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Patrick J. McGowan*

ABSTRACT

Described here is a new data set including all successful *coups d'état* (80), failed *coup* attempts (108) and reported *coup* plots (139) for all 48 independent sub-Saharan African (SSA) states for the 46-year period from January 1956 until December 2001. Elite political instability (PI) in this form remains widespread in SSA, in contrast to other regions of the global South. Military-led PI has been shown to adversely affect economic growth and human development in SSA, and is a major cause of the current African 'crisis'. The frequency of these instability events is given for each state for all 46 years and for the two periods 1956–79 and 1980–2001. A Total Military Intervention Score (TMIS) for each state is calculated and examined over time to explore trends in *coup* behaviour. The distribution of these events among major African regions is presented. Appendix A lists all *coups* and failed *coups* by state and date. Major findings are that military interventions have continued to be pervasive in Africa, despite democratisation trends since 1990; that *coups*, failed *coups* and *coup* plots form a syndrome of military-led PI; that colonial heritage is unrelated to *coup* activity; that the chance of success when launching a *coup* attempt has averaged more than 40% since 1958; that once a successful *coup* has occurred, military factionalism often leads to more *coup* behaviour; that except for a declining rate of success once a *coup* is undertaken, there is no major difference between 1956–79 and 1980–2001; that no trends of increasing or decreasing *coup* behaviour are evident, except that up to around 1975 as decolonisation progressed, TMIS also increased; and that West Africa is the predominant centre of *coup* activity in SSA, although all African regions have experienced *coups*. States that have been free of significant PI since 1990 are examined and those with institutionalised democratic traditions appear less prone to *coups*.

INTRODUCTION

When noted scholars such as Colin Leys (1994) and Giovanni Arrighi (2002) write about 'the African tragedy' and 'the African crisis', and when

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influential magazines such as *The Economist* (13–19.5.2000) run cover stories on ‘Africa: The Hopeless Continent’, the perilous condition of much of sub-Saharan Africa (SSA) is highlighted.¹ Of course, any generalisation about all 48 states of SSA will always have important exceptions (Englebert 2000; Mkandawire 2001). Countries as diverse as Senegal, Botswana, Mauritius and most notably the ‘new’ South Africa have operated stable, multiparty democracies since independence and the end of apartheid respectively, and their economies have also experienced growth.² Indeed, Botswana and Mauritius are models of African ‘democratic developmental states’ (Mkandawire 2001: 310). This said, at least since the early 1980s much of the region has declined both absolutely and relative to the rest of the global periphery. This decline is multifaceted and well documented (e.g. Arrighi 2002; Callaghy & Ravenhill 1993; Kennedy 1999; Sandbrook 1985; Whitaker 1988; World Bank 1989, 1994). The reasons for SSA’s crisis are however hotly disputed.

As Arrighi (2002) notes, explanations of the African tragedy tend to emphasise either factors external to Africa such as declining terms of trade and Cold War interventions, or factors internal to weak African states themselves such as authoritarian rule and corruption, as the reasons for widespread decline and decay. It is not the purpose of this article to engage this important debate, since a complex mix of both external and internal structures and agents are evidently involved. Among the most important internal causes, however, are various forms of political instability (PI) and mal-governance, which may themselves have external causes.³

A major, but not the only manifestation of domestic PI in SSA is the military *coup d’état*, of which there have been 80 along with 108 failed *coup* attempts by elements of the military and related security services during the 46 years examined in this article (see Appendix A for a chronological list of these 188 events). Military rule is by definition authoritarian and is often very corrupt – as Major-General Ibrahim Babangida’s rule from 1985 to 1993 in Nigeria illustrates (see Diamond 1995) – and the historical record shows that military rulers ‘govern’ no better than elected civilians in Africa, and often much worse – witness Babangida, Idi Amin, Jean-Bedel Bokassa and Sani Abacha.

Because African militaries in power often fail to create political order, they are part of the problem, not its answer (Huntington 1968). As Decalo (1976: 14–5) writes:

many African armies bear little resemblance to a modern complex organisational model and are instead a coterie of armed camps owing primary clientelist allegiance to a handful of mutually competitive officers of different ranks seething with a variety of corporate, ethnic and personal grievances. One direct corollary

is that when the military assumes power it is frequently not able to provide an efficient, nationally oriented and stable administration.

These facts led Robin Luckham (1994: 52) in his important survey of the literature and issues to conclude that: ‘a brutally cynical view would be that there has been only one general pattern. So far *neither* military nor civilian governments have been able to resolve the development crises facing African states.’

That PI in the form of military-led *coups*, attempted *coups* and *coup* plots harms the economic performance of countries experiencing them is close to conventional wisdom. Nobel Prize winning economist Simon Kuznets (1996: 451) has written: ‘Clearly some minimum political stability is necessary if members of the economic society are to plan ahead and be assured of a relatively stable relation between their contribution to economic activity and their reward.’ Regarding Africa, Fosu’s (1992, 2001, 2002a, 2002b) sophisticated econometric studies have shown that *coup*-related events had a clear impact on yearly growth in GDP for 31 SSA states during the period 1960–86, reducing the rate of growth by as much as one-third of the observed average. Military-led PI also had a negative impact on the rate of improvement in human development (life expectancy + literacy) between 1970 and 1985 for a slightly reduced sample of 29 African states (Fosu 2002b: 14–16).

For Fosu (2002b: 11) and Deger (1986), the economically distorting rent-seeking behaviour of African militaries and their elite constituencies explains the negative impact of military-led PI and military rule on economic growth and human development.⁴ Whether it is the military’s diversion of drought relief funds in Mali (Wolpin 1980) or the establishment by the Sudanese military of their own trading, transport and industrial ventures, enabling them to generate independent revenue and engage in corruption (Bienen & Moore 1987; Luckham 1994: 39, 51), African militaries often become an ‘armed party’ (Luckham 1994: 44) or ‘*partis militaires*’ (Rouquié 1981), engaged in personal and corporate enrichment and the political representation of their corporatist interests.

Moreover, the military *coup* is today almost exclusively an African phenomenon. Once frequent and widespread in the global South, since the mid-1980s successful military *coups d'état* have become relatively rare in Latin America and the Caribbean, the Middle East and North Africa, and Asia; whereas between 1985 and 2001 SSA experienced 21 successful *coups* and 41 failed *coup* attempts.⁵ The pervasiveness of African military *coups* and their anti-developmental consequences justify a descriptive analysis of their frequency, trends and geographical distribution.

A *coup d'état* involves the sudden, often violent overthrow of an existing government by a small group – in contrast to ‘revolutions’ achieved by large numbers of people working for basic social, economic and political change. Thus, a *coup* is a change in power from the top that always results in the abrupt replacement of leading government personnel, but may or may not alter a state’s fundamental social and economic policies or entail a significant redistribution of power among political groups. The classic analysis of *coups* and resulting military rule is by Finer (1988).

When *coups d'état* became frequent and widespread in SSA during the second half of the 1960s, scholars began to produce an impressive array of single-case studies. Those published in this *Journal* alone include: Bennett (1975), Fischer (1969), Higgott & Fuglestad (1975), Lewis (1972), Lofchie (1972), and Southall (1975). Also appearing were more comparative, qualitative studies of the role of the military in African politics; those published in this *Journal* include Decalo (1973), O’Connell (1967), and Welch (1967, 1972, 1975). Research of this *genre* continues (e.g. Decalo 1989; Ihonvbere 1996) and is very useful, as detailed case histories (including those of failed *coups*, as in Birmingham 1978; Clapham 1968; Kebschull 1994) can provide a richness of detail and nuance impossible in comparative and quantitative studies.

The systematic and quantitative study of African *coups d'état* was pioneered by Morrison & Stevenson (1971) and most impressively advanced in their collaborative effort with others published in 1972 as *Black Africa: a comparative handbook* (Morrison *et al.* 1972). In this book the authors produced an index of ‘elite instability’ for 32 SSA states from independence until December 1969, including clear operational definitions of successful *coups*, attempted *coups* and *coup* plots (1972: 128). In their country chapters (1972: 181–382) they provided capsule descriptions of all the *coups* and attempted *coups* they identified, as well as yearly frequency counts of all three types of event.⁶ Their method of ‘event data-making’ made it possible for others to posit complex models of the causes of African *coups d'état*, and test them with sophisticated statistical methods (e.g. Jackman 1978).

Building upon this early work, and modifying Morrison *et al.*’s definitions to include only events involving the military, police and/or security services, we assembled an event data of set of military *coups d'état*, attempted *coups* and reported *coup* plots for all 45 independent SSA states for the period from 1 January 1956 to 31 December 1985 (McGowan & Johnson 1984, 1986). Because of these articles and our willingness to share our data, others were able to investigate a wide array of theoretical

explanations of military-led PI in Africa, using a variety of statistical techniques (Jenkins & Kposowa 1990, 1992; Kposowa & Jenkins 1993; Lunde 1991), and to explore the impact of PI on such issues as economic growth, human development and arms transfers (Fosu 1992, 2002a, 2002b; Wang 1998).

AN EXPANDED DATA SET

In this article we present and analyse an extended event data set covering all 48 independent sub-Saharan African states for the 46-year period from 1 January 1956 to 31 December 2001.⁷ Our original conception of African *coups* was influenced by Ruth First's (1970: 18) pioneering analysis when she wrote: 'the *coup d'état* can pre-empt revolution, or lead to it. It can install a military, or an alternative civilian government. It can maintain, or change, social policy. In its essence the coup is a lightning action at the top, in which violence is the ultimate determinant, even if it is not used.' As in earlier studies (McGowan & Johnson 1984: 634–6, 1986), our focus here is on events in which existing regimes are suddenly and illegally displaced by the action of a relatively small group, in which members of the military, police or security forces of the state play a key role, either on their own or in conjunction with civilian elites such as civil servants, politicians and monarchs. Consistent with First (1970), the scope of change in any regime resulting from a successful intervention can vary from the mere removal of the head-of-state (including his assassination), to the wholesale displacement of leaders and officials by the *coup* perpetrators, or a dissolution of previously existing constitutional relationships such as the suspension of the constitution, closing legislatures and banning political parties. The stated aims of the *coup*-makers can vary from reaction to revolution. Likewise, the degree of violence involved can range from none, so-called 'bloodless *coups*', to pronounced.

For the purposes of this study, the displacements of government personnel or constitutional relationships lasting at least one week have been classified as 'successful *coups d'état*'. Falling below this threshold, 'failed *coups*' are defined as those which involved either (i) displacements lasting less than seven days, or (ii) attempted assassinations and arrests of some members of the existing regime, or (iii) the mobilisation of the military, police, or security forces explicitly aimed at a government take-over.

Plots are another form of extra-legal military involvement in African politics. Outsiders generally learn of their existence from government announcements that a plot has been uncovered, prior to it becoming a visible

public event. This immediately raises the question whether the various reported plots did in fact exist, or whether they were manufactured by the regime as a justification for eliminating political opponents. A number of plots may also have been hatched and later dropped for some reason without the government knowing about them, much less exposing their existence (on the problems of identifying plots and distinguishing them from failed *coups* see Kebschull 1994: 567–8).

In the course of our research we recorded only those ‘*coup* plots’ reported in at least two independent news sources. By these standards it was alleged in 139 instances that a plot had been uncovered. It is not possible to guarantee that in all instances these were ‘actual’ as opposed to ‘manufactured’; nor can we claim that no more have occurred in the 48 SSA states studied. Nonetheless, reported plots are important data, indicating military involvement in politics and, for that reason, worth examining with these caveats in mind. Moreover, Fosu (2001: 293) has demonstrated that when it comes to explaining differences in the rates of economic growth in SSA, an index including *coup* plots along with *coups* and failed *coup* attempts is a statistically more powerful measure of African PI than any of the three types of events alone.

In Appendix B we report examples from our new data set of *coups*, failed *coups* and *coup* plots from Côte d’Ivoire in the period 1991 to 2000. As can be seen from these examples, each of the 327 events in our data file includes seven items of information: (1) the state where the event happened; (2) the type of event; (3) the date of the event; (4) a description of the event; (5) a roster of known or alleged participants; (6) the apparent and reported causes of the event; and (7) the sources from which the information was gathered.

This approach to ‘event data-making’ takes a middle ground between narrative case studies and simple quantitative counts of events including only the type of event and its date (e.g. Lunde 1991: 30–1; Wang 1996, 1998: 675). While in no way as detailed as a case study of a particular *coup*, our event descriptions are narrative texts that can be analysed via computer-assisted content analysis, for example, in an effort to identify causes of PI in Africa. On the other hand, if one wants to study the rate of *coup* behaviour over time via event history analysis, as advocated by Lunde (1991), Appendix A provides the exact dates of all failed and successful *coups* by country over our 46-year time period.

Information on each event was gathered from a variety of sources. The starting point was our existing data file for the period 1956–85 (McGowan 1986). All events in this file were double-checked against the events reported in the second edition of *Black Africa: a comparative handbook* (Morrison

et al. 1989: 357–716) for the years 1956–79, and the list of failed and successful *coups* given by Lunde (1991: 30–1) for the 1955–85 period. New events for the period 1986–2001 were identified and written up using the *Lexis-Nexis Academic Universe* electronic archive and printed sources such as *The New York Times Index* and *Africa Research Bulletin*. The *Lexis-Nexis* archive is ideal for our purposes, as it stores news stories from international wire services, major Western newspapers, and the African press. Its coverage of news sources is similar to *Africa Research Bulletin*'s, but much easier to access because of its computer-based interactive format. For the years 1986–90 we checked our new events against Wang's (1996) data set that extended our original file for these five years.⁸ We also compared all our successful *coup* events with Esterhuysen's (2002: 72–85) list of government changes in all African countries from independence to the end of 2001.

As stated, no event was included in our file unless it was reported in at least two independent sources.⁹ We are confident that all 327 events we have identified did occur. Regarding both failed and successful *coups* by the military, which are highly newsworthy events, we believe that we have identified all that have occurred for our 48 states during our 46-year time period. A comparison of Appendix A with the lists of *coups* and *coup* attempts in Morrison *et al.* (1989), Lunde (1991: 30–1) and Wang (1998), shows a very high degree of agreement for the years 1956–90. Regarding reported *coup* plots, we are certain that the 139 we have identified actually did happen, but others may have occurred without being reported in our sources.

THE FREQUENCY OF COUP BEHAVIOUR IN AFRICA

Appendix C summarises our findings for all 48 SSA states for all 46 years between 1956 and 2001. The first striking fact that it shows is how pervasive *coups* have been in post-colonial Africa. Thirty SSA states (62.5 %) have experienced at least one successful *coup* and 18 (37.5 %) have suffered multiple *coups*; Benin, Burkina Faso and Nigeria lead the pack with six each. Since failed *coup* attempts can be as bloody and destructive as successful *coups*, witness Cameroon in April 1984 and Côte d'Ivoire in September 2002, the overall picture is even worse. Forty-one out of 48 SSA states (85.4 %) have had either *coups* or failed *coup* attempts. Only six countries have been completely free of military intervention events; but three of them (Namibia, Eritrea and South Africa) only became independent or majority-ruled in the 1990s, and therefore have not had much time to prove they are immune from this form of PI. Thus, only the multiparty democracies of Botswana, Cape Verde and Mauritius have

both been independent for more than 25 years and entirely free of the *coup* virus.

Second, with the exception of the Seychelles, all the states that experienced the 80 *coups* we have recorded also saw failed *coups* and *coup* plots. Thus, these three types of military intervention events are part of a larger military PI syndrome within African states. The product-moment correlations among the three types of events are: *coups* with failed *coups*, $r=0.576$; *coups* with plots, $r=0.541$; and failed *coups* with plots, $r=0.555$ (all significant at the $p<0.001$ level when $N=48$). Thus, while some researchers will prefer to study event counts and their timing (see Appendix A), the interrelatedness of the three event types justifies calculating the Total Military Intervention Scores (TMIS) in Table 1.

Creating TMIS is also justified by Luckham's (1994: 34) summary of the findings of previous statistical research on African *coups*: 'In general the political impact of plots, coup attempts and coups has been additive. Coups have been more likely in states where major plots and coup attempts have already occurred, and still more likely in states which have already experienced successful coups and military government.' Weights were assigned to each type of event (*coup*=5, failed *coup*=3 and *coup* plot=1), with TMIS being the sum of these weighted events for each SSA state (cf. Jackman 1978; McGowan & Johnson 1984; Morrison *et al.* 1989). As the actual frequencies of each type of event for each state are given in Appendix C, others are free to create different weighting schemes according to their theoretical preferences.

Because states like Sudan, Ghana and Uganda have such high TMIS values, its distribution is skewed with a mean value of 18.0 and a lower median value of 13.5. The first 18 states in Appendix C, from Sudan to Guinea, recorded scores above the average TMIS value and were 'praetorian' states during many of their post-colonial years. Five of these were British colonies, nine were French colonies, and two were Belgian, while Ethiopia and Liberia were never European colonies. This suggests that features common to weak African states themselves, such as the nature of civil-military relations and the character of African militaries (Decalo 1989), rather than factors associated with their colonial heritage, are the source of much *coup*-driven PI in SSA.

This conclusion is reinforced by the fact that with the exception of Comoros, all 18 praetorian states achieved their independence before 1963. Only Comoros and Guinea-Bissau rank above the median TMIS value of 13.5 and also became independent more than a decade after 1963, whereas 16 states ranking below the median value became independent or majority-ruled after that year. On average, the longer a SSA state has

been independent, the more TMIS it has accumulated. When TMIS is regressed on the number of years an African state has been independent, the resulting equation is: $TMIS = -17.1 + 0.97 \text{ Years Independent}$, adjusted $R^2 = 25.7\%$.¹⁰ As a descriptive statistic, this says that for every year of independence, the typical SSA post-colonial state has experienced one additional TMIS point. Of course, this does not explain the variation in TMIS between these states, but it does indicate that as the years pass weak post-colonial African states tend to accumulate more military-led PI.

There are many reasons for staging a *coup* in Africa. Among the most important is the rent-seeking behaviour made possible by control of the state (Bayart 1993). Of course, staging a *coup* is a risky business and only rational if there is a good chance of success, so that rent seeking can be undertaken. We can therefore define a 'coup success rate' as the probability of being successful once an attempt is started (i.e. successful *coups* divided by successful *coups* + failed *coups*). In Appendix C the success rate is 42.6% (80/80 + 108), indicating that there has been a better than 40% chance of gaining power when launching a *coup* since the first successful *coup* in the Sudan in November 1958.

Overtime the success rate has varied around this overall average rate. When calculated by 5-year periods (see Table 2), success rates have been as high as 74% (1966–70) and as low as 19% (1991–95). In eight of the nine periods the rate of success was greater than one in three, apparently sufficient to tempt elements in African militaries to initiate *coup* attempts as they evaluated their chances *vis-à-vis* other militaries' successes and failures.

Finally, when we compare Appendix A and Appendix C, we find that 89 (47.3%) of the 188 *coups* and failed *coups* were against an existing military regime that itself had come to power in a *coup*. This shows the extent of factionalism and rivalry in African militaries once they have accomplished a successful *coup d'état* (Lunde 1991: 17). This is particularly true of the 18 praetorian states with above average TMIS. Eleven of Sudan's 15 failed *coups* and successful *coups* were against existing military regimes, as were 7 of Ghana's 11, and 8 of Uganda's 13. In extreme cases of military factionalism, this and other processes can result in a collapsed state, civil wars and warlordism as in Somalia, Liberia and Sierra Leone (Reno 1998).

The 46 years examined in this article can be divided into two periods of 24 and 22 years respectively: 1956 to 1979 and 1980 to 2001. By the end of 1979 all of SSA was independent and majority ruled except for Zimbabwe, Namibia, Eritrea and South Africa. While there was variation, African economies performed reasonably well up to the end of the 1970s (Mkandawire 2001). After 1979 the knock-on effects of the OPEC oil price hikes

of 1973 and 1979 and the collapse of commodity prices in the mid-1980s took effect and SSA entered its post-1980 period of marginalisation and crisis. In order to show *coup* frequencies in these two different time periods we have created Appendices D and E.¹¹

While countries change their rank in these two appendices, as one would expect, the differences in average *coup* behaviour are much less than one might anticipate given the democratisation trend that began in SSA around 1990 as part of a global 'third wave' of democratic transitions (Huntington 1991). The first period from 1958 to 1979 saw 93 attempted *coups*, of which 47 were successful. The second period from 1980 to 2001 saw slightly more attempts, 95, with 33 being successful. The periods are almost identical in the frequency with which *coups* have been launched, but differ notably in their success rates: 1958 to 1979 had a success rate of 50.5%; between 1980 and 2001 the rate fell to 34.7%. The difference in total TMIS of 439 vs. 424 is trivial, a mere 1.7%. The first period between 1958 and 1979 saw 17.5% more successful *coups* than the second, but the years 1980 to 2001 saw 14.8% more failed *coup* attempts. Given that there are four more SSA states in Appendix E than in Appendix D, the frequency of reported *coup* plots stayed about the same.

Three conclusions follow from this evidence. First, once begun in 1958, military-led PI has remained pervasive over time in SSA. Second, African regimes were better able to survive *coup* attempts in the second period than in the first, perhaps because they were independent longer and their political systems had become more institutionalised (Huntington 1968) or because they had learned techniques to insulate themselves from successful *coups* (Lunde 1991: 25). Third, the differences in macroeconomic conditions and performance between the two periods, with the first being much better than the second, do not appear to have affected the frequency of *coup* behaviour.¹²

Another politically significant turning point occurred at the end of the 1980s. The Berlin Wall and then European Communism collapsed between November 1989 and the end of 1991, thus ending the Cold War. In 1990 in Africa the 'second wave of independence' began with democratisation in Benin and the beginning of the negotiated transition to democracy in South Africa. With democratisation and the end of Cold War interventions, the political environment in SSA in the 1990s was dramatically different from the earlier post-colonial decades. Much of the recent literature on African politics has examined these hopeful trends. Unfortunately, when it comes to military interventions, the 1990s are an instance of *plus ça change, plus c'est la même chose*. During the 12 years 1990 to 2001 there were 50 attempted *coups*, of which 13 (26%) were successful.

TABLE I
Changes in TMIS, 1956–2001

1956–79		1980–2001	
Above average TMIS			
Sudan	Nigeria	Sudan	Niger
Benin	CAR	Ghana	Mauritania
Ghana	Togo	Uganda	Comoros
Uganda	Sierra Leone	Burundi	Eq. Guinea
Ethiopia	Somalia	Nigeria	Liberia
Congo, Brazzaville	Madagascar	CAR	Côte d'Ivoire
Burundi	Burkina Faso	Togo	Gambia
DRC	Guinea	Sierra Leone	Guinea-Bissau
		Burkina Faso	Lesotho
		Guinea	Zambia
Below average TMIS			
Chad	Tanzania	<i>Benin</i>	Tanzania
Niger	Angola	<i>Ethiopia</i>	Gabon
Mali	Gabon	<i>Congo, Brazzaville</i>	Mozambique
Mauritania	Mozambique	<i>DRC</i>	Kenya
Comoros	Senegal	<i>Somalia</i>	Malawi
Eq. Guinea	Liberia	Chad	Cameroon
Rwanda	Kenya	Mali	Djibouti
Seychelles	Côte d'Ivoire	Rwanda	São Tomé & P.
Swaziland	Malawi	Swaziland	
No TMIS			
Botswana	Guinea-Bissau	<i>Madagascar</i>	Botswana
Cameroon	Lesotho	<i>Seychelles</i>	Cape Verde
Cape Verde	Mauritius	<i>Angola</i>	Mauritius
Djibouti	São Tomé & P.	<i>Senegal</i>	
Gambia	Zambia		
Average TMIS = 10.0		Average TMIS = 9.6*	

Notes:

* For the 44 states in Table 1 in contrast to the average of 8.8 for the 48 states in Appendix E. States in normal type did not change category in the two time periods (N = 22); states in *italic* type saw their rank lowered (N = 9); states in **bold** type saw their rank increase (N = 13).

These 50 events represent 26 % of all *coup* behaviour recorded in this study. The preceding 12 years, 1978 to 1989 saw 54 attempted *coups*, of which 26 (48 %) were successful. These 54 events are 28.7 % of all *coup* behaviour reported here. Again, the 1990s saw a much lower rate of success in comparison to earlier years, but no significant reduction in the African military's propensity to launch *coup* attempts. New, weakly institutionalised democratic governments are as apt to suffer from the *coup* virus as are weak one-party and military regimes.

In Table 1 we have grouped the 44 African states that were independent by the end of 1979 by their level of TMIS in the two time periods, 1956–79

and 1980–2001. In the two time periods there was little difference in average TMIS, 10.0 vs. 9.6 for these 44 states. There were 16 states with above average TMIS in the first period (Sudan through Guinea), and 20 above average states in the second period (Sudan through Zambia).¹³ Ten states (Sudan through Guinea) remained above average in both periods. These ten states alone account for 50.4% of all observed TMIS in Africa (see Appendix C) and were at one time (Ghana and Uganda) or remain, praetorian states *par excellence*, as the 15 March 2003 *coup* in the Central African Republic illustrates. Whether the important case of Nigeria has seen the end of praetorianism is not yet certain.

Ten other states (Niger through Zambia) moved to above average TMIS in 1980–2001. Niger, Mauritania, Comoros, Equatorial Guinea, Liberia and Côte d'Ivoire experienced below average TMIS from their independence through the end of 1979. But, in the second period they witnessed eight successful *coups* and 16 failed *coups*. Comoros was particularly unstable with two *coups* and six attempts, several involving mercenary interventions by the infamous Frenchman, Bob Denard. With Samuel Doe's *coup* in April 1980, Liberia began its slow descent into anarchy. Four states that had been without *coup* activity from independence to the end of 1979 jumped into the above average category (Gambia, Guinea-Bissau, Lesotho and Zambia). The first three saw their first *coups* in 1994, 1980 and 1986 respectively, and Zambia suffered three *coup* attempts between 1980 and 1997. It is among the above average TMIS states in the years 1980–2001 that we find the neighbouring 'warlord' states of West Africa – Guinea, Liberia, Guinea-Bissau, Sierra Leone and perhaps tomorrow's Côte d'Ivoire.

Five states (Benin, Congo-Brazzaville, Ethiopia, Somalia and Zaire/DRC) moved from above average TMIS to below average in 1980–2001. With the exception of Benin, the other four states experienced extensive communal violence and civil war at various times in the period. In the case of Somalia, after dictator Siad Barre fled Mogadishu in January 1991 having lost a civil war, there has been no central government against which to attempt a *coup d'état*. Madagascar experienced a *coup*, two failed *coups* and a *coup* plot before 1980 and therefore was in the above average TMIS group, but saw no subsequent intervention behaviour to the end of 2001. The authoritarian rule of President Didier Ratsiraka (a former naval officer) and the military's loyalty to his regime brought this about.

Nine states from Chad to Malawi had below average TMIS levels in both time periods. Nevertheless, Chad, Mali, Rwanda and Swaziland had *coups* in the first period and Mali had a second *coup* in March 1991. Of these nine states only Malawi has never seen a *coup* or attempted *coup*. Gabon,

TABLE 2
Successful and failed coups by five-year periods, 1956–2001

Period	Successful coups	Failed coups	Total	Success rate (%)
1956–60	2	4	6	33.3
1961–65	6	7	13	46.2
1966–70	17	6	23	73.9
1971–75	12	15	27	44.4
1976–80	15	15	30	50.0
1981–85	10	19	29	34.5
1986–90	5	8	13	38.5
1991–95	5	21	26	19.2
1996–2001	8	13	21	38.1

Kenya, Rwanda, Swaziland and Tanzania saw no intervention events after January 1990 (see Table 3), although Rwanda has become today's paradigm of civil war and communal violence since the genocide of 1994.

Three states (Cameroon, Djibouti and São Tomé & Príncipe) shifted from no TMIS in the first period to below average in 1980–2001, because each experienced an attempted *coup* in 1984, 1991 and 1995 respectively (Cameroon also had a *coup* plot). Still, none have so far seen a successful *coup* and Cameroon has been free of military intervention activity since January 1990.

Three states (Angola, Senegal and Seychelles) moved from the below average TMIS category from their independence to 1979 into the group of no TMIS between 1980 and 2001. The MPLA regime in Angola was, of course, engaged in a bitter civil war with Savimbi's UNITA throughout these years. In the case of the Seychelles, Albert René, who came to power in a *coup* in 1977, democratised the political system in the 1990s. Senegal, which saw a failed *coup* in 1962 soon after independence, has solidified its record as a multiparty democracy, particularly when opposition leader Abdoulaye Wade won a hotly contested election in March 2000.

Thus, only the three long-standing multiparty democracies of Botswana, Cape Verde and Mauritius were in the no TMIS category from their independence until the end of 2001. Cape Verde, independent in 1975, democratised in 1990 and the opposition won the first genuinely democratic elections in 1991. Botswana has operated a multiparty democracy since independence in 1966, but the Botswana Democratic Party has never lost an election. Mauritius, on the other hand, has seven different political parties and incumbent prime ministers have been defeated three times since independence in 1968 (1982, 1995, 2000).

Half the states in Table 1 (22) did not change categories in the second half of our 46 year time span: ten stayed above average TMIS, nine stayed below average and only three were continuously without TMIS of any kind. Thirteen states saw their TMIS grouping increase in the second period and nine decreased. Hence, with the exception of a lower success rate, the 1980s and 1990s were little different from the 1960s and 1970s for military involvement in the politics of particular African states.

TRENDS OVER TIME

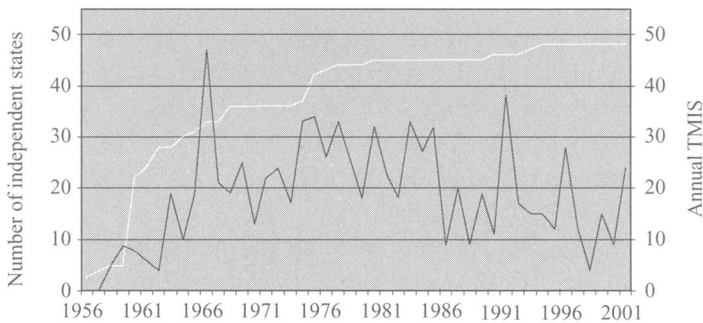
Given our discussion of Appendices C and D and Table 1, it should come as no surprise that *coup* behaviour in SSA exhibits no clear increasing or decreasing trend over all 46 years studied here. In Table 2 we have plotted the frequency of successful and failed *coups* by nine, five-year periods.¹⁴ *Coup* behaviour reached a peak during the fifteen-year period 1971–85, although 1966–70 saw the most successful *coups* with 17. The second half of the 1980s saw only 13 *coups* and failed *coups*, but that was also true of the first half of the 1960s. While 1991 to 2001 may have been years of democratisation in Africa, they nevertheless saw 47 *coup* attempts of which 13 were successful. In comparison, the period 1971 to 1980 saw 57 attempted *coups* with 27 being successful, while 1981 to 1990 was similar to the 1990s with 42 attempts of which 15 were successful (see also Appendix A).

Indeed, since the first *coup* in the Sudan in November 1958 there has not been a single year through 2001 without *coup* activity by African militaries.¹⁵ During the 44 years between 1958 and 2001, only ten years did not see a successful *coup d'état* somewhere in SSA – 1959, 1961, 1962, 1964, 1970, 1988, 1990, 1995, 1998 and 2000 – but all of these *coup*-free years saw from one to three failed *coup* attempts. The peak years of *coup* activity were 1991 with two successful *coups* and eight failed *coup* attempts, and 1966 with one failed *coup* and a remarkable eight successful *coups*, three more than 1980 which had five *coups d'état*.

In Figure 1 we have plotted annual TMIS and the number of independent SSA states for each year. Because TMIS includes *coup* plots as well as failed and successful *coups*, the extent of PI in Africa is clearly evident. The annual average value of TMIS across these 46 years is 18.8, with a standard deviation of 10.6. Only in 1966 with a TMIS value of 47 was the index more than two standard deviations above average. In most years, 31, TMIS varied within one standard deviation of its average: 8.2 to 29.4. The following years recorded TMIS of 30 or more: 1966, 1974, 1975, 1977, 1980, 1983, 1985 and 1991. These were years of above average *coup* behaviour and cluster in the middle of our time-span when most SSA

FIGURE 1

Successful and failed military *coups d'état* in sub-Saharan Africa, 1956–2001 (by year).



states had achieved independence. Years with TMIS of 8 or less were 1956, 1957, 1958, 1960, 1961, 1962 and 1998. Except for 1998, these were years at the beginning of our study period when there were few independent SSA states, or immediately after 1960 when the number of independent states jumped from five to 22 (see Lunde 1991).

In contrast to the co-variation of intervention events within African states discussed above, these events do not co-vary over time. The product-moment correlations across our 46 years are: *coups* with failed *coups*, $r = -0.065$; *coups* with plots, $r = 0.240$; and failed *coups* with plots, $r = 0.173$, none of which are significant at the $p < 0.10$ level when $N = 46$. When TMIS is regressed on time, the resulting equation is: $\text{TMIS} = 15.783 + 0.127 \text{ Time}$, adjusted $R^2 = 0.3\%$.¹⁶ Neither the F-test for the entire regression nor the t -test for the regression coefficient of 0.127 are significant at the $p < 0.10$ level when $N = 46$. These results indicate that there is no overall time dependent trend, either positive or negative, in the TMIS values plotted in Figure 1 across all 46 years.

However, while it may not be immediately apparent because of the exceptional years of 1966 (when TMIS reached 47) and 1991 (when TMIS was 38), there is a rough curvilinear trend in TMIS over time. That is, between 1956 and 1975 when TMIS reached 34 – a score not to be exceeded again except for 1991 – the index increased both over time and along with the number of independent African states, which increased from three in 1956 to 42 by the end of 1975. Ignoring the exceptional year of 1991, from 1976 to 2001 TMIS appears to slope downward while 26 more years passed and the number of independent, majority-ruled SSA states increased to 48 by 1994.

This 'eyeball' impression is confirmed by regression analysis. When we divide the time period into two – 1958–75 and 1976–2001 – and regress TMIS on time, the results are: $\text{TMIS} = 0.816 + 1.527 \text{ Time}(1956-75)$, adjusted $R^2 = 51.7\%$ and $\text{TMIS} = 40.09 - 0.593 \text{ Time}(1976-2001)$, adjusted $R^2 = 21.4\%$. Both regressions and the regression coefficients of 1.527 and -0.593 are significant at the $p < 0.001$ level for the first equation (when $N = 20$) and at the $p = 0.01$ level for the second equation (when $N = 26$). These results indicate that between 1956 and 1975 TMIS *increased* by an average of 1.5 per year and that between 1976 and 2001 it *decreased* by an average of 0.60 each year.

One should be cautious about reading too much into such statistical analyses. What can be safely said is that once begun in 1958, the level of African military interventions has varied from year to year, with most years having a significant amount of *coup* activity (as previously noted, *every* year from 1958 on has seen at least one *coup* or failed *coup* attempt). Despite the exceptional years of 1966 and 1991, there is also an increasing trend to around 1975 (which 1966 supports) and a decreasing trend thereafter (which is weakened but not contradicted by 1991).

These findings also suggest that TMIS is a useful measure of PI in Africa when the research question addresses variation in TMIS among SSA states and the possible causes of TMIS (as in Jackman 1978; Jenkins & Kposowa 1990, 1992; McGowan & Johnson 1984, 1986) or its consequences (as in Fosu 1992, 2002a, 2002b; Wang 1998) across states. When the research question addresses variation over time in the rate of *coup* behaviour, TMIS is possibly not as useful as studying the timing of individual events such as failed and successful *coups* as is done in event history analysis (Box-Steffensmeier & Jones 1997; Lunde 1991; Strang 1990).

If all African states are equally prone to *coup* behaviour, TMIS should increase over time in tandem with or lagging somewhat behind the increasing number of independent states in SSA. This is what we find. When annual TMIS is regressed on the number of independent SSA states in a given year, the resulting equation is: $\text{TMIS} = 4.653 + 0.374 \text{ states}$, adjusted $R^2 = 17.8\%$. Both the entire regression as measured by the F-test and the regression coefficient of 0.374 as measured by the *t*-test are significant at the $p < 0.01$ level, when $N = 46$. As we have seen, a close examination of Figure 1 shows that between 1956 and 1975 TMIS steadily increased as the number of independent African states increased from three in 1956 to 42 by the end of 1975. After 1975 TMIS tended to lessen while independent states increased from 43 in 1976 to 48 in 1994, and this fact makes the relationship between annual TMIS and the number of independent SSA states a weak, albeit significant, one.

Lunde's (1991: 24–5) event history analysis of failed and successful African *coups* between 1955 and 1985 suggests why TMIS tends to increase with the number of newly independent states. He found that the probability of *coups* and attempts rises sharply for the first 45 months after independence and following every subsequent regime change. If a military or civilian regime can survive this testing three to four years, the risk of a *coup* or *coup* attempt declines afterwards. This is consistent with what we see in Figure 1: TMIS increases sharply until the mid-1970s when most SSA states had become independent, and then moderately declines.

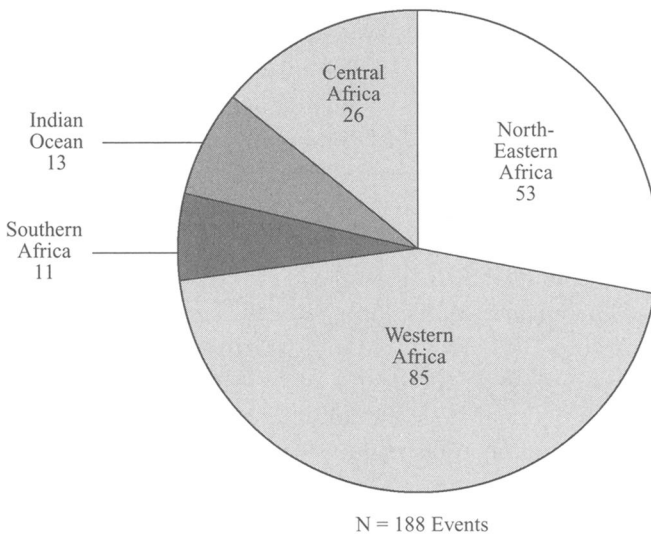
As Appendix A reports, 25 (59.5%) out of these 42 fragile, post-colonial states experienced failed or successful *coups* from their independence to the end of 1975. This suggests that country-specific factors such as the extent of civilian control of the military (Goldsworthy 1981), conditions within African militaries such as the degree of factionalism (Decalo 1989; Gutteridge 1967) or political institutionalisation, particularly institutionalised democracy (Huntington 1968; Lunde 1991) affect the frequency and location of *coup* events over time. Moreover, if global conditions such as the ending of the Cold War between 1989 and 1991 or the collapse of commodity prices in the mid-1980s are major influences on *coup* activity, this too is not evident in Figure 1.

GEOGRAPHICAL DISTRIBUTION

In Figure 2, we show the location of all 188 failed and successful *coups* in Africa's five major regions.¹⁷ With 16 states, West Africa has one-third of all independent SSA states, yet with 85 failed and successful *coups* out of 188 (45.2%), it has been the African region most prone to PI. All of the 16 states in this region apart from Senegal have experienced from one to six (Benin, Burkina Faso, Nigeria) successful *coups* and all have had at least one failed *coup* attempt. As Appendix C shows, much of this activity occurred in Ghana, Sierra Leone, Benin, Nigeria and Burkina Faso. To the extent that *coup* contagion exists in SSA, it would appear strongest in West Africa. With the failed *coup* on 19 September 2002 and the ensuing civil war in Côte d'Ivoire, the West African region remains the centre of military-led PI in Africa.

North-eastern Africa with 10 states (21%) has seen 53 failed and successful *coups* (28.2%) between 1958 and 2001. Most of this activity has been located in the Sudan, Uganda, Burundi and Ethiopia. As with West Africa, the occurrence of attempted and successful *coups* is proportionately higher than the number of states in this region.

FIGURE 2
Geographical distribution of failed and successful African military *coups d'état*, 1956–2001



The other three regions of Central Africa, the Indian Ocean and Southern Africa have all seen *coup* behaviour, but proportionately less than the number of states in each region. In Central Africa the CAR, Congo-Brazzaville and the DRC have seen the most PI. The Comoros in particular and Madagascar contribute most to the Indian Ocean region's total. In Southern Africa with 10 states, only Lesotho and Swaziland have experienced successful military-led *coups*, and this is therefore the region with proportionately the least PI activity.¹⁸ Between 1956 and 1994 the region was dominated by apartheid South Africa, which engineered the January 1986 military *coup* in Lesotho. The South African threat and long civil wars in Angola and Mozambique may have kept the militaries in independent Southern Africa focused on their more traditional duties rather than intervening politically.



Military-led PI in SSA has been so pervasive across African countries and over time, and its consequences so negative for human and economic development on the continent, that a major topic for research must be to investigate what conditions and policies lessen or eliminate *coup* behaviour (for early efforts of this type, see Goldsworthy 1981; Pachter 1982). In this

TABLE 3
States without serious military intervention events since 01.01.1990

States with plots only	
Malawi* (2)	Equatorial Guinea** (1)
Mauritania** (1)	Mozambique* (1)
States with no intervention events	
Angola	Madagascar**
Botswana*	Mauritius*
Burkina Faso*	Namibia*
Cameroon**	Rwanda
Cape Verde*	Senegal*
Congo, Brazzaville	Seychelles*
Eritrea	Somalia
Ethiopia**	South Africa*†
Gabon**	Swaziland
Ghana*	Tanzania*
Kenya**	Uganda
	Zimbabwe**

Notes and Sources:

* States that began the 1990s with a functioning multiparty democratic system or made a transition to such a system between 1990 and 2001 as reported in Ramsay (2001) and Esterhuysen (2002: 86–9).

** States that held regular elections in the 1990s, but of a questionable democratic character as reported in Ramsay (2001) and Esterhuysen (2002: 86–9).

† A plot by right-wing whites, including three senior South African National Defence Force Army officers, was reported on 14.08.2002, *Lexis-Nexis Academic Universe*, Agence France Presse, 14.08.2002, 256 words.

regard it is interesting to note that since January 1990 more than one-half (27) of all SSA states have been free of *coup* attempts and successful *coups*. These states are listed in Table 3.

Following Decalo (1989), there is no single reason for the absence of *coups* and attempts among these states. Several of them (Cameroon, Gabon, Senegal) have been *coup* free at least in part because France guaranteed their stability until the late 1990s (Renou 2002). In others, the military has been bought off by sharing in the spoils of the regime (Kenya, Mauritania, Rwanda, Uganda, Zimbabwe). Seven states saw no *coup* behaviour at least in part because they were preoccupied with other, more extreme forms of political violence: civil wars in Angola, Congo, Rwanda and Uganda; warlordism in Somalia; and interstate war in Eritrea and Ethiopia. This points to the fact that *coups* are only one type of PI in SSA, and that other forms of large-scale political violence have become widespread in post-Cold War Africa.

But the most positive reason is that some regimes have been 'able to develop a measure of systemic legitimacy that serves to discourage praetorian assaults from their armed forces' (Decalo 1989: 575). These are the

states that entered the 1990s with a functioning multiparty democratic system (Botswana, Mauritius, Namibia, Senegal) or that made the transition to such a system in the 1990s (Burkina Faso, Cape Verde, Ghana, Malawi, Mozambique, Seychelles, South Africa, Tanzania).

Although twenty of these states held regular elections between 1990 and 2001, in at least eight countries these elections were not entirely free and fair, as happened in Zimbabwe's 2000 (legislative) and 2002 (presidential) elections. Nevertheless, in 12 states functioning multiparty democratic political systems existed in 1990 or were established subsequently. Since 1989, 33 out of SSA's 48 states have held 71 multiparty elections (Esterhuysen 2002: 77), so multiparty constitutions and regular elections are no guarantee against *coup* behaviour. Table 3 does suggest, however, that the duration and quality of multiparty electoral democracy is one of the factors that reduces the likelihood of military-led PI.

This conclusion is not a tautology. All independent SSA states *are at risk* of experiencing a *coup* attempt at any time. *A priori* this risk can be said to be equal for all states. Some factors increase this risk, such as a history of attempted and successful *coups*. Other factors appear to lessen this risk; institutionalised democracy being one of the most important (Huntington 1968). Nevertheless, even well-established democracies in Africa and elsewhere have some risk of experiencing a *coup*.

With international supervision, Angola had a decent election in 1992, but when Jonas Savimbi lost he went back into the bush and the civil war resumed. With his death in February 2002 and the ensuing ceasefire between the MPLA government and UNITA, domestic and international pressures may nudge Angola toward electoral democracy. The Congo and Rwanda have non-elected governments that came to power by winning civil wars. Eritrea and Uganda operate no-party systems of personal rule by President Afewerki and President Museveni. Somalia is a classic African collapsed state and has no national government. Swaziland is a traditional monarchy whose parliamentary constitution was abolished by a military-supported, palace *coup* in 1973.

Research on the causes of *coups* across countries and over time is needed, particularly if it can identify causal variables that can be modified by the policies of African governments, the new African Union and NEPAD with its peer review mechanism, aid donors and international financial institutions, in order to reduce *coup* behaviour by African militaries. The data set presented in this article is intended to promote such research.¹⁹

Policies that foster institutionalised, multiparty democracy and strong, elected civilian control of the military throughout Africa must be identified

if SSA is to begin to overcome its current crisis. One must agree with Luckham's (1994: 65) conclusion in his impressive survey of the political role of the armed forces in Africa 'the search must continue for ways of bringing them under effective *democratic* and not merely *civilian* control'.

NOTES

1. In this article Africa and Sub-Saharan Africa will be used interchangeably.
2. Senegal did experience a bloodless failed *coup* in December 1962 resulting from an ideological and policy dispute between prime minister Mamadou Dia and President Leopold Senghor, but has seen no military intervention activity of any kind since then.
3. Such as United States support for the 1965 *coup d'état* that brought Mobutu Sese Seko to power, and subsequently for his regime in Zaire.
4. Rent-seeking distortions of African economies by the military in power can take various forms, as Fosu (2002b: 17) notes: '... increased expenditures on programmes that are disproportionately preferred by the elite, including the military budget and spending on tertiary education, rather than on primary school and general literacy programmes that benefit the population at large; tax policy that favours the elite, including subsidies for urban dwellers, either directly or implicitly in the form of an overvalued domestic currency that subsidizes imports predominantly consumed in urban areas, while taxing exports produced primarily by non-urban dwellers as in the case of primary exports; and maintaining controls such as foreign exchange that perpetuates the privilege of the elite through their enforcement, including the use of bribery'. Mkandawire (2001: 299–303), however, questions the role of rent seeking as a cause of Africa's crisis.
5. The major exceptions are three *coups* in Haiti in June and September 1988 and September 1991, and General Pervez Musharraf's October 1999 *coup* in Pakistan.
6. A second edition of their work updating their event file through December 1979 appeared in 1989 (Morrison *et al.* 1989).
7. After 1985 the number of SSA states increased from 45 to 48 with the independence of Namibia (1990) and Eritrea (1993) and the achievement of democratic rule in South Africa (1994).
8. Professor Wang most helpfully shared his research materials with us in this effort.
9. In our data file each SSA state is also identified by a three-digit numerical code taken from Russett *et al.* 1968, hence the 437 code for Côte d'Ivoire.
10. With an F statistic of 17.28, the total regression is significant at the $p < 0.001$ level, and with a *t* statistic of 4.16, the regression coefficient of 0.97 is also significant at the $p < 0.001$ level. The constant of -17.06 is not significant at the $p < 0.05$ level. We report these descriptive statistics for readers' information. Our data are not drawn from a probability sample, and therefore normal inferential statistics are not appropriate.
11. Since the first observed intervention event of any kind in our data file was the successful *coup d'état* in the Sudan on November 17, 1958, the years 1956 and 1957 saw no reported military interventions among the then independent SSA states – Ethiopia, Ghana, Liberia and Sudan. Hence, Tables 2 and 3 are identical in that they both actually cover 22 years of intervention behaviour. 1956 and 1957 are also unique in that they are the only years between 1956 and 2001 without military intervention events of any kind.
12. The alternative hypothesis that PI in the period 1958 to 1979 is one of the main causes of the African crisis in the second period of 1980–2001 will be investigated in subsequent research.
13. This indicates that the distribution of TMIS in the first period is more positively skewed towards high scoring states than in 1980–2001.
14. The last period, 1996–2001, includes six years.
15. The average values of the three types of intervention events across 46 years are: *coups* 1.74 per year, failed *coups* 2.36 and *coup* plots 3.02.
16. Time is a simple count of each additional year: 1, 2, 3 ... 46.
17. The states in each region are: CENTRAL AFRICA (8) Cameroon, Central African Republic, Congo, Chad, Democratic Republic of the Congo, Equatorial Guinea, Gabon and São Tomé & Príncipe; NORTH-EASTERN AFRICA (10) Burundi, Djibouti, Eritrea, Ethiopia, Kenya, Rwanda, Somalia, Sudan, Tanzania and Uganda; SOUTHERN AFRICA (10) Angola, Botswana, Lesotho, Malawi, Mozambique, Namibia, South Africa, Swaziland, Zambia and Zimbabwe; WESTERN AFRICA (16) Benin, Burkina Faso, Cape Verde, Côte d'Ivoire, Gambia, Ghana, Guinea, Guinea-Bissau, Liberia, Mali, Mauritania,

Niger, Nigeria, Senegal, Sierra Leone and Togo; WESTERN INDIAN OCEAN (4) Comoros, Madagascar, Mauritius and Seychelles (Esterhuysen 2002: 7).

18. Based on information given in Morrison *et al.* 1989: 647, we have coded the 12 April 1973 palace coup by King Sobhuza a military *coup d'état* because it was supported by his new, 300-man army. Among the 80 coups in our data file, this is the most ambiguous case according to our coding rules.

19. The author will share the entire event history data file with other scholars beginning in January 2004. Please contact McGowan via e-mail in this regard at Patrick.McGowan@asu.edu.

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APPENDIX A

CHRONOLOGY OF FAILED AND SUCCESSFUL AFRICAN MILITARY
COUPS D'ÉTAT, 1956–2001

Country	Date (d.m.y.)	Result			
			Ghana	13.01.1972	Successful
			Congo-Brazzaville*	22.02.1972	Failed
			Benin	23.02.1972	Failed
Sudan	17.11.1958	Successful	Madagascar	18.05.1972	Successful
Sudan*	04–09.03.1959	Failed	Benin	26.10.1972	Successful
Sudan*	21–22.04.1959	Failed	Swaziland	12.04.1973	Successful
Sudan*	09.11.1959	Failed	Rwanda	05.07.1973	Successful
DRC	14.09.1960	Successful	Burkina Faso	08.02.1974	Successful
Ethiopia	14.12.1960	Failed	Uganda*	23–24.03.1974	Failed
Somalia	10.12.1961	Failed	Niger	15.04.1974	Successful
Senegal	17.12.1962	Failed	Ethiopia	12.09.1974	Successful
Togo	13.01.1963	Successful	Uganda*	11.11.1974	Failed
Congo-Brazzaville	15.08.1963	Successful	Ethiopia*	22.11.1974	Successful
Benin	28.10.1963	Successful	Central African Republic*	07.12.1974	Failed
DRC	19.11.1963	Failed	Madagascar*	31.12.1974	Failed
Ghana	02.01.1964	Failed	Benin*	21.01.1975	Failed
Tanzania	19.01.1964	Failed	Madagascar*	11.02.1975	Failed
Gabon	18–20.02.1964	Failed	Uganda*	16.02.1975	Failed
Burundi	18.10.1965	Failed	Chad	13.04.1975	Successful
DRC	25.11.1965	Successful	Nigeria*	29.07.1975	Successful
Benin	29.11.1965	Successful	Uganda*	00.08.1975	Failed
Benin	22.12.1965	Successful	Sudan*	05.09.1975	Failed
Central African Republic	01.01.1966	Successful	Mozambique	17–18.12.1975	Failed
Burkina Faso	03.03.1966	Successful	Central African Republic*	01.02.1976	Failed
Nigeria	15.01.1966	Successful	Nigeria*	13.02.1976	Failed
Uganda	22.02.1966	Successful	Niger*	14–15.03.1976	Failed
Ghana	24.02.1966	Successful	Uganda*	10.06.1976	Failed
Burundi	08.07.1966	Successful	Uganda*	00.07.1976	Failed
Nigeria*	29.07.1966	Successful	Sudan*	02.07.1976	Failed
Burundi	28.11.1966	Successful	Burundi*	01.11.1976	Successful
Sudan	18.12.1966	Failed	Ethiopia*	03.02.1977	Successful
Togo	13.01.1967	Successful	Sudan*	03.03.1977	Failed
Sierra Leone	21.03.1967	Successful	Congo-Brazzaville*	18.03.1977	Failed
Ghana*	17.04.1967	Failed	Chad*	01.04.1977	Failed
Benin*	17.12.1967	Successful	Angola	27.05.1977	Failed
Sierra Leone*	18.04.1968	Successful	Seychelles	04–05.06.1977	Successful
Congo-Brazzaville*	31.07.1968	Failed	Uganda*	18.06.1977	Failed
Congo-Brazzaville*	03.08.1968	Successful	Ethiopia*	12.11.1977	Successful
Mali	19.11.1968	Successful	Somalia*	09.04.1978	Failed
Sudan	25.05.1969	Successful	Comoros	12.05.1978	Successful
Somalia	21.10.1969	Successful	Sudan*	02–03.07.1978	Failed
Benin	10.12.1969	Successful	Ghana*	05.07.1978	Successful
Congo-Brazzaville*	22.03.1970	Failed	Mauritania	10.07.1978	Successful
Togo*	08.08.1970	Failed	Ghana*	15.05.1979	Failed
Guinea	22.11.1970	Failed	Ghana*	04–06.06.1979	Successful
Uganda	25.01.1971	Successful	Equatorial Guinea	03.08.1979	Successful
Sierra Leone	23.03.1971	Failed	Central African Republic*	20.09.1979	Successful
Uganda*	12.07.1971	Failed			
Sudan*	21–23.07.1971	Failed			

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Country	Date (d.m.y.)	Result			
Mali*	25.03.1991	Successful			
Lesotho*	29-30.04.1991	Successful			
Lesotho*	07.06.1991	Failed			
Togo	01.10.1991	Failed			
Togo	07-08.10.1991	Failed			
Chad	13.10.1991	Failed			
Togo	27-30.11.1991	Failed			
Togo	03.12.1991	Failed			
Togo	15.12.1991	Failed			
Burundi*	04.03.1992	Failed			
Sierra Leone	30.04.1992	Successful			
Benin	27.05.1992	Failed			
Comoros	26.09.1992	Failed			
Sierra Leone*	29.12.1992	Failed			
Guinea-Bissau*	17.03.1993	Failed			
Burundi	03.07.1993	Failed			
Burundi	21.10.1993	Failed			
Nigeria	17.11.1993	Successful			
Burundi	25.04.1994	Failed			
Gambia	22-23.07.1994	Successful			
Liberia	15.09.1994	Failed			
Gambia*	11.11.1994	Failed			
São Tomé & Príncipe	15.08.1995	Failed			
Comoros	28.09.1995	Failed			
Sierra Leone*	02-03.10.1995	Failed			
Sierra Leone*	16.01.1996	Successful			
Niger	27.01.1996	Successful			
Guinea*	03.02.1996	Failed			
Central African Republic	18.05.1996	Failed			
Burundi	25.07.1996	Successful			
Sierra Leone	16.12.1996	Failed			
Sierra Leone	25.05.1997	Successful			
Zambia	28.10.1997	Failed			
Guinea-Bissau*	07.06.1998	Failed			
Niger*	09.04.1999	Successful			
Comoros*	30.04.1999	Successful			
Côte d'Ivoire	24.12.1999	Successful			
Comoros*	21.03.2000	Failed			
Sierra Leone	22.05.2000	Failed			
Côte d'Ivoire*	18.09.2000	Failed			
Côte d'Ivoire	07-08.01.2001	Failed			
DRC*	16.01.2001	Successful			
Burundi*	19.04.2001	Failed			
Central African Republic	28.05.2001	Failed			
Burundi*	23.07.2001	Failed			
Comoros*	19.12.2001	Failed			
Mali*	25.03.1991	Successful			
Lesotho*	29-30.04.1991	Successful			
Lesotho*	07.06.1991	Failed			
Togo	01.10.1991	Failed			
Togo	07-08.10.1991	Failed			
Chad	13.10.1991	Failed			
Togo	27-30.11.1991	Failed			
Togo	03.12.1991	Failed			
Togo	15.12.1991	Failed			
Burundi*	04.03.1992	Failed			
Sierra Leone	30.04.1992	Successful			
Benin	27.05.1992	Failed			
Comoros	26.09.1992	Failed			
Sierra Leone*	29.12.1992	Failed			
Guinea-Bissau*	17.03.1993	Failed			
Burundi	03.07.1993	Failed			
Burundi	21.10.1993	Failed			
Nigeria	17.11.1993	Successful			
Burundi	25.04.1994	Failed			
Gambia	22-23.07.1994	Successful			
Liberia	15.09.1994	Failed			
Gambia*	11.11.1994	Failed			
São Tomé & Príncipe	15.08.1995	Failed			
Comoros	28.09.1995	Failed			
Sierra Leone*	02-03.10.1995	Failed			
Sierra Leone*	16.01.1996	Successful			
Niger	27.01.1996	Successful			
Guinea*	03.02.1996	Failed			
Central African Republic	18.05.1996	Failed			
Burundi	25.07.1996	Successful			
Sierra Leone	16.12.1996	Failed			
Sierra Leone	25.05.1997	Successful			
Zambia	28.10.1997	Failed			
Guinea-Bissau*	07.06.1998	Failed			
Niger*	09.04.1999	Successful			
Comoros*	30.04.1999	Successful			
Côte d'Ivoire	24.12.1999	Successful			
Comoros*	21.03.2000	Failed			
Sierra Leone	22.05.2000	Failed			
Côte d'Ivoire*	18.09.2000	Failed			
Côte d'Ivoire	07-08.01.2001	Failed			
DRC*	16.01.2001	Successful			
Burundi*	19.04.2001	Failed			
Central African Republic	28.05.2001	Failed			
Burundi*	23.07.2001	Failed			
Comoros*	19.12.2001	Failed			

* The action was against an existing military regime.

APPENDIX B

EXAMPLES OF MILITARY INTERVENTION EVENTS

A. Coup d'état

COUNTRY Côte d'Ivoire ID# 437 EVENT coup DATE 24.12.1999

Description: On Thursday soldiers began looting, hijacking cars, and set up military checkpoints in Abidjan, the capital. They announced an all-night curfew, and that anyone in the streets later than 18:00 would be shot. In addition, they freed prisoners from the opposition party, and in the process 6,500 others managed to escape. On Friday, General Robert Guei declared military control, suspended the Constitution, Courts and Parliament, thereby effectively overthrowing President Henri Konan Bedie. It was not clear whether Gen. Guei himself put the mutinous soldiers up to the task, or whether he just seized advantage of the situation when it became clear the government was no longer in control. Over the next few days Guei consolidated his power. Army and police forces supported him, as well as some government ministers. Guei appointed nine senior officers to a Committee of National Salvation to oversee the country and named himself as President of the Committee. Guei promised the restoration of 'genuine democracy' after a transition period. Elections had been scheduled for the following October, but Guei gave no immediate indication that they would still take place. The coup was 'relatively bloodless'.

Participants: General Guei, rebellious soldiers and the army and police.

Apparent causes: Recent economic and political instability seem to have been a factor. The European Union and IMF had recently suspended aid because of alleged corruption, and the world prices of cocoa and coffee had dropped. Politically, a lot of turmoil surrounds the upcoming presidential election. Bedie's Democratic Party tried to prevent Alassane Ouattara from running, and the government had jailed several leaders of the Republican Party. Troops began looting in protest of unpaid salaries, poor living conditions, and 'bad governance'. The unpaid salary complaint stems back to troops who served with a UN peacekeeping force in the Central African Republic, and allegedly never were compensated for their service. They also demanded the release from jail of eleven opposition party members.

Sources: *Lexis-Nexis Academic Universe*, *The Toronto Star*, Sunday, December 26, 1999, 454 words; *Deutsche Presse-Agentur*, Sunday, December 26, 1999, 527 words; *The New York Times*, Monday, December 27, 1999, p. A10; *The Guardian* (London), Monday, December 27, 1999, p. 13; Esterhuysen (2002: 75).

B. Failed coup d'état

COUNTRY Côte d'Ivoire ID# 437 EVENT attempted coup DATE 18.09.2000

Description: Unidentified gunmen attacked the residence of General and President Robert Guei, killing two bodyguards. Guei claimed it was an assassination attempt. Shooting began about 2:00 Monday morning and automatic weapons and mortars were heard. At least 26 persons, including six military officers, were arrested Monday and Tuesday; most of the soldiers arrested were from the Presidential Guard. Among those accused are General Lansana Palenfo, the former number two military man, and General Abdoulaye Coulibaly. Arms and incriminating evidence were found in Palenfo's home. Guei called the attackers a 'small group' of opposition supporters. Members of Ouattara's Republican Party denied involvement, saying they are always used as scapegoats. On Tuesday the city was calm, but soldiers guarded TV stations, the presidential building and Guei's residence.

Participants: Twenty-six persons, including six military officers including Generals Palenfo and Coulibaly. Members of the Republican Party were accused of involvement in the attempt, but denied it.

Apparent causes: Elements of the armed forces were not happy with Guei. In July, some soldiers rebelled demanding compensation for their role in last December's successful coup.

Sources: *Lexis-Nexis Academic Universe*, *Deutsche Presse-Agentur*, 18 September, 2000, 405 and 408 words; *Deutsche Presse-Agentur*, 19 September, 2000, 327 words; *Deutsche Presse-Agentur*, 20 September, 2000, 213 words; *Africa News Service*, 20 September, 2000, 491 words; *The Ottawa Citizen*, 26 October, 2000, p. A18.

C. Coup plot

COUNTRY Côte d'Ivoire ID# 437 EVENT plot DATE 30.07.1991

Description: The army's chief-of-staff, Brigadier-General Robert Guei, said that mutinous soldiers were planning to overthrow President Felix Houphouët-Boigny, but had been foiled in the eleventh hour. Guei reported that they were caught 'red-handed' and were already distributing cartridges to go into action. Twenty enlisted men were arrested and interrogated at an army base outside Abidjan, the capital. The highest ranked among them was a sergeant. The paper *La Voie* also reported that two men died in detention. Guei did not detail the causes of the plot or the objectives of the soldiers. However, the alleged plot is broadly linked to assaults by the military on a school campus on 18 May, economic problems, and a ban on a multiparty state. Guei, who is close to President Houphouët-Boigny, also hinted that the plot was orchestrated by disgruntled civilians. Diplomats interpreted this as an attempt to discredit Laurent Gbagbo, the leader of the Popular Front and the only challenger in last October's presidential election.

Participants: Some twenty unnamed Army enlisted men.

Apparent causes: Political unrest, dissatisfaction, and the Boigny Government's alleged corruption. In addition, a huge drop in prices of cocoa and coffee, the country's main exports, led to massive street demonstrations.

Sources: *Lexis-Nexis Academic Universe*, *The Toronto Star*, Wednesday, 31 July, 1991, p. A17; *The Independent* (London), Wednesday, 31 July, 1991, p. 9; *The Associated Press*, Tuesday, 30 July, 1991, 325 words.

APPENDIX C

TOTAL MILITARY INTERVENTION SCORES (TMIS) AND EVENTS FOR
ALL SUB-SAHARAN AFRICAN STATES, 01.01.1956 TO 31.12.2001

Rank ^a	Country ^b	Plots	Failed coups	Successful coups	TMIS	Year of independence ^c
1.	Sudan	17	11	4	70	1956
2.	Ghana	11	6	5	54	1957
3.	Uganda	4	9	4	51	1962
4.	Burundi	2	7	5	48	1962
5.	Sierra Leone	5	6	5	48	1961
6.	Benin	6	3	6	45	1960
7.	Nigeria	4	2	6	40	1960
8.	Burkina Faso	6	1	6	39	1960
9.	Comoros	0	6	3	33	1975
10.	Central African Republic	2	5	3	32	1960
11.	Ethiopia	5	2	4	31	1956 ^c
12.	Togo	3	6	2	31	1960
13.	Congo-B	4	4	2	26	1960
14.	D.R. Congo	7	1	3	25	1960
15.	Liberia	11	3	1	25	1956 ^c
16.	Mauritania	6	1	3	24	1960
17.	Niger	1	2	3	22	1960
18.	Guinea	8	3	1	22	1958
19.	Equatorial Guinea	2	3	1	16	1968
20.	Guinea-Bissau	5	2	1	16	1974
21.	Mali	5	0	2	15	1960
22.	Lesotho	1	1	2	14	1966
23.	Côte d'Ivoire	3	2	1	14	1960
24.	Somalia	3	2	1	14	1960
25.	Chad	2	2	1	13	1960
26.	Madagascar	1	2	1	12	1960
27.	Gambia	0	2	1	11	1965
28.	Zambia	1	3	0	10	1964
29.	Swaziland	1	1	1	9	1968
30.	Rwanda	1	0	1	6	1962
31.	Gabon	3	1	0	6	1960
32.	Seychelles	0	0	1	5	1976
33.	Kenya	2	1	0	5	1963
34.	Tanzania	2	1	0	5	1961
35.	Cameroon	1	1	0	4	1960
36.	Mozambique	1	1	0	4	1975
37.	Angola	0	1	0	3	1975
38.	Djibouti	0	1	0	3	1977
39.	S. Tomé & Príncipe	0	1	0	3	1975
40.	Senegal	0	1	0	3	1960
41.	Zimbabwe	0	1	0	3	1980
42.	Malawi	3	0	0	3	1964
43.	Botswana	0	0	0	0	1966
44.	Cape Verde	0	0	0	0	1975
45.	Eritrea	0	0	0	0	1993
46.	Mauritius	0	0	0	0	1968

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Rank ^a	Country ^b	Plots	Failed coups	Successful coups	TMIS	Year of independence ^c
47.	Namibia	0	0	0	0	1990
48.	South Africa	0	0	0	0	1994 ^c
Totals		139	108	80	863	
Average		2.9	2.2	1.7	18.0	

Notes:

^a In this and all following Appendices, where states have the same TMIS they have been ranked first according to the number of coups they have experienced, second by the number of failed coups, third by the number of plots and fourth, alphabetically.

^b In all Appendices and Tables the country names are those in effect on 31.12.2001.

^c As defined in this study. Ethiopia is an ancient state, Liberia's independence was recognised in 1847 and South Africa became independent in 1910, but achieved majority rule in 1994.

APPENDIX D
TOTAL MILITARY INTERVENTION SCORES (TMIS) AND
EVENTS FOR ALL INDEPENDENT SUB-SAHARAN AFRICAN STATES,
01.01.1956 TO 31.12.1979

Rank	Country	Plots	Failed coups	Successful coups	TMIS
1.	Sudan	8	9	2	45
2.	Benin	3	2	6	39
3.	Ghana	7	3	4	36
4.	Uganda	2	8	2	36
5.	Ethiopia	4	1	4	27
6.	Congo-Brazzaville	3	4	2	25
7.	Burundi	2	1	3	20
8.	D.R. Congo	6	1	2	19
9.	Nigeria	0	1	3	18
10.	Central African Republic	2	2	2	18
11.	Togo	3	1	2	16
12.	Sierra Leone	2	1	2	15
13.	Somalia	2	2	1	13
14.	Madagascar	1	2	1	12
15.	Burkina Faso	0	0	2	10
16.	Guinea	7	1	0	10
17.	Chad	1	1	1	9
18.	Niger	1	1	1	9
19.	Mali	3	0	1	8
20.	Mauritania	1	0	1	6
21.	Comoros	0	0	1	5
22.	Equatorial Guinea	0	0	1	5
23.	Rwanda	0	0	1	5
24.	Seychelles	0	0	1	5
25.	Swaziland	0	0	1	5
26.	Tanzania	1	1	0	4
27.	Angola	0	1	0	3
28.	Gabon	0	1	0	3
29.	Mozambique	0	1	0	3
30.	Senegal	0	1	0	3
31.	Liberia	3	0	0	3
32.	Kenya	2	0	0	2
33.	Côte d'Ivoire	1	0	0	1
34.	Malawi	1	0	0	1
35.	Botswana	0	0	0	0
36.	Cameroon	0	0	0	0
37.	Cape Verde	0	0	0	0
38.	Djibouti	0	0	0	0
39.	Gambia	0	0	0	0
40.	Guinea-Bissau	0	0	0	0
41.	Lesotho	0	0	0	0
42.	Mauritius	0	0	0	0
43.	São Tomé & Príncipe	0	0	0	0
44.	Zambia	0	0	0	0
Totals		66	46	47	439
Average		1.5	1.0	1.1	10.0

APPENDIX E

TOTAL MILITARY INTERVENTION SCORES (TMIS) AND EVENTS FOR
ALL SUB-SAHARAN AFRICAN STATES, 01.01.1980 TO 31.12.2001

Rank	Country	Plots	Failed coups	Successful coups	TMIS
1.	Sierra Leone	3	5	3	33
2.	Burkina Faso	6	1	4	29
3.	Burundi	0	6	2	28
4.	Comoros	0	6	2	28
5.	Sudan	9	2	2	25
6.	Nigeria	4	1	3	22
7.	Liberia	8	3	1	22
8.	Mauritania	5	1	2	18
9.	Ghana	4	3	1	18
10.	Guinea-Bissau	5	2	1	16
11.	Uganda	2	1	2	15
12.	Togo	0	5	0	15
13.	Lesotho	1	1	2	14
14.	Central African Republic	0	3	1	14
15.	Niger	0	1	2	13
16.	Côte d'Ivoire	2	2	1	13
17.	Guinea	1	2	1	12
18.	Gambia	0	2	1	11
19.	Equatorial Guinea	2	3	0	11
20.	Zambia	1	3	0	10
21.	Mali	2	0	1	7
22.	D.R. Congo	1	0	1	6
23.	Benin	3	1	0	6
24.	Cameroon	1	1	0	4
25.	Chad	1	1	0	4
26.	Ethiopia	1	1	0	4
27.	Swaziland	1	1	0	4
28.	Djibouti	0	1	0	3
29.	Kenya	0	1	0	3
30.	São Tomé & Príncipe	0	1	0	3
31.	Zimbabwe	0	1	0	3
32.	Gabon	3	0	0	3
33.	Malawi	2	0	0	2
34.	Congo-Brazzaville	1	0	0	1
35.	Mozambique	1	0	0	1
36.	Rwanda	1	0	0	1
37.	Somalia	1	0	0	1
38.	Tanzania	1	0	0	1
39.	Angola	0	0	0	0
40.	Botswana	0	0	0	0
41.	Cape Verde	0	0	0	0
42.	Eritrea	0	0	0	0
43.	Madagascar	0	0	0	0
44.	Mauritius	0	0	0	0
45.	Namibia	0	0	0	0
46.	Senegal	0	0	0	0
47.	Seychelles	0	0	0	0
48.	South Africa	0	0	0	0
Totals		73	62	33	424
Average		1.5	1.3	0.7	8.8