

Coup-Proofing via Capital Relocation

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Jeff Jacobs

Introduction

Several previous studies have found robust relationships between spatial properties of a country's **capital city** and that country's propensity for **conflict** and **misgovernance**.

Perceptions of this linkage also have an effect on “coup-proofing” decisions made by national governments. A recent BBC interview with Equatorial Guinea's President Teodoro Obiang, for example, highlighted this as a factor behind his decision to relocate the capital city:

It's the remoteness of Oyala that makes it so appealing to President Obiang. In a rare interview he described how rebels had recently plotted a seaborne assault on his palace in the current capital, Malabo. ‘We need a secure place for my government and for future governments. That's why we have created Oyala, to guarantee the government of Equatorial Guinea.’ [@sackur_equatorial_2012]

This case is far from exceptional, as an even more recent *Washington Post* article points out with respect to Myanmar's decision to move its capital from Yangon to Naypyidaw:

Analysts have described the decision as motivated by a desire to secure the military's seat of power from any threat of protests or invasions. [@berger_myanmars_2021]

Most of these studies, however, are based on observations of **conflict events**. In this study, we study the more fundamental variable of a capital's distance from the **population centroid** of the country.

Literature Review

@campante_capital_2019 analyzes the relationship between the location of a **capital city** and the degree of conflict and misgovernance in a given country. Their two key findings are that: