

*Full Length Research Paper*

# Autocrats' modes of exit, rents and crisis in Africa

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Studies analyzing dictators' in power do not generally distinguish the way through which rulers are booted out. In consequence, a destabilizing effect is attributed to some variables without specifying and testing the mechanisms through which this effect may operate. In this paper, we argue that 'regular' leadership changes stem from the incumbent's incapacity to thwart elite defection and opposition groups coordination through the use of patronage, whereas, 'irregular' changes are mainly brought about by economic collapse and the widespread of poverty. We also analyze the patterns behind the steady institutionalization of African politics. Data from all African countries between 1946 (or the year of independence) and 2000 permit us to put such general hypotheses under scrutiny and confirm them using multinomial logistic duration regressions. It is also shown that foreign pressure, aid conditionality and domestic opposition have been the major determinants of institutionalization of African dictatorships, making, thus, possible the decrease in the number of irregular ousters.

**Key words:** Regular leadership changes, irregular changes, Africa, institutionalization.

## INTRODUCTION

In democratic systems, citizens are empowered to replace their leaders when elections are held, while political parties may resort to coalition breakdown, intrigues or, more formally, to censure motions in-between election years. Conversely, dictatorships are characterized by the lack of these regulated accountability mechanisms. Autocrats can be removed from office through a variety of ways: Some can be considered to be regular, such as pacted successions, replacements within one-party systems, or even electoral defeats; while others are purely irregular and potentially violent, like military coups, palace plots and popular rebellions.

Ruler replacement methods under dictatorship are relevant because they might shape leaders' incentives towards predation and development by affecting their perception of risk and uncertainty (Goldsmith, 2004). In this sense, the institutionalization of authoritarian politics usually involves the regularization of politics, so replacements tend to become predictable and non-violent, and time-horizons not that uncertain. Yet, the most recent studies focusing on African leaders' succession are basically descriptive, since they just inform about the number of regular and violent successions that occurred in that continent, about the

existing upward trend in the number of regular leader changes, and point only tangentially to some potential causes (Goldsmith, 2004; Posner and Young, 2007). Research works that theoretically analyzed rulers' ways of exiting power are extremely scarce (Snyder, 1998).

African successions are mostly characterized by conflict and violence. According to our data, there have been a total of 53 regular ruler changes and 86 irregular ousters in the period 1946 - 2000. There has been, however, a growing trend towards the institutionalization of politics, particularly after the end of the Cold War, when regular ruler replacements have outnumbered those carried out through violent means. Two questions are still open: what are the determinants of those two types of ruler replacement? And, what are the causes of the growing trend in the institutionalization of power?

This paper analyses African dictators' duration in power, focusing on the different modes through which they may be substituted or overthrown. To do so, we distinguish between regular and irregular modes of exit and theorize about what may determine the likelihood of each of them under authoritarian regimes. Our data covers 170 authoritarian rulers in 53 African countries from 1946 (or the year of the country's independence) to 2000. Our main contention is that the determinants and

underlying dynamics of regular and irregular ousters are essentially different. Therefore, we assert that by pooling cases of regular and irregular ousters together, researchers are losing not only empirical information, but also theoretical accuracy. We also offer some evidence on the determinants of the institutionalization of African autocratic regimes.

## **Autocrats' durability and regime institutionalization in Africa**

### ***Dictators' mode of exit***

The existing literature explaining leadership duration has not distinguished the various modes through which rulers might exit power. Hence, this approach lacks concrete theories about the particular conditions that may destabilize rulers' tenure (Bienen and van de Walle, 1991; Bueno de Mesquita et al., 2003). As Snyder (1998) elaborated in one of the few theoretical contributions on the topic, the political-economic determinants of regular and irregular successions can be expected to be different. Thus, regular successions (term limits, resignations, withdrawals, successions within one-party systems), which conform to a set of predetermined rules (either formal or not), are procedurally peaceful, and use to take place within more institutionalized political systems. Instead, irregular ousters (like coups, revolts, and assassinations) are the result of the use or the threat of violence.

African politics have been largely dominated by authoritarian regimes whose functioning has been described as neopatrimonial (Bratton and van de Walle, 1997). According to Jackson and Rosberg (1984: 424), under personal rule "the system favors the ruler and his allies and clients: Its essential activity involves gaining access to a personal regime's patronage or displacing the ruler and perhaps his regime and installing another". Consequently, "to keep the coalition intact, it is necessary for the dictator to distribute benefits to the coalition" (Brough and Kimenyi, 1986: 46). Those benefits, according to Bueno de Mesquita et al. (2003), take the form of private goods (namely, access to graft, bribes, privileges, etc.), which are then allocated only to the members of the winning coalition. Instead, public goods (such as economic growth, public policies, etc.) are delivered to a broader cross-section of the population.

Resource revenues and foreign aid constitute the two main sources of patronage rents - or private goods- that can be diverted to buy off loyalty to the regime and to assure elite cohesion and support (Brautigam, 2000; Escribà-Folch, 2007; Jensen and Wantchekon, 2004; Morrison, 2007).<sup>1</sup> The amount of such windfalls historically flowing to Africa has been remarkable. Non-

tax revenues have represented more than 30% of total revenue in countries such as Congo, Egypt, and Guinea-Bissau. Between 1973 and 2001, non-tax revenues covered 44% of total expenditures in Burundi and Egypt, 46% in Mali and Ethiopia, and 59% in the Republic of Congo (Morrison, 2009). In Guinea, a mineral exporting country, over 50,000 civil servants consumed over half the budget (Jensen and Wantchekon, 2004: 820). Besides, "dictators are often dependent on foreign patrons, who supply critical military aid and material resources that can help fuel their domestic patronage networks" (Snyder, 1998: 58). In Zambia, aid was equivalent to 32.7% of GNP by 1993 (Bratton and van de Walle, 1997). In the mid-1980s, foreign assistance represented over 50% of Somalia's GNP, yet "much of this aid was siphoned off for private use and utilized by Siad Barre's regime to strengthen his private hold on power" (Coolidge and Rose-Ackerman, 1997: 29).

The prevalence of state patronage as a loyalty mobilizing and authority maintaining method, rules out the need for the institutionalization of regimes, and if institutions do exist, they tend to be weak, non-binding and used to bribe and split potential elite opposition (Clapham, 1982; Jensen and Wantchekon, 2004; Gandhi and Przeworski, 2006; Ulfelder, 2007).<sup>2</sup> As Snyder (1998: 53) stresses, "when state institutions are thoroughly penetrated by the dictator's patronage network, the political space for the emergence of regime soft-liners is minimal, and the ruling clique and the state are essentially fused into a unitary, hard-line actor". As regular replacements require a fairly institutionalized system, we propose the following hypothesis:

H<sub>1</sub>: The presence of windfall resources will reduce the likelihood of regular power transfers under dictatorship and, hence, allow for longer tenures.

Some authors have noted that it is not the sole presence of resources that might stabilize governments, but whether the revenues stemming from such natural wealth are likely to accrue and, hence, benefit the state or not (Snyder and Bhavnani, 2005). In sharp contrast, "the risk of state collapse and civil war is highest when lootable resources are the main source of wealth, and the dominant mode of extraction is artisanal" (Snyder and Bhavnani, 2005: 569). This is not the case of windfalls such as aid or most of oil revenues, but might be so for types of mineral wealth. In particular, more lootable resources are associated with modes of extraction that do not require skilled labor and capital so they are more likely to benefit potential rebel groups (Ross, 2003; Snyder and Bhavnani, 2005; Snyder, 2006). Alluvial diamonds, drugs, and timber are thus often argued to increase the likelihood of civil war onset (Ross, 2003; Lujala et al., 2005).

<sup>1</sup> The same logic applies to revenues from taxes on international trade as they can be raised at few points of entry and exit of products, requiring, thus, a reduced administrative apparatus (Lieberman, 2002).

<sup>2</sup> On the change in the role and effects of development assistance due to increased conditionality in the late 80s and 90s see Goldsmith (2001).

Consequently, we will use alternative indicators of the presence of windfalls. We then expect only those windfalls that accrue to the government (aid, oil, and minerals) to be effective in reducing the likelihood of regular leader exits.

The type of regime may also play a role since it might formally or informally regulate the access to and the transfer of power and shape the structure of the elites' incentives. In this line, Geddes (1999) argues that military governments are prone to handover power to civilians if their cohesiveness as an institution is endangered by the exercise of power. Conversely, in single-party regimes, all factions within the regime have incentives to cooperate with the aim of remaining in office. Further-more, party organizations provide party members with a durable framework wherein to resolve differences, bargain and advance in influence. As a result, dominant party systems generate and maintain a cohesive leadership cadre (Geddes, 1999). Finally, as outlined, personalist dictators typically have weak political institutions and rely on exclusionary patronage networks for their stability. So, ruler replacements, due to such weak institutions, will most probably be carried out through irregular methods. Rival factions will remain loyal only if the pay-off from supporting the ruler exceeds the expected benefits of a risky plot:

H<sub>2</sub>: Therefore, we predict regular power transfers to be more frequent in single-party and military regimes than in personalist ones.

Irregular ousters include a wide range of possibilities, to repeat, assassinations, coups, or revolts. From the literature on coups and rebellion, it is relatively easy to extract a set of coincidences and regularities in the empirical results explaining those events. Most of these studies tend to corroborate that the most relevant causes of irregular ousters are fundamentally economic. The evidence reveals a prominent inverse relationship between coup occurrence and low per capita income (Londregan and Poole, 1990). In a nutshell, O'Kane (1981: 308) asserts that "perhaps coups are just the drastic response to an unstable and hopeless economic situation against which little can be done". Other studies stress the relevance of the short-run performance of the economy; particularly, economic downturns are generally found to boost coup risk.<sup>3</sup> The early literature on military intervention affirmed that what the armed forces detest most is social unrest within the country so that, usually, they seize power with the purpose of restoring order once it is clear that the incumbent government is incapable of doing so (Nordlinger, 1977; O'Donnell, 1973). It is thus shown that coup attempts are more likely when there is economic recession causing widespread discontent against the incumbent ruler (Galetovic and Sanhueza,

2000). For instance, in Ghana, economic crises and the resulting low income fostered coups and coup attempts between 1957 and 1980, as coups followed most of crises spells (McBride, 2005). Concerning popular uprisings, according to the relative deprivation theory, political dissent and violence result from social frustration, which is basically caused by bad economic conditions: Low performance and poverty.<sup>4</sup> As Auvinen (1997: 177) puts it, "the regime's inability to provide economic and political goods is seen as a source of relative deprivation within population". The coincidence in the underlying causes of both types of disrupting events is evident, so we propose the following hypothesis:

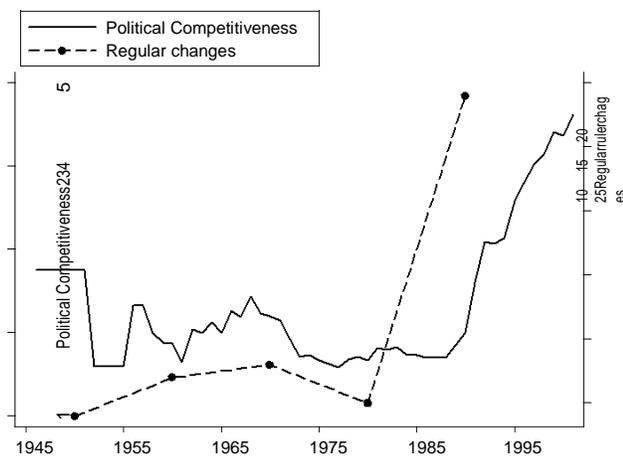
H<sub>3</sub>: So, as a third hypothesis, and in contrast to the first one proposed, we expect irregular transfers to be the result of bad economic performance and low income per capita.

Nonetheless, irregular ousters, albeit sharing a common set of explanatory factors, may actually reflect two rather distinct backgrounds or causal dynamics. First, such ousters represent a final response to the continued patrimonialization of politics, the exploitation of ethnic divisions, plunder and the worsening of economic conditions under patrimonialism. Prolonged rule under a personalist autocrat inevitably leads to deprivation, enormous inflation rates, and shrinkage in income growth rates, which curtail a ruler's ability to buy support. This was the case of Mwatusa IV, Mobutu Sese Seko, Jean-Bedel Bokassa, Francisco Macías Nguema, Siad Barre, and Haile Selassie, among others. Mobutu Sese Seko, Zaire's former personalist dictator, was ousted in 1997 by rebellion after 32 years of continued kleptocracy and economic mismanagement. After having backed his anti-communist regime, the US suspended aid to Mobutu's regime in 1992. Income per capita declined at an average rate of 2.56% during his rule. In Mali, economic collapse in the early 1990s triggered massive protests against the regime. After the brutal repression, a military coup led by junior officers removed Moussa Traoré -who had been in power for 23 years- from office and paved the way to political liberalization.

Second, as Londregan and Poole (1990) defend, some countries may find themselves stuck into what is called a "coup trap." In this case, irregular transfers (military coups and coup attempts mainly) tend to occur soon after the new ruler has taken over, principally in poor countries, and are largely driven by politically or ethnically motivated factional rivalries inside the military or personalist governments (Kposowa and Jenkins, 1993). Such was the situation of countries like Benin from the mid 1960s to the early 1970s, where six successful coups brought to power Apithy, Christophe Soglo, Alphonse Alley, Emile Zinsou, and Mathieu Kérékou almost

<sup>3</sup> See, among some others, Johnson et al. (1984), O'Kane (1981, 1993), and Galetovic and Sanhueza (2000).

<sup>4</sup> See, for instance, Feierabend, Feierabend, and Gurr (1972) and Dudley and Miller (1998). On rebellions in Africa see Carey (2007).



**Figure 1.** Average political competitiveness and regular ruler changes, 1946-2000.

consecutively. Similar turbulent patterns took place in Burkina Faso from late 1970s all through the 1980s, and in Nigeria since the early 1970s, to cite some.

In sum, the use of resource revenues has allowed African authoritarian rulers to personalize their power, co-opt opponents and buy off loyalty; consequently, most African states have remained under-institutionalized and put patronage at the core of regime stability, making, as a result, regular replacements most unlikely where such windfall resources abound. Nevertheless, this logic might not be sustainable in the mid to long-term. Weak states and neopatrimonialism inevitably lead to underdevelopment and economic collapse, which can eventually trigger an overthrow by either the military or the civil opposition. Natural resources and aid dependency may thus have both direct and indirect effects. On the one hand, we expect the effect of windfall resources to be direct in preventing regular leader substitutions. On the other hand, this impact is anticipated to be just indirect in the case of irregular falls, as it is the second-order consequences, they are prone to bring about increased patrimonialism and rent diversion. It then results to economic downturns, underdevelopment, and widespread poverty, which are expected to be significant in this case.

Hence, our main argument presents then one basic corollary hypothesis:

Irregular leader changes will mainly occur either after a personalist ruler have been in power for many years, alternatively, in the very first years of rule of military governments (and to a lesser extent of personalist ones) existing in poor countries.

### ***The institutionalization of politics in Africa***

Understanding the potential political-economic determinants of leader change constitutes just one part of the story, which informs us about the factors behind those events from a comparative cross-country perspective.

Yet, these results tell us little about the temporal dimension, that is, about the factors behind the progressive increase in the total number of such events. Hence, the second part of the story concerns the aforementioned increasing institutionalization of politics in Africa and its causes. Both processes are closely linked, as Figure 1 reveals. It shows the yearly average of the degree of political competitiveness of African authoritarian regimes (as coded by Polity IV), and the accumulated number of regular exits that occurred during each decade (indicated in the figure in the first year of the decade, e.g., 1950).<sup>5</sup>

The correlation between both measures is more than evident and has translated into regular changes outnumbering irregular ones in the 1990s (29 vs. 19), coinciding with the sharp increase in the degree of institutional openness of African regimes, as Posner and Young (2007) already emphasized. Yet, although these authors hint at some potential determinants of this process, they do not provide any systematic empirical test. As our focus is on authoritarian regimes, we study the factors behind the tendency towards increased competitiveness and institutionalization of African dictatorships, to the point that some rulers have conceded free elections and, eventually, democratized, especially, as said, during the 1990s.

Analyzing the degree of openness within authoritarian regimes allows us to increase the range of institutional adjustments and changes for two basic reasons: First, transitions to democracy have not been so frequent and generally have come as the result of gradual liberalization. Second, the most common transformation of African regimes towards institutionalization and competitiveness has involved not democratization, but the emergence of what is often called "electoral authoritarianism" (Schedler, 2006). These regimes are argued to be the result of both internal and, especially, external pressures after the end of the Cold War, although the internal opposition was not strong enough to push for a complete democratic transition (Levitsky and Way, 2002). International pressure and democracy diffusion after the end of the Cold War removed the support for authoritarian regimes due to geo-strategic motivations (Levitsky and Way, 2006). "Thus the trend toward democracy has been accompanied by an even more dramatic trend toward pseudodemocracy" (Diamond, 2002: 27). One key aspect of this higher degree of foreign pressure concerns aid and its increased conditionality, given Western donors' new emphasis on the rule of law on the rule of law. The existing evidence about the new role of aid is not conclusive though. While some find no relationship or a negative one between aid and democratization -not

<sup>5</sup> See Marshall and Jaggers (2005). The index is the result of combining information from two variables: the regulation of participation and the competitiveness of participation; it ranges from 1 to 10, 1 indicating that political competition is completely suppressed, and 10 that there exists fully institutionalized electoral competition.

even for the post-Cold War period- (Knack, 2004; Djankov et al., 2008), other authors shows that there is a positive, albeit small, correlation between development assistance and democratization in the 1990s among African countries (Goldsmith, 2001), especially after the end of the Cold War (Dunning, 2004). Wright (2009) found that conditionality only fosters democratization in regimes with large distributional coalitions. Nonetheless, the potential effect of aid on more limited –and far more common in Africa<sup>6</sup>– modes of political reform, like the emergence of electoral or competitive authoritarian regimes, has not been studied; neither has the changing impact of aid been analyzed in this context. Concretely, we hypothesize aid to exert either no effect, or a negative one on institutional openness during the Cold War period, and a stronger positive impact towards competitive authoritarianism from then onwards, that is, when conditionality began to come into play.

A second key determinant of institutionalization has been the pressure from domestic opposition in the form of political protests. Indeed, some argue that the opening of limited representative institutions under dictatorship responds to the necessity to co-opt a growing domestic opposition (Gandhi and Przeworski, 2006). Bratton and Van de Walle (1997) affirm that protests were behind the introduction of liberalization reforms in the majority of countries that opted for regime openness. Political concessions are thus the result of a growing threat of social unrest that elites seek to accommodate by legalizing parties and dividing the opposition. Protest can also be interpreted as an indirect measure of a leader's popularity, which, according to Posner and Young (2007), can lead rulers to decide to hold onto power and subvert succession rules.

Finally, windfall resources have been a major obstacle to political liberalization since they allow the maintenance of deep patronage networks that rule out the need for citizen cooperation and mobilization through institutions. Nonetheless, as Gibson and Hoffman remark, “domestic and international factors in the late 1980s and early 1990s combined to inhibit rulers’ supply of patronage resources, reducing their ability to support their followers and buy off their opponents” (2004: 2- 3). Indeed, natural resource depletion during the period from 1946 to 1980 represented 8% of African countries’ GNI on average. However, after steady decline during the 1980s, resource rents ended up representing only 4.7% of African states’ GNI on average. So, although, we predict resource rents to be a major obstacle to liberalization, we also expect their impact to be smaller in the post-Cold War period.

## DATA AND METHODS

Our empirical tests are based on a database of 53 African countries with dictatorial regimes at any time between 1946 (or the year of

<sup>6</sup> According to Lindberg (2006), out of the 53 electoral authoritarian systems that existed in Africa during the 90s, only 14 democratized.

independence) and 2000.<sup>7</sup> The data include 170 authoritarian rulers and more than 1,000 country-year observations, which may vary with data availability.

Our first set of empirical models focuses on leaders’ duration, and examines whether patronage resources fundamentally prevent regular replacements and whether good economic performance prevents irregular ousters. To do so, we use a variable taken from the *Archigos* database, which codes the manner of exit for most of the world’s heads of state (Goemans et al., 2009). Specifically, this variable codes whether the leader lost his/her office as a result of an irregular transfer or regular transfer, and whether the leader was deposed by a foreign state or died while in office.<sup>8</sup> The variable has been adapted so that it can be used to run event history analyses with discrete time; therefore, each dictator can be in one of these three exclusive states: In office ( $j=0$ ), thrown out through regular means ( $j=1$ ), or overthrown through irregular means ( $j=2$ ). Leaders who died from natural causes while in office have been excluded from the analyses.

The main independent variables are the following: On the economic conditions side, we include the logarithm of the GDP per capita and its annual rate of growth.<sup>9</sup> Both variables are taken from the ‘Penn World Tables’. In order to capture access to windfall resources, we include a “resource-rich country” dummy, which is coded 1, if the average ratio of fuel exports to total exports in 1990 - 1993 exceeded 50% or if the average ratio of ore and mineral exports in a particular year exceeded 50% of total merchandise exports, and 0 otherwise.<sup>10</sup> The presence of natural resources (specifically, oil) has also been captured using a variable constructed by Humphreys (2005), which measures per capita oil production records, concretely, the average amount of oil extracted in a given year (measured in millions of barrels per day). The presence of potentially lootable resources has been controlled by including a variable, developed by Humphreys (2005) as well, that measures a country’s diamonds production in a given year. The second main source of public revenue not stemming from taxation, is the foreign aid, as pointed out in the previous section. We use both the logarithm of foreign aid per capita as well as its annual variation (first difference).<sup>11</sup>

Regarding institutions and recent regime history, we include a set of dummy variables that summarize the institutions of the authoritarian regime as well as the previous regime existing in the country: The variable “previously democracy” takes value 1, if the preceding regime was democratic (0 otherwise) and is intended to gauge the potential strength of the pro-democratic civil opposition. Thus, this variable indicates for every regime spell, whether this country was democratic prior to a given authoritarian spell or not. On the other hand, many leaders became heads of government after having gained widespread popularity through anti-colonial activism. Such were the cases of Julius Nyerere, Habib Bourguiba and Kenneth Kaunda, who remained in power unchallenged for more than twenty years.<sup>12</sup> So, the variable “colony before” is coded 1, if prior to the existing regime the country was under colonial administration (0 otherwise). Other country-specific controls considered are the size of the country and the index of religious fractionalization. Given the role that ethnicity plays in African politics, as a robustness check, we also control for the index of

<sup>7</sup> Our identification of authoritarian regimes is based on the dichotomous variable developed by Przeworski et al. (2000).

<sup>8</sup> See Goemans et al. (2009) for more details on the codification of this variable.

<sup>9</sup> Concretely, we have used a two-year lagged moving average. See Gasiorowski (1995).

<sup>10</sup> Compiled from Przeworski et al. (2000) updated version.

<sup>11</sup> This variable is taken from the World Bank’s *World Development Indicators*.

<sup>12</sup> Nyerere retired in 1985; Bourguiba was substituted due to his senility, and Kaunda conceded multiparty elections.

ethnic fractionalization.<sup>13</sup>

We include a distinction of authoritarian regime types based on the typology developed by Geddes (1999), which has been recently extended and updated by Joseph Wright.<sup>14</sup> We have recoded the initial types in three basic categories (Wright, 2007): Personalist regimes (monarchs and personalist), single-party systems (single-party and single-party/personalist) and military regimes (military, military/personalist and military/single-party).

Finally, to control for the international context and foreign pressure, we have considered the yearly number of transitions to democracy in the region in order to test whether ruler change and liberalization are the result of a diffusion process. International factors may trigger leader and regime changes, as Gleditsch and Ward (2004, 2006) remark, by (i) affecting the relative balance of power within the regime; and (ii) altering the preferences or evaluations (in terms of costs and benefits) of democracy.

The methodology used for the duration models consists of multinomial logistic regression with clustered robust standard errors in order to deal with the potential time dependence in our data.

Regarding the models explaining regime institutionalization, we use the two alternative dependent variables: The political competition index (from Polity IV), and a dummy indicating regimes with a legislature, in which at least, one opposition party is allowed to be represented. For the competitiveness indicator, we use ordered logistic regressions, whereas, for the dummy on multiparty authoritarian system, we use logistic models. We include the following independent variables: A dummy variable for the Cold War period (years from 1945 to 1990 are coded 1). International pressure is 'proxied' by the yearly proportion of democracies in the world. It is assumed that pro-democratic international pressure is greater when the proportion of democracies in the world is higher. We also include the measure of foreign aid just described, as well as the 'resource-rich country' dummy previously defined to control for aid conditionality and patronage rents. To gauge societal pressure, we take the sum of anti-regime demonstrations and riots occurring yearly (Banks, 1996). Finally, potential regime exhaustion and the need for reform are captured by the variable "age of the regime," which indicates the total number of years the regime has existed until a given year. All variables have been lagged for one year in order to diminish the potential endogeneity problems.

## ANALYSIS AND RESULTS

Table 1 reports the results of the survival models using the two variables measuring rent availability. Both measures performed as expected, helping the incumbent dictator to avert elite disaffection and opposition cooperation, and are significant in all the alternative specifications. The results indicate, as we claimed in hypotheses 1 to 3, that irregular ousters are better explained by variables measuring economic conditions (growth and GDP per capita), the strength of the opposition ("democracy before") and the type of regime (military).

<sup>13</sup> Both the religious and ethnic fractionalization indexes are time invariant variables. The first is calculated as  $1 - \sum p_i^2$  where  $p_i$  is the share of the population that is Catholic, Protestant, Moslem, or of "other" religions. The index of ethnolinguistic fractionalization is defined as  $1 - \text{ETHFRAC} = 1 - \sum p_i^2$ ,  $i = 1, \dots, I$ , where  $p_i$  is the proportion of the population belonging to ethnolinguistic group  $i$  and  $I$  is the number of ethnolinguistic groups in the country. Thus both indexes measure the probability that two randomly selected persons from a given country will *not* belong to the same religious or ethnolinguistic group, respectively.

<sup>14</sup> I wish to thank Joseph Wright for sharing his data on regime type with me. For more details, see Wright (2007).

On the contrary, those independent variables capturing the availability of patronage resources (namely, aid and natural resources) and foreign pressure (transitions in the region) have only significant effects on the likelihood of regular ruler demises. Note also that patronage rents are not significant in explaining irregular power seizures, while economic conditions are not significant in predicting regular transfers in any model either. As also expected, regular exits are more likely in single-party and, in particular, military regimes.

In order to clarify the results from the multinomial logistic regressions, we have performed various simulations using the predicted probabilities obtained from the logistic model. Indeed, the impact of the natural resources dummy (oil and minerals) on stability is considerable; the probabilities of being booted out in resource-poor states are three times higher than those of leaders governing resource-rich countries. Both measures of foreign aid availability (the current level and the annual change) are significant and correctly signed. Figure 2 portrays the predicted probability of a regular change as the level of aid per capita and per capita oil production vary within a given interval.<sup>15</sup>

The considerable descent in the autocrats' risk of being replaced (y-axis) by regular means is made evident as the amount of aid received or oil production augment (x-axis).<sup>16</sup> In addition, if foreign aid, natural resources and primary commodity exports certainly provide autocrats with patronage rents, it must follow that when the amount of windfalls stemming from one of these sources is low, the effect of the remaining source will be much stronger. Put it differently, if one source becomes or is scarcer, then the ruler will squeeze out the rest of the possibilities within reach to attain his main goal (that is, staying in power). Figure 2 allows us to prove this corollary contention as well. As shown, the effect of both variables is simulated conditional on the values of the other. So, for the case of oil production, Figure 2a portrays the predicted effect of this variable on the likelihood of a regular change for two different values of foreign aid, one above average (aid-rich) and the other well below average (aid-poor).<sup>17</sup> As for aid, simulations are performed conditionally on the two values of the "resource-rich country" dummy. It becomes apparent that the stabilizing impact of both sources of patronage rents is much stronger when the access to an alternative source is very limited.

In model 6, we include the variable measuring diamonds production to control for different types of resource wealth. No significant effect was found on leaders' likelihood of exit. Mineral and oil availability and

<sup>15</sup> We use oil production here and not the 'resource-rich country' dummy because it is a continuous measure, so it allows us to better observe the change in the predicted probability.

<sup>16</sup> The rest of the independent variables are held constant at their sample means.

<sup>17</sup> The sample mean of 'log of aid per capita' is 2.84 and the standard deviation is 1.55. The values taken are 4 and -3.

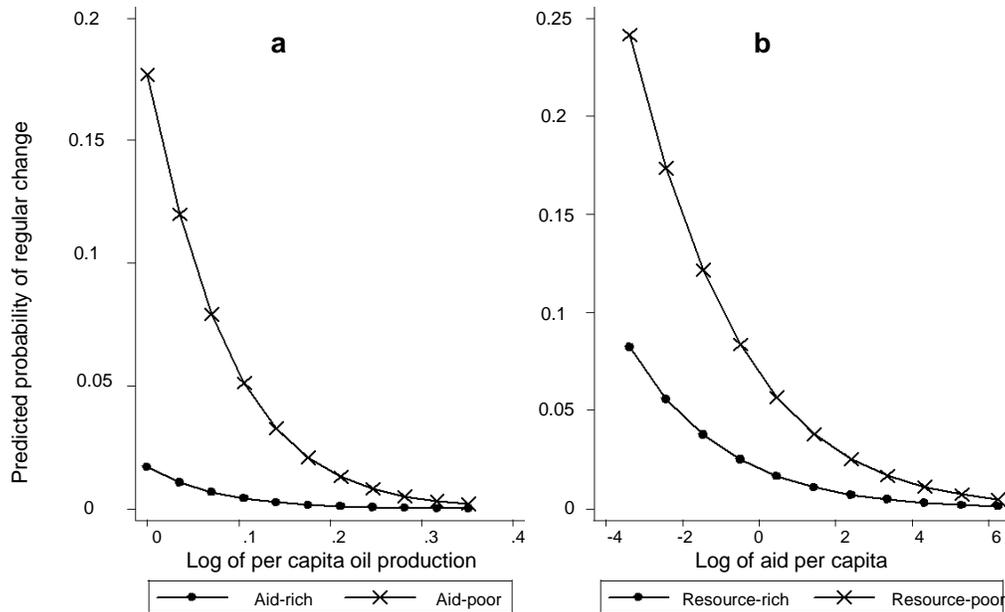
**Table 1.** Multinomial logit: Autocrats' survival and mode of exit.

	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)
	<b>Pr (Regular exit)</b>					
Resource-rich country	-1.40**(0.586)	-1.28**(0.648)	-0.948**(0.477)		-1.40**(0.669)	-1.42**(0.664)
Oil per capita production				-13.22**(6.21)		
Diamonds						0.039(0.057)
Log (Aid per capita)		-0.442**(0.220)			-0.462**(0.211)	-0.452**(0.213)
Aid per capita			-0.015**(0.006)	-0.030***(0.009)		
Log(GDP per capita)	0.001(0.287)	0.010(0.360)	-0.431(0.290)	-0.082(0.277)	0.028(0.359)	0.032(0.319)
Growth	-0.012(0.021)	-0.004(0.021)	-0.007(0.020)	-0.006(0.019)	-0.003(0.021)	-0.002(0.021)
Single-party	0.981*(0.590)	0.821(0.597)	0.979(0.650)	0.993(0.661)	0.819(0.584)	0.829(0.614)
Military	2.30***(0.547)	2.26***(0.565)	2.38***(0.588)	2.45***(0.658)	2.46***(0.593)	2.53***(0.655)
Democracy before	0.740(0.523)	-0.190(0.697)	0.589(0.425)	0.225(0.384)	-0.378(0.686)	-0.298(0.693)
Colony before	-0.411(0.471)	-0.494(0.489)	-0.561(0.560)	-0.396(0.587)	-0.527(0.464)	-0.456(0.451)
Religious fractionalization	0.560(0.902)	0.651(1.01)	0.406(1.02)	0.810(1.02)	0.263(0.936)	0.029(0.954)
Ethnic fractionalization					-0.841(0.662)	-0.862(0.732)
Years in power	0.028(0.036)	0.029(0.035)	0.022(0.040)	0.023(0.042)	0.032(0.035)	0.028(0.036)
Democratizations in region	0.613***(0.124)	0.791***(0.153)	0.658***(0.133)	0.676***(0.136)	0.799***(0.154)	0.799***(0.153)
Country size	8.8e-07***(3.22e-07)	5.67e-07(3.57e-07)	7.1e-07** (3.31e-07)	4.03e-07(3.08e-07)	4.67e-07(3.51e-07)	3.84e-07(3.69e-07)
	<b>Pr (Irregular exit)</b>					
Resource-rich country	-0.248(0.309)	-0.200(0.326)	-0.128(0.308)		-0.217(0.339)	-0.188(0.313)
Oil per capita production				-8.96(6.63)		
Diamonds						-0.053(0.036)
Log (Aid per capita)		-0.123(0.161)			-0.127(0.164)	-0.122(0.165)
Aid per capita			-0.010(0.007)	-0.015(0.009)		
Log(GDP per capita)	-0.599**(0.278)	-0.591*(0.315)	-0.679**(0.312)	-0.413(0.377)	-0.586*(0.315)	-0.592*(0.333)
Growth	-0.043***(0.016)	-0.044***(0.016)	-0.046***(0.015)	-0.047***(0.016)	-0.044***(0.016)	-0.045***(0.016)
Single-party	-0.348(0.538)	-0.351(0.511)	-0.331(0.552)	-0.376(0.549)	-0.344(0.516)	-0.325(0.516)
Military	0.776*(0.447)	0.746(0.471)	0.851*(0.460)	0.952**(0.466)	0.791*(0.468)	0.733(0.468)
Democracy before	1.08**(0.468)	0.904*(0.509)	1.08**(0.462)	1.05**(0.467)	0.863(0.529)	0.820(0.510)
Colony before	0.180(0.465)	0.077(0.456)	0.204(0.480)	0.306(0.484)	0.064(0.458)	-0.005(0.469)
Religious fractionalization	-0.770(0.643)	-0.865(0.660)	-0.734(0.656)	-0.515(0.648)	-0.943(0.716)	-0.755(0.720)
Ethnic fractionalization					-0.210(0.530)	-0.145(0.514)
Years in power	-0.002(0.027)	0.0001(0.023)	-0.004(0.028)	-0.002(0.029)	0.0007(0.024)	0.005(0.026)
Democratizations in region	0.125(0.107)	0.172(0.118)	0.135(0.105)	0.140(0.103)	0.170(0.119)	0.161(0.120)
Country size	1.13e-07(2.27e-07)	1.08e-08(2.64e-07)	7.86e-08(2.39e-07)	6.09e-08(2.14e-07)	-1.45e-08(2.79e-07)	1.16e-07(3.02e-07)

**Table 1.** Cont.

Model	1	2	3	4	5	6
Clustered errors	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes
Wald- $\chi^2$	197.24	250.04	249.94	223.26	679.51	996.52
Pseudo $R^2$	0.1047	0.1175	0.1152	0.1155	0.1189	0.1167
Observations	1048	1016	1007	984	1016	993

Standard errors in parenthesis; \*\*\* $p < 0.01$ , \*\* $p < 0.05$ , \* $p < 0.10$ ; Omitted regime type is personalist/monarchy.



**Figure 2.** The effect of resource rents on the predicted likelihood of a regular leader change.

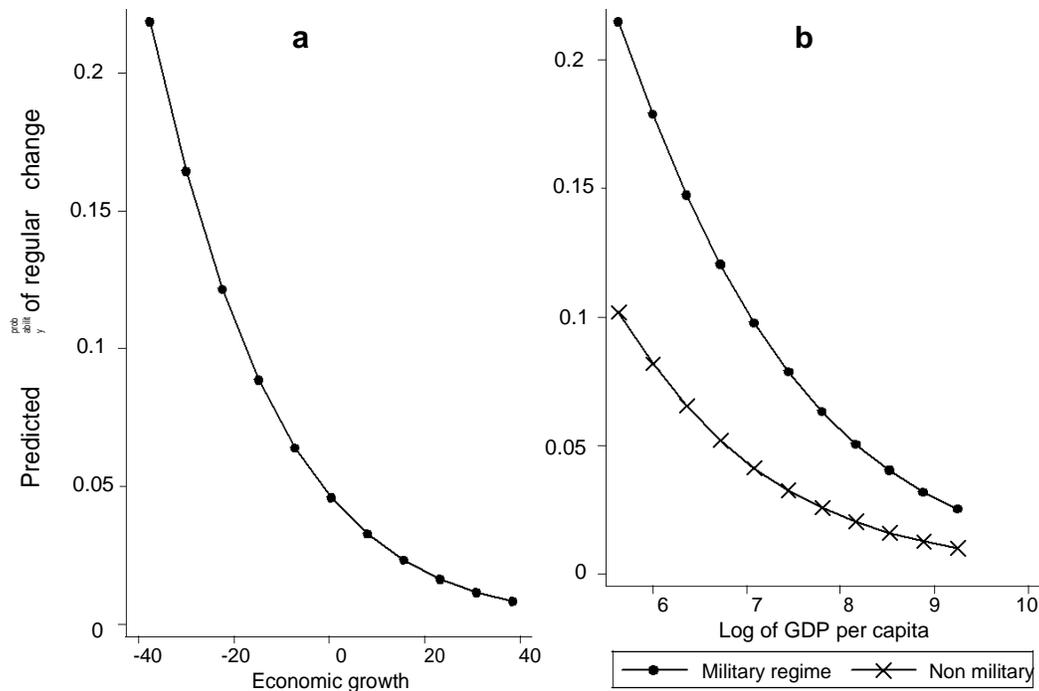
aid receipt are still significant though, as in the previous models. Only those windfalls benefiting the government serve to really prevent regular exits from office. As remarked, however, diamond extraction and trade may not generate revenues to the government unless such diamonds are not lootable and/or they involve an industry based mode of extraction.

Irregular changes are the result of poverty and crisis, as already outlined. Again, in order to make results from the logistic regressions visually clearer, we have performed predictions of the probability of an irregular change using our estimates of the effects of the two basic economic variables: Income growth (Figure 3a) and the log of the GDP per capita (Figure 3b). These computed values are shown in Figure 3 and explicitly show the positive effect of good economic performance, in terms of growth and per capita income, on the stability of African authoritarian leaders.

Regarding regime type, single-party and -most especially- military regimes are more prone to regular changes than monarchs and personalist dictators are, as

we had predicted in hypothesis 2.<sup>18</sup> Besides, military rulers face a significantly higher probability of being deposed through irregular means (models 1, 3, 4, and 5). Military regimes are shown then to be the most unstable ones, as suggested by part of the literature on democratic transitions (Geddes, 1999) and the new literature on regime stability (Smith, 2005). Some other variables also perform as expected: The current number of democratizations in the region significantly increases the likelihood of a regular replacement as they reduce the elites' cost of exit by capturing foreign pressure and diffusion. If the previous political regime was a democracy, the probability of an irregular ouster is systematically higher, as the strength of the opposition can be assumed to be higher. The degree of religious fractionalization is not found to have a significant effect on African dictators' stability. In models 5 and 6 we also

<sup>18</sup> Indeed, only 17% of regular ruler changes took place in personalist regimes; 31% occurred in single-party regimes, and 51% in military regimes.



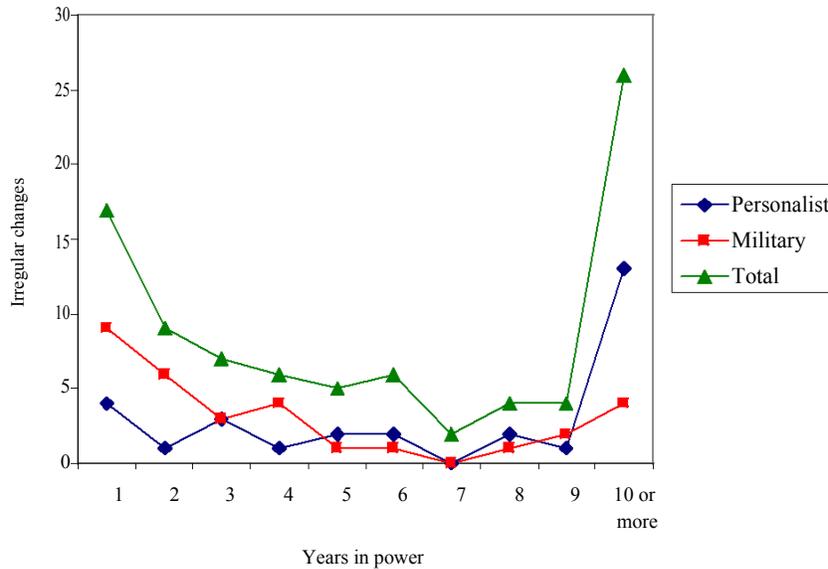
**Figure 3.** Predicted probabilities of irregular change and economic conditions.

control the degree of ethnic fractionalization existing in a country. The estimated coefficients are not statistically significant.

The strictly different logic and nature of these two succession methods is reflected in their political consequences: 34% of regular changes (18 out of 53) ended up with a transition to a democratic system, while this outcome only occurred after 8.1% of the irregular depositions (7 out of 86). If we exclude those cases in which the autocrat was removed by a foreign state, then, the percentage of irregular changes that lead to democracy is just 7.2%. Those regular changes ending in democratization took place basically in personalist and military regimes, 57.1 and 55.5%, respectively. Single-party systems contain institutional mechanisms that make possible the regular and pacific replacement of rulers without affecting the overall stability of the regime. Indeed, only 18% of the regular changes ended up in democratization under single-party regimes. In contrast, as Geddes (1999) argues, military governments are prone to hand power to civilians if their cohesiveness as an institution is endangered by the exercise of power or when they consider their mission of restoring order has been fulfilled. The military are able to impose a credible threat on the new regime and thus capable of controlling the liberalization process. Consequently, military rulers usually return power to civilians peacefully. Such was the case of Obasanjo or Abubakar in Nigeria. However, this is not the case of personalist dictatorships. When facing a

decrease in the availability of patronage resources, divisions within the elite may emerge. Under these circumstances, personalist rulers may respond by either strengthening repression in order to retain power or by liberalizing the regime expecting to be able to control the regime change process. Those expectations may be misled, as in the case personalist ruler Hastings K. Banda (Malawi), who under donors' pressure decided to hold a referendum on his regime and presidency in June 1993. 64% voted in favor of multi-partyism. Moreover, in the first democratic elections held the next year, Banda ran as the MCP presidential candidate and obtained only 33% of the vote. Also overoptimistic were the expectations of Kenneth Kaunda in Zambia, who in the first democratic election got only 24.2% of the vote in the 1991 presidential elections and his party, got only 25 out of 150 seats in the legislative elections. Conversely, Rawlings' calculations proved to be more accurate and he won in the first multi-party elections held in Ghana in 1992.

The results of the multivariate analyses serve to confirm general relationships between the independent variables included and to test our general hypotheses. But our corollary hypothesis about the political-economic background under which irregular ousters occur, demands a more careful and descriptive examination of the data. According to our argument, we should find irregular leader changes happening either very soon in rulers' tenure or when leaders have already stayed for a



**Figure 4.** Number of irregular changes, length of rulers' spells and regime type.

long periods of time in office. Figure 4 reveals that this is in fact true by showing the number of irregular exits for each total number of years rulers have remained in office.

We can see that nine autocrats were thrown out after having spent two years in power, and 17 just after one. In contrast, 26 were ousted irregularly after having held their position for at least ten years. Furthermore, if our corollary argument is true, violent ousters occurring after the dictator has long been in power should mainly be found amongst personalist regimes, whereas, those ousters happening soon after getting power should be more common among military regimes and mainly carried out by other members of the armed forces. Figure 4 also proves this proposition showing again the number of irregular leader exits and the total number of years in power, distinguishing between types of regime. 71% of irregular exits of military rulers occur in the first four years of power, while 43% of personalist leaders' irregular exits take place after the autocrats have already been ten or more years in office. In fact, military regimes account for 68% of the total number of irregular ousters that took place within the first four years of a new government, and 75% of military governments thrown out through irregular means in their first three years of rule that were substituted by another military government. The existence of coup traps related to poverty is made clearer by Figure 3b, where it can be observed that the highest risk of an irregular change corresponds to military regimes in very poor countries. The average GDP per capita for those military regimes dying in their first four years in power is just \$887, while for the rest of the regimes that died soon, the average was \$1,300.<sup>19</sup>

<sup>19</sup> Real GDP per capita, 1985 international prices.

Similarly, the rate of growth at the time of being deposed was, on average, -7.05% for those personalist autocrats ousted after having been in power for more than ten years, while average GDP per capita was just \$601 due to continued predation.

Finally, Table 2 reports the estimated coefficients of the probabilistic models predicting the institutionalization of dictatorial regimes. The results are almost identical for the two alternative dependent variables used. The most relevant independent variables have been interacted with the Cold War dummy to uncover whether their impacts either change sign or become stronger during the period of post-Cold War.

The results conform to our initial intuitions sketched in the analysis of regular exits about the role of natural resources and international pressure. The impact of domestic opposition is positive and strong in all models too. The big negative coefficient of the Cold War in models 1 and 3 corroborates that authoritarian opening is principally the result of the changing international context through the mechanisms that the interactions in models 2 and 4 unveil.<sup>20</sup> First, concerning donors' pressure through aid conditionality, the coefficient of aid for the post-Cold War period is positive and highly significant.<sup>21</sup> This strong effect makes evident that aid conditionality has exerted a much bigger influence on the creation of competitive

<sup>20</sup> Interactive models should be interpreted as follows: if a variable  $X$ , say, aid, is interacted with the 'ColdWar' dummy, then, after estimation we get  $\beta_1 X + \beta_2 (X \times \text{ColdWar})$ , so the effect of  $X$  during post-Cold War years is just  $\beta_1$ , whereas the effect of  $X$  during Cold War years is  $\beta_1 + \beta_2$ , if  $\beta_2$  is negative (as it is the case in our models), then, obviously, the global effect is  $\beta_1 - \beta_2$ .

<sup>21</sup> Note that the general effect of aid in models 1 and 3, that is, without interacting it, is minuscule and not significant.

**Table 2.** The emergence of competitive authoritarian regimes.

Independent variables	Multi-party system dummy		Political competitiveness index	
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)
Cold War	-1.21***(0.352)	3.38(2.61)	-1.29***(0.318)	4.08**(1.93)
Foreign aid (log)	0.067(0.065)	0.716***(0.174)	0.046(0.052)	0.479***(0.164)
Democracies in the world	5.72***(1.74)	11.39***(4.33)	2.10(1.46)	7.78***(2.99)
Natural resources	-1.13***(0.148)	-1.03***(0.199)	-1.03***(0.122)	-0.521***(0.211)
Political protests	0.182***(0.053)	0.204***(0.064)	0.185***(0.050)	0.243***(0.057)
Cold War*Foreign aid		-0.630***(0.188)		-0.408***(0.177)
Cold War*Democracies in the world		-4.27(4.88)		-6.41*(3.53)
Cold War*Resources				-0.877****(0.266)
Single-party regime		0.463***(0.207)		0.176(0.166)
Military regime		-1.11****(0.270)		-1.35****(0.224)
Age of the regime		0.009****(0.003)		0.011****(0.002)
Constant	-2.01***(0.934)	-7.48****(2.51)	-	-
Observations	1418	1283	1298	1215
Pseudo-R <sup>2</sup>	0.2006	0.2688	0.0874	0.1254
Wald-Chi <sup>2</sup>	243.61	281.69	272.94	369.16

Robust standard errors in parenthesis; \*\*\* p < 0.01; \*\*p < 0.05, and \*p < 0.10.

authoritarian regimes rather than on the prospects for democratization, as the comparison of our results with those in Goldsmith (2001) uncovers. General foreign pressure towards liberalizations, as captured by the proportion of democracies in the world, has an extremely strong impact on the likelihood of regime openness as well. For both variables, the interactive term is negative, which indicates that their effect was much lower or almost inexistent (for the case of aid) during the period of Cold War. As also predicted, the presence of windfall resources hinders institutionalization, although as model 4 shows, this effect was definitively higher before 1991. Besides, increased regulation and competition is also more likely the older the existing regime is, as its initial legitimacy may get eroded over time.

Concerning regime type, the results show that openness is more unlikely to occur in military regimes. In contrast, single-party regimes are more prone to allow for greater competitiveness, as such regimes are better prepared to compete and influence the distribution of power in a more open regime.

## Conclusion

Dictators can be substituted or removed either through regular or irregular means. The logic and the causes behind each of these possibilities are shown, both at the theoretical and the empirical levels, to be different. Regular power transfers, which reflect a more institutionalized political system, are less likely if patronage pervades political relations. On the other hand, irregular changes, namely, coups, plots and revolutions, are the result of economic crises and underdevelopment.

Departing from this underlying assumption, this paper aimed to show that regular and irregular types of ruler substitution are explained by different sets of variables.

The results of our regression models clearly demonstrate that windfall resources, channeled through patronage networks to buy off loyalty and co-opt opposition members, are essential for incumbent autocrats in order to prevent elite disaffection and opposition cooperation that may end up in a regular leader substitution. In contrast, irregular interventions are principally triggered by bad economic conditions, which are the common consequence of mismanagement and the abundance of resource-rents. The results also confirm that military rulers are the most vulnerable of all, especially, to regular substitutions and irregular ones shortly after taken power. The international context, captured by the number of democratic transitions in the region, has also been proven to increase the likelihood of a regular power transfer.

The increase in the number of regular exits and, hence, in the degree of institutionalization of African regimes is the result of foreign pressure and aid conditionality after the end of the Cold War and of the increase in levels of domestic opposition. As also claimed, resource rents availability hinder the development of more competitive institutions regulating access to power.

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