

## Equatorial Guinea

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Equatorial Guinea is coded as an autocracy for all the years in our time frame. Geddes (1999) has not provided coding on authoritarian regime type because she only codes countries with a population of at least 1 million as of January 1 2009. Equatorial Guinea has fewer than that.<sup>1</sup> In 1968, Francisco Macías Nguema became the country's first president, overseeing "rule by a small family elite" (Wood 2004, 548). There is no SOLS change at independence. Macías assumed dictatorial powers and from 1969 became a despot, murdering even those in his own family to maintain power. He also assumed the title of "President-for-Life". Macías was a personalist ruler. First, although he was affiliated with the Worker's National United Party (PUNT), which was declared to be the only party legally permitted, this party was created by him after his accession to power, indicating a personalist rather than a single-party regime. Also, on May 7, 1971, he issued Decree 415, which repealed parts of the 1968 Constitution and granted him "all direct powers of Government and Institutions", including powers formerly held by the legislative and judiciary branches, as well as the cabinet of ministers (Muller 2011: 434). This also suggests that the leader, not the party, had complete control over the government. Second, facing an attempted coup led by Foreign Minister Ndongo Miyone in 1969, he arrested and executed some 200 individuals including Ndongo. The "continuous political purge" went on until 1979 and anybody who was suspected of opposing Macías Nguema's regime was killed (Jackson and Rosberg 1982, 247). According to the U.S. Department of State, "the Macías regime was characterized by abandonment of all government functions except internal security, which was accomplished by terror; this led to the death or exile of up to one-third of the country's population" (US Department of State, 2010). Third, Macías Nguema was a mainland Fang (Muller, 2011: 434). The Fang are one of the two basic ethnic groups in the country along with the Bubi, which is the minority. As soon as Macías Nguema came to office he "installed 7,000 of [his] Fang supporters in government positions in the capital (Jackson and Rosberg 1982, 246)." The domination by one clan is one of the characteristics of a personalist regime (Geddes, 72).

His nephew, Teodoro Obiang Nguema Mbasogo, a military general, staged a coup in 1979 that was successful in ousting his uncle after Macías ordered the murder of Obiang's brother. Obiang Mbasogo had actually been appointed by his uncle to lead day-to-day affairs of the country (Jackson and Rosberg 1982, 248), but after the coup he arrested his uncle and had him tried. This leader transition raises the question of whether Macías Nguema's personalist regime ended with Obiang Mbasogo's assumption of power and whether we should code a SOLS change here. While it is true that Obiang used violence to remove Macías Nguema and had him tried, Obiang Mbasogo was also a relative of Macías Nguema and had been appointed by him to high military rank. Most importantly though, following the coup, Obiang Mbasogo left the power structure of Nguema largely in tact. Like his uncle before him, Mbasogo's pillars of support consisted of the Esangui clan, the army and Macías' Juventud en Marcha youth organization (Rake 2001, 81; East & Thomas 2003, 161; Europa Publications 2004, 373). Obiang's rule served to entrench the family's power. Thus, we code the personalist regime of Macías Nguema as continuing with Obiang Mbasogo and we code no SOLS change here.

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<sup>1</sup> The population was 659,197 people in 2008. Source: World Bank, World Development Indicators.

Obiang Mbasogo was initially supported by a Supreme Military Council which was abolished when a new constitution came into effect in 1982. Throughout the 1980s and early 1990s, he slowly transitioned to a multiparty system under international pressure, but he maintained his personal grip on power. The Department of State suggests, “Despite the formal ending of one-party rule in 1991, President Obiang and a circle of advisors (drawn largely from his own family and ethnic group) maintain real authority.” According to worldstatesmen.org, Obiang’s affiliation changed from Mil to Partido Democratico Guinea Ecuatorial (PDGE) in 1987. This does not represent a SOLS change because the regime remained a personalist dictatorship throughout the period and the adoption of a party affiliation was only to pacify Western donors (Wood 2004, 549).

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