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Crisis, violence and political succession in Africa

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ABSTRACT *This article examines African leadership succession and the effect of crises on the orderliness of succession. The data set consists of 102 successions from 1963–1988, using the* African Contemporary Record *as our major source. We divide 102 successions into those which are 'regulated,' or rule-directed, and those which are not. We find that about a third of all successions were regulated, and that the presence of a political crisis is the critical obstacle to a regulated succession, more important than either economic or cultural crises. We also find that economic performance is a significant long-term factor in a country's succession record.*

This study is about political succession in Africa, the process by which a country's leader is selected. Our purpose is to find patterns of leadership change, and to link particular types of change to features in the social, economic and political environment.

We examine succession with a set of research objectives. First, we are interested in the specific circumstances that accompany successions. What background events precede successions, and how do they affect the subsequent administrations? Second, we want to know if particular socioeconomic characteristics affect successions. Do more prosperous countries have the same patterns of succession as less prosperous countries, or do the patterns differ? Do heterogeneous ethnic polities produce different succession patterns than relatively homogeneous nation-states?

Succession and institutionalisation

All political systems experience leadership change. The study of succession raises the issues of who the new leader is and how that leader is selected. The former is the central concern within any polity, and is likely to receive far more attention, but for political scientists the question of the process of selection is more salient.

The process of leadership change varies according to the extent that it is governed by established procedures. This, in turn, provides some indication of

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the extent to which a political system has been institutionalised. Theoretically, we can distinguish two types of leadership succession. In the institutionalised system, political successions conform to a set of predetermined and widely accepted rules. Legitimacy is claimed by virtue of the process of selection, to the extent that it honours those rules. The transition is peaceful and the leader's opposition acquiesces, however grudgingly, to that selection. In the second type of succession, characterised by a system that lacks institutionalisation, successions are completely self-justificatory and the leader is virtually self-selected. Legitimacy is claimed through possession of superior force and possibly justified by a set of policies (usually promulgated to 'save the nation'), but not through a process of compromise, bargaining or accommodation with opposition groups. The transition is marked by the threat or use of force, and the opposition usually refuses to recognise the new government.

This theoretical distinction does not easily translate into a model for empirical inquiry. First, while institutionalised systems entail peaceful, rule-bound leadership transitions, the converse is not true. Many countries have elections and other orderly transitions, only to experience subsequent coups. In these cases, we would not describe the political successions of these countries as institutionalised, or even partly institutionalised. Second, and related to the first, institutionalisation develops only over time, with the persistence of a system over an extended period. Successions, in contrast, are time-bound events. Only after a series of successions can anyone make an informed determination of whether or not the succession process has been institutionalised. Third, in the African context the level of institutionalisation has limited utility since there is thus far relatively little variance. Few (and arguably none) of Africa's political systems can be said to be significantly institutionalised.

There is nevertheless a linkage between succession and institutionalisation. In Huntington's formulation, orderly and peaceful succession implies adaptability, one of the three criteria of institutionalisation. Adaptability is manifest in, among other things, a system's ability to transfer leadership from one group to another in the face of changing internal and external influences.[1] Huntington thus sees leadership change as a way of adapting to new political and social environments.

In the context of relatively new nation-states, successions provide a way of examining the extent to which a system is in the process of institutionalisation, especially if the system is progressing towards liberal democracy. Such events as the election of 1800 in the USA provided a kind of 'critical experiment' to see if power could be transferred from the Federalists to Jefferson and his supporters. When that transition occurred without violence or naked resort to power (the only residue being a legal imbroglio settled by the Supreme Court[2]), a crucial test had been passed. Huntington sets a criterion of two changes of government (from one party to an opposition group) for the probation of democracy. In Africa, the same kind of test has not been available. Until recently, many African nation-states had not had a succession, having been ruled continuously by the leader at independence. A generation later, those leaders are gone, and almost every African nation-state has had at least one succession. Now an examination of political successions should be valuable to understanding political development in Africa as well.

Trends in literature

The topic of succession has been given scant attention in the field of comparative politics. Scholars have shown more concern with whole system change than leadership change. In the 1970s the literature focused on the pre-eminence of command economies and bureaucratic–authoritarian political structures in Asia, Africa and Latin America. In the 1990s this research has been supplanted by the study of the transformation of whole governance systems, notably the transition from authoritarian to democratic systems.[3] Naturally, one would expect such dramatic events as the decline of the Eastern bloc to capture the attention of political scientists. However, the less spectacular government changes in other parts of the world deserve attention as well.

The existing research on succession has been limited to attempts to explain or predict violent government takeover. Typically, the research focuses on coups,[4] or the more general topic of revolution.[5] In these cases, the subject is specifically the event or series of events that led to the replacement of a particular government through extra-legal means. While these are certainly the most dramatic successions and warrant plenty of scholarly attention, there is also good reason to study all successions, violent or not, to generate comparative hypotheses and to provide a comprehensive view of succession.

Recent work in this direction has been advanced by Bienen and van de Walle,[6] and specifically in the African context by Londregan *et al.*[7] This work helps fill a gap in scholarship on African succession. A significant reason for this research gap is the prevalence of studies of personalism in African politics. Jackson and Rosberg, as well as Zolberg before them, explicitly deny a significant ideological component to African governments and succession, arguing that governments in Africa are conducted primarily for the benefit of the leaders themselves.[8] They see leadership change as part of a continuing parade of self-serving politicos. In this view, government turnover rarely produces significant policy change, much less the kind of change that the transition literature has covered. The implication is that there is no point to studying succession.

This sort of argument seriously underestimates the importance of leadership change. It avoids the question of the extent to which institutionalisation may be taking place. Many political systems, Mexico in particular, became institutionalised after a series of highly personalist leaders.[9] The need to gain support among the groups that make up civil society can lead to just the sort of government–group linkages that solidify a political system, even if those linkages are made in the midst of highly personalised power struggles. Thus, personalism does not preclude contributing in the long term to the institutionalisation of a society, even if the individual administrations do not consciously attempt to institutionalise their structures.

In addition, successions are important moments in the history of the evolution of a country's political structures and policies. Some successions result in changes in policy, international alignments and shifts in governing coalitions. Others mark an explicit rejection of change. Personalist though they may be, autocrats usually attempt to mould a society that mirrors their vision—traditional, collectivist, bureaucratic, capitalist, socialist or some combination.

Such leaders may leave the legacy of an ideological goal that subsequent political systems may adopt. Alternatively, consensus-oriented leaders usually end up leaving some imprint by the compromises they forge. Those compromises may eventually translate into institutional arrangements.

It is important to remember that, in African polities, political successions provide one of the only opportunities for policy and structural changes. With few opportunities for policy debates, a change in government leadership allows a window during which policies and objectives come into question. To overlook successions because of the self-centred motives of the players (which makes an assumption about motives that cannot ultimately be verified) is to miss key events in the evolution of African polities.

We are convinced that there is a need for the study of succession on its own terms, including the circumstances under which successions take place, and for recognising the diverse processes at work.

Political succession: a definition

Succession is a transition from one leader to another. Originally, the term was applied to monarchies, denoting the replacement of one sovereign by another. In hereditary monarchies, this is a fairly smooth process, with occasional conflicts over the legitimate heir. In all monarchical systems, a change in the sovereign also signifies a change in government.

The development of the modern bureaucratic state has changed the picture somewhat. Where more bureaucratic states developed, monarchs either became figureheads or disappeared, and government change was achieved by shifts in political parties and party coalitions. Moreover, the appearance of revolutions over the years has raised the possibility of whole system change, which was virtually unthinkable in traditional regimes. The net effect has been to reduce, but not eliminate, the importance of the individual leader in the modern political system.

Another effect has been to complicate the identification of the pre-eminent political leader in a country. In the USSR it took careful analysis to determine that the First Secretary of the Politburo was the top position in the system. In Africa the situation is compounded by two factors: (1) the importation of various political titles from the Western and Eastern blocs, so that Presidents, Premiers and Prime Ministers appear, often in the same government (Somalia in its early years of independence, for example); and (2) the many councils of state and *ad hoc* political arrangements make it difficult at times to identify the actual leadership of a country. The most dramatic example of such an *ad hoc* arrangement is in Libya, where Gaddaffi does not hold any official governmental title, but is clearly pre-eminent in that political system. We therefore must define what we mean by 'leadership'.

We are interested in an individual recognised as the principal leader of a country. By this we mean that there is no individual with more policy-making and decision-making power within the state. More specifically, we focus on (1) the power to make personnel decisions and (2) the power to make policy.

The first concern involves administrative capacity. Stated simply, if X can fire Y, but Y cannot fire X, then X is closer to the principal leadership of a country. That capacity is not necessarily an agreed-upon authority, but is instead a *de facto* consideration. Stated more broadly, we look for the person who has principal control over hiring and firing in an administration. If that person is not clearly under the control of some other authority, there is a strong indication that we have found the principal leader.

During a succession, such control is demonstrated by a new leader's naming a new cabinet, or at least making some changes in cabinet membership. If the changes can be made and go into effect, that would indicate a sufficient consolidation of power by a new administration.

The power to make policy is equally important. If we can identify a person who is controlling the implementation of public policy, then we have found the principal leader. In other words, we look for an individual who has ultimate decision-making authority when it comes to the most basic decisions regarding public policy.

In the context of a succession, this power is manifest in a change in domestic or foreign policy. A new set of policies often motivates a change of administration, but we cannot be certain that a new government has consolidated its power until these new policies begin to appear.

We looked for evidence of either personnel change or policy change, taking each separately to be a sufficient condition for principal leadership. We found no contradictory cases, and indeed it is hard to conceive of such a possibility.

In effect, we are defining leadership in terms of the behaviour of the individual involved. If that person hires and fires, or directs public policy, then that person is the leader. The alternative is to define leadership by reference to the individual occupying a particular position. The example of Gaddaffi in Libya shows one obvious shortcoming of that method, but an additional shortcoming is apparent during fluid political situations. First, during a military *coup d'etat*, there may be several titular heads of the ruling military council before an effective government emerges. A researcher relying on nominal changes in leadership could easily conclude that there had been several successions during the transition, when in fact the sequence consisted of the removal of the previous principal leader, a period of chaos which saw several claimants to the position of principal leader, and the consolidation of a new government. By our methods, this would be one succession.

Second, during *coups d'etat* there is often a situation in which an individual is placed as a figurehead in a leadership position while the rebel forces work out lines of authority. That person has no real power, cannot act as a leader and should not be considered the leader, regardless of title. Our emphasis, then, is on a leader's having consolidated sufficient political support to act as a genuine leader.

To summarise, we define a political succession as the appearance of a new person filling the position of principal leader, and exercising primary control over the personnel and policy apparatus. This change is marked by a new leader and a new set of advisors or a reshuffled cabinet with some new faces, or significant departures from previous domestic or foreign policies.[10]

The concept of regulated succession

In the West, one feature of liberal democracy is the assurance that elections will be held according to a set of agreed-upon procedures. In strong presidential systems, the elections are regularly scheduled, while in parliamentary systems elections may be called only after a number of conditions have been met.

In Africa fair and freely contested elections have been rare. But in the absence of elections there is still a distinction between what we call a 'regulated' succession and a completely unregulated succession. For example, in a monarchy there is no electoral process, but there is a well understood method of transferring power from one person to another.[11] In other cases, the transition does not conform to a set of established rules, but is still the result of a political process. The process may be characterised by official or unofficial bargaining and consensus-building among elite groups. Even when such a process is limited to participation by the military, the new leader is in some way a product of that process (as opposed to being self-appointed), and begins a new administration having to acknowledge those same forces.

In contrast, some successions are the result of a conspiracy, and are completely self-justificatory. The legitimacy of the new administration rests only on the tactical military superiority of the new government against its opponents. Opponents do not ratify the new arrangements; at best they acquiesce to them. Such successions reflect almost no exchange with a larger political environment save the desire to ignore or destroy any forces that might constrain the new administration. The only bargaining and consensus occurs inside the conspiratorial circle.

Regulated and unregulated successions can also be distinguished in terms of the presence or absence of force as a significant component of the successions. In a regulated succession, the use of force, or an explicit threat to use force, is absent as a significant component of the succession. The threat or use of force destroys any rules, agreements or expectations for succession. Even when force is used to support the results of an otherwise regulated succession, it stands as evidence that the agreement itself was not sufficient to effect the transition. In a similar vein, the study of violence during successions raises questions relevant to institutionalisation. The presence of violence during a succession is a clear indication that institutionalisation has not taken place. Violence entails serious dissatisfaction with the process or outcome of a succession. As an attempt to overturn the 'rules of the game', violence denies compliance with a set of rules for succession.

However, the mere absence of force does not guarantee a regulated succession The absence of force may signify only a lack of an organised opposition to the new leadership, or an opposition at a serious tactical or strategic disadvantage that obviates armed opposition. Therefore, we will need to see both evidence of rule-directed behaviour or at least a political consensus, and no use of force in achieving the succession before we label a succession as regulated.

We are essentially postulating a joint sufficiency between the absence of force and rule-directed or otherwise constrained behaviour. It can be represented in Fig. 1.

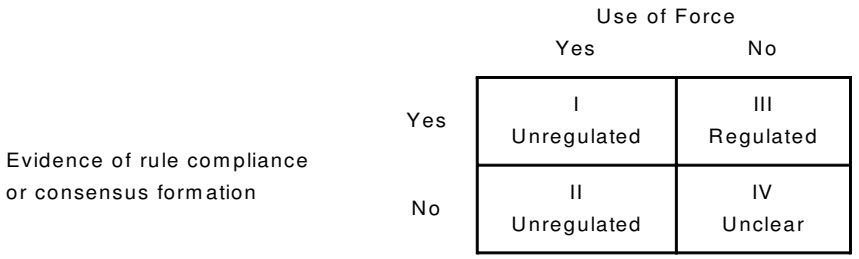

FIGURE 1
The relationship between force, rules and regulated successions

Case IV presents the only problem in conceptualisation. However, to designate such successions as 'regulated' makes a questionable assumption that hidden or secret rules are operating, and moreover removes the rule criterion from consideration, with the presence or absence of force becoming the only differentiation between regulated and unregulated successions. If we were to designate these successions as 'unregulated' we are making a similarly questionable assumption that there couldn't possibly be any consensus or rules operating. Beyond that, our definition of regulated becomes overly restrictive. As we will see later, some of the conceptual dilemma can be resolved empirically, but the problem remains a difficult one.

In summary, we distinguish between the regulated succession and the non-regulated succession. The former is directed by a set of rules understood at least by the major political players in the system, and is accomplished without the use or threat of force. The latter is any succession driven by the use or threat of force, or is otherwise bereft of any identifiable rule-governed behaviour. The regulated succession is essentially a movement in the direction of institutionalisation, although it by no means ensures it. More accurately, a regulated succession is entailed by institutionalisation, but not vice versa.

The concept of a regulated succession draws a distinction that is relevant to the reality of post-independence Africa. A strict standard of constitutionality along the lines of a Western liberal democracy would distinguish only a few successions from the vast majority of successions that do not meet such a standard. Worse yet, it would ignore the many successions that are constrained, if not completely organised, by some implicit or explicit rules and are characterised by the functioning of the political process. Quite possibly, studies of personalist rule in Africa fail to recognise the political process in leadership because an inappropriate standard has been applied. We believe that there is a significant amount of territory between purely constitutional succession and purely personalist, self-serving succession, and that it deserves our attention.

The data

Part of the problem in examining succession has been a problem of data collection. Not only are there few data sets available, but the methodology used has led to some gaps in the analysis. Specifically, there are both theoretical

and statistical problems inherent in the correlation of event data with aggregate data.

One statistical problem is that most techniques look for variables to covary proportionately. There may be reason to believe that a poor country is more unstable than a moderately wealthy country, but there is no reason to expect that, when a country is 10% poorer than another, it will also be 10% more unstable. Yet this is the type of analysis used in most aggregate data analyses, if for no other reason than that the data are metric.

Another statistical problem is that aggregate attribute variables tend to be static, while behavioural variables tend to fluctuate to a much greater extent. Thus, while Nigeria's economic position among African nations is unlikely to change, its level of stability will go through a series of drastic changes. At various times Nigeria has been among the more stable African polities, while at other times it has been unstable. Correlation thus seems improbable from a statistical perspective.

The theoretical problems stem from the linkage between attribute space and behavioural space. It is quite a deductive leap from, say, a low GNP to a high frequency of leadership change. Such problems have beset the political violence literature since the first breakthrough studies. Those and subsequent attempts to correlate background conditions with the magnitude of political violence produced a modest set of findings.

It is odd to expect that the magnitude of instability or violence would be attributable directly to a set of background conditions. Causal factors may indeed lead to conditions where violence or instability become likely, but it is hard to imagine that the magnitude of those factors will automatically condition the magnitude of the behaviour.

Furthermore, such facile comparison denies the significance of politics and political leadership. A direct connection between aggregate data and country-specific behaviour 'black-boxes' the political system of every country involved. It is therefore assumed that politicians and political developments cannot affect any of the outcomes involved. In the case of political succession, it borders on the bizarre to ignore political factors.

For example, we would argue that the most recent troubles in Rwanda cannot be traced to any particular attribute of Rwanda, such as ethnic ratios or economic performance, but rather to the specific actions of the local political leadership. On the other hand, the political leadership could not exploit ethnic and economic troubles were none present. It is furthermore probable that the choices available to local political leaders are in some way limited or otherwise defined by resource bases and other larger considerations. In other cases, a scarcity of resources might restrict a country's prospects for a multiparty system by making it difficult to share resources and satisfy all interested groups.

We are essentially positing an indirect linkage between our contextual variables and the actual behaviour of countries in dealing with succession. The proximate causes of the behaviour are the situational variables drawn from the event data. We will look for direct linkages between the situational variables and the succession experience of each African country. The situational variables, are,

in turn, potentially linked to the contextual variables. A separate investigation will determine if any of these relationships are relevant.

We look to two sources for our data. For aggregate data, we use the 'Black Africa' data set.[12] Our second source was an event data set we generated covering the years 1963–88. We will begin with the data set we generated.

Event data

We coded 28 variables across 102 successions. Our primary source was the *African Contemporary Record* (*ACR*).[13] It provides an annual account of the major events in all African countries. It covers political successions in considerable detail as well as ensuing policy and structural changes which result. *ACR* began its coverage in 1968. For the period between 1963, when the first post-colonial succession took place in Togo, and 1968, we used a combination of *Africa Report* and *Africa Diary*. Although the formats of these two sources differed from *ACR*, we found that in the late 1960s their reports produced comparable data.

Each event was coded by our research assistant, and then checked by each of the co-authors. Discrepancies and disagreements were discussed until a decision could be reached on an agreed set of facts. In general, one or two problems appeared per succession. All were eventually rectified or coded as missing data where the information was too ambiguous to resolve.

In defining our variables, we attempted to maintain the maximum level of simplicity in the coding scheme. One way of doing this was to create as many dichotomous variables as possible. Of the 28 variables, 22 are 'yes/no' choices. Four variables are polytomies (several categories). The only open-ended variables are the country and date of succession.

We also created variables without mutual exclusivity. For example, in identifying the conditions during which a succession occurred, we allowed for a political, cultural and an economic crisis to have appeared. This ultimately allowed a great deal of flexibility in characterising each event, and minimised reliability problems that would have arisen had we attempted to determine which crisis was paramount.

As in all event data collections we relied heavily on our sources to provide the information we needed and for editorial judgement. If, for example, the source mentioned no economic crisis during a succession, we assumed that there was none worth discussing. Moreover, if there was no reference to a leader's military background, we assumed that any such experience was tangential to that person's biography.

At the same time, we created our own definitions for various terms, rather than relying entirely on *ACR* to provide meaning to each term. This, we believe, allowed us to compile data systematically without ignoring the expertise of the area specialists employed by these publications. Table 1 presents the variables used for the study.

In addition to the importance of the three variables that identify regulated succession (force, constitutionality, elite consensus), we would emphasise the importance of three variables coded for each succession. These variables—the

TABLE 1
Data Map

Variable description	*Values*
1. Year of succession	1963–87
2. Forced succession (death or resignation)?	Dichotomous Y/N
3. Outgoing regime type	traditional military mobilising other authoritarian electoral
4. Incoming regime type	as in 3
5. Leader's occupation	military civil service leader of faction other
6. Ethnicity of leader compared to previous leader	same different
7. Designator of new leader	military group former leader party/cabinet election other
8. Constitutional/traditional succession?	Dichotomous Y/N
9. New leader selected for ideology/policy?	Dichotomous Y/N
10. New leader a consensus figure?	Dichotomous Y/N
11. New leader to ease tension?	Dichotomous Y/N
12. New leader a prestige figure?	Dichotomous Y/N
13. Was there a political crisis?	Dichotomous Y/N
14. Was there an economic crisis?	Dichotomous Y/N
15. Was there a cultural crisis?	Dichotomous Y/N
16. Was there violence before succession?	Dichotomous Y/N
17. Was there violence during succession?	Dichotomous Y/N
18. Was there a threat or show of force?	Dichotomous Y/N
19. Elite consensus?	Dichotomous Y/N
20. Promise of less corruption?	Dichotomous Y/N
21. Promise of unity?	Dichotomous Y/N
22. Promise of new policies?	Dichotomous Y/N
23. Less tensions with neighbours?	Dichotomous Y/N
24. Realignment with superpowers?	Dichotomous Y/N
25. More aid from West?	Dichotomous Y/N
26. More aid from East?	Dichotomous Y/N
27. Change in ethnic balance?	Dichotomous Y/N

presence or absence of a political crisis, an economic crisis, and a cultural crisis—account for a good portion of the empirical analysis.

Political crisis. We defined a political crisis as a set of conditions that jeopardised the regime's ability to govern. This included the collapse of or

widespread defection from an established governing coalition, or a significant increase in the strength of an opposition party or coalition.

Economic crisis. We regarded an economic crisis as an acute and adverse shift in the well-being of an economy. Sudden rushes of inflation and food shortages certainly qualify, as do the consequences of IMF stabilisation and other austerity programmes. However, the mere presence of adverse economic conditions would not qualify as a crisis if these conditions were long-standing.

Cultural crisis. Nearly all of Africa can be said to be in the midst of a cultural crisis at one time or another. Here, we have limited cultural crisis to outward manifestations of dissent or disaffection by specific ethnic or religious groups, including violence, demonstrations, and boycotts.

It is important to bear in mind that we are not documenting every political, cultural and economic crisis in Africa since independence, but only those crises that coincided with successions. The variable thus only has that limited meaning.

Aggregate data

We also aggregated the variables by country and correlated these results with variables taken from the 'Black Africa' data set. This allowed for both macro- and micro-level analyses of questions regarding African succession. Specifically, we used data from five major areas:

(1) economic indicators: real GDP per capita 1960 and 1990, percentage Annual GNP growth 1980–90.;
(2) social indicators: Human Development Index (HDI) change 1970–90, GNP per capita rank minus HDI rank 1990, education as a percentage of public expenditure 1988–90;
(3) dependency indicators: ratio of debt service to export earnings, 1970 and 1990, overseas development aid as a percentage of GNP 1991.
(4) ethnicity indicator: percentage of population in largest ethnic group;
(5) 'modernisation' indicators: percentage of labour force employed in agriculture, 1965 and 1990,[14] number of radios per 1000 population, 1990, annual urban growth rate, 1960–91.

Propositions and findings

We identified 102 successions. Of these, 34 were regulated successions, while 62 were not. The remaining six were cases in which we could find neither evidence that established procedures were followed, nor evidence of actual or threatened use of force as part of the succession ie case IV in Fig. 1).

Our findings have been grouped by topic. Each topic subsumes a set of propositions discussed both theoretically and empirically.

Political, cultural and economic crises

Proposition 1: successions in the midst of political, economic or cultural crises are less likely to be regulated than successions without crises;

Proposition 2: successions with more than one crisis present are less likely to be regulated than successions with only one crisis;

Proposition 3a: successions in the midst of political crises are *more* likely to be regulated than successions during economic or cultural crises;

Proposition 3b: successions in the midst of political crises are less likely to be regulated than successions during economic or cultural crises.

Proposition 1 posits that stress on political systems will cause them to crack. This proposition assumes that African political systems are chronically weak, and therefore incapable of bearing such stresses, particularly during successions.

Proposition 2 is a virtual corollary of the first, extending the concept of stress to include multiple crises occurring simultaneously. If one crisis is stressful, then two would be more so.

The reasoning behind Proposition 3a is that political crises are theoretically more manageable through elite compromise and consensus. In contrast, economic and cultural crises can more easily escalate beyond manageable proportions.

The alternative proposition, 3b, examines the flip-side of the same argument. If a government is based on a particular arrangement among elites, a political crisis will directly undermine that arrangement. In addition, a political crisis may come from newly mobilised political actors who directly challenge the political system. If the system itself is insufficiently institutionalised, the result should be political decay.[14]

In testing the first three propositions, we eliminated the six 'unclear' successions, and contrasted regulated with non-regulated successions. This created a database of 96 successions.

Our empirical results show that all three types of crisis reduced the probability of a regulated succession. Cross-tabulations testing Proposition 1 showed that the presence of each type of crisis increased the probability of a non-regulated succession, while the absence of each type of crisis increased the probability of a regulated succession. All cross-tabulations were statistically significant.

Furthermore, when we cross-tabulated regulated succession with the number of crises present (Proposition 2), the relationship was stronger than those produced by any individual type of crisis. One striking finding was that, in all six cases where three crises were present, the successions were violent. However, if we exclude successions without crises, the difference between one, two or three crises is itself not statistically significant. The most significant difference, not surprisingly, is between no crises and the presence of at least one. Table 2 shows the relevant correlations.

Of the three types of crisis, the political crisis appeared to have the strongest effect. The association was stronger and at a level of significance beyond that of the other two crises.

TABLE 2
Crises and regulated succession

Independent variable	*Tau (sig)*	*N*
Political crisis	−.58***	96[a]
Economic crisis	−.31**	96
Social crisis	−.27*	96
Number of crises[b]	−.59***	96

Notes:
*p < 0.05
**p < 0.01
***p < 0.001
[a]Six cases were omitted because they showed no evidence of either rule-directed succession or force. They were thus unclear as to status. The data thus display the direct contrast between regulated and non-regulated successions.
[b]Tau figures reflect Kendall's Tau C for number of crises. Other independent variables used Tau B.

In order to verify the results, we ran two logistic regressions, regressing regulated succession on the three types of crisis. The presence of a political crisis had the only significant coefficient in the equation and was clearly the strongest predictor.

What is interesting here is that the specifically political crisis is more powerful than either economic or cultural crises in predicting the nature of a succession. The political decay argument would anticipate coup and revolt in the presence of economic and cultural crisis, unless mitigated by an institutionalised system. However, the political crisis poses the more direct threat, and is thus more damaging to the possibility of a regulated succession. The data show that the nature of a succession is in part conditioned by the nature of the political arrangements feeding into the process. If the leadership has not retained its popularity, or if it has failed to preserve its governing coalition, the political situation gets much more volatile. If the government does fall, it will fall hard and unpredictably. Our data thus support Proposition 3b over the alternative Proposition 3a.

In an institutionalised system, a political crisis will usually produce a succession as an adaptation to a changing environment. In liberal democracies, the change is usually from one party to another. Without institutionalisation, a political crisis may or may not induce a change in leadership, but if the change occurs, it will be chaotic.

Aggregate data from the Black Africa collection shed further light on the question of crises. We first separated the sample into groups of those countries who had successions brought about by political crises and those whose successions were without such crises. The results are shown in Table 3.

Only two variables, the number of radios per 1000 population and education as a percentage of public expenditure, showed significant differences. At first

TABLE 3
T-test comparing countries with and without political crises

Variable	*Mean for non-crisis countries*[a]	*Mean for countries with crises*	*T-value (DF)*
Radios per 1000 population, 1990	31.2	72.1	− 3.39** (35)
Education as a % of public expenditure (1988–90)	19.5	14.8	2.06* (32)

Notes:
*$p < 0.05$.
**$p < 0.01$.
***$p < 0.001$.
[a]Countries experiencing at least one succession amid political crisis were Benin; Burkina Faso; Burundi; Central African Republic; Chad; Comoro Islands; Congo Republic; Equatorial Guinea; Ethiopia; Ghana; Guinea-Bissau; Lesotho; Liberia; Madagascar; Mali; Mauritania; Mauritius; Niger; Nigeria; Seychelles; Sierra Leone; Somalia; Sudan; Swaziland; Togo; Tunisia; Uganda and Zaire.

glance, this might appear to be a confirmation of a traditional social mobilisation hypothesis, since both mass communication and education are putative catalysts of social mobilisation. This would lead to the argument that such mobilisation may easily lead to political crises, if not to more serious consequences such as political decay.

But the figures for education are the opposite of what we would expect under a social mobilisation model. We found that successions marked by political crises are more likely at lower, not higher, levels of educational expenditure. Clearly, the explanation of these findings lies elsewhere.

It should be remembered that the figures are for educational expenditure as a percentage of public sector outlays, not educational level achieved. In small or poor countries, this figure may be artificially high given minuscule state budgets.

We are left with the rather wide disparity in mass communication between crisis and non-crisis polities. This is certainly consonant with the idea that radios can be powerful agents of socialisation and social mobilisation. What is more interesting is the question of exactly how such communication might lead to a specifically political crisis. Our definition of political crisis encompasses both collapses of ruling coalitions and increasingly popular opposition movements.

This might be explained under an assumption of free, unrestricted media access. Such access might bring on frequent political crises, with opposition groups able to state their grievances before the mass public, which in turn could precipitate a succession. However, independent media are rare in Africa (and indeed throughout the world). More commonly broadcasting is state-owned or government-dominated.

This puts us in the uncomfortable position of having only two significant findings regarding political crisis, one of which is the opposite of what we would have expected, and the other of which cannot be supported by a plausible deductive linkage.

We also performed T-Tests between countries that had experienced succes-

sions with economic crises, and those with none. We found no significant results for any of the contextual variables—not even economic ones. As it turns out, the probability that a country may have a succession brought on in part by an economic crisis is in no way affected by the economic performance of that country, in either a longitudinal or cross-sectional sense.

This is another counter-intuitive result. A country on the brink of economic collapse should have frequent, if not constant, economic crises. It would be a matter of statistical probability that some of these crises would condition one or more political successions. But this is not the case.

There are many possible reasons for the lack of correlation. One possibility is that 'economic crisis' is a relative term, and that any country, irrespective of economic resources, may have one that contributes to the downfall of a regime. Virtually every country is subject to economic fluctuations, even wealthy ones. The US succession of 1976 had as a major issue a 'runaway inflation' of 5%. This may seem trivial in retrospect, but at the time it afforded Jimmy Carter a considerable amount of political currency. The point here is that a 'crisis' is as much a state of mind as a set of objective conditions. That said, it may be that the overall economic strength of a country does not predict its frequency of economic crisis over time.

Even if economic resources do influence the number of economic crises a country faces, there is an alternative explanation for the apparent lack of correlation. Specifically, in countries where economic crises are more rare, an economic crisis is more likely to have serious political repercussions. If economic crises lead to successions in these cases, the empirical manifestation would be a tendency towards a negative correlation. Coupled with the positive correlative tendencies of countries with frequent crises, the net statistical result would be an absence of correlation.

One additional alternative is that economic crises are relevant to successions only when they occur during an administration that emphasises economic issues. While we have data on immediate issues raised by new governments, we do not have data on the extent to which administrations raised economic issues throughout their tenure. We therefore cannot test this alternative empirically.

The separation of countries with and without cultural crises during successions produced no statistically significant differences across all contextual variables. It is perhaps most shocking that there was no correlation with our measure of ethnic homogeneity/heterogeneity, the percentage of the population belonging to the largest ethnic group. Countries without a cultural crisis during succession had a mean of 47.3%, while countries with at least one succession precipitated by a cultural crisis had a mean of 48.4%. This difference is completely negligible.

So minuscule is this difference that we are confident that the results would not become significant were we to use another measure of ethnic division, such as the one developed by Londregan, *et al.*[15]

Instead, we would propose that countries have successions precipitated by cultural crises when the political leadership activates and politicises these concerns. That is, virtually any ethnic mix can lead to a cultural crisis if it is

developed by government or opposition leaders. Even if the society is culturally heterogeneous, clan divisions can take the place of ethnic disputes. The key, then, is not the cultural arithmetic, but the politicisation and exploitation of whatever cultural tapestry is present. This, unfortunately, is not easily testable, as it calls for data far beyond that which we have collected. However, our results tend to show that multiple crises produce an environment in which regulated successions are less probable, which would indicate that adding a cultural crisis to other crises can create an unstable political environment for successions.

Aggregate data propositions and results

We expected not to find any direct connections between the aggregate measures and regulated succession. Nevertheless, we ran a series of ANOVA comparisons after dividing our sample into three groups: (1) those with only regulated successions during the study period, (2) those with only non-regulated successions, and (3) those with both regulated and non-regulated successions between 1963–87.

We based our analyses on theoretical expectations in the five categories of contextual variables we collected, and tested the following propositions:

> Proposition 4: wealthier countries and countries experiencing economic growth will tend to have regulated succession, while poorer or stagnant countries will not;
>
> Proposition 5a: countries with a higher commitment to social welfare will tend to have regulated succession, while those with a lower commitment will not;
>
> Proposition 5b: countries with a higher commitment to social welfare will tend to have unregulated successions, while those with a lower commitment will tend to have regulated successions;
>
> Proposition 6: countries with higher levels of indebtedness will tend to have non-regulated succession compared with countries that are more self-sufficient;
>
> Proposition 7: countries with more homogeneous populations will tend to have regulated successions, while more diverse populations will not;
>
> Proposition 8: countries undergoing 'modernisation' to a relatively higher degree will experience non-regulated successions, compared to those with relatively less change.

Proposition 4 might at first appear to be a variant of the old 'take-off' idea of development,[16] in which stable political systems develop after significant economic growth. Actually, it is more a prediction of elite behaviour. We suspect that elites will cooperate, or at least compete within rules, if there is sufficient economic incentive to do so. We do not know, however, whether it is the absolute size of the economy, or its ability to sustain growth, that will precipitate such behaviour.

Proposition 5a is based on the assumption that a government that engages in social welfare programmes is attempting to build support beyond elite circles. As new actors become incorporated into the system, the system becomes more sophisticated and stabilises. The alternative proposition (5b) posits that such mobilisation will be destabilising.

Proposition 6 applies the concept of dependency to political systems. If local elites are beholden to foreign interests, there will be little or no reason for any cooperation in domestic politics. The result should be a damaged political system, far too weak to mediate any conflicts.

Proposition 7 examines the ubiquitous issue of ethnicity in African politics, from the straightforward perspective that ethnic conflict is more likely in diverse countries, and that ethnic conflict is likely to engender more chaotic politics. However, recent research suggests that the ethnic picture may well be more complex than this.[17]

Proposition 8 reflects the political decay argument that countries experiencing pressures from modernisation will have significant political upheaval,[18] among other things, less orderly leadership transitions. To some extent, it reflects scholarship suggesting that violence and disorder result from significant demographic change.[18] However, it is not a direct test of either approach, which would require different data.

The data essentially support Propositions 4 and 5, but not Propositions 6–9. Table 4 summarises the results of the one-way analysis of variance performed to test these propositions.

Proposition 4 was tested using per capita GDP in 1990, 1960 and the derivative variable of GDP change from 1960–90, and GNP growth 1980–90. The GDP variables all produced significant ANOVAS, while the GNP variable did not: the general trend was for countries having regulated successions to show more robust economies than those with unregulated successions. The 'mixed' category produced different results in the three significant analyses. In all three, the countries having regulated successions only produced the highest mean. In all three, the countries with either 'mixed' or purely unregulated successions had much lower means. The difference was that the 'mixed' group produced higher means than the 'unregulated' group in 1960 GDP per capita and GDP change between 1960 and 1990, but the 'unregulated' group had a higher mean for 1990 GDP per capita.

It therefore seems that economic well-being has an effect on succession. Specifically, higher domestic outputs are associated with regulated succession. It may be that continued economic growth provides an environment in which competing elites may coexist, rather than a sort of 'zero-sum' arrangement in which there is less to be gained from playing according to the rules. If there is a large, growing pie, then fights over individual pieces are likely to be milder and more contained than conflict in the context of a static or shrinking economy. This might also explain why the GNP variable did not produce a significant equation. Foreign-orientated production and consumption is comparatively less relevant to the domestic economic (and hence political) environment, and thus had less effect over the study period. However, it is equally likely that the time span (1980–90) was too restrictive; statistical significance could not be discerned with such a small temporal baseline.

TABLE 4
One-way analysis of variance, regulated succession and aggregate variables

	Group means				
Variable	*Regulated only*	*Mixed*	*Unregulated only*	*F (sig)*	*DF (b/w)*
Real GDP cap 1960	1030.9	904.3	508.5	4.77*	2/33
Real GDP cap 1990	2312.4	1095.4	1106.7	4.51*	2/34
Real GDP cap change, 1960–90	1281.5	191.1	212.6	6.41**	2/33
HDI change, 1970–90	12.5	3.4	3.1	6.04**	2/30

Notes:
*$p < 0.05$.
**$p < 0.01$.

An alternative explanation is that we are looking at an artifact of a few countries that prospered under long-lived leaders. Senegal and Kenya are two countries that immediately come to mind, and indeed they are included in the group of countries having regulated successions only (at least during our study period). Of course, one could argue that the reason for the longevity of the leaders was in part their ability to produce economic growth, which leaves an unresolvable causal web.

It also appears that the critical distinction in succession experience is between those countries having only regulated successions and those having at least some unregulated successions. Countries with both types of successions (ie the 'mixed' category) showed little empirical difference when compared with countries with only unregulated successions. Empirically, then, they more closely resemble countries without regulated successions.

Finally, there is a significant ANOVA for Proposition 5 using the change in the HDI between 1970–90, with countries in the regulated group having had the strongest improvement in HDI, followed by the 'mixed' group, and then by the 'unregulated' group. As was the case with GDP, the 'mixed' group's results were far closer to those of the unregulated group than to the regulated group. Overall, the hypothesis is well supported, which might suggest that governments that satisfy mass publics with social services are more likely to have some sort of consensus-based succession process. At the same time, however, HDI increases correlate with economic growth, since economic growth provides the means by which human needs can be satisfied.

Although we did not obtain a significant ANOVA from the testing of Proposition 7, we did find a result worth reporting. The percentage of the population in the largest ethnic group averaged 47.6% for the 33 countries tested. Countries with regulated successions only averaged 39.5%, the 'mixed' group averaged 43.6%, and the unregulated group averaged 58.8%. Although these differences were not significant. they were exactly the opposite of what we expected. The more homogeneous countries tended to produce more unregulated

successions, while the heterogeneous countries tended to have more regulated successions.

Conclusion

It seems that there is more to African politics than personalist rule. This study of succession showed that in a significant number of cases political arrangements or accommodations have taken place. Such arrangements may represent the beginnings of more mature political systems.

The study has established that political crises are more directly linked to unregulated successions than economic or social crises. The collapse of a coalition or a shift in the political equation was a more disruptive precipitant of successions than cultural or economic problems. However, it is unclear which types of countries are more or less prone to political crisis, and, worse yet, the correlations we obtained defy explanation.

The importance of economics is manifest not in individual successions but in a broader, less direct fashion. Stronger economic systems tend to produce a more stable form of succession. While economic crises tend to produce unregulated successions, the connection is not as strong as when a political crisis leads to a succession. Thus, long-term economic weakness seems ultimately more damaging to the succession process than short-term economic problems.

Cultural conflict produced much less of an impact than we expected. Aside from the weaker correlations between cultural crises and regulated successions, we were more surprised at the insignificant findings correlating cultural homogeneity with the succession history of each country. Beyond that, a simple comparison of means produced a finding exactly opposite of what one might expect. We conclude that, while cultural conflict dominates many areas of African politics, it is somewhat less important to the succession process.

We also have two suggestions for those who are interested in pursuing further research. First, we strongly recommend the use of the concept of 'regulated succession'. It is a somewhat less exacting criterion than, say, democratic succession, and thus can be satisfied in a fairly large number of cases. This leads to a more even division between those successions meeting the criterion and those that do not, which facilitates better statistical analysis. Beyond that, the criterion is better suited to the African political context. Democracy has been scarce in the continent, and few systems have any appreciable level of institutionalisation. However, some form of political arrangement among competing groups often operates. Given countries no older than a few decades, it is appropriate to distinguish raw seizures of power from successions where some degree of accommodation is present.

Second, we strongly suggest research along the lines of the data set we created. Aggregate data are less promising than data taken from event-specific, direct observation. The latter are more sensitive to change as it occurs, as well as to the diversity of conditions under which the events transpire. Event data also allow for more qualitative data collection, and are not prone to autocorrelative tendencies. But most importantly, the African continent is in the middle of an era of dramatic political change and volatility. We should not miss the opportunity to record it and learn from it.

Notes

The authors wish to thank Prof Robert Charlick, who collaborated with us on an earlier version and added his expertise to this project. We especially honour the memory of Prof Aaron Segal, who passed away this year. Prof Segal conceived the project that yielded the data set we are using for this research, and provided support and encouragement throughout the process. He will continue to be our inspiration as we continue his work.

[1] 'The more often the organization has surmounted the problem of peaceful succession and replaced one set of leaders by another, the more highly institutionalized it is'. Samuel Huntington, *Political Order in Changing Societies*, New Haven: Yale University Press, 1968.

[2] We refer here to the case of Marbury vs. Madison (1803).

[3] See especially Juan Linz & Albert Stepan, *The Breakdown of Democracy*, Baltimore, MD: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1978; Guillermo A O'Donnell, Philippe Schmitter & Laurence Whitehead (eds), *Transitions from Authoritarian Rule*, Baltimore, MD: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1986; L Diamond, J Linz & SM Lipset (eds), *Democracy in Developing Countries: Africa*, Boulder, CO: Lynne Reinner, 1988; and Samuel Huntington, *The Third Wave: Democratization in the Late Twentieth Century*, Norman, OR: University of Oklahoma Press, 1991.

[4] Richard LY Li & William R Thompson, 'The coup contagion hypothesis', *Journal of Conflict Resolution*, 19, 1975, pp 63–84; Manus Midlarsky & Raymond Tanter, 'Toward a theory of political instability in Latin America, *Journal of Peace Research*, 3, 1967, pp 209–227; Edward Luttwak, *Coup d'Etat: A Practical Handbook*, Greenwich, CT: Fawcett Publications, 1969; and RW Jackman, The predictability of coups d'etat: a model with African data, *American Political Science Review*, 72, 1978, pp 1262–1275.

[5] Ted Robert Gurr, *Why Men Rebel*, Princeton NJ: Princeton University Press, 1970; Theda Skocpol, *States and Social Revolutions: A Comparative Analysis of France, Russia and China*, New York, Cambridge University Press, 1979; and Chalmers Johnson, *Revolutionary Change*, Boston, MA: Little, Brown, 1966.

[6] Henry Bienen & Nicholas van de Walle, *Of Time and Power: Leadership Duration in the Modern World*, Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1991.

[7] John Londregan, Henry Bienen & Nicholas van de Walle, 'Ethnicity and leadership succession in Africa, *International Studies Quarterly*, 39, 1995, pp 1–25.

[8] R Jackson & C Rosberg, *Personal Rule in Black Africa*, Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1982. See also AR Zolberg, *Creating Political Order: The Party-States of West Africa*, Chicago: Rand McNally, 1966.

[9] Robert B Charlick & Rodger M. Govea, 'Stratagems, conditions and chance: transitions beyond personal rule in Mexico and Niger', paper presented to the International Studies Association, Washington, DC, April 1990.

[10] This method produced some differences between our own collection and the best known collection on succession, Bienen & van de Walle, *Of Time and Power*. For a complete discussion of those differences, see Rodger M Govea & John D Holm, 'A report from a new data set on African succession, paper presented to the African Studies Association, Seattle, WA, November 1993.

[11] For an excellent example of analysis of regulated succession in an African monarchy and the implicit rules which governed, see MG Smith, *Government in Zauzau, 1800–1950*. London: Oxford University Press, 1980, pp 33–36.

[12] Donald G Morrison, *Black Africa: A Comparative Handbook*, New York: Free Press, 1989.

[13] Colin Legum was editor of *ACR* through the 1987–88 edition, Vol XX. Marion Doro joined him as co-editor for this volume and became the sole editor for 1988–89. At first *ACR* was published by Rex Hollings in London, now it is done by Africana Publishing in New York. We were able to obtain information on several of the 1967 cases out of volume 1, even though it supposedly covered 1968–69.

[14] Observations were taken from 1989 to 1991, so that there are slight variations from country to country. However, these variations are unlikely to be statistically relevant.

[15] Huntington, *Political Order in Changing Societies*.

[16] Londregan *et al*, 'Ethnicity and leadership succession in Africa'.

[17] WW Rostow, *The Stages of Economic Growth*, London: Cambridge University Press, 1960.

[18] Londregan *et al*, 'Ethnicity and leaderships succession in Africa'.

[19] Jack Goldstone, *Revolution and Rebellion in the Early Modern World*, Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1991; and Eric Wolf, *Peasant Wars of the Twentieth Century*, New York: Harper and Row, 1969.