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The Politics of the Great: The Influence of Domestic Elites
and External Actors on the Overthrow of Post-Colonial
Authoritarian Regimes

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Abstract:

Extensive literature sees the Cold War period as an era of mass foreign intervention by the world's superpowers. I focus on postcolonial Sub-Saharan African states because of the tumultuous period that marks the transition from colony to independent nation-state. Further, authoritarian regimes were distinct on the African continent, with the prevalence of popular Pan-African leaders emerging. There are two key findings. First, if the US is in the "selectorate" of a nation-state, and a leader that threatens their sphere of influence is overthrown, it would be due in part to the actions of the US. Second, a leader who threatens the United States will also threaten a powerful subsection of the domestic elite. In turn, this domestic elite will either appeal to the US or work with the US to overthrow the leader. To provide evidence for my claims, I use process tracing and selectorate theory to investigate the overthrow of the two 'fathers of Pan Africanism' that emerged during the postcolonial period. I demonstrate that the relationship between the domestic elite and the United States heavily informs the overthrow of popular Pan-Africanist leaders. These leaders were anti-free markets, expropriated profits, and initiated significant land reform and redistribution of income. This threatened the US version of the world order and the position of disgruntled domestic elites whose benefits would be curtailed if that world order were to change.

Introduction

From the beginning of the Cold War to the fall of the Soviet Union in 1989, forty-four African countries gained independence. As a result, this period represented the era of decolonization and reinvention on the continent. I seek to understand how the relationship between the US and African elites helped to affect the overthrow of key leaders during this era. Despite their popular support, many authoritarian African leaders were overthrown, from Sekou Touré to Thomas Sankara to Modibo Keita. Frequent US and Soviet intervention also marked the Cold War period. With regards to overthrow, it was primarily the US that managed to impose its version of the global world order by eliminating leftist leaders and suppressing leftist political ideologies. Some entrenched African elites found the US global world order appealing. The alternative socialist ideologies, with their visions of land reform and a command economy, undermined traditional elites' power and threatened their economic wherewithal. The mutual interests between the US and these African elites established a relationship that generated felicitous conditions for the overthrow of African leaders, themselves authoritarian but with leftist commitments, during this period.

Much of the literature about regime transitions, including overthrows, focuses on democratization, sometimes involving civilians. There is also a subsection of literature in political science that discusses the importance of transitions from one set of elites in an authoritarian regime to another—without democratization. Even though, in these instances, the regime type has not changed, the regime's character can change dramatically. Ideological commitments can shift a nation-state's entire trajectory. The removal of authoritarian leaders who espoused Pan-African beliefs and their replacement with authoritarian leaders who did not was far from uncommon in postcolonial Sub-Saharan Africa, and in these cases, the U.S., in collaboration with local elites, often played a key role.

Pan-Africanism emerged as a concept before and during the independence movements of the 1950s, led by the likes of Kwame Nkrumah and Patrice Lumumba. At the time, Pan-Africanism put forward the vision of a united Africa focused on decolonization and anti-imperialism. While many civilians supported Pan-Africanism, some external actors and domestic elites were fearful that such a shift would undermine their power. Tribal elites could lose control, influence, and revenue if citizens opted for the principles of Pan-Africanism over loyalties to local chiefs. The Pan-African vision of a common currency, a single central bank, and a united foreign policy in one large, cross-continental African state would be detrimental to the power of the US politically and economically.

In contrast to Pan Africanism, the US and several domestic elites supported the free market and, in the case of African elites, already existent patronage networks. Patronage networks and a free-market economy allowed elites to maintain their profits and hold on to their land. The ideological alignment between many African elites and the US generated a relationship that made the suppression of Pan-African regimes more likely and more successful. The US often played a role in efforts to overthrow African leaders, and domestic elites have historically worked with the US and even helped prompt intervention due to perceived mutual interests.

In the following thesis, I focus on Kwame Nkrumah and Patrice Lumumba to answer the following questions. Why were these leaders overthrown, and what does their history tell us about Cold War politics more generally? Are there lessons from the Cold War that might be more generalizable? If so, what are they? There must be at least some domestic elite discontent for an overthrow. However, at least in this period, elite discontent needed to be bolstered by American support for an overthrow to occur. The relationship between crucial segments of the elite and the US leading to overthrow takes several forms. If the US is in the

selectorate of a nation-state, it will find and work with disgruntled elites to overthrow a leader. If the US is not in the selectorate, domestic elites will seek American support for the overthrow. This support can come in the form of financial guarantees in the aftermath of the coup or financial/military support for the coup to occur.

Literature Review

There is extensive literature on regime change. Grimm and Weiffen (2018) argue that domestic elites work to influence external actors to play a role in democratization. Similarly, Ezrow & Frantz find that an authoritarian regime's political successes or failures largely depend on the leader-elite relationship (Ezrow & Frantz, 2011). When a leader threatens local elites' power and economic control, the relationship between the latter and the former will be damaged, and the leader's power will be threatened. This is less common in military authoritarianism and military governments as they are less capable of governing than other forms of authoritarianism (Geddes, 2004). Military authoritarian regimes face issues regarding centralization, and matters are dealt with aggressively rather than diplomatically.

In *Understanding Authoritarian Regimes*, Ezrow and Frantz discuss authoritarian overthrow. They find that foreign powers can overthrow regimes through domestic actors or hidden intelligence services (Ezrow & Frantz, 2011). The authors acknowledge Geddes' claim regarding the requirements for foreign intervention. Geddes argues that three instances make foreign intervention possible and likely. First, one must be in the intervener's sphere of influence, meaning, in their selectorate. Second, domestic weakness must be combined with neighbors' territorial ambition. Finally, the economic crisis of the late eighties and nineties provided the leverage to international financial institutions to take advantage of foreign intervention (Geddes, 2003). Ezrow and Frantz also extend their discussion of the leader-elite relationship to overthrow. They find that government insiders, nearly 80% of the time,

remove dictators from power (Ezrow & Frantz, 2011). As a result, a nation's elites are essential to an authoritarian leader's survival. However, while gaining the elites' support is crucial, maintaining their support is imperative. Some unifying force often binds elites. This can be family, region, industry investments, etc. Therefore, a leader must ensure that the elites are divided or that their unifying force supports the leader. It is dangerous for elites to be a unifying force because they would have the power to bargain with the leader as a group. The leader cannot easily replace members within the elite if they organize as a unit.

The literature on coups involves many debates. Some argue that leaders are likely to coup-proof as the coup risk increases. Leaders will try to divide the military into separate factions to decrease the potential for unity against the leader and the ability to organize a coup (Bohmelt, 2014). This dynamic can be conceived of as a U-shaped relationship. Leaders will coup-proof, which decreases the chances of a coup. Still, these efforts can be thwarted when a tipping point is reached, i.e., when the divisions in the military evolve into two equally strong factions, as opposed to many unequal factions. At this point, coup onset becomes more likely (Bohmelt, 2014). Notably, some of the literature disagrees with this version and argues that leaders are less likely to initiate coup-proofing efforts as coup risks increase. In this view, military members will see coup-proofing efforts as a survival attempt and will respond to it by accelerating the process by which a coup can take place. In this understanding, leaders will try as much as possible not to “offend” elites or the military (Sudduth, 2017). A final point worth noting: the literature finds two critical facts about coups. First, coups usually involve one authoritarian leader replacing another authoritarian leader. They are rarely a democratizing force. Second and similarly, coups are more frequent in nondemocracies than in democracies (Aidt & Leon, 2019).

There is also an extensive literature on the topic of Pan-Africanism. Pan-Africanism rejects the Eurocentric notions of Africa. It emerged to resist imperial machinations and the

ideas of African inferiority that undergirded them. Pan-Africanism imagined that the artificial boundaries imposed by colonial rule could be dismantled, and one unified African “nation” could replace the current configuration of the nation-state. Pan-Africanism was at odds with entrenched political interests in part because many Pan-African visions put forward economic policies of redistribution and land reform. These threatened to undermine existing patronage networks.

The literature on decolonization helps to explain the emergence of Pan-Africanism. John Plamenatz’s *On Alien Rule and Self-Government* espoused ideas about colonies overcoming alien rule and joining an international society. In this sense, decolonization served as a tool for self-determination for former colonies but also as a mechanism for imperial powers to maintain some form of imperial dominance. Newly independent states that became a part of the international society had little to no decision-making power; they adhered to the norms set by imperial powers (Getachew, 2019; Plamenatz, 1960).

Theory

The literature covers three main areas regarding this thesis. First, it understands the content of authoritarian regimes—how they develop and are maintained. Second, it addresses coups and elite involvement. Finally, it defines Pan-Africanism and its role during independence movements. I seek to use this literature and case studies to understand how elite and external actor interaction informs authoritarian overthrow. My theory aims to give more insight into what authoritarian overthrow means, especially for postcolonial Sub-Saharan African states that faced it during the Cold War period. Chris Edmond puts forward a compelling analysis of how citizens are often misinformed about the level of manipulation from autocratic regimes, which allows leaders to maintain power and avoid revolution (Edmond, 2007). Nevertheless, he does not extensively dive into popular African

authoritarian regimes. Many of these regimes were overthrown due to Pan-Africanism and the threat this movement posed to elites and the US.

Selectorate theory describes the position leaders face in their efforts to remain in power. They must answer to 1) the winning coalition and 2) the selectorate. Within the population of a state, you have a selectorate. This group of individuals is described as those who have some ability to influence who is in charge of the country. Within the selectorate group, a leader must assemble a winning coalition from among the people who have the potential to influence the outcome of an election or the decision of who leads the country. The leader must figure out the minimum number of people they need from within the selectorate group to stay in power. As a result, membership in the selectorate is a requirement for membership in the winning coalition. De Mesquita et al. universally apply this to regimes (De Mesquita, Smith, Morrow, Siverson, 2003).

In a democracy, everyone over a certain age can vote. In some countries, democracy means that the winning coalition is half +1 of the voting population. The selectorate is also closer in size to the population, and the winning coalition is a large percentage of the selectorate. This means that the winning coalition has a large share of popular support.

However, in an autocracy, the selectorate is smaller than in a democracy and is often not transparent. For example, Ibrahim Traore recently overthrew Paul-Henri Sandaogo Damiba in a coup d'état in Burkina Faso. Ibrahim Traore may not have been a member of the selectorate before the coup since he was only a junior officer. However, now that he has orchestrated the coup and taken power, he has become a member of the selectorate. This could have a roll-on effect, leading to more junior officers gaining access to the selectorate. As such, the selectorate in an autocracy can be defined as a group of individuals from whom a sufficient number of people could be assembled to overthrow the government and support new leadership. In an autocracy (and indeed in democracies too), the selectorate's members

are not necessarily equally powerful. One member of the selectorate does not equal one vote. If a general controls an entire military, they must be in the winning coalition due to their power, even though they are only one person out of potentially hundreds. The general might represent one individual in the selectorate, but this can represent a large percentage of the power. The selectorate is small compared to the population, and the winning coalition is small compared to the selectorate. Unlike a democracy, autocracies do not require 50% of the people for support; they need 50% of the power.

De Mesquita et al. fail to account for one aspect of the selectorate that is crucial to my argument. External actors can influence, and even be a part of, the selectorate of a particular government. Suppose the United States found that a leader in their sphere of influence went against their interests. In that case, it may attempt to assemble a new winning coalition out of the selectorate that will have enough power to overthrow the current leader and replace them with an individual more suited to their ideology. As a result, the US can be a member of the selectorate along with the domestic elite. In countries where the US's sphere of influence is not threatened, they will not be a member of the selectorate and will not initiate an overthrow. Therefore, the only group able to trigger the steps necessary for the overthrow is the domestic elite. However, they often still require support from the US, even if the US is not initiating the overthrow. I expect that the US will be part of the selectorate based on whether they care about the political events that take place in the country. If there is dissatisfaction amongst elites and the US is not part of the selectorate, then these disgruntled elites will reach out to the US for support. If the US is unsatisfied with a leader and they are in the selectorate, they will try establishing a new winning coalition to replace the existing leader.

I highlight Sub-Saharan African postcolonial regimes. In this context, I consider these regimes to be newly independent nation-states that emerged during mass African independence and decolonization from 1950 to 1980. This intense transition generated

disagreements in deciding which political route the country should take, especially with the global Great Power feud affecting these decisions. By focusing on the United States, I acknowledge the potential of external intervention at the peak of its occurrence. The frequent overthrow of autocratic regimes in the mid-twentieth century heavily informed the democratic systems that emerged following this period. By investigating the overthrow of authoritarian regimes, we become aware of acts by elites or the US that might inform the removal of individuals from office. However, the addition of 'postcolonial' here allows us to investigate a population that frequently experienced authoritarian regimes. As outlined above, the literature on democratization is vast. As a result, I use the literary conclusions that have been drawn to apply to the debate on overthrow that I am investigating. I am asking why and through what mechanism autocracies are overthrown, but I am not concerned with how the governmental system changes because of or in response to the overthrow. It is difficult to measure the reason for an overthrow, as most authoritarian regimes have many factors contributing to an individual's removal from office. Nevertheless, by focusing on the domestic elite and external actors, we narrow the scope to two of the most influential factors in this period.

Overthrow due to domestic elite

Elitism in Africa was commonplace both before colonialism and post-colonialism. The tribal systems in place were monarchical, and there was an understanding amongst populations that specific individuals were meant to lead tribes while others would serve the tribe. Much like monarchies in Europe, tribal leaders were often considered ordained by a higher power, or wisest due to age and stature, making them fit to lead. The political institutions that emerged following colonization prioritized democracy and elections from civilians. This posed a concern to tribal elites as they could no longer decide who was

destined to lead based on their values but instead through democratic elections. Elites now had to prove to an entire country, which could be made up of hundreds, if not thousands of chiefdoms, that someone from their tribe was most fit to lead the country.

This developed several issues. First, if an individual from a tribe that was not powerful emerged as a leader, the powerful tribes would see their power and wealth diminish for the development of the weaker tribes. Second, the political systems of the colonizers required parliamentary approval, meaning that while one tribe may have the most power, their power is constrained. This meant that elites were careful to ensure their power remained unconstrained, if not, minimally reduced. Further, the land reform and income redistribution that came with Pan-Africanism during independence threatened local elites' power. This meant that American ideals aligned with elite ideals. Therefore, if a leader threatened American ideals, there is a high likelihood that the leader threatened tribal elites as well. If the elites found that a leader threatened their power, they would seek help from the US to remove this leader from power.

H1: An authoritarian leader who poses a threat to the US will also pose a threat to a powerful subsection of the domestic elite, who will aid in the leaders' overthrow.

This means that the domestic elite would initiate the steps necessary to remove the authoritarian leader from power and seek aid from the US.

Overthrow due to external actors

Focusing on the Cold War period, I account for the global feud surrounding these autocratic overthrows. I consider the US and the Soviet Union (USSR) to be the world's great powers during this period. I acknowledge that the US worked in tandem with its allies to overthrow regimes due to the ties its allies had with formerly colonized states. The USSR

plays less of a role than the US for multiple reasons. Its colonial endeavors focused on the Balkans, which eventually formed the USSR. As a result, it was less concerned with the events outside this sphere of influence. While the USSR played a role in interfering with the affairs of states outside this region, the Allies played a much more significant role. Due to the tight bonds between the US and its allies, the US was more connected to the interference of affairs in these newly emerging states. While the USSR might send ambassadors and maintain communication, the KGB had a limited presence in Africa compared to Belgian, British, French, and American intelligence services.

Further, changes in office informed the levels of intervention of the two countries. While Dwight Eisenhower, the President of the United States during the independence movement of the DRC, wanted “to be on the side of the natives for once,”¹ his successor, Richard Nixon, was less concerned with this. On the contrary, Khrushchev and Brezhnev, while not aligned on policy, had similar outlooks on the events occurring in these newly independent states, especially those with leftist leanings. The political rollercoaster that the US experienced meant its role was heavier at specific periods during the Cold War than others. As a result, some authoritarian regimes experienced less interference than others. With the prominence of Pan-Africanism in the 1950s, 60s, and 70s, the US had a more aggressive policy towards Africa than the USSR. The USSR was not as concerned with interfering where individuals did not align with their political ambitions. Therefore, the external actor I focus on is the US.

H2: If the United States is in the selectorate of a nation-state, and an authoritarian leader that posed a threat to the sphere of influence of the US is overthrown, the leader's overthrow would be partly due to the US.

¹ Direction given to the CIA in the discussion of how to handle Lumumba after his success in the 1960 election

This is to say that the US would react to the emergence of a new leader who threatened their power by initializing the steps necessary to ensure their removal if they were in the selectorate of that nation-state.

Methodology: Case studies and Process Tracing

I will use two case studies and process tracing to measure whether my hypotheses and theory are supported. The first case study I will use is Kwame Nkrumah, the authoritarian leader of Ghana from its independence in 1957 to his overthrow in 1966. My second case study will be Patrice Lumumba, the autocratic prime minister of the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC), from its independence in June 1960 to September 1960. The two case studies were chosen based on their similarity in ideological views, image within their country, and the period in which they emerged. They differ significantly in their length in office, but I expect this to be informed by the reasons for their overthrow.

I use process tracing to determine the validity of each case. This method involves a testing of each proposed step in my theory. If the evidence that I provide for each step in the proposed theory lends itself to the expected outcome of the argument, this would indicate that my theory holds weight. This follows Derek Beach's causal case study methods (Beach, 2016). Process tracing is used because of the strength it brings to arguments made in a case study setting. This method takes a small-end study and multiplies the ends. As two cases are insignificant enough to make a claim, process tracing provides more opportunities for failure. My theory must overcome all potential failure points to be confirmed by the process tracing test. Below is a visual description of my argument following the process tracing method.

Causal Mechanism for Hypothesis 1	
Theory	Proposed evidence
Authoritarian leader demonstrates strong ideological positioning and policy proposals	Nkrumah's policy implementations (especially anti-chieftaincy policies)
This poses a threat to the power of elites and to the US global world order	Context of Nkrumah's policies undermining elites in the country and response from elites
Relationship established between elites and US over concern of leader's position	Number of elites appealing to US govt for help in neutralizing Nkrumah
Overthrow	Coup organized by elites while Nkrumah out of country

Causal Mechanism for Hypothesis 2	
Theory	Proposed evidence
Authoritarian leader demonstrates strong ideological positioning and policy proposals	Lumumba's speeches and political alignment with the Soviets
This poses a threat to the global order and balance of power	Concern from US over Lumumba's alignment with Soviets

Concern from western governments that their sphere of influence will be undermined	CIA documents indicating desire to remove Lumumba
Overthrow	Removal of Lumumba from office funded by CIA

Case Study 1: Kwame Nkrumah

Background

Kwame Nkrumah was the founding father and first president of the Republic of Ghana. He adopted socialist values during his education in the US and the United Kingdom (UK).² Upon his return to Ghana, he formed the Convention People's Party (CPP) in 1949. His most notable achievement was securing independence for the Gold Coast/Ghana from the British Empire on the 6th of March 1957.³ President Kwame Nkrumah was overthrown from office in 1966 while on a trip to China.⁴ Though the Africans on the Gold Coast Legislative Council brought Nkrumah back to carry Ghana to independence, he became a fifth-column character by implementing socialist policies, which caused discontent amongst the Asante elite. Additionally, implementing these socialist policies displeased the Western world that Ghana had been so closely allied with in recent years. The discontent of the Asante elite translated into the attempt to dismiss him from power several times, and his ideological association allowed the coup's plotters to get approval from a world superpower: the US.

² Gebe Boni Yao. *Ghana's Foreign Policy at Independence and Implications for the 1966 Coup D'état* (Journal of Pan African Studies, 2008), p. 165

³ Berry LaVerle. *Ghana: a country study* (Washington D.C., Federal Research Division, Library of Congress, 1995), p. 30

⁴ Martin C Okany. *Osagyefo Dr. Kwame Nkrumah: The legend of African Nationalism* (Africana First Publishers, 2008), p. 908

The coup had five main actors at its core. The first was Dr. Busia, the head of the Ghana Congress Party, which opposed the Convention People's Party headed by Nkrumah.⁵ Busia went into exile in 1958 because his life was in danger with Nkrumah in power.⁶ The second, General Joseph Ankrah, became commander of the Ghanaian army and Deputy Chief of Defense Staff in 1961.⁷ He was dismissed from his post in 1965 on suspicion of a coup attempt. The third, Colonel Kotoka, became lieutenant colonel in 1965.⁸ He became close friends with the fourth plotter of the coup, Major Afrifa, who oversaw army training and operations.⁹ The fifth, John Harlley, became police commissioner in 1965.¹⁰

Many Ghanaians criticized Nkrumah's authoritarian style of leadership. However, some admired leaders who made decision-making "seem uncomplicated and direct"¹¹ and with "charisma and a strong and dynamic."¹² Nkrumah thus had immense support from the civilian population, which raised questions regarding the lack of opposition to the coup.

Analysis

Nkrumah's relations with the conservative Asante elites deteriorated when his socialist values came to light. In August 1947, Africans had a majority on the Gold Coast's Legislative Council for the first time, and this allowed them to choose a President.¹³ It could be argued that many of the Asante members, who dominated the Council, supported

⁵ Gebe Boni Yao. *Ghana's Foreign Policy at Independence and Implications for the 1966 Coup D'état* (Journal of Pan African Studies, 2008), p. 175

⁶ *Ghana: Political Parties* (Encyclopedias of the Nations, 2007)

⁷ Lt. General Joseph A. Ankrah (Ghanaweb, 2018)

⁸ Lt-Gen Emmanuel Kwasi Kotoka (Ghanaweb, 2018)

⁹ Lt-Gen Emmanuel Kwasi Kotoka (Ghanaweb, 2018)

¹⁰ Vieta, K. T. *The flagbearers of Ghana: profiles of one hundred distinguished Ghanaians* (Ena publications, 1999)

¹¹ Yakubu Saaka. *Recurrent Themes in Ghanaian Politics: Kwame Nkrumah's Legacy* (Journal of Black Studies, 1994), p.276

¹² Yakubu Saaka. *Recurrent Themes in Ghanaian Politics: Kwame Nkrumah's Legacy* (Journal of Black Studies, 1994), p.276

¹³ David Rooney. *Kwame Nkrumah: The Political Kingdom in the Third World* (St. Martin's Press, 1998), p.27

appointing Nkrumah, hoping that he would resemble an Arminius character¹⁴ and propel Ghana closer to self-governance along pre-colonial societal lines.¹⁵ Instead, Nkrumah had developed a socialist mindset while in Britain.¹⁶ An essential element of socialism is anti-tribalism: national unity is of more importance than individual values.¹⁷ From 1947, Nkrumah began implementing anti-tribal policies.¹⁸ This attack came under significant criticism by many Asante leaders, including one of the principal plotters of the 1966 coup, Kofi Busia.¹⁹ This could explain the tribal chiefs' lack of support for Nkrumah during the coup. Nkrumah's increasingly dictatorial rule also meant that many were becoming opposed to his government, in addition to Busia.²⁰ The failed assassination plot in 1958, led by a parliamentarian, proved that Nkrumah's authoritarian manner was causing discontent within the socio-political elites.²¹ This could thus be seen as a foreshadowing of Nkrumah's demise. Seeing as the 1958 attempt was so easily crushed, it was important for the plotters of the 1966 coup to get enough backing to see through the removal of Nkrumah. This feasibly explains the collaboration between a group of politicians and elements of the military and the police force.

Nkrumah robbed the police force of their power when he introduced the Police Service Act in 1965, which allowed him to hire and fire any heads of police that he wished.²² This is an example of Nkrumah's authoritarian manner. Heads of Security Services who

¹⁴ David Rooney. *Kwame Nkrumah: The Political Kingdom in the Third World* (St. Martin's Press, 1998), pp.27-28

¹⁵ David Rooney. *Kwame Nkrumah: The Political Kingdom in the Third World* (St. Martin's Press, 1998), pp.27-28

¹⁶ Gebe Boni Yao. *Ghana's Foreign Policy at Independence and Implications for the 1966 Coup D'état* (Journal of Pan African Studies, 2008), p. 175

¹⁷ Gebe Boni Yao. *Ghana's Foreign Policy at Independence and Implications for the 1966 Coup D'état* (Journal of Pan African Studies, 2008), p. 176

¹⁸ Kwame Nkrumah, *Africa Must Unite* (1983), p. 74 quoted by George P. Hagan. *Nkrumah's Cultural Policy*, in Arhin. *The Life and Work of Kwame Nkrumah* (1992)

¹⁹ Kwame Nkrumah, *Africa Must Unite* (1983), p. 74 quoted by George P. Hagan. *Nkrumah's Cultural Policy*, in Arhin. *The Life and Work of Kwame Nkrumah* (1992).

²⁰ George P. Hagan. *Nkrumah's Cultural Policy*, in Arhin. *The Life and Work of Kwame Nkrumah* (1992).

²¹ David Birmingham. *Kwame Nkrumah: The Father of African Nationalism* (Ohio University, 1998), p.86

²² Ama Biney. *Nkrumah's Political Thought in Exile* (Journal of African History, 2009), p. 82

appeared not to support Nkrumah's 'single-party state' policies were retired or dismissed from their posts.²³ Nkrumah's Preventive Detention Act and Pre-Trial Detention saw the imprisonment of many army officials.²⁴ David Birmingham, an acclaimed historian, argues that "no single measure did more to bring down Nkrumah's reputation than his adoption of internment without trial for the preservation of security."²⁵ This act by Nkrumah saw many of the conservative elites in Ghana's military and police force imprisoned. The coup planners were all trained either at Metropolitan Police College or Royal Military Academy Sandhurst and, thus, had a "pro-Western" mentality.²⁶ This supports the theory that the coup against Nkrumah had a basis in the ideological differences between Nkrumah and the coup plotters. In addition to these ideological differences, in 1963, Nkrumah turned the focus of officer training from Britain to the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics.²⁷ The Ghanaian corps was an almost entirely Anglophilic group with British military culture.²⁸ Thus, it was not surprising that this switch of officer training to the Soviet Republic came under great criticism. Michael Otu, the former chief of defense staff, fired by Nkrumah in 1965, wrote in 1968: "Ghana had become a single party totalitarian dictatorship; spurned all its traditional ties with the West in favor of dubious advantages of association with strange friends from the east."²⁹

In Afrifa's broadcast to the Ghanaian people following the overthrow of Nkrumah, he said this grave step was taken because "no other means were available to restore to the people of Ghana the blessings of liberty, justice, happiness and prosperity for which we all have

²³ Gocking, Roger. S. *February 24, 1966: Dr. Kwame Nkrumah overthrown as President of the Republic of Ghana* (Edward A. Ulzen Memorial Foundation, February 2018)

²⁴ Ama Biney. *Nkrumah's Political Thought in Exile* (Journal of African History, 2009), p. 84

²⁵ David Birmingham. *Kwame Nkrumah: The Father of African Nationalism* (Ohio University, 1998), p.84

²⁶ Robert Pinkney. *Ghana Under Military Rule* (Studies in African History, 1972), p. 4, 46.

²⁷ Eboe Hutchful. *Military Rule and the Politics of Demilitarization* (University of Toronto, 1973), pp. 89-90.

²⁸ Eboe Hutchful. *Military Rule and the Politics of Demilitarization* (University of Toronto, 1973), pp. 89-90

²⁹ M. A. Otu in *Ghana Armed Forces Magazine*, June 1968, quoted in Hutchful. *Military Rule and the Politics of Demilitarization* (University of Toronto, 1973), p. 116.

struggled for so long.”³⁰ Afrifa also approached president Johnson of the US pleading for his aid, complaining about both the economic state Nkrumah had left the nation in, and his negotiations and dealings with Communist states. Afrifa’s letter to the US suggests that the overthrow of Nkrumah was not a matter of greed but of ideological association. He wrote, “We became convinced that the ex-President and his communist friends were determined to use Ghana as a bridgehead for the dissemination of communism.” He expounded, “I hope that we will establish a line of credit with the United States as soon as possible.”³¹ These two extracts from the letter show that Afrifa and his fellow coup plotters were against collaboration with communist states and were more in favor of association with the capitalist nations. As a result, the new government immediately reached out to the United States after the coup.

Additionally, in 1963, Dr. Busia reached out to the US before the coup, requesting their backing for the dismissal of Nkrumah. Though it could be argued that the coup plotters were more concerned with Nkrumah’s association with the East than with elite power, the associations Nkrumah had with communist states did not change Ghana’s condition. The Cold War was an excuse for the elite to criticize Nkrumah and turn to the US and its allies. The elites were concerned about their power.

In *I Speak of Freedom*, a book released by Nkrumah in 1961, he writes, “The government believes that chieftaincy, in common with other human institutions, cannot remain static, but that it must in large measure adapt itself to the changing requirement of the changing time.”³² In 1958, Nkrumah’s Ashanti Stool Lands Act and Akim Abuakwa Act

³⁰ Office of the Historian. *Letter From the Chairman of the National Liberation Council Lieutenant General Ankrah to President Johnson* (US government, 2016).

³¹ Office of the Historian. *Letter From the Chairman of the National Liberation Council Lieutenant General Ankrah to President Johnson* (US government, 2016).

³² Kwame Nkrumah. *I Speak of Freedom* (Bedford, Panaf Books, 1961), p. 35

transitioned land management from chieftaincy to the state.³³ Historically, if an individual wanted to acquire land, they would have to gain permission from local chiefs and pay taxes to local landowners. Therefore, Nkrumah's repositioning of land rights within the state angered elite landowners who expected dividends and chiefs who sought to maintain power.³⁴

Nkrumah's party took a very aggressive stance towards chieftaincies. They described chiefs as "imperial stooges". They released newspapers that called on citizens to hold chiefdoms accountable, like the French held King Louis and Marie Antoinette responsible during the French Revolution.³⁵ Unlike the French Revolution, anti-chieftaincy movements were local rather than national.³⁶ While citizens who supported Nkrumah's CPP showed antipathy to individual chiefs, there was little concern over the chiefdom system. Citizens could not mobilize against chiefdom as a unit like chiefs, and elites could mobilize against Nkrumah.

Dr. Busia's speech to the United States Congress in 1962, just four years before the coup, gave many the impression that the coup was planned and coordinated by the CIA. In a New York Times article released in 1978, John Stockwell discusses the events from the CIA Accra station's perspective. The article reads, 'After the CIA was told by higher authorities not to try to oust Mr. Nkrumah, the station in Accra was "nevertheless encouraged by headquarters to maintain contact with dissidents of the Ghanaian army to maintain intelligence on their activities."' ³⁷ On 3rd December 1962, the exiled Dr. Busia gave a speech to the US Congress pleading for the overthrow of Nkrumah. He advocated for sanctions on

³³Franklin Obeng-Odoom. *Understanding Land Reform in Ghana* (Review of Radical Political Economics, 2016).

³⁴ Franklin Obeng-Odoom. *Understanding Land Reform in Ghana* (Review of Radical Political Economics, 2016).

³⁵ Richard Rathbone. *KWAME NKURUMAH AND THE CHIEFS: THE FATE OF 'NATURAL RULERS' UNDER NATIONALIST GOVERNMENTS* (Transactions of the Royal Historical Society, 2000), p. 53

³⁶ Richard Rathbone. *KWAME NKURUMAH AND THE CHIEFS: THE FATE OF 'NATURAL RULERS' UNDER NATIONALIST GOVERNMENTS* (Transactions of the Royal Historical Society, 2000), p. 54

³⁷ Stockwell quoted in Hersh, Seymour M. *C.I.A. Said to Have Aided Plotters Who Overthrew Nkrumah in Ghana* (New York Times, 1978).

Ghana and Nkrumah for the authoritarian regime established there.³⁸ Major A. Afrifa, General Ankrah, Colonel Kotoka, and Dr. Busia, all members of the Ghanaian government or influential elites of Ghanaian society, favored Ghanaian association with the US instead of the recently established relationship with the USSR. It could thus be argued that the US approved of the coup in Ghana because the conservative Asante elites asked them to. US approval was crucial for the coup's plotters as it provided a sense of security and confidence: the new Ghanaian government would have the US to rely on for support following the coup to reinstate political and economic stability. This was solely an act of encouragement and support from external actors. No information indicates that any actions on behalf of the US or its allies directly caused the overthrow of Nkrumah. Notwithstanding, their support and aid guarantees post-coup paved the path for the coup. Even though the US is not in the selectorate of Ghana, as there is nothing of vital interest to them there, it was their support that gave the coup plotters the go-ahead. By aligning with communist ideals and initiating anti-chieftaincy land reform, Nkrumah dug his own grave.

Case Study 2: Patrice Lumumba

Background

Patrice Lumumba was the DRC's first Prime Minister, leading them to independence from the Belgians in 1960. Lumumba was heavily influenced by Nkrumah's Pan-Africanist ideology and worked with him to disseminate the idea in the Congo and throughout the continent. Lumumba founded the Mouvement National Congolais (MNC) in 1959.³⁹ While his similarity to the ordinary Congolese and Pan-Africanist claims drew much attention to him and his party, he was heavily criticized for his short attention span, frequent traveling,

³⁸ Kwame Nimako. *Nkrumah, African Awakening and Neo-colonialism: How Black America Awakened Nkrumah and Nkrumah Awakened Black America* (The Black Scholar, 2010), p. 65

³⁹ Keith Kyle. *International Affairs* (Royal Institute of International Affairs 1944, 2002), p. 597

and dictatorial decision-making.⁴⁰ The criticisms he received from party members at this time would be the same arguments external actors would use in initiating the steps for his overthrow.

The Belgians made countless attempts to stop Lumumba due to the anticolonial sentiment he generated in the nation. He was arrested on multiple occasions for public speeches he made, the most infamous in which he claimed, “Dear friends, are you afraid of death?” in a call to garner support for the removal of Belgian troops from the ground.⁴¹ Nevertheless, the support Lumumba had gathered, and his unwavering commitment to the cause of independence prevented the Belgians from being able to neutralize him. Instead, he convinced the Belgians and the United Nations to leave the Congo by 30th June 1960. Further, he won the support of the public and was announced as Prime Minister as the nation became independent.

The president, Joseph Kasavubu, was a ceremonial figure like the Monarchs in various European countries. As a result, the power remained in the hands of the Prime Minister. Unlike Nkrumah, Lumumba did not have many enemies within his government or the DRC. The main actors in the coup were the Belgians, the UN, the CIA, and Joseph Mobutu. Though Kasavubu played a role in announcing the coup, he was very much a puppet for the UN and the Belgians, and this attempt ultimately failed. This coup was not initiated by those who despised him within the country, like Nkrumah. This was a coup out of external actors' fear that Lumumba was too powerful and reactionary to be a prominent leader in a newly independent African state. Due to his popular support, they could not control and defeat him by constitutional means.

⁴⁰ Keith Kyle. *International Affairs* (Royal Institute of International Affairs 1944, 2002), p. 598

⁴¹ Keith Kyle. *International Affairs* (Royal Institute of International Affairs 1944, 2002), p. 599

Analysis

As Pan-Africanism is an inherently socialist ideal, it was clear that Lumumba ideologically positioned himself on the left—however, many individuals who promoted Pan-Africanism aligned with Western ideals. Nkrumah’s initial ideological positioning confirmed this. Therefore, Lumumba was not an immediate concern to the West. This swiftly changed when he developed a close association with the communist party. When beginning his anti-colonial campaign, he promised that “establishing diplomatic ties with Moscow would be among the first acts of an independent Congolese government.”⁴² His ties with the communist party were also evident with his frequent trips to Brussels. He met with the Belgian Communist party and “inquired about the possibility of sending Congolese to study in the Soviet Union.”⁴³ Many claim that Lumumba used the Soviets to generate capital for his campaigning activities back home. His close friend, Joseph Mobutu, went as far as to claim, “Believe me. Lumumba is not communist. The Communists are trying to use him, to act through him.”⁴⁴ Regardless of whether Lumumba would indeed classify himself as a Communist, the information the U.S. was receiving depicted him as an ally of communism.

Lumumba continued to act alongside or with the support of Communist actors, which furthered American concern. In June, he abruptly demanded the removal of Belgian troops in 48 hours. He claimed that if they did not leave, he would use all Soviet ties at their disposal to ensure their removal.⁴⁵ While Lumumba seemed tied to the Soviets militarily, it could be argued that he was posturing and using the Cold War context to his advantage. No information demonstrates he was acting and, thus, supporting communism, nor is there clear

⁴² Stuart A. Reid. *The Lumumba Plot: The Secret History of the CIA and a Cold War Assassination* (International Affairs, 2023), p. 65

⁴³ Stuart A. Reid. *The Lumumba Plot: The Secret History of the CIA and a Cold War Assassination* (International Affairs, 2023), p. 66

⁴⁴ Stuart A. Reid. *The Lumumba Plot: The Secret History of the CIA and a Cold War Assassination* (International Affairs, 2023), p. 95

⁴⁵ Stuart A. Reid. *The Lumumba Plot: The Secret History of the CIA and a Cold War Assassination* (International Affairs, 2023), p. 180

information that negates this claim. His speeches, however, constantly demonized the West. While addressing his supporters in the Congo, he claimed, “These injustices and the stupid superiority complex displayed by the colonialists are...the source of the tragedy of Western presence in Africa.”⁴⁶ While Lumumba never overtly mentioned the US in his speeches, as they had little relevance in the country before independence, he demonstrated a clear anti-Western mindset. This mindset was developed due to colonial activities, but America’s association with colonial powers as allies brought them into this group as “colonialists.” By the time DRC gained independence from Belgium, two things were clear. First, Lumumba had a robust anti-Western stance stemming from his anticolonial sentiments. This made alignment with the US far less likely. Second, he had made friends with Communist individuals and organizations in Belgium and the USSR. This concerned the US and ushered in a wave of mass American presence in the DRC and Africa.

Lumumba’s ideological positioning led the US to action. Before Lumumba’s arrival on the political scene, the CIA invested very little in activities on the continent. No country or individual was seen as enough of a threat or showed enough promise for the US to invest its assets in. The summer of 1960 drastically changed this. During this period, “foreign policy debates centered on the advance of communism in postcolonial countries.”⁴⁷ The DRC quickly joined this discussion despite not being a priority until then. On August 11, 1960, DRC CIA station Chief Larry Devlin wrote in a cable to Washington that “unless [Lumumba] is stopped in the near future, he will become a strongman...establishing a regime under the influence of, if not fully controlled by, the Commies.”⁴⁸ The Americans on the ground were convinced that Lumumba needed to be removed from power solely because of his ideological

⁴⁶ Olivier Klein, Laurent Licata. *Excerpts from speeches can be found in Van Lierde (1963/1972)*

⁴⁷ Stuart A. Reid. *The Lumumba Plot: The Secret History of the CIA and a Cold War Assassination* (International Affairs, 2023), p. 187

⁴⁸ Stuart A. Reid. *The Lumumba Plot: The Secret History of the CIA and a Cold War Assassination* (International Affairs, 2023), p. 239

positioning. Following this cable, Devlin proposed using CIA money to fund Lumumba's opposition and garner a vote of no confidence in the Senate.⁴⁹ He found that "although it is better to oust him, we do not want to become tied irrevocably to the opposition if it is not able to achieve its goals."⁵⁰ At the time, while the US was eager to remove Lumumba from power, it did not want to tie itself to the winning coalition of his successor, under the possibility that his successor would be a failure and paint a bad image of the US. Though this was a corrupt attempt at foreign intervention, it was much less violent and direct than the foreign intervention occurring elsewhere during this period. Their efforts were not as successful since they could not identify individuals as suited as Lumumba to lead the nation, nor did they find many willing to do what was necessary to remove Lumumba from power. The US became eager to accelerate the process. In a national security meeting on August 18, 1960, Robert Johnson, the official notetaker of the meeting, noticed Eisenhower to turn to Allen Dulles, director of the CIA. The President "said something that came across to [him] as an order to assassinate Lumumba."⁵¹ This evidence is skeptical, as it lies in the hands of one notetaker, who was instructed to remove the instance from his notes. The only additional supporting evidence was the notes of the State Department's director of policy planning, who read "Lumumba" with a large "X" next to it. Nevertheless, suppose Eisenhower indeed ordered the assassination of Lumumba. In that case, it indicates the importance of his removal of power to the U.S. With Lumumba in power, the threat of communism extended beyond DRC and to all of Africa due to his position as a leader of Pan-Africanism. The CIA used Lumumba's desire for Pan-African recognition against him. At a Pan-African conference organized by Lumumba, the CIA station paid protestors to incite violence outside of the

⁴⁹ Stuart A. Reid. *The Lumumba Plot: The Secret History of the CIA and a Cold War Assassination* (International Affairs, 2023), p. 241

⁵⁰ Stuart A. Reid. *The Lumumba Plot: The Secret History of the CIA and a Cold War Assassination* (International Affairs, 2023), p. 241

⁵¹ Stuart A. Reid. *The Lumumba Plot: The Secret History of the CIA and a Cold War Assassination* (International Affairs, 2023), p. 263

building. This forced local police to shoot warning shots and react to protestors throwing stones at them.⁵² The event slowly became violent, and the delegates who came for the conference began to lose faith in Lumumba and his envisioned project. This was the beginning of the Americans' successful steps towards removing Lumumba.

Following this protest, the CIA station in DRC began to exaggerate the Soviet presence on the ground to generate attention from the White House. While the CIA station was reporting 232-364 Soviet KGB personnel residing in the Congo, only three KGB officers were engaging in any activity in the DRC at the time.⁵³ There was very little Soviet presence, as the Kremlin doubted their potential for influence in the country with the high presence of Belgians and American personnel. Under the false assumption that there were high levels of Soviet presence on the ground, the CIA began to ramp up their intervention efforts. The White House had created a covert CIA program to “replace Lumumba’s government by constitutional means.”⁵⁴ The CIA station in Leopoldville approached Kasavubu, suggesting he remove Lumumba by constitutional means. This was an attempt by the US to prevent their involvement from being overt and work with Congolese officials to remove Lumumba. It is not clear whether they financially supported or coerced Kasavubu into this action. The only explicit information was Kasavubu’s ambivalence toward the political scene if he maintained his plush lifestyle. Nevertheless, on September 3rd, 1960, Kasavubu gave a letter to the UN informing them of his decision to remove Lumumba from the role of Prime Minister for “grave misuse of power.”⁵⁵

⁵² Stuart A. Reid. *The Lumumba Plot: The Secret History of the CIA and a Cold War Assassination* (International Affairs, 2023), p. 271

⁵³ Stuart A. Reid. *The Lumumba Plot: The Secret History of the CIA and a Cold War Assassination* (International Affairs, 2023), p. 283

⁵⁴ Stuart A. Reid. *The Lumumba Plot: The Secret History of the CIA and a Cold War Assassination* (International Affairs, 2023), p. 241

⁵⁵ Stuart A. Reid. *The Lumumba Plot: The Secret History of the CIA and a Cold War Assassination* (International Affairs, 2023), p. 291

Lumumba managed to quell Kasavubu's address to the nation, maintained power, and rode the streets of the Congo. The U.S., fed up, knew that military action was the only way Lumumba could be curtailed. Therefore, following selectorate theory, they approached the man in charge of the army, Joseph Mobutu. An alliance with Mobutu was essential because even though he was just one man who would support the ousting of Lumumba, he controlled the entire army, meaning a large part of the nation's power resided in him. Devlin handed Mobutu a briefcase with \$5000 to bring officers on board for the military coup. Here, he said, "I guarantee you American support."⁵⁶ This was the confirmation. The US, after organizing a failed constitutional ousting by Kasavubu, was directly paying a military general to remove a leader from power. They did this for one reason: the communist threat that Lumumba posed.

Clare Timberlake, the U.S. ambassador to the Congo, claimed, "This new and troubled African country has given the boot to the bloc."⁵⁷ Lumumba was removed from power. Though outside the scope of this paper, the CIA assassinated Lumumba one year later due to his determination to regain control over his overthrow. It is important to note that the US would not have succeeded in the removal or assassination of Lumumba if it had not tapped into the power of local elites. This indicates that, while the US may have played the most significant role, local elite discontent was still necessary for the overthrow.

Differences and similarities in findings from cases

Kwame Nkrumah and Patrice Lumumba shared many similarities. First, both leaders championed Pan-Africanism. This ideological positioning struck fear in those trying to maintain power and control over African economic growth and prosperity. For the Ashanti

⁵⁶ Stuart A. Reid. *The Lumumba Plot: The Secret History of the CIA and a Cold War Assassination* (International Affairs, 2023), p. 303

⁵⁷ Stuart A. Reid. *The Lumumba Plot: The Secret History of the CIA and a Cold War Assassination* (International Affairs, 2023), p. 308

elite, there was concern over reallocating power away from chiefs and tribal leaders. For the US, there was concern over the growth of a central, powerful nation that would be far larger and closely aligned with the East. Both leaders were cursed with discontent from those surrounding them because of their ideological associations.

Second, both leaders used the Cold War context to their advantage, a tactic that many Europeans did not think Africans had the intelligence to employ. Nkrumah and Lumumba frequently negotiated with both sides to grow their capital and resources, often using one side as a threat to the other. Both sides of the Cold War conflict became aggravated by the two-sided nature of this tactic. For Lumumba, this meant a lack of Soviet support and bolstering American discontent. For Nkrumah, this meant minimal support from both ends, resulting in economic dismay and a platform for the domestic elite to voice their concerns.

The final fundamental similarity between the two cases is the time of independence. With Ghana as the first Sub-Saharan African country to gain independence and the DRC as the eighth, both leaders were faced with leading a nation-state in a continent that had not known freedom since the 14th century. There was no clear framework for transitioning from a colony to an independent state, and the speed at which the Belgians and British left placed significant pressure on the two leaders. For Nkrumah, enormous government spending and anti-tribal policy implementation as a response to independence were unacceptable for domestic elites. For Lumumba, the anticolonial and anti-western rhetoric he used in response to independence upset imperial powers. They had hoped to use independence simply as a title but not give up financial control or political manipulation. Their similarities in ideology, Cold War positioning, and period present themselves as attributes of their overthrow. Their differences highlight how they were able to be overthrown through distinct methods.

Nkrumah was much more educated than Lumumba. He holds two master's degrees from the University of Pennsylvania and University College London and has spent much of

his life in the US and the United Kingdom. Lumumba had not gained any further education than Leopoldville Postal School.⁵⁸ Their counterparts, Julius Nyerere and Leopold Senghor, both Pan-Africanists and independence leaders in their respective countries, were also well-educated and free from foreign intervention. As such, external actors may have seen Lumumba's lack of Western education as a concern and a pretense for their intervention. The UK and US saw Nkrumah as a Western figure at the time of his appointment as President of Ghana, and it can be argued that this image was upheld long past his associations with the Soviets and socialism. This education might not have been enough for the US to denounce the Nkrumah's coup, but it may have informed their lack of action compared to Lumumba.

Nkrumah and Lumumba also differ in length in office. I find that this is attributable to their means of removal. While Nkrumah held office for nine years, Lumumba was only Prime Minister for four months. Since the US was not concerned with Nkrumah as he was not in their sphere of influence (despite his ideological positioning), removing him from office was not of immediate concern. The domestic elite tried in 1958, and several times after, to remove him from power but did not have the resources until 1966. In Lumumba's case, though the US failed, they managed to gather the elite support to remove Lumumba from power in a matter of days. If Nkrumah had posed the same threat to Cold War power dynamics as Lumumba, the US would have removed him from power within a similar timeline. In Ghana, the domestic elite had to unify and seek American approval, which extended their timeline. On the other hand, in the DRC, the US already had the resources to overthrow Lumumba; they just needed domestic elite support.

⁵⁸ Stuart A. Reid. *The Lumumba Plot: The Secret History of the CIA and a Cold War Assassination* (International Affairs, 2023). p. 109

Conclusion

With seven coups in the last three years in Africa, authoritarian overthrow is more relevant than ever. Unlike Nkrumah's overthrow, which had the domestic elite appealing to the US at its core, recent overthrows have mimicked Lumumba's. Military members or individuals we would not consider to be in the selectorate have formed new winning coalitions and overthrown leaders in the name of political progress and economic self-sufficiency. Interestingly, we see much more Russian involvement in these coups than the more common US involvement in African Coups during the Cold War. This is not to say that Russians are initiating the steps for the overthrow. However, they are finding themselves playing more of a role in the selectorate in these nations and offering financial support for the events following an overthrow. They diplomatically bind themselves to the leader of the opposition (those initiating the overthrow). In addition, Aidt et al.'s authoritarian-to-authoritarian regime framework is mimicked in modern-day African regimes.

While I have focused on coup attempts and not coup success, future research could investigate the success of Sub-Saharan African elites in overthrows without American support. This paper also reveals Cold War dynamics, but there should also be a focus on modern-day overthrows. Some attention should be paid to the relationship between the domestic elite and the great powers in modern-day African regime change. Increased association with Russia and the removal of democratically elected leaders provides an interesting comparison to this thesis. While the literature finds that the late eighties and nineties economic crisis provided leverage to global financial institutions for foreign intervention, little is discussed regarding how the current international creditor and monetary system paves a path for indirect foreign intervention in Sub-Saharan Africa.

The findings from my results highlight three crucial aspects of my theory. First, the US can be in a nation's selectorate but not try to form a winning coalition or act on this

position. In the case of Ghana, when Dr. Busia reached out to the US, they had the opportunity to play a significant role in forming the winning coalition. Still, they opted not to play a direct part in the overthrow. Nevertheless, their approval and support were still needed for the domestic elite to carry out the overthrow. Second, it takes far less time to overthrow a leader under the condition that the US is part of the selectorate. Since Nkrumah had coup-proofed, the Asante elite had to form a unified structure capable of succeeding in a coup. In contrast, the US used its resources to supply various elites in days. Even though it had been tracking different members of the DRC government for some time, their dispersion of resources accelerated the speed at which an overthrow could occur. Thirdly, more evidence is needed to show whether the domestic elite can succeed in a coup against a Pan-African leader in this period without the support of the US. The unification of the Asante elite after gaining American support was essential for a successful coup. However, many Asante elites were already planning for the coup. This presents an avenue for future research.

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