

Like father, like son? Hereditary succession and political continuity in Togo

Anja Osei

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1 Introduction

In 2005, Gnassingbé Eyadéma died after having ruled Togo for 38 years. The army subsequently installed his son Faure Gnassingbé as the president of the republic. Protests erupted in the capital Lomé, but while opposition groups, youths, and civil society organizations expressed their discontent about the unconstitutional transfer of power, the ruling party kept its ranks closed. In fact, the cadres of the regime stood up “like one man” (Attisso 2012: 46) to support the presidency of Faure Gnassingbé.

Such a high degree of elite cohesion cannot be taken for granted. Especially in personalized authoritarian systems the death of a leader poses a serious challenge to regime survival (Geddes 1999; Brownlee 2007). Togo therefore falls into a small group of non-monarchies that have experienced a “seamless passage of power from one autocratic ruler to his preferred heir” (Brownlee 2007: 599). Brownlee (ibid. 610) has argued that elites in personalized systems might prefer such hereditary succession over unconstrained power struggles. While this explains the occurrence of hereditary succession, we know relatively little about the mid-term consequences of this transfer of power: Can the son simply pick up where the father left off? Does he need to redefine the regime’s legitimation strategies, and/or build up a new ruling coalition? In order to answer these questions, the paper at hand uses a mixed methods design which combines a theoretically guided case study with statistical network analysis. The qualitative part will describe and compare the legitimation strategies of authoritarian rule under Gnassingbé Eyadema and Faure Gnassingbé respectively. The quantitative part uses a unique data set collected in the Togolese National Assembly in 2014. It contains not only information on the biographies, career patterns and values of the deputies, but also on their communication structures and interactions. By providing a snapshot of elite configurations, these data help to understand who belongs to Togo’s ruling coalition today.

The paper contributes to the wider debate on authoritarianism in two ways. First, it suggests a way to study elite structures and interactions in authoritarian countries empirically. Secondly,

it discusses continuity and change in a highly personalized system and shows how legitimization strategies must be adapted after the death of a ruler. In doing so, the paper not only opens up the black box of elite politics in non-democratic countries, but also contributes to our understanding of transitions from one authoritarian regime to a successor authoritarian regime.

2 Authoritarian subtypes and transitions

It has become widely accepted that there are different types of authoritarian regimes which differ in the way that power is organized and exercised, and – partly as a consequence – in their durability and. Regime transitions, therefore, can take place not only from autocracy to democracy, but also from one authoritarian type to another (Geddes, Wright and Frantz 2014). This section briefly discusses three different regime classifications (Geddes 1999; Wahman, Teorell, and Hadenius 2013; Kailitz 2013) and situates Togo as a case study in this debate. In a seminal article, Geddes (1999) distinguishes between three different authoritarian regime types: military, single-party, and personalist regimes. In military regimes, a group of officers decides who will rule (ibid. 121), and in single-party regimes the dominant party controls the access to spoils and political office (ibid.). Personalist regimes differ from these two types in that the “access to office and the fruits of office depends much more on the discretion of an individual leader” (ibid. 121). Although personalist regimes can be founded by a military dictator who then creates a single party to support him, neither the party nor the military exercise any independent decision-making power (ibid. 121-22). These different types of authoritarian regimes have different propensities for survival and democratization (Hadenius and Teorell 2007: 143; Geddes 1999). While military regimes often fall victim to internal splits, factions in single party and personalist regimes have stronger incentives to cooperate with each other (Geddes 1999: 122; Brownlee 2007). Personalist regimes are, however, especially vulnerable to economic crises and to the death of the dictator (ibid.). They are also

the least likely to democratize (ibid.) Geddes' finding that personalist regimes are more enduring than military regimes, but less stable than one-party regimes, has been tested and corroborated by numerous other studies (Hadenius and Teorell 2007; Kailitz 2013; Escribà-Folch 2013).

Geddes' work has inspired an ongoing debate on regime classifications. Especially her treatment of personalism as a unique regime type is attracting criticism. Hadenius and Teorell (2007: 145) see personalism rather as a continuous trait that may be more or less present in a regime. They nevertheless employ the length of tenure as a measure for personalization and come to the conclusion that there is a strong "correlation between years of executive tenure and the lifespan of authoritarian regimes" (151). Their own typology (Hadenius and Teorell 2007; Wahman, Teorell, and Hadenius 2013) distinguishes between authoritarian regimes without elected legislatures (monarchies or military regimes), and authoritarian regimes with elected legislatures (no-party, one-party, or multiparty authoritarian). The type of the multiparty authoritarian regime corresponds to Schedler's (2006: 3) term "electoral authoritarianism" (2006: 3), which denotes regimes that hold regular elections, but violate liberal-democratic principles at the same time. Discussing various regime classification attempts, Kailitz (2013) reintroduces the category of the personalist regime but reserves it for countries in which the head of state is not chosen in popular elections. Kailitz' electoral autocracy category is similar to the limited multiparty system of Wahmann, Teorell, and Hadenius and is also based on Schedler's definition cited above.

The usefulness of regime classifications for large-N studies is beyond doubt. All of the three attempts discussed here try to make sense of the diversity of authoritarian regimes, and all three put forward well-thought arguments for their typologies. When applied to a single case like Togo, however, it becomes obvious how difficult it is to capture empirical reality in these categories. Looking at data sets by Geddes, Hadenius and Teorell, and Kailitz respectively, one gets the impression that the country possess a bit of everything: personalism, military *and*

single-party rule. In an updated version of her dataset¹ Geddes classifies Togo as a personalist regime throughout the entire history of the country since independence. This would mean that Faure Gnassingbé governs in much the same way as his father did, and that no greater changes have taken place. Wahman, Teorell, and Hadenius (2013) classify Togo under Gnassingbé Eyadema as a military regime (one-party military until 1990 and multiparty military after a transitional period from 1990 to 1993), which has evolved into a limited multiparty system after the hereditary transfer of power. This suggests, by contrast, that Togo has experienced more than one transition from one authoritarian sub-type to another. For Kailitz, Togo falls into the category of the personalist regime from 1967 to 1990 and becomes an electoral autocracy from 2004 onwards.²

Since this paper is not dealing with regime typologies *per se*, no alternative classification for Togo will be proposed. It is also not my aim to judge which typology is the “best” or comes closest to reality. The argument I wish to make is that we need an iterative dialogue between case-based research and classificatory work to refine our categories. Since cases for qualitative or quantitative work are often chosen on the basis of typologies (Collier, LaPorte, and Seawright 2012), these typologies must be empirically well-grounded. Given the fact that Togo is extremely under-researched³, it is not surprising that the regime cannot be classified without ambiguity. This demonstrates one of the major weaknesses of the current literature on authoritarianism: due to the opaqueness of non-democratic regimes we often know very little about their internal logic. In addition, the geographical scope of most empirical work is limited and we tend to “make universal claims based on a subset of cases” (Gandhi and Lust-Okar 2009). Against this background, Morse (2012: 189) suggests that the next stage of

¹ Available at <http://sites.psu.edu/dictators/> For a description of the data set, see Geddes, Wright, and Frantz 2014.

² It remains unclear why the year 2004 marks the beginning of a new regime type. Unfortunately, the years 1994 to 2003 are missing in Kailitz’ classification.

³ In the two leading Africa journals, *African Affairs* and *The Journal of Modern African Studies*, not a single research article on the politics of Togo has appeared over the last 20 years. The same is true of the leading political science journals.

research on electoral authoritarianism needs to be case driven, and Art (2012: 353) argues that we need to find ways to “work in place that would seem ill-suited for fieldwork”. For a case like Togo this means that much empirical groundwork is still to be done. Only on the basis of better data can we arrive at a better understanding of transitions from one authoritarian regime type to another.

The paper at hand will therefore open up the black box of authoritarian rule, change and continuity in Togo. As a theoretical guideline, I will use Gerschewski’s “pillars of stability” to describe the politics of the country (see section 3). Since it seems to be relatively undisputed that political power was heavily concentrated in the hands of Gnassingbé Eyadema at least in the period before 1990, I will also discuss the role of personalism. To avoid any confusion over classificatory issues, I will use the adjective “personalized” instead of “personalist” whenever I talk about the concentration of power in the hands of the leader, thus leaving it open whether personalism constitutes a unique category of authoritarian regimes or not.

3 Sources of stability and instability in personalized regimes

All autocratic regimes, irrespective of their type, rely on a combination of legitimation, repression, and co-optation (Gerschewski 2013). While repression is still “the backbone of authoritarian rule” (Gerschewski 2013: 18), even the most repressive regimes must develop a legitimation strategy. The legitimation of an authoritarian regime can be rooted in nationalism or any form of official state ideology, but also in performance – for example in the areas of socio-economic development or security (ibid. 18-20). In addition, authoritarian rulers seek to co-opt strategically relevant actors by rewarding their loyalty with the access to material benefits (Gerschewski 2013: 22).

The pillars of stability-theory is applicable to all autocracies, but there is also reason to believe that the actual combination of strategies differs across authoritarian regime types.

With regard to legitimation, personalized systems may possess a distinct ideology or

legitimize themselves by the providing collective goods like economic prosperity or political stability, but they typically also build up a cult around the leader. Schatzberg (2001: 8ff) has vividly described how African leaders invoke paternal images to present the nation as a family and the president as the “father” of this family. These personality cults are often rooted in local cosmologies and spiritual belief systems that (ibid.). Anthropological research provides numerous examples of how postcolonial leaders connected political legitimation to occultism and witchcraft (Yates 1996: 112; Ellis 1999 on Liberia; Geschiere and Roitman 1997), or grotesque and obscene displays of wealth and power (Mbembe 2001). By attributing supernatural powers to themselves, rulers not only formulate a strong claim to power but also threaten and deter their opponents. According to Schatzberg there are two complementary sides of power in Africa, and the loving father is at the same time the dreaded, larger-than-life dictator: “When political fathers care for, nurture, and provide wealth for their children, their political legitimacy is enhanced. (...) The second side of the coin is less loving, less nurturing, and less paternal. If the father smiles and forgives, the chief snarls and punishes. This harsh and repressive visage has confronted many middle Africans when they have protested their lot. (...) The benevolent father thus gives way to the malevolent chief whom people expect to command both the forces of coercion and the forces of the occult, deploying them as arms of governance. (Schatzberg 2003, 24-25).

It becomes clear from this quotation that personality cults in authoritarian regimes are inextricably linked to repression. Levitsky and Way (2010: 57f) distinguish between high intensity-coercion like violent repression, imprisonment, or assassination, which is directed against well-known people and groups, and low intensity repression, which is less visible and includes for example surveillance or low-profile physical harassment. Personalized systems employ the full range of repressive instruments like restrictions on the freedom of speech, information, and assembly, violently crushing opposition protest, or jailing political opponents. It is worth noting, however, that repression is often also directed against members

of the ruling elite. In a bid to avoid the emergence of alternative power centers, rulers frequently rotate the political personnel (Geddes 1999: 133). Opponents are typically expelled and have to take refuge in civil society, parallel economy, or exile {Citation}(Bratton van de walle 463). This creates a constant insecurity even among the rulers' closest collaborators (Schatzberg 1991: 3) and makes the emergence of coordinated rival factions highly unlikely (see Geddes 1999).

Co-optation, the third pillar of stability, plays therefore a crucial role for a dictators' ruling coalition. Personalist rulers typically rely on the support of a small clique of strategic elites, who can be members of a certain ethnic group or even family (Geddes 1999: 133). The political loyalty of these persons is exchanged against the access to material benefits (ibid.). Although the ruling coalition is narrow, scholars of African studies often emphasize that elite co-optation and patronage have a close link with mass patronage because political representatives in Africa are usually expected to care for the well-being of their home communities (Chabal and Daloz 1999). In other words, if a member of a group has made it to the inner circle of the regime, his or her fellow ethnics might see this as a sign that their interests are being served and that they will receive their fair share of the "national cake" (see Randall 2007: 91; Chabal and Daloz 1999: 42; van de Walle 2003).

The extreme informalization and centralization of power coupled with the reliance on patronage distribution makes personalist regimes extremely vulnerable to economic crises (Geddes 1999; Bratton and van de Walle 1994). Economic downturns deprive leaders of the capacity to "buy off" the political opposition. If they then resort to repression, their legitimacy is further undermined (Bratton van de walle 460). In addition, personalized systems rarely survive long after the death of the ruler (Geddes 1999: 132). Given the high informalization and centralization of these regimes, an unexpected death creates a power vacuum that poses an imminent risk of regime collapse. There is a small number of countries, however, in which the collapse of the regime is avoided by transferring the power to the deceased rulers' son. In

Africa, this applies to Togo 2005, Gabon 2007, and the DRC 2001. According to Brownlee (2007: 597), regimes with hereditary succession have in common that they lack established precedents for the orderly transfer of power. Under these circumstances, elites may prefer hereditary succession over an unconstrained power struggle (ibid. 610). Senior leaders might also expect “to hold sway over an ostensibly inexperienced heir” (ibid. 607). This explains why hereditary succession occurs, but it says nothing about the future of these regimes. The three African cases mentioned above reveal interesting parallels in this regard: in each of the countries, elections were held to legitimize the power of the respective heir. None of these elections was entirely free and fair, and none of the countries can be said to have transitioned to a democracy. This suggests two things: first, successor regimes are still able to uphold authoritarian rule, and second, crucial elites have remained loyal to the heir. From this, two interrelated questions arise:

- a) How and why did the regime survive, i.e. what are the changes and continuities in authoritarian rule in Togo?
- b) Who are the ruling elites in Togo today?

In order to do answer these questions, the paper combines a qualitative and a quantitative approach, both of which will be described in section 4.

4 Case study and method

Due to their opaqueness, authoritarian regimes pose a number of challenges for research (Schuler and Malesky 2014: 687). This is definitely true for Togo, where political observers lament a situation in which “nothing is sure, nothing can be known precisely” (Ellis 1993: 471). The political science literature on Togo is extremely sparse; after a number of articles and books on the limited liberalization and the national conference in the 1990s (Seely 2009; Hounnikpo 2001; Heilbrunn 1993), research on Togo almost died down. The unconstitutional transfer of power in 2005 attracted some comments on the response of the

international community and the African Union (Albert 2007), but most of them did not engage with domestic politics. It is thus extremely difficult to look behind the scenes of authoritarian rule in the country. The paper at hand has therefore chosen a mixed-methods approach to arrive at a more comprehensive understanding of Togolese politics. Mixed method designs have experienced increasing recognition in the past years, with some authors arguing that this is a “third paradigm” that combines the strengths of the qualitative and quantitative paradigm (Johnson and Onwuegbuzie 2004). The central idea is to collect different kinds of data and to combine or integrate them at different stages of the research process (ibid., see also Creswell and Clark 2011). In this paper, a descriptive case study is combined with statistical network analysis. According to the typology of Leech and Onwuegbuzie (2007), the mixed methods design of this paper is a partially mixed concurrent equal status design. The qualitative and quantitative data were collected largely at the same time and are given equal weight in the paper. The different types of data are analyzed separately and only mixed in the interpretation.

Before any single case study can be conducted, the universe of cases must be defined. Togo is an electoral authoritarian regime, which belongs to a small group of cases that have experienced non-monarchic hereditary succession from father to son. Within this group, Togo is a typical case. A typical case “is representative in the sense of being able to generalize insights from it to similar cases in the population” (Rohlfing 2012: 66). Since the cases in a given population can still be relatively different, a cautious approach should still be taken to generalizations (ibid. 67).

The qualitative part of the paper is a thick description of the continuities and changes in Togo guided by Gerschewski’s theory of the three “pillars of stability”. This case description partly informs the hypotheses for the statistical network analysis, which are then tested on a unique data set. Data collection took place in close collaboration with the *Centre de Recherche et de Sondage d'Opinions* (CROP) in 2014 and 2015 in Togo. The field work

included a quantitative survey of political elites supplemented by a small number of qualitative in-depth interviews with selected persons (country experts, journalists, members of the ruling party and the opposition). The qualitative interviews provide additional and background information, whereas the quantitative part is designed to shed light on the biographical characteristics of the Togolese political elite and their networks of interaction. Since authoritarian states are characterized by informality (Levitsky and Way 2010: 27), this is a difficult task. There probably exists an informal “shadow structure” (Reno 1999: 2) around the ruler which consists of his closest allies, but unfortunately such networks of power are not directly observable and therefore hard to uncover. The challenge is therefore to identify a relevant group of political actors whose informal interactions can be measured with the tools of social network analysis. Using the positional method which identifies elites according to the formal positions they hold, Members of Parliament (MPs) were chosen as a target group. According to authors like Gandhi (2010), political institutions in authoritarian regimes fulfil a number of functions for authoritarian regime survival, for example they regulate the access to patronage (Lust-Okar 2009), and give the opposition a partial say in decision-making (Schuler and Malesky 2014). It can therefore be argued that parliaments allow certain inferences about the composition of the ruling elite.

A number of steps had to be taken to ensure the collaboration of the MPs. A letter was first sent to the president of the National Assembly who indicated that it would be necessary to seek the formal approval of all political parties represented in the national assembly. Letters were thereafter sent to the respective party leaders, and appointments for personal communications were fixed, in which a team of researchers explained the objectives of the study. It was especially important to assure all MPs that all data would be used for scientific purposes only and that no sensitive information connected to individual names would be published. Although the ruling party UNIR was in the beginning a bit more reluctant than the opposition, all parties finally granted their cooperation. To ensure the quality of the data, our

interviewers underwent an extensive training in which all aspects of the project were explained. Interview situations were simulated before going to the field, and feedback rounds where the interviewers could share and discuss their experiences, were organized. In this way, a high response rate of 79% (72 of 91 MPs) was achieved.

MPs were interviewed using a standardized questionnaire. Two types of data were collected: attribute data (biographical data, career patterns, and values) and relational data. The questionnaire contained a number of biographical questions, in which MPs were asked to indicate whether they

- a) have ever held a position in the political sector before being elected to parliamentary,
- b) have ever held a high position in the economic, social, traditional, or security sector, and
- c) whether they have relatives who have held or are currently holding a high position in any one of the sectors.

For the collection of the relational data, a name generator was used: 'Looking back over the last six months, who are the people in the Parliament of Togo with whom you have discussed important political decisions? Please give me their names.' A similar question was first used in the General Social Survey (GSS) and has since been a standard tool for obtaining network information (Burt 1984). On average, MPs named 5 fellow MPs as discussion partners. From these ego networks, a full network of interactions is constructed. The Togolese network is directed, meaning that the ties have a direction from actor *i* to actor *j* or from actor *j* to actor *i*. Actors who receive a high number of incoming ties (in-degrees) are prominent or prestigious in the network, because they are extensively the object of relations (Knoke and Burt 1983). For the Togolese network, prestigious actors can be assumed to be members of the core regime elite. Actors with high out-degrees send out a large number of ties and can therefore they make their views known to others or disperse information (Hannemann and Riddle 2005). Since in- and out-degrees can tell us who is influential in the network, they are

used for the statistical network analysis in section 6. The combination with data on actors' attributes allows to analyze the formation of ties in the network.

Since social network data violate the assumptions of many conventional statistical procedures, specialized statistical models are needed. This paper draws on the family of exponential random graph models (ERGM), or p^* models, described by Robins, Pattison, Kalish, & Lusher, 2007) and implemented in the *statnet* package (Handcock et al. 2008; Hunter et al. 2008) for the statistical computing environment R. The central idea is that network ties depend on each other and are at the same time influenced by actor attributes and other exogenous factors (Lusher, Koskinen, and Robins 2012: 10). Because ERGMs permit inferences about how ties arise and form local network configurations, they help to understand the underlying social processes (*ibid.*). In a nutshell, ERGMs compare an observed network to a large number of random networks by modelling the effects of interest and finding a distribution of graphs where the observed data are central in the distribution (Robins and Lusher 2012: 33). They allow to model both exogenous effects (covariates) and effects and structural effects in the network simultaneously (Cranmer and Desmarais 2011). The model is fitted via Markov Chain Monte Carlo Maximum Likelihood Estimation (MCMC MLE). The dependent variable is the log odds of establishing a network tie. Coefficients are interpreted as log-odds ratios conditional on the rest of the network. Before these methods are applied to the data set, the next section will give a qualitative account of politics in Togo.

5 Togo under the Eyadema-Dynastie

5.1 Legitimation

Eyadema's rule was based on a number of interrelated legitimacy narratives. One legitimation strategy was to present Togo as a place of stability and prosperity. In fact, the country was relatively well-off in the 1970s and 1980s and never saw a civil war or large-scale conflict.

The discourse of Togo as a stable, peaceful, and economically successful nation can however not be separated from the myth that surrounded the leader himself. In his early years, Eyadema claimed to have “saved” Togo from the ethnically imbalanced government of the first president Sylvanus Olympio. The over-proportional representation of Ewe and Mina from the south of the country was in part a consequence of an historic north-south development gap inherited from the colonial era (Toulabor 1986: 33). While administrative staff was recruited from the southern ethnic groups, military careers were one of the few ways of social advancement for the northern ethnic groups (ibid. 37). Many Togolese soldiers fought in the French army in Algeria and Indochina (ibid). Upon their return to Togo, these “anti-nationalist” fighters were denied the integration into the regular army by the nationalist Olympio (ibid. 70). The first military coup, in which Olympio was assassinated, was led by exactly these elements. The army handed over the power to Olympio’s rival Grunitzky whose government was, however, weak and incapable of solving the power struggles between various elite factions. This led to the second military takeover in 1967, in which Gnassingbé Eyadema was the leading figure. A military council took over the political power, dissolved the national assembly and banned all political parties except the newly created ruling party RPT (Rassemblement du Peuple Togolais). Eyadema’s personal role in the first coup and especially his involvement in the assassination of Olympio remain unclear, but he began to exploit these events to his advantage by claiming to have personally killed the ex-president. He even presented his own ascendancy to power as the will of God (Attisso 2012: 41). Inspired by Mobutu Sese Seko of Zaire – another dictator who had formed a bizarre cult around his personality – Eyadema began to model himself as a ruler with supernatural powers. Having come to power on the 13th of February 1967, he created a cult around this date and especially the figure 13 (ibid. 41). The myth around Eyadema’s alleged supernatural powers was perpetuated by the Sarakawa incident: in 1974 the president’s plane crashed near his hometown Pya, killing all crew members except Eyadema himself. A mausoleum was erected

around the carcass of the airplane, which served as a site for the regular performance of secret rituals. As Toulabor (1986: 110ff) describes, regime stalwarts dressed in white clothes would sacrifice sheep to form an alliance between the Togolese people and the “miracle of Sarakawa”. In constructing the cult, Eyadema heavily borrowed from local belief systems and religious motives which he merged with a postcolonial conception of personalized, sacrificed, and indivisible power (ibid.).

Two other motives are connected to the Sarakawa incident: anti-imperialism and *authenticité*. Since the plane crash coincided with a dispute on the phosphate trade between France and Togo, Eyadema blamed France for trying to kill him (Houngnikpo 2001: 58). As a result, and again closely modelled along the lines of Mobutu’s Zairianisation, he announced a policy of nationalization and began to portray himself as fighter against imperialism. While the relationship with France quickly normalized, the Sarakawa incident had an impact on the way power was conceptualized and displayed under Eyadema. It perpetuated an image of an invulnerable and immortal leader.

5.2 Patronage

Eyadema administered Togo like his personal property and distributed favors to everyone who supported his regime. RPT loyalists received psychological and material benefits such as lucrative jobs, bank loans and study credits, as well as commercial monopolies (Toulabor 1986: 93). As the fifth biggest producer of phosphates worldwide, Togo enjoyed a period of economic growth in the early years of Eyadema’s rule. In addition, Western powers provided generous development aid and military assistance to the regime which they saw as a bulwark against socialist experiments in the neighboring West African countries. A third source of resources for clientelistic redistribution was the Port of Lomé, one of the biggest and safest harbors in the region, which generated high tariff revenues.

Attiso (2012: 80ff) describes clientelism in Eyadema's Togo as very much personalized. Every day, he writes, people were cueing up in front of the president's residence in Lomé II to introduce their real or fake project plans to him. If he liked the idea of the project, Eyadema would send his son Faure to the family safe to hand over this or that sum of money to the applicant (ibid). Sometimes, however, he would tell the applicant to go to the director of the port who had then to provide the requested money from his funds (ibid.).

Corruption existed everywhere and was tolerated as long as the perpetrator was a regime insider. Among the regime supporters, however, not everyone benefited in the same way; there were surely those who received far more than a fair share. This was true for the extended Eyadema family, but also for members of certain northern ethnic groups. Many important and lucrative political or administrative positions were filled with northerners, especially from the president's ethnic group, the Kabiye. In the words of Seely (2009: 47), "the RPT has always perpetuated a thin veneer of north-south cooperation while maintaining the real power in the hands of loyal northerners". Heilbrunn (1997b: 228) summarizes the situation in Togo as follows: "Although the party included supporters from southern Togo, most high-ranking officials were family members of Kabye from the president's home region. These individuals occupied the lucrative directorships of public enterprises and preferred posts in the army."

5.3 Repression

The army was probably the most important source of Eyadema's power. In his public speeches he usually emphasized the role of the army and its symbiotic relationship with the population (Attisso 2012:). The budget of the armed forces was constantly expanded and the number of soldiers and casernes increased over time. In short, the army was omnipresent in all spheres of public life. Most officers belonged to the Kabye ethnic group and were loyal to the president. Eyadema was minister of defense and commander-in-chief of the armed forces at

the same time. While the government was largely composed of civilians to disguise the military character of the regime, high-ranking military personnel held important political and administrative positions, for example in state enterprises and parastatals (Attisso 2012: 96f). Critics of the regime were intimidated, harassed, or jailed, and opposition demonstrations were repressed or violently crushed. In general, the Eyadema regime committed grave gross human rights violation throughout the period of its existence. Until the 1990s it was difficult to acquire reliable information on the political system because the “security forces had instilled a fear so pervasive as to discourage any discussion of politics, particularly in the capital city” (Ellis 1993: 462).

5.4 Togo between change and continuity

The transitional period in the 1990s has been analyzed in depth by Seely (2009), Houngnikpo (2001), and Heilbrunn (1993). For this paper it suffices to say that the democratic transition failed, but the political system nevertheless underwent some changes (Seely 2009: 44). A multiparty system was introduced and elections were held for the first time in 1998. Against a disunited opposition, Eyadema emerged as the winner of the polls and was re-elected in 2003. The process was marred by electoral violence, alleged vote-buying and accusation of electoral fraud. In 2005, Gnassingbé Eyadema died. According to the constitution, the president of the National Assembly, Fambaré Natchaba, was entitled to become the head of an interim government. Natchaba had been director of the cabinet under Eyadema from 1977 to 1981 until he fell out with the president and went into exile. Having returned in the transition period he joined the ruling party and was made the president of the National Assembly, but he never had the full trust of crucial RPT elites. This became more than obvious during the short succession crisis of 2005: because Natchaba was absent from the country when Eyadema’s death was announced, the military elite immediately suspended the constitution to avoid a “power vacuum” and declared allegiance to the new president Faure Gnassingbé (see Banjo

2008: 151). As a next step the constitution was changed in an extraordinary parliamentary session; Natchaba who tried to return to Lomé was not allowed to enter the country. Although the international community condemned the unconstitutional change of government, opposition protests and strikes were violently crushed. Finally, Faure stepped down to appease the situation, but stood as a candidate in the elections that were held only 60 days later. He won the elections of 2005, and then also those of 2010 and 2015. Each of the polls was surrounded by accusations of electoral fraud and/or sometimes electoral violence. It is not entirely whether Eyadema himself groomed Faure as his successor. Eyadema had a large number of children and although it appears that he actively pushed Faure's political career, it cannot be completely ruled out that there were intra-familial power struggles. Some observers argue that Faure was chosen because of his relatively high education but also because his mother came from the south.⁴ The latter point would suggest that he is well placed to bridge the antagonism between the north and the south of the country.

6 Togo under Faure Gnassingbé

6.1 Legitimation

Faure is often described as taciturn and introvert (Attisso 2012: 14), and his style of rule is definitely less personalized.⁵ It is unclear where the real power is located: is Faure the undisputed leader or is he controlled by old regime cadres in the background? According to some observers Faure is, like his father before him, surrounded by an informal network of core regime supporters who take all crucial decisions.⁶ It is clear that Faure cannot credibly claim to have inherited the supernatural qualities that his father claimed to possess. Secret rituals of power play however still a role. The celebrations at the Sarakawa mausoleum are

⁴ Interviews with a political observer and a journalist, Lomé, November 2014. For reasons of confidentiality, the names of all informants are withheld. Details can be obtained from the author upon request

⁵ Interview with a leading member of the ruling party, Lomé, December 2015.

⁶ Interview with a political observer, Lomé, November 2014.

still held, and, in addition to this, Faure is a member of the Togolese freemasonry lodge. In the context of African freemasonry, secret rituals are used to foster elite integration and cohesion.⁷ It can therefore be argued that the membership in this lodge is one of selection criteria for the opaque core of the regime elite.

Faure himself emphasizes continuity and change. On the one hand, he continues to present Togo as a peaceful and prosperous country. Against the background improving macroeconomic indicators, these claims have certain credibility. On the other hand, Faure tries to slightly distance himself from his father by presenting himself as a reformer. As the literature on electoral authoritarianism is often arguing, elections and institutions play an important role for regime legitimacy (Ghandi 2010). Faure therefore used the 2005 elections to legitimize his unconstitutional power takeover. While international observers found the 2005 elections to be seriously flawed, the 2010 polls were declared free and fair (Beaulieu 2014). Although the opposition has contested each and every election result, Faure can at least claim to have increased the credibility of the electoral process. Another reform was the renaming of the ruling party RPT into UNIR (Union pour la République) in 2013. According to some observers, however, the party only changed the name but the structures are largely the same as before.⁸ Furthermore, important positions in the party are still held by ethnic Kabyle.⁹

6.2 Co-optation

Patronage is still a pillar of the regime and loyalists are still rewarded with posts and positions. On the one hand, Faure is bringing new and younger people into the ruling coalition. Many of them are former fellow students from the Lyceum in Kara and are

⁷ Interview with a political observer, Lomé, November 2014. For the link between freemasonry and elite power in francophone Africa, see among other sources, a special report entitled “Les francs-maçons africains au pied du mur” in *Jeune Afrique*, March 2016.

⁸ Interviews with a journalist and two political observers in Lomé, November 2014.

⁹ Interview with a leading opposition politician, Lomé, December 2015.

personally loyal to him. On the other hand, he cannot afford to alienate the old guards, and many of the old RPT cadres are still around.¹⁰

A new form of elite co-optation was introduced by the accord which was signed in 2010 between the ruling party and the UFC (Union des Forces de Changement). Under Gilchrist Olympio, son of the first president Sylvanus Olympio, the UFC used to be the most important opposition party for a long time, but in the run-up to the 2010 elections an internal leadership struggle broke out. When his opponent, Jean-Pierre Fabre, was nominated as the presidential candidate of the party, Gilchrist struck a deal with Faure to form a government of national unity. As a reward, the UFC members were nominated for high-ranking positions, for example as ministers or ambassadors. This move was not acceptable for a large part of the opposition and finally led to a split in the UFC, and finally to the founding of the ANC by Jean-Pierre Fabre. For Faure, the unity accord had several benefits because he could neutralize the threat from at least a part of the opposition and at the same time claim to have reconciled the two leading political families in the country, the Gnassingbé-dynasty and the oppositional Olympio-dynasty. For the UFC, however, the accord was a double-edged sword: while gaining a number of lucrative posts, the party lost its vote base and is reduced to only two deputies in the current parliament.¹¹

In addition to elite co-optation, mass patronage is remains to be an important factor for the survival of the regime. Money and other material benefits are channeled to chief and other locally influential persons, and huge construction projects were started before the 2010 elections. UNIR also sold pasta and rice with the party emblem or the picture of the president

¹⁰ Interview with two political observer, Lomé November 2014. Interview with a leading opposition politician, Lomé, December 2015.

¹¹ Today, many UFC members view the accords rather critically, some even vow for a reconciliation and reunification with Fabre's ANC. Interviews with two UFC politicians, Lomé, December 2015.

for a dumping price.¹² In this regard, Faure simply continues with entrenched practices of vote buying and manipulation.

6.3 Repression

The overall human rights situation has improved, but Amnesty International still lists a number of problems in the 2015/16 report, for example the excessive use of force by security agents against peaceful protest, the arbitrary banning of demonstrations, repression against critical journalists, and instances of arbitrary arrest and detention.¹³ Rebellious opposition politicians are still faced with various forms of low level repression. These range from the denial of allowances and benefits that flow from the function as a parliamentarian to arbitrary arrest and false accusations.¹⁴

Not only regime opponents were targets of repression, but also regime insiders. The most prominent example is Kpatcha Gnassingbé, a half brother of Faure who was arrested in 2009 for trying to “destabilize state security”.¹⁵ Kpatcha was a danger to Faure because he had his own network of supporters in the RPT and the military.¹⁶ Moreover, Kpatcha was believed to be a guarantor of northern influence in the regime, whereas Faure was seen as somebody who could shift the power balance to the south (Attisso 2012: 148).

Thus, although the overall situation for civil liberties has improved, repression remains an important pillar of stability.

7 Elite networks in Togo: The National Assembly

As detailed in section 3, the data that are used in the quantitative analysis were collected in the current parliament of Togo. The parliament has 91 members. 62 of them belong to the

¹² “La campagne togolaise sur la ligne de départ”, *Jeune Afrique*, 08.01.2010, online :

<http://www.jeuneafrique.com/186368/politique/la-campagne-togolaise-sur-la-ligne-de-d-part/> [06.07.2016]

¹³ <https://www.amnesty.org/en/countries/africa/togo/report-togo/> [06.07.2016]

¹⁴ Interviews with two opposition MPs, Lomé, December 2015.

¹⁵ “Faure contre Kpatcha Gnassingbé : les raisons du conflit”, online : <http://www.afrik.com/article16625.html> [06.07.2016]

¹⁶ Ibid.

ruling party UNIR, the others belong to one of the small opposition groups in the parliament. For this paper, all opposition parties are grouped together in one category. The UFC is somewhat ambiguous but considers itself as an opposition party and is therefore counted as such.

The full network that was constructed from the MPs survey responses is displayed in Figure 1.

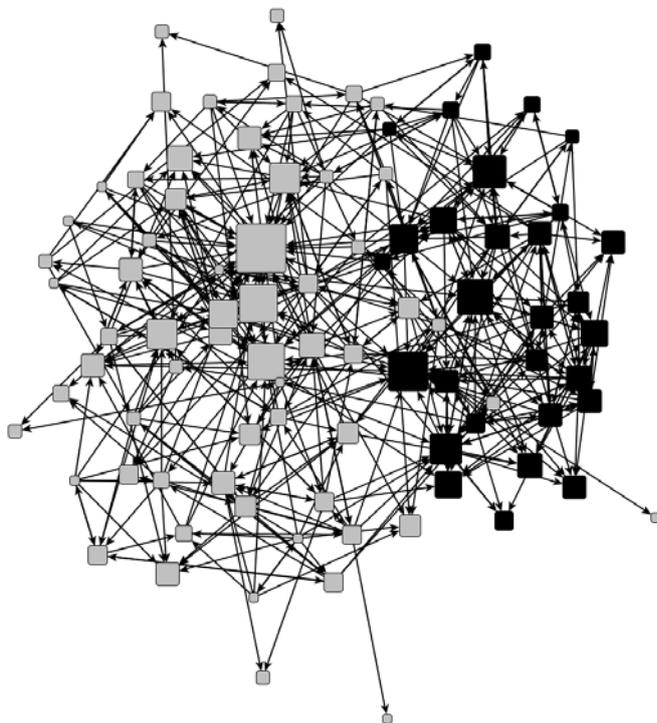


Figure 1

Altogether, the network has a density of 0,055 – this means that 5,5 of all possible nodes are present. Nodes are colored according to whether the deputy belongs to the government or the opposition, while the size of the node indicates in-degree centrality. Centrality as a concept in social network analysis describes the position of individual nodes in a network; in-degree centrality as used here is simply the number of ties that an actor receives, i.e. the number of times he or she was nominated as a discussion partner by a fellow MP. It is clearly visible that there are very central persons in the government and the opposition, but also that there are huge differences between the actors. The most central actor, a deputy of UNIR, receives 26

ties. Furthermore, there are 12 actors with an in-degree of over 10, but also 10 actors with an in-degree of 1. The average number of incoming ties is 4,98.

The data set contains basic biographic information and information on the career patterns.

When looking at the careers of government and opposition respectively, it becomes obvious that there are huge differences (see Table 1). Many UNIR deputies have held important positions in the past; most notably in the political and administrative sectors. The number of positions a person has held in the past ranges from 1 to 6 for the political sector, and from 1 to 7 in the administrative sector. Moreover, many MPs have been active in more than one sector in the past. It is not unusual to have been minister and/or director of a parastatal before being elected to the parliament. Two deputies have worked in high positions at the port of Lomé. This is interesting because, as we have learned in section 5, the huge incomes generated by the port of Lomé were in the past used as a patronage reservoir. Surprisingly few MPs come from the security sector; in fact there is only one former police officer in the national assembly. Two other deputies have family members in the army – in one of the cases the respective family member holds on of the highest positions in the armed forces. This indicates that there is still a link between the political and the military sector, but it also shows that political positions are mostly staffed with civilians. The big caveat here is that the data are confined to the national assembly and not the cabinet or the inner informal circle of the regime.

Opposition deputies have held considerably less important positions in the past and only a few of them have family members who do so.

Table 1: Positions in various sectors before being elected to the Parliament, in Percent.

	UNIR	Opposition
Political sector	39.6	9.9
Administration	36.3	13.2
Private economy	9.9	6.6
Social sector	20.9	7.7
Security sector	1.1	--
Educational sector	13.2	8.8
Family	34.1	13.2

Furthermore, there are differences between government and opposition with regard to their regional and ethnic origin. 56,5% of the UNIR MPs come from the north of the country, and 43,6% from south. UNIR's northern bias is thus not as large as expected. The opposition, however, has a clear southern bias with 72,4% of the MPs originating from this part of the country.

These descriptive statistics tell us something about the composition of the Togolese elite, but nothing about the distribution of power *within* this elite. The purpose of the quantitative network analysis is therefore to analyze whether actors with certain attributes have a higher prestige, i.e. a higher probability of being chosen as a discussion partner. In the models in table 3 and 4 this was operationalized as the number of incoming ties, i.e. the coefficients relate to the probability of a node to receive a tie. Only in model 4, the outgoing ties are used. Before we turn to these models, we can formulate some hypotheses on the basis of the qualitative part of the paper. As has been shown in section 5 and 6, Gnassingbé Eyadema's power rested on a small clique of regime insiders who were predominantly of Northern origin. More specifically, the most important high positions were staffed with ethnic Kabyé. From this, the first two hypotheses can be formulated:

H1: A northern origin increases the likelihood of being chosen as political discussion partner

H2: Being an ethnic Kabyé increases the likelihood of being chosen as political discussion partner

To account for the continuing presence of old regime stalwarts, an index of power was constructed which simply sums up the number of high positions that a person held in the past (see also Table 1). In addition, a disaggregated version of the power variable was created which separately counts up the number of positions held in the individual sectors: politics, administration, security, private economy, social sector, and education. It is assumed that people who have held many important positions possess more prestige than political newcomers:

H3: The more important political positions a deputy has held in the past the more likely he or she is chosen as a discussion partner.

Given the dynastic character of politics in Togo, it can also be assumed that people from powerful families have more prestige than others. Therefore the variable “family” is a count of all family members who have held high positions or are currently holding such positions in any of the sectors:

H4: The more family members of an MP have held/are holding important positions, the more likely is that MP chosen as a discussion partner.

Furthermore, control variables are added: the year of birth, gender, political affiliation (government or opposition), and the number of legislative periods that the MP has been a member of the national assembly. These controls are important because one could assume that there are differences in the prestige of government and opposition MPs, but also that men, as well as older and more experienced MPs are more likely to be chosen as discussion partners. All models contain the term “edges” which adds a statistic equal to the number of edges in the network (Morris, Handcock and Hunter 2008). It is equivalent to a constant in regressions and gives the baseline propensity of any tie. In addition, The GWESP (Geometrically Weighted

Edgewise Shared Partners) and GWDSP (Geometrically Weighted Edgewise Shared Partners) terms control for triad closure.¹⁷ Triadic closure describes the well-known effect in the social network analysis that friends of a friend are also likely to become friends: if actor A is connected to actor B and actor C it is hence very likely that a connection between B and C will also emerge.

The first contains “power” and “north” and only controls for government and opposition with “government” coded as 0 and “opposition” coded as 1, whereas the second model replaces “north” with Kabye. Since the Kabye are an ethnic group of northern origin, these terms are not included together in one model. The power variable is highly significant in both models, and triad processes are present, but there is no significant effect for northerners. Also, the negative effect for UNIR shows that opposition MPs are more likely to receive a tie than government MPs. Kabye, however, are significantly more likely to be chosen as discussion partners (Model 2). Model 3 adds the control variables. While “Kabye”, “power”, and “UNIR” remain significant, neither age nor gender seems to be a determinant for tie formation. The number of legislatures, however, increases the likelihood of being chosen as a discussion partner. The latter result indicates that experienced MPs receive more ties. Model 4 models the likelihood of an outgoing tie. This model makes clear that people who receive a large number of ties are not necessarily also sending out more ties.

¹⁷ For more on this, see Goodreau, Kitts and Morris (2009).

Table 2: ERGM of Tie Formation in the Togolese Parliament

	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3	Model 4
	North	Kabye	Full Model	Outgoing ties
Edges	-3.15 *** (0.14)	-3.18 *** (0.13)	-10.44 (6.94)	-3.32 (6.74)
North	-0.05 (0.06)			
Kabye		0.3 ** (0.11)	0.27 * (0.11)	0.17 (0.12)
Power	0.05 *** (0.01)	0.04 *** (0.01)	0.04 ** (0.01)	0.00 (0.01)
UNIR	-0.2 ** (0.06)	-0.23 *** (0.07)	-0.2 ** (0.07)	-0.13 + (0.07)
Gender			0.00 (0.08)	-0.07 (0.08)
Year of birth			0.00 (0.3)	0.00 (0.00)
Legislative periods			0.13 ** (0.05)	-0.05 (0.07)
GWESP=0	1.57 *** (0.08)	1.57 *** (0.08)	1.57 *** (0.08)	1.59 *** (0.08)
GWDSP=0	-0.18 *** (0.02)	-0.18 *** (0.02)	-0.18 *** (0.02)	-0.19 *** (0.01)
AIC	3097	3093	3091	3119
BIC	3139	3135	3154	3182

*** p < 0.001, ** p < 0.015, * p < 0.05, + p < 0.1

Model 5 and 6 are interaction models which disaggregate the power variable into the positions held in the individual sectors and interacts them with government and opposition. An interaction variable was built for each of these variables by multiplying it with the value for

government and opposition (government =1, opposition =0 in model 5, and the reverse in model 6.) We see that for UNIR, political positions are the most important determinant of tie formation, some others are weakly significant. For the opposition, the educational sector is weakly significant.

Table 2: Interaction Models

	Model 5	Model 6
	UNIR	Opposition
Edges	-3.07 *** (0.12)	-3.12 *** (0.11)
Political sector	0.06 * (0.02)	0.03 (0.03)
Administration	-0.02 (0.02)	-0.03 (0.05)
Private economy	-0.05 (0.09)	0.05 (0.09)
Social sector	-0.1 ⁺ (0.06)	0.09 (0.06)
Seucrity sector	-0.28 (0.24)	
Educational sector	-0.06 (0.06)	0.05 ⁺ (0.03)
Family	0.02 (0.04)	0.02 (0.06)
GWESP=0	1.57 *** (0.08)	1.57 *** (0.08)
GWDSP=0	-0.18 *** (0.02)	-0.18 *** (0.02)
AIC	3113	3116
BIC	3183	3179

*** p < 0.001, ** p < 0.015, * p < 0.05, ⁺ p < 0.1

8 Conclusion

This paper has analyzed continuity and change in the electoral autocracy Togo. As the qualitative part has shown, the rule of Gnassingbé Eyadema rested on a combination of strategies: the cult around the leader, repression by the security forces, and selective material benefits to regime supporters. The ruling coalition around the president was heavily biased in favor of northerners and ethnic Kabye. His son Faure Gnassingbé had to adapt his strategies to new circumstances. He portrays himself as a reformer, but still works with many old regime cadres. Elections and political institutions like the national assembly and the renamed ruling party are used to create the impression of a reformed regime. In this way, the unity accord with the also UFC helped to enhance Faure's legitimacy. On the other hand, the danger of repression remains constantly high. In addition, the superior financial resources allow the government to distribute benefits to strategically important social groups and individuals.

The quantitative analysis suggests that people who have held important positions in the past still play a huge role in the regime elite. For UNIR, these are predominantly people from the political sector, among them many former ministers and people who have worked closely with Faure's father. A good deal of the power is still in the hands of the Kabye ethnic group. Interestingly, however, no indication for a northern dominance has been found. This gives credit to the speculations that the power balance under Faure is shifting away from the north. The interpretation is difficult, because the greater regional balance can be seen as a positive sign for a greater dispersion of power. On the other hand, the significant role of the Kabye rather indicates that the epicenter of power is still located in the hand of one and the same ethnic group and family.

What can be learned from these findings? First of all, the paper has shown a way to analyse at least in part the power structures of an authoritarian regime. Secondly, it has

become clear that hereditary succession involves changes and continuities. If a son is able to adapt his strategies, he can successfully stabilize the authoritarian regime he has inherited. Personal charisma, however, cannot be inherited. Faure does definitely not possess the same alleged supernatural qualities of his father. This sheds doubt on the continuing classification of Togo as a personalist regime by Geddes, because it ignores the differences between father and son. Thus, the paper also shows that much more empirical, case-based knowledge is necessary to develop better sub-types of authoritarian regimes.

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