Cline Center
Coup d'État Project Dataset
Codebook
(v2.1.3)

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The Coup d'État Project identifies coups, attempted coups, and coup plots/conspiracies anywhere in the world that occurred between 1945-2023. The data identifies the type of actor who initiated the coup (i.e., military, palace, rebel, etc.) as well as the fate of the deposed executive (killed, injured, exiled, etc.).

This version of the dataset extends the last round of data published in February 2023 by adding new coup events and updating the coding of coup events that occurred in 2022 and extending the period covered from 1945 through the end of 2023. This version of these data (v2.1.3) contains 1000 events in 137 countries (443 successful coups, 352 attempted coups and 205 coup conspiracies).

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SUMMARY

Coups d'Ètat are important events in the life of a country. They constitute an important subset of irregular transfers of political power that can have significant and enduring consequences for national well-being. There are only a limited number of datasets available to study these events (Powell and Thyne 2011, Marshall and Marshall 2019). Seeking to facilitate research on post-WWII coups by compiling a more comprehensive list and categorization of these events, the Cline Center for Advanced Social Research (previously the Cline Center for Democracy) initiated the Coup d'État Project as part of its Societal Infrastructures and Development (SID) project. More specifically, this dataset identifies the outcomes of coup events (i.e., realized, unrealized, or conspiracy) the type of actor(s) who initiated the coup (i.e., military, rebels, etc.), as well as the fate of the deposed leader.

Version 2.1.3 adds 19 additional coup events to the data set, corrects the date of a coup in Tunisia and reclassifies an attempted coup in Brazil in December 2022 to a conspiracy.

Version 2.1.2 added 6 additional coup events that occurred in 2022 and updated the coding of an attempted coup event in Kazakhstan in January 2022.

Version 2.1.1 corrected a mistake in version 2.1.0, where the designation of "dissident coup" had been dropped in error for coup_id: 00201062021. Version 2.1.1 fixed this omission by marking the case as both a dissident coup and an auto-coup.

Version 2.1.0 added 36 cases to the data set and removed two cases from the v2.0.0 data. This update also added actor coding for 46 coup events and adds executive outcomes to 18 events from version 2.0.0. A few other changes were made to correct inconsistencies in the coup ID variable and the date of the event.

Version 2.0.0 improved several aspects of the previous version (v1.0.0) and incorporated additional source material to include:

- Reconciling missing event data
- Removing events with irreconcilable event dates
- Removing events with insufficient sourcing (each event needs at least two sources)
- Removing events that were inaccurately coded as coup events
- Removing variables that fell below the threshold of inter-coder reliability required by the project
- Removing the spreadsheet 'CoupInventory.xls' because of inadequate attribution and citations in the event summaries
- Extending the period covered from 1945-2005 to 1945-2019

- Adding events from Powell and Thyne's Coup Data (Powell and Thyne, 2011)

Version 1.0.0 was released in 2013. This version consolidated coup data taken from the following sources:
- The Center for Systemic Peace (Marshall and Marshall, 2007)
- The World Handbook of Political and Social Indicators (Taylor and Jodice, 1983)
- Coup d'Ètat: A Practical Handbook (Luttwak, 1979)
- The Cline Center's Social, Political and Economic Event Database (SPEED) Project (Nardulli, Althaus and Hayes, 2015)
- Government Change in Authoritarian Regimes – 2010 Update (Svolik and Akcinaroglu, 2006)

The first section of this codebook provides a succinct definition of a coup d'état used by the Coup d'État Project and an overview of the categories used to differentiate the wide array of events that meet the project's definition. It also defines coup outcomes. The second section describes the methodology used to produce the data.

DEFINITIONS AND VARIABLES

Coup d'État Project Definition of a Coup d'État

The Coup d'État Project defines coups d'état as *organized efforts to effect sudden and irregular (e.g., illegal, or extra-legal) removal of the incumbent executive authority of a national government, or to displace the authority of the highest levels of one or more branches of government.*

To satisfy this definition, the following criteria must be met:

1. **Initiating actor(s)**: There must be an actor or group of actors initiating the event.
2. **Incumbent Targets**: Actors targeted for removal may include any incumbent that exercises control over national policy. Primary targets of a coup are individuals or groups that command executive authority, including presidents, prime ministers, dictators, members of an established executive collective (rotating presidency, collective executive councils, juntas, single-ruling party systems), and so on. Coups may also target the authority of non-executive branches of government, provided that they have meaningful control over policy.
3. **A threat to leaders' hold on power**: A relevant coup event must be a credible, short-term, and direct threat to an incumbent leader or leaders.
4. **Irregular Means**: Initiators must use irregular means to seize, remove, or render powerless the incumbent target. Typically, this is done by the threat or use of coercion or force. Some events involve violence, but coups may also be bloodless. Some relevant events are auto-coups, in which a chief executive uses irregular means to seize or dismantle competing centers of state power, including legislative and judicial authorities with influence over national policy. Relevant non-executive targets are limited to formal branches of a national government and can include legislative leadership and high-ranking members of official judicial bodies. Constitutionally legitimate leadership changes, including impeachments, no confidence votes, and resignations triggered by a loss of popular support are regular removals, and are not coup events.
5. **Organized effort:** There must be an organized effort (whether successful or unsuccessful) that leaves the incumbents in a titular, *de jure* position of power subordinated to a higher authority (a military junta or supervisory council) that is the *de facto* executive leadership.

Outcomes

Coups can be unrealized or realized. A coup is unrealized if it fails to achieve the effective removal or displacement of the targeted incumbent or fails to end their ability to direct national governance.

Unrealized events include two sub-types: conspiracies and attempted coups. A conspiracy is a plot that is discovered and disrupted in the planning stages. An attempted coup is planned and initiated but fails to achieve the effective removal or displacement of the targeted incumbent. In general, all coups begin as conspiracies, and include actions that may or may not succeed.

A coup is realized (i.e., successful) if incumbents lose their capacity to control the state by irregular means. Success in the Coup d'État Project definition, requires only that targeted incumbents lose power, and does not require evidence that the conspirators form an effective government or exert positive control of the state. In cases where legislative or judicial leaders are targeted, a coup may entail removal, replacement by fiat, and/or the irregular displacement of their designated functions.

To summarize:

> **Unrealized Coup** - A coup that fails to achieve the effective removal or displacement of the targeted incumbent actor or fails to end their ability to direct national governance.
>
> These include:
>
>> **Coup Conspiracies -** A coup plot discovered and disrupted in the planning stages.
>>
>> **Attempted Coups -** An initiated coup plot that fails to achieve the effective removal or displacement of the targeted incumbent actor or fails to end their ability to direct national governance.
>
> **Realized Coup** - A coup that achieves the effective removal or displacement of the targeted incumbent actor or that ends their ability to direct national governance. The plotters need not accomplish the effective takeover of the state apparatus.

Coup Typology

A considerable range of events fall within our definition of a coup. Because variation exists within situations we define as coups, we constructed a typology consistent with the objectives and reach of the Coup d'État Project that focuses on the circumstances surrounding the execution of the coup (who initiated it, the immediate setting, its resolution, etc.). The typology and operational definitions of the coup categories are provided below. It should be noted that these categories are not mutually exclusive and that, where warranted, a coup may be placed in more than one category.

Military Coup
Coups initiated by military actors who are not a formal part of the governing apparatus (i.e., a military junta). This category does not include security forces, police, or retired/former officers because these groups/people are not part of the military or no longer in the active military.

Dissident Coup
Coups initiated by a small group of discontents to include ex-military leaders, religious leaders, former government leaders, members of a legislature/parliament, and civilians. This category does not include security forces or police as they are organized arms of the government.

Rebel Coup
Coups initiated by organized, militarized groups that have broken with the existing government and are actively contesting government forces.

Palace Coup
Coups initiated by members of a faction within the existing government (i.e., ministers, cabinet members, or other high-ranking people in the executive branch). This does not include members of the legislature/parliament. This category can include military personnel if they are members of a ruling military junta.

Foreign-backed Coup
Coups with a foreign power as the force behind the event. In many instances the foreign power works in collaboration with a set of domestic actors to remove the incumbent leader and install a government more sympathetic to its interests.

Auto Coups
Coups where the existing chief executive takes extreme measures to eliminate, or render powerless, other components of the government (legislature, judiciary, etc.). It also includes situations where the chief executive simply assumes extraordinary powers in an illegal or extra-legal manner (i.e., goes beyond extraordinary measures included in the country's constitution, such as declaring a state of emergency).

Forced Resignations

A soft coup where there is no formal deposing of the chief executive. Instead, the chief executive resigns from his or her position under the imminent threat of illegal or extra-legal removal. If the threat of removal is through legal means spelled out in the constitution, it is not a forced resignation (i.e., President Nixon's resignation in 1974).

Popular Revolt

An irregular regime change driven by widespread popular dissatisfaction expressed through large-scale civil unrest. An event falls into this category if a large-scale popular rebellion overthrows the existing leader, forces their resignations, or elites use irregular means to force leadership changes to conciliate the populace. It is not a popular revolt if elites overthrow incumbents they consider "soft" on dissent to facilitate a crackdown.

Counter Coup

A coup where the newly installed, post-coup leadership is removed by members of the prior regime within one month of the preceding, realized coup.

Other

A residual case where the initiators do not fit the above categories (military, rebel, dissident, etc.) or the actors in a coup are not identified.

PROCESS FOR PRODUCING THE DATA

After the release of updated data in 2020 (v2.0.0), we began to collect candidate coup events over the next two years. This included events that occurred after 2019 as well as potential coup events that occurred prior to 2019. In addition to new events, we also identified coup events in the existing data which were missing information on actors and/or the outcomes for the incumbent executive.

In May of 2022, we began gathering sourcing information on the list of potential coup events as well as the events with missing actor/executive outcome data using a combination of the ProQuest Historical Newspaper Collection, Lexis-Nexis Newspaper database, as well as Wikipedia. Event coding began in June 2020 after sources were gathered.

The coding team consisted of four individuals. Each person had been trained using a gold standard created for the 2020 update.[1] Each potential event was independently coded. Disagreement between the four members of the coding team concerning type of event, actors involved and outcomes for the incumbent executive were reconciled in meetings between the four members of the coding team.

The current version of the data set (V2.1.3) was compiled using Stata code. First, corrections were made to existing cases in the data (including actor and executive outcomes as well as incorrect dates). Second, data with the new coup events were merged with the corrected coup data set and the final data checked for incongruence in coding event types as well as for missing actor or executive outcome data. Finally, the coup identification numbers were standardized by adding a leading zero to the COW codes for countries in the Caribbean and North America (in the case of the United States, two leading zeros were added). This standardized the COW code portion of the coup identification number as having three digits.

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[1] Individual agreement scores on the Gold Standard test met or exceeded the reliability scores of the previous data release (v2.0.0) listed in the Reliability appendix.

Table 2
Cline Center Coup d'État Project Dataset Variable Descriptions

Variable	Description
coup_id	Unique number assigned to each event. It consists of the country's **cowcode** and the eight-digit date of the event in MMDDYYYY. [2]
cowcode	A unique country code number based on the Correlates of War (COW) country code list.[3] It is used to identify the country where a coup event occurred. Please note, these codes are slightly different from the canonical COW codes. For details, please see "Note on COW Country Codes," below.
country	Name of the country where the coup event occurred.
year	Year of the coup event.
month	Month of the coup event.
day	Day of the coup event.
event_type	Indicates whether the event is a coup, attempted coup, or conspiracy.
unrealized	A dummy variable where one indicates an unsuccessful coup or plot and zero otherwise.
realized	A dummy variable where one indicates a successful coup and zero otherwise.
conspiracy	A dummy variable where one indicates a coup conspiracy thwarted prior to execution and zero otherwise.
attempt	A dummy variable where one indicates a coup was attempted by failed and zero otherwise.
military	A dummy variable where one indicates a military coup/attempt/conspiracy and zero otherwise.
dissident	A dummy variable where one indicates a dissident coup/attempt/conspiracy and zero otherwise.
rebel	A dummy variable where one indicates a rebel coup/attempt/conspiracy and zero otherwise.
palace	A dummy variable where one indicates a palace coup/attempt/conspiracy and zero otherwise.
foreign	A dummy variable where one indicates a foreign-backed coup/attempt/conspiracy and zero otherwise.
auto	A dummy variable where one indicates an auto coup and zero otherwise.
resign	A dummy variable where one indicates a forced resignation and zero otherwise.

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[2] When using this variable in a statistical program, you might need to set up a custom data format to ensure that the leading zeros are not removed. A simple approach to take is to convert this variable into a character/string column.

[3] http://www.correlatesofwar.org/data-sets/cow-country-codes

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popular	A dummy variable where one indicates a popular revolt and zero otherwise.
counter	A dummy variable where one indicates a counter-coup and zero otherwise.
other	A dummy variable where one indicates the coup event does not fit into any of the above categories or the actors were not identified and zero otherwise.
noharm	A dummy variable where one indicates the deposed executive was not injured or killed during the coup event and zero otherwise.
injured	A dummy variable where one indicates the deposed executive was injured during the coup event and zero otherwise.
killed	A dummy variable where one indicates the deposed executive was killed during the coup event and zero otherwise.
harrest	A dummy variable where one indicates the deposed executive was placed under house arrest and zero otherwise.
jailed	A dummy variable where one indicates the deposed executive was arrested, detained or jailed and zero otherwise.
tried	A dummy variable where one indicates the deposed executive was tried and zero otherwise.
fled	A dummy variable where one indicates the deposed executive fled the country and zero otherwise.
exile	A dummy variable where one indicates the deposed executive was banished from the country and zero otherwise.

NOTE ON COW COUNTRY CODES

The country code (**cowcode)** values used in this dataset are based on the Correlates of War (COW) country code list. However, some minor changes were made to this list. These exceptions are documented in the table below.

Table 3
COW Country Code Changes

Country	Code used in Data	Original COW Code	Years
Serbia	340	345	1992-Present
USSR	365	365	1945-1991
Russia	393	365	1991-Present

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APPENDIX 1. RELIABILITY

The gold standard was produced by randomly drawing 120 cases from the Coup D'état Project dataset (v1.0.0). The sample was independently analyzed by two analysts who trained on the concepts of the coup definitions. Results were evaluated by using percent agreement, Krippendorff's Alpha, Cohen's Kappa, and Brennan and Prediger's Kappa (see Table A.1 below). These results show a very high level of agreement within in all the categories by the two analysts assigned to produce the gold standard. Disagreements between each pair of analysts were reconciled and the final reconciled dataset became the gold standard used in the gatekeeper test.

Table A.1
Inter-coder Reliability Results for Analysts Who Produced the 'Gold Standard'

Variable	Number of Categories	Number Of Cases	Percent Agreement	Expected Percent Agreement	Krippendorff's Alpha	Cohen's Kappa	Brennan and Prediger's Kappa
realized	2	120	.93	.57	.85	.85	.87
unrealized	2	120	.93	.51	.85	.85	.85
attempt	2	120	.91	.57	.79	.79	.82
conspiracy	2	120	.96	.61	.89	.89	.92
military	2	120	.83	.50	.65	.65	.65
rebel	2	120	.93	.90	.27	.27	.85
palace	2	120	.88	.73	.56	.56	.77
popular	2	120	.93	.86	.52	.52	.87
dissident	2	120	.79	.74	.17	.19	.58
foreign	2	120	.93	.84	.53	.53	.85
resign	2	120	.91	.89	.11	.13	.82
counter	2	120	.97	.97	-.01	.01	.93
auto	2	120	.99	.96	.80	.80	.98
other	2	120	.92	.90	.13	.12	.83
noharm	2	120	.92	.74	.67	.67	.83
injured	2	120	1.00	.98	1.00	1.00	1.00
killed	2	120	.98	.95	.66	.66	.97
harrest	2	120	.95	.90	.48	.47	.90
jailed	2	120	.94	.91	.34	.34	.88
tried	2	120	.99	.99	.00	.00	.98
fled	2	120	.95	.94	.23	.23	.90
exile	2	120	.93	.90	.30	.30	.87

APPENDIX 2. CHANGES FROM V2.1.2

The following events have been added to the dataset since the last release.

Country	Date	Event type
Armenia	9/25/2023	Conspiracy
Azerbaijan	4/6/2023	Conspiracy
Brazil	12/18/2022	Conspiracy
Brazil	1/8/2023	Attempted coup
Burkina Faso	9/27/2023	Conspiracy
Chile	9/14/1970	Conspiracy
Democratic Republic of the Congo	5/30/2023	Conspiracy
Gabon	8/30/2023	Coup
Ghana	9/20/2019	Conspiracy
Guinea-Bissau	11/30/2023	Attempted coup
Kazahkstan	11/15/2023	Conspiracy
Kyrgzstan	6/5/2023	Conspiracy
Moldova	2/23/2023	Conspiracy
Niger	7/25/2023	Coup
Peru	11/12/1992	Conspiracy
Romania	10/16/1984	Conspiracy
Russia	6/23/2023	Attempted coup
Sierra Leone	7/31/2023	Conspiracy
Sierra Leone	11/26/2023	Attempted coup

The date for the coup in Tunisia (61601142019) was corrected from 1/14/2019 to 1/14/2011 and the coup_id was adjusted to reflect the new date (61601142011).

The attempted coup in Brazil on 12/29/2022 was re-coded as a conspiracy.