came to power by staging a bloody coup against Macias Nguema, but the latter was his uncle and Obiang was the commander of the army.

All these precedents must be nuanced if we consider the long tenure these leaders have enjoyed so far. Personalism is related to tenure, but, as the leader in power is aging if a powerful organization – the army or the party – has maintained a minimum autonomy a dynastic succession is less likely.

Therefore, is necessary to look to the current organization of these regimes, starting from the three that share common features with those cases as Burundi, Angola and Zimbabwe: namely, a powerful army more or less “fused” with a rooted party, starting from that with the strongest roots and army: Rwanda. Although the circle surrounding Kagame is informally known as the *akazu* (“the family”) and the president periodically purge the senior cadres of both the party (RPF - Rwandan Patriotic Front) and the army (RDF - Rwanda Defence Force)⁴⁶, which are fused together, a dynastic succession seems to be excluded since the party/army has taken stable roots in the country through entrenched programs of mobilization and militarization of the entire society⁴⁷. The same could be said about Eritrea, where is up to the army to mobilize (and control) people for both developmental project as well as zonal policing⁴⁸.

The case of Uganda is more ambiguous. In this case, the son of the President, Muhoozi Kainerugaba, is Commander of the land forces and of the Special Forces Command in the UPDF (Uganda Peoples’ Defence Forces). However, this case deserves further attentions. Uganda is demographically important, has a vibrant civil society and rooted political opposition parties, as it is demonstrated during elections. At the same time, the dominant NRM (National Resistance Movement) party is well rooted in the rural society, through a combination of “decentralization”

⁴⁴ See on this, A. Meng, op. cit.

⁴⁵ See, P. Yengo, *La guerre civile du Congo-Brazzaville. 1993-2002 “Chacun aura sa part”*, Karthala, 2006, on political dynamics within the PCT.

⁴⁶ The last ample purge within the army occurred in June 2023 (“Rwanda’s Kagame Orders Major Military Purge”, *Agence France-Presse*, June 07, 2023).

⁴⁷ See C. A., Mgbako, *Ingando Solidarity Camps: Reconciliation and Political Indoctrination in Post-Genocide Rwanda*, in *Harvard Human Rights Journal* 18, 2005, 201-224.

⁴⁸ Military administrators (the army is divided in zones) are deemed to be the most powerful next to Afewerki. K. Tronvoll, D.R. Mekonnen. *The African Garrison State. Human Rights and Political Deveolpment in Eritrea*, James Currey, 2014, 77. Major General Filipos Woldeyohannes, minister of the Defence and Chief of Staff, is considered the right arm of Afewerki.

and patronage⁴⁹. As the RPF, in Rwanda, NRM decentralization serves actually, although less efficiently and far more corrupted, as an instrument of mobilization and control. Therefore, opposing tendencies seems at work in Uganda. One which leads to a growing personal power surrounding the family⁵⁰, a trend marked by the expulsion of senior rank military and party officers since 1999 and the promotion of Muhoozi in the army, and of mounting corruption in the party cadres and one which makes still difficult to control the entire huge party machine and at the same time the army through personal power alone⁵¹. This makes a dynastic succession a less certain outcome.

If we shift our attention to the remaining cases, similar ambiguities do emerge. In Cameroon, the President is endowed with extraordinary personal power. Biya reached an enviable forty-year long tenure and an age approaching ninety. However, there is no certainty about a dynastic succession in this case since the sons of the president are rather engaged in business activity than in politics⁵². It is probably in the dominant party that must be looked on or, alternatively, in the army⁵³.

Congo is also an ambiguous case. A dominant party does exist – the PCT (Parti congolais du travail) – as well as an army which is dominated by Northerners. Sassou-Nguesso came actually from the former military wing of the party, when these were fused. However, such fusion no longer exists. Rather, after the sequel of civil wars (1993-2002) is the army which dominates on the party. The army is made of Sassou-Nguesso loyalists while his son Denis, who is not a military, is pursuing its career in the party. In this case, as in the following (E. Guinea) control of oil rents by the family in power represents an important resource to spend when pursuing succession, even if this does not guarantee family continuity in power if not supported by a strict control of the army⁵⁴, which actually exist in the case of E.

⁴⁹ How much decentralization reform supported by donors strengthened NRM patronage is stressed in A.M. Mwenda, R. Tangri, *Patronage Politics, Donor Reforms, and Regime Consolidation in Uganda*, in *African Affairs*, No. 416, 2005, 449-467.

⁵⁰ See, G. Bareebe, K. Titeca, *Personalisation of power under the Museveni regime in Uganda*, in F. Reyntjens, S. Vandeginste, M. Verpoorten (Eds.), *L'Afrique des Grands Lacs. Annuaire 2011-2012*, L'Harmattan, 2013.

⁵¹ In October 2022, Muhoozi was removed as Commander of the Land Forces. He however retains his position as senior presidential adviser for special operations («Uganda removes president's son from army role after Kenya invasion tweets», in *Reuters*, October 4, 2022).

⁵² « Cameroun: le premier cercle très fermé de Franck Biya, fils (et successeur ?) du président Paul Biya », in *Jeune Afrique*, 28 mars 2021.

⁵³ As far as the growing importance of army see N. Bagayoko-Penone (*Cameroon's Security Apparatus: actors and structures*, Report, Africa Security Sector Network. 2008). However, also the army has been purged by the President after the recent coup in Gabon («Au Cameroun, Paul Biya a-t-il remanié son armée à cause du putsch gabonais ?», *Jeune Afrique*, 1 septembre 2023).

⁵⁴ As the cases of Gamal Mubarak, Isabel Dos Santos and the same Omar Bongo demonstrate. Rivalries and dissensions within the Congolese cannot be excluded, given the many precedents of factionalism. See, P. Yengo, *op. cit.*

Guinea. In this case a dynastic succession in the form of father-to-son seems most likely to occur⁵⁵.

5. Personal Power and Collegial Power: Re-Classifying Authoritarian Types

This chapter re-groups all the cases so far considered including those not tested, namely those that have not experienced a political succession at the top.

Grouping the cases led to three groups which are found in table 2.

TAB. 2 PERSONAL AND COLLEGIAL POWER

COLLEGIAL PERSONAL	YES	NO
YES	A EGYPT (SCAF) ANGOLA (MPLA) SUDAN (-2019) ZIMBABWE (-2017) ETHIOPIA (TPLF – Zenawi; PP – Abyi?) ERITREA RWANDA CAMEROON UGANDA	C CHAD TOGO DJIBOUTI GABON E. GUINEA UGANDA (1999-)? CONGO (1997-)
NO	B MOZAMBIQUE (FRELIMO) TANZANIA (CCM) BURUNDI (in the army: <i>Nonoka Association</i>) ALGERIA	

⁵⁵ Teodorin Nguema, Obiang son, is the best positioned to follow his father as President which is not yet the case of Denis Christel Sassou Nguesso, who is only a Minister in Congo. Teodorin was appointed as Vice-President in 2016. However, such kind of successions are not without risks. In 2003, a suspected coup, about to be staged by Obiang’s half-brother, General Augustin Ndong Ona, was crushed.

As the box displays cases are regrouped into three groups. Type A is made of cases where personal power is balanced by a certain degree of collegial power vested in a party and in the armed forces, or just the latter. These are the cases of Zimbabwe and Angola, Sudan up to 2019 and Ethiopia. Reasons for including these cases in this group is given in table 1 (third and four column). Succession was ruled by the party and/or the army, however it is out of doubt that leaders that succeed the previous ones share the same strong man profile. It is difficult to ascertain whether in these cases leaders now in power has developed enough personal power to downgrade rivals in the army. For example, this is not the case of Mnangagwa in Zimbabwe, who has been in charge of security dossiers since 1980, but owes a lot for his success to Constantino Chiwenga, with whom share actual power and who is probably in control of the army although his retirement. The same could be said in Ethiopia of Abiy. Abiy surfing a lot within the EPRDF (Ethiopian People's Revolutionary Democratic Front) before rising to power. He successfully managed to expulse the TPLF (Tigray People's Liberation Front) from the party when he transformed it into the PP (Prosperity Party), most likely with the intention to make it his personal vehicle. However, the PP, as the EPRDF before, is a federal party, as was the LCY (League of Communists) in former Yugoslavia, and power is rather dispersed through the regional party branches. Military power count in all these cases, but party role must not be underrated at least in the case of Angola, Ethiopia (the regional branches) and possibly Zimbabwe. These are also cases where the army is fused at the top with the party.

Within the same slot, we also find Egypt where the party counted nothing. The NDP (National Democratic Party) was easily disbanded during the 2011 revolution, sacrificed as a scapegoat by the military just to resurface in the parliament recently as the *Mostaqbal Watan* (MW), a bloated coalition of individualities linked in a way or the other to the military, founded in 2014 just as a vehicle to appease and co-opt businessmen or local patrons. What does count in this country are the top military represented in the SCAF (Supreme Council of the Armed Forces), which is a formal organ of the armed forces. Between 2011 and 2013 this organ acted as the main instrument for the regime survival and remains an institutions where vested interests (also economic ones) by the military must be preserved⁵⁶. Although succession at the top has yet to occur, probably Eritrea, Rwanda and Cameroon could stay in this group⁵⁷. If confirmed, Cameroon is the only regime where the army and the party in power are clearly two distinguished organizations.

⁵⁶ See, M. Gamal, *What is Behind Dismissal of Egyptian Defense Minister?*, Strategic Report, Istanbul, Egyptian Institute for Studies, 2 July 2018.

El-Sisi, frequently intervened in recent years dismissing generals and promoting more loyal ones in the SCAF. These interferences against the SCAF evokes those of Nasser after 1967, when top military officers were replaced by younger ones disconnected from the Free Officers' coup (I. Harb, *The Egyptian Military in Politics: Disengagement or Accommodation?*, in *Middle East Journal*, No. 2, 2003, 276).

⁵⁷ The case of Cameroon is much more controversial. If we follow Morse (*Electoral Authoritarianism and Weak States in Africa*, cit.), Cameroon should stay in group C.

The second group – group B – is made of those cases where personal power does exist but it is severely curbed by collegial interests. Four cases are found in this slot. Two are dominated by the party in power – Tanzania and Mozambique – and two by the army. The formers have routinized through controlled elections succession at the top. In the case of Mozambique, the military within the party retain a voice, which is not the case of Tanzania. These differences are due to the historical role played by the military in the FRELIMO during the war against RENAMO (Resistência Nacional Moçambicana). The other two cases, found their collegial power vested in the military. Since 1965 (the Boumédiène coup), in Algeria the military dominated the party – the FLN (Front de libération nationale) – and since 1992 this has been downplayed to play only a façade and ancillary role losing its party monopoly. With variations Burundi resemble the case. All reports point to a demise of the civilian wing within the ruling CNDD-FDD party which achieved power in 2005 after a civil war⁵⁸. The problem for those two cases is the importance of factionalism within the military which in Egypt the SCAF controls. There is no equivalent organ in the Algerian military forces and these in time of crises are shaken by rivalries which usually opposes the military intelligence to the Chief of Staffs and/or the regional commanders⁵⁹. In Burundi, does exist an informal structure – called the *Nonoka* Association – made of influential men in uniform which are responsible for choosing positions within the movement but that made difficult to maintain a strict control on factionalism as it is demonstrated by the failed coup attempt of 2015⁶⁰.

Finally, it comes the third group – group C – made of those cases where personal power is weekly curbed by a strong organization. In the most extreme cases, like E. Guinea and to a lesser degree Chad, the family presides over the party/government and/or the army, or controls them through specialized units (generally intelligence units) in charge to investigate over them. I found seven cases. Four out of this list have already experienced a dynastic succession, while the other three most likely would undergo a similar outcome. It's the cases of Congo, E. Guinea and Uganda, since 1999. The first two share with Chad, Togo, Djibouti and Gabon the smaller demographic and/or geographic dimension combined with the importance of controlling rents (Beblawi 1987) while Uganda remains the most doubtful case and could be likely to be found in the group A. The point is indeed which kind of succession ensures more stability. It is what is discussed in the conclusive remarks.

6. Conclusions: Succession and Stability

⁵⁸ See in particular G. Rufyikiri, *Failure of rebel movement-to-political party*, cit.

⁵⁹ The organization of the army in regions is a heritage of the war of liberation. Regions are headed by generals who constitute an informal cupola.

⁶⁰ Factionalism in Burundi resulted in a sort of duumvirate between the President and the Prime Minister (PM). In 2022, Bunyoni was dismissed as PM and substituted by Ndirakobuca. However, it is doubtful that the latter is more loyal to the President.

Personal power grows during long tenure (even if it tends to be weakened as the leader reach age limits), as leaders are tempted to get rid of potential rivals within the party and/or the army, promoting young but uninfluential technocrats in the party or kin in the army or demoting regular armies by creating special units under parental control (Chad has been found as a paradigmatic case of this case, as the regular army has no match with such military units)⁶¹. With time personal power could spread to different arenas. Generally, from the military to politics and last to business but very hardly the opposite since it is not easy to improvise as a military man. Rather, civilian leaders prefer to weaken the army to the point of not endangering their own position, preferring to find support in a sponsoring external power.

However, personal power could be mitigated by existing organizations which circumscribe personalism within some arenas or within some timespan. Such organizations could act behind a curtain, remaining largely silent for long, only to re-surface during crucial times, especially when regimes are under pressure, personal power weakens and leaders approach their physical end. When this condition happens, decisions are often made collectively.

“Collegiality” performs in an opposite direction of personal power. Sketches of recent examples has been done. The long-standing Mubarak’s presidency ended in 2011 under extensive civil protests thanks to a pro-active neutrality of the army just to usher the return of the military in 2013 after one year and half of a civilian transitory regime. The great part of literature devoted to Mubarak’s Egypt in the 1990s and 2000s pointed to a personal/neo-patrimonial regime, having Mubarak reigned for thirty years and was promoting his son – Gamal – to the party leadership⁶². The same could be said for Angola under Dos Santos⁶³, Zimbabwe under Mugabe⁶⁴ and Algeria under Bouteflika⁶⁵. Regimes characterized by long-standing presidencies and the role played by relatives⁶⁶. All these dramatically ended, with the supposed exception of Dos Santos. In fact, a year after his resignation, the new president in power, Lourenço, initiated legal procedures for

⁶¹ It is the case of Chad, where the DGSSIE (Direction générale de service de sécurité des institutions de l’État) is an elite force. In 2014, its budget was of 42 billion CFA Francs while the army took only 9. It was under the direct control of the Presidency, placed under the command of his son, now acting President, and grandly recruited among the Bideyat (A. Tisseron, *Tchad, l’émergence d’une puissance régionale?* Institut Thomas More, note d’actualité, n°34, institut-thomas-more.org/2015/07/20/tchad-lemergence-dunepuissance-regionale/).

⁶² See J. Brownlee, *Hereditary Succession in Modern Autocracies*, cit.

⁶³ See, M. Power, *Patrimonialism & Petro-Diamond Capitalism: Peace, Geopolitics & the Economics of War in Angola*, in *Review of African Political Economy*, No. 90, 2001, 489-502.

⁶⁴ M. Dawson, T. Kelsall, *Anti-developmental patrimonialism in Zimbabwe*, in *Journal of Contemporary African Studies*, No.1, 2012, 49-66.

⁶⁵ M.R. Lowi, *Oil Wealth and the Poverty of Politics: Algeria Compared*. Cambridge University Press, 2009.

⁶⁶ Dos Santos was President for 38 years, Mugabe 30, as President, and 7 as Prime minister, Bouteflika 20. Crucial was the economic or political role of Isabel, the daughter of the President, during the last decade of Dos Santos power, of Saïd, brother of Bouteflika, and of Grace, the First Lady of Zimbabwe.

misappropriation against Dos Santos' kin, in particular the daughter Isabel, chairwoman of the powerful public SONANGOL (*Sociedade Nacional de Combustíveis de Angola*) company⁶⁷.

Existing organizations, such as parties or armies, which retain a degree of autonomy from personal and arbitrary intervention by strongmen ensure a degree, albeit limited, of collegiality which hampers personal power. Collegiality is at its maximum when parties are fused with the army. This condition is typical of former liberation movements as in these organizations discipline, hierarchy and ideological strictness are highly considered and kept. In these movements merit tends to go together with loyalty while excessive personalism, cronyism and nepotism are contained. Since army and party are fused, men in uniform tend to prevail on civilian leaders within the movement since the former control the monopoly of violence⁶⁸. This is surely the most efficient way to ensure stability within the existing regime⁶⁹. It is only second to those cases that have routinized succession within the party through controlled elections after two terms in office as Mozambique and Tanzania⁷⁰.

However, we cannot exclude that also a certain degree of personal power may be conducive for stability if combined with collegial control. And all successful regimes under collegial control have been also led by strongmen. In Egypt a way to rule over factionalism and rivalries was found within the SCAF with the party playing a sort of clientelistic connection with the society. These solutions do not guarantee from short circuits and serious crisis, but the opposite are cases like Algeria or Burundi⁷¹, where organizational mechanisms which regulate turnover at

⁶⁷ By agreeing in transferring power to Lourenço, Dos Santos' case is close to E. Frantz, E.A. Stein, *Countering Coups: Leadership Succession Rules in Dictatorships*, in *Comparative Political Studies*, No. 7, 2017, 935-962, argument in favor of orderly successions in electoral authoritarian regimes.

⁶⁸ It must be noted that all the acting presidents of these countries were once men in uniform and at least three of them have been also intelligence officers in the army. For the importance of the military for succession in communist regime see Perlmutter and LeoGrande (*The Party in Uniform*, cit. 785).

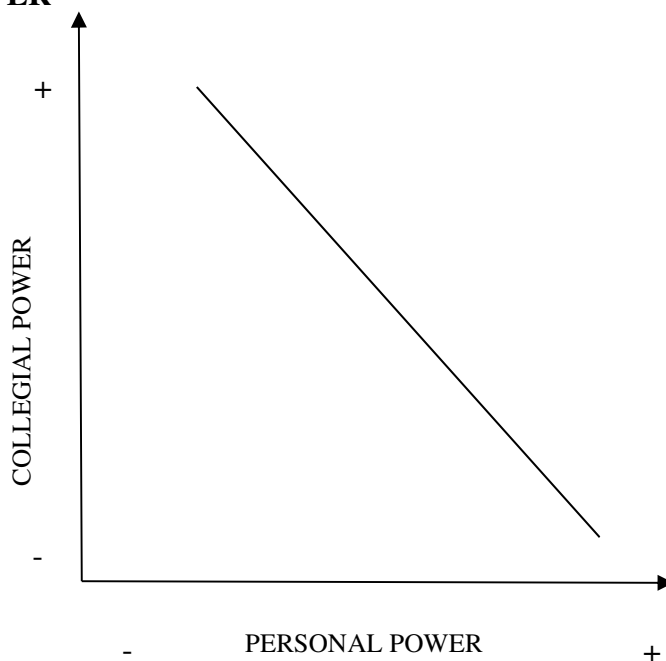
⁶⁹ As the "no-party democracy" of the NRM in Uganda see G. Carbone, *Political parties in a 'no-party democracy'. Hegemony and opposition under 'Movement democracy' in Uganda*, in *Party Politics*, No. 4, 2003, 485-502. Most of these "successful" – i.e. enduring – regimes came out from "victorious" guerrillas which had previously established effective wartime governance in liberated territory (T. Lyons, *The Importance of Winning*, cit., 170).

⁷⁰ Tanzania introduced it back in 1985 when Julius Nyerere stood down. Mozambique did it in 1994 when it returned to multipartism. These two regimes endured very long stability interrupted by marginal episodes of tension and they are probably destined to endure, unless the opposition will be able to mobilize ampler social strata beyond a small, mainly urban based population or the dominant party will for some reason suffer an internal crack. Still today, the key of such stability is found in the dominant party which is not only an important patronage machine that benefits from social roots strengthened under historical favorable conditions (A. Dinerman, *Revolution, Counter-Revolution and Revisionism in Postcolonial Africa: the case of Mozambique, 1975-1994*, Routledge, 2006; N. Cheeseman, H. Matfess, A. Amani, *Tanzania: The Roots of Repression*, in *Journal of Democracy*, No. 2, 2021, 77-89), but also a party able to counter factional conflicts by sharing power at the top.

⁷¹ On Burundi, see G. Ruffyikiri, *Failure of rebel movement-to-political party*, cit., and J. Speight, K. Wittig, *Pathways from rebellion*, cit. On Algeria, L. Addi, *Army, State and Nation in Algeria. The Military and Nation Building in the Age of Democracy*, Zed books, 2001.

the top may exist (Burundi) but not strong enough to counter inner factionalism that periodically shakes the regime. The army internally divided could not be able to contain such effects and paradoxically the absence of a strongman who rule over factionalism may strengthen the same effect. In these cases, the intensity of factional conflict may adversely impact on both personal and collegial power, which normally find an equilibrium or collide, as it is depicted in figure 1. When both collegial and personal powers are weakened a situation of power deterioration is caused which degenerates into systemic instability.

FIGURE 1 - THE BALANCE BETWEEN PERSONAL AND COLLEGIAL POWER



Finally, comes cases of extreme personal power where collegial control is excluded. The most extreme case is that of Obiang's Guinea where personal control is strengthened by the enormous oil resources, a mediocre demography, and the support of an important patronage machine together with oiled coercive instruments⁷². At first glance these regimes are stable having not undergone the test

⁷² On Uganda, see I.M. Ashaba, *Regime Survival in Uganda, Security Agencies and the Question of how many generals do you have?*, 2017, ia-forum.org/Files/WDHVFV.pdf.

It is not that E. Guinea is ruled only through personal power. A dominant party does actually exist—the PDGE (Partido Democrático de Guinea Ecuatorial) – and an army, but both are strictly controlled by Obiang's family and clan. It is said that seven out of a total of nine generals are presidential relatives. Almost all members of the Armed Forces are recruited in Mongomo, the President's hometown (G. Wood, *Business and Politics in a Criminal State: The Case of Equatorial Guinea*, in *African Affairs*, No. 103, 2004, 550).

of succession, not a predictable outcome even in a dynastic regime⁷³. But it is possible that, when some conditions occur, dynastic succession may accommodate different factions within the regime avoiding or postponing the day of reckoning, which is up to the new ruler to later evade⁷⁴. Furthermore, since dynastic succession occurs under electoral rules, “designation” may help neutralizing the electoral impact of succession and «unbridled power struggle among ruling elites»⁷⁵.

These was also the case of Djibouti, where the FRUD (Front pour la restauration de l'unité et la démocratie) insurgency ended in 1994, less perhaps that of Gabon and Togo, even if the latter was able to survive several crises (while Ali Bongo was overthrown August 2023 by a coup staged by his presidential guard). In these two cases, the opposition is larger enough to periodically defies the regime. This must overcome challenges only by combining electoral manipulation, cooptation and division in the opposition⁷⁶ and a moderate dose of repression.

⁷³ This is again the case of E. Guinea. It seems that the last congress of the PDGE, held in preparation for the next presidential elections of November 2022, disagreement surfaced between the supporters of the current president, Teodoro, and his son Teodorin. The same Teodoro Obiang succeeded his uncle Macías Nguema staging a bloody coup d'état in 1979.

⁷⁴ G. Tullock, *Autocracy*, cit.

⁷⁵ See, Qingjie Zeng, *Leadership Succession and the Resilience of Electoral Authoritarian Regimes*, in *Political Studies*, No. 3, 2020, 768-796.

⁷⁶ As the rivalries opposing Fabre to Olympio in Togo. In this country, co-optation plays also an important role for regime survival. A. Osei, *Like father, like son? Power and influence across two Gnassingbé presidencies in Togo*, in *Democratization*, No. 8, 2018, 1460-1480.