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Patronage and Political Stability in Africa

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Political conflict across Africa is often linked to the pervasive use of patronage in retaining control of the state. However, few sources of data have been available to systematically examine the relationship between a leader's patronage strategies and the likelihood of an extraconstitutional change in power. This article employs ministerial appointments to the cabinet as a proxy for changes in the size of a leader's patronage coalition. With time-series cross-section data on 40 African countries, this study shows that the size of cabinets varies systematically according to regime type, resource constraints, ethnic fractionalization, and total population. It then shows that African leaders extend their tenure in office by expanding their patronage coalition through cabinet appointments. A proportional hazards model of regime duration indicates that cabinet expansion lowers the probability of a leader's being deposed through a coup. The appointment of one additional minister to the cabinet lowers a leader's coup risk by a greater extent than does a 1-percentage-point increase in economic growth.

Keywords: *patronage; stability; coups; cabinet; Africa*

Africa's political instability is conventionally attributed to the manner in which leaders sustain themselves in power. Leaders across the region hold onto office by purchasing support through the distribution of state resources; as such, any conflict over their allocation is thought to degenerate into a struggle over control of the state. Violence erupts either because some elites crave a larger share of the spoils controlled by the leader or because those outside the leader's patronage-based coalition want access to resources to which they have been denied. According to a United Nations report on conflict in Africa,

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> the nature of political power in many African States, together with the real and perceived consequences of capturing and maintaining power, is a key source of conflict across the continent. It is frequently the case that political victory assumes a "winner-takes-all" form with respect to wealth and resources, patronage, and the prestige and prerogatives of office. (Annan, 1998, p. 4).

Yet, the deployment of patronage has also been used to explain the exceptional durability of some African regimes. The evidence from paradigmatic cases such as Côte d'Ivoire, Kenya, and Senegal suggests that leaders can achieve a degree of stability for their regimes by using state resources to facilitate intra-elite accommodation.

Although policy makers, journalists, and scholars readily employ the concept of patronage in explaining political outcomes in Africa, relatively little is known about the extent to which the distribution of patronage systematically affects political stability. Rather than assert that African leaders are merely venal or myopic in their deployment of resources, the empirical regularities surrounding the use of patronage as an instrument for managing political relations need to be explained. Has the patronage-based rule of African leaders undermined their capacity to stay in power?

I address this question by drawing on insights from two analytic traditions. Quantitative cross-national research on the principal manifestations of political instability—coups and civil wars—has consistently shown that economic conditions are the best predictors in Africa and other developing regions (Fearon & Laitin, 2003; Londregan & Poole, 1990; Miguel, Satyanath, & Sergenti, 2004). Although these empirical analyses acknowledge that the weakness of political institutions contribute to the region's volatility, they do not explicitly control for patronage—the chief strategy used by most African leaders to buy off rivals and reward their followers. By contrast, political scientists working in the case study tradition have long been concerned with understanding how political order is shaped by the patron–client relationship (Bienen, 1970; Boone, 1992; Gertzel, Baylies, & Szeftel, 1984; Widner, 1992; Zolberg, 1969). This literature, however, has failed to specify the conditions under which patronage enhances the stability of a leader's regime.

I argue that African leaders expand their patronage-based coalitions to minimize the form of political instability that most directly concerns them—being overthrown through extraconstitutional means. I claim that leaders use high-level government appointments to make credible their promises to distribute patronage among political elites and the constituencies whom

they represent. In this context, increasing the number of appointees becomes a rational strategy for insecure leaders who want to lower the risk of being overthrown: A leader's coalition becomes less dependent on the loyalty of any single member of the political elite, whereas coordination among potential rivals within a leader's coalition becomes more difficult to carry out.

I test the hypothesized relationship between patronage and stability by using data on ministerial cabinets for 40 African countries between 1970 and 2000. The analysis proceeds in two parts. I first estimate a between-groups model of cabinet size to show that the size of a leader's patronage coalition depends on regime type, resource constraints, ethnic fractionalization, and total population. I then show that patronage appointments to the cabinet can be used to extend a leader's tenure. A proportional hazards model of regime duration indicates that cabinet expansion—just like economic growth—lowers the probability of being deposed through a coup. But recruiting additional clients lowers the coup risk only up to a point. Such a resource-intensive strategy produces diminishing returns once the number of ministers grows beyond a country-specific threshold. Leaders who overextend their coalitions appear to tempt rebellion, rather than minimize it, whenever they accommodate additional partners by allocating thinner slices of a relatively fixed pie.

I begin in the next section by briefly reviewing the findings from the coup and civil war literatures to glean some insights on the factors most likely to produce instability. Second, I discuss the logic linking patronage to stability, and I explain why the number of cabinet ministers is an adequate proxy for the size of a leader's patronage coalition. Third, I present the cross-country data used in both the between-groups model of cabinet size and the proportional hazards model of regime survival. Fourth, I discuss the results of the principal variables of interest and simulated scenarios. I then conclude with an assessment of the evidence and with some points for further analysis of the relationship between patronage and stability.

The Causes of Political Instability

Although political instability takes a variety of forms—communal violence, rural insurgency, urban riots, coups d'état, and civil wars—this article focuses on the type that stems from elite disagreement over the distribution of power and resources. Elite conflicts are consequential for stability in Africa because they can spiral into other mass forms of violence. Given their encyclopedic work on political events in Africa, Morrison,

Mitchell, and Paden (1989) observe that other manifestations of instability are "often a response on the part of communal groups in national populations to elite instability which either fails to bring about a reapportionment of ethnic representation in government or a redistribution of other goods" (p. 124). Indeed, institutional authority in countries such as the Central African Republic and the Democratic Republic of Congo has most obviously broken down when elites have chosen to use violence to recalibrate the relations that exist among them. For much of the time since independence, overthrowing the chief executive has been the central means for achieving such recalibration, regardless of whether a conflict resulted from a power grab by factions within a regime or by regional elites seeking greater autonomy from the center.

Of 180 leadership changes in the region between 1960 and 1999, 101 took place through a coup or some other extraconstitutional event (Goldsmith, 2001). Coups have been attempted in 41 of 48 African countries since independence, and at least 30 of those countries had at least one successful coup (McGowan, 2003). Twenty countries have also endured at least one episode of civil war since independence (Elbadawi & Sambanis, 2000). If the transition to multiparty politics in the early 1990s lessened the need for violent leadership change, it did not completely eliminate the threat. Between 1990 and 2000, 15 leadership changes in the region were produced through elections, whereas 25 others were brought about through coups.[1]

Our state of knowledge on the causes of such elite political instability has advanced considerably since Decalo (1990) argued that idiosyncratic factors—personal rivalries, fears, and ambitions—"of the kind not even considered by statistically inclined scholars play a powerful independent role in destabilizing African political systems" (p. 287). The accumulated findings from cross-national research on coups (Johnson, Slater, & McGowan, 1984; Londregan & Poole, 1990; O'Kane, 1993) and civil wars (Collier & Hoeffler, 2000; Fearon & Laitin, 2003; Miguel et al., 2004) suggest that a generic economic model can be applied to the African context. Widespread poverty, stagnating growth, and primary resource dependence are the strongest and most consistent predictors of political instability. In this respect, Africa appears to be no different from other parts of the world. If the region's countries do have a higher probability of political conflict when compared to those of other regions, it is largely due to their continuing economic deterioration rather than their ethnic diversity or colonial legacies. Any country that experienced the economic decline of the Democratic Republic Congo or Sierra Leone would have suffered the same incidence of violence.

State capacity is the mechanism by which an economic variable such as per capita gross domestic product (GDP) affects the likelihood of conflict. The government of a poor country, which is often assumed to be corrupt or badly ruled, is less likely to have the resources needed to pay the military to stay in its barracks (McGowan & Johnson, 1984) or to put down a locally led insurgency (Fearon & Laitin, 2003). It is during an economic downturn, when a leader's government is broke as well as unpopular, that a rival can maximize the likelihood of successfully employing force to renegotiate the distribution of state resources. Collier and Hoeffler (2000) suggest that conflict is more likely to erupt in states with greater levels of resource abundance, as proxied by primary commodity export dependence. A rebel leader can draw new recruits and sustain an insurgency if one has ready access to diamond mines or other lootable sources of wealth (Weinstein, 2006). Not only are African governments generally weak, but the opportunity cost for joining a rebellion against them is relatively low.

Although researchers integrate the notion of state capacity into the mechanism linking economic variables to political instability, they are unable to speak to the direct effect that political strategies or institutions can have on the risk of conflict among elites. Economic models of political instability do not directly test whether the reliance on patronage by African leaders increases the likelihood of instability. And few efforts have been made to explicitly test for their influence. Londregan and Poole (1990) note that the "economic variables have a much stronger effect than the political variables" (p. 158), but elections are the only institutional variable that the researchers include among their list of political variables—including, for example, riots, executions, and deaths from domestic violence. In other cases, no explicitly political or institutional variables are employed (Collier & Hoeffler, 2000, 2002). This omission may be due to the fact that violence-prone countries are known to have fragile institutions with little constraining effect; as such, the best that can be done is to distinguish authoritarian from democratic regimes. And because these countries tend to be poor, they will unlikely develop the types of political organization that inhibit conflict in the first place (Przeworski, Alvarez, Cheibub, & Limongi, 2000).

The Impact of Elite Patronage

Whether termed *clientelism*, *neopatrimonialism*, or *"big man" rule*, the patron–client relationship is understood to be the principal mechanism regulating political and economic life in African countries (Bratton & van

de Walle, 1997). Formal institutions are generally too weak to perform the functions associated with their counterparts in the industrialized world—that is, aggregation, mobilization, and representation. Power is instead arrayed through "a system of relations linking rulers not with the 'public' or even with the ruled (at least not directly), but with patrons, associates, clients, supporters, and rivals, who constitute the 'system'" (Jackson & Rosberg, 1982, p. 19). Patrons offer resources to their clients in exchange for their loyalty, and clients support their patrons to access rewards that cannot be readily attained in a weak formal economy. The state is thus a venue where political actors bargain over the allocation of resources and secure their consumption under conditions of economic scarcity (Hyden, 2006; Lemarchand & Legg, 1972).[2]

The current received wisdom holds that a reliance on patronage has led to greater instability in Africa through the distortion of economic policies and political institutions. This form of governance has been linked to the region's civil wars (World Bank, 2000) and lagging democratization (Diamond & Plattner, 1999). Yet, an earlier generation of scholarship suggested that the distribution of patronage could be used to pull together a heterogeneous elite and in this way build up institutions over the long term (Huntington, 1968; Scott, 1969). This is certainly a well-understood part of early American and British party politics: The patronage dispensed by parties facilitated the coordination of office seekers and, thereby, the formation stable majorities. It was this reading of history that led Huntington (1968) to observe that the active use of patronage had "contributed directly to the building of some of the most effective political parties and most stable political systems" (p. 70).

The Africanist literature provides corroborating evidence for this stabilizing view of patronage, which according to scholars, has been strategically deployed by leaders to consolidate their regimes since independence (Bienen, 1978; Lemarchand, 1972; Rothchild, 1970, 1997; van de Walle, 2006; Zolberg, 1966). Leaders hold onto their positions—and provide political stability in the process—by maintaining elite clientelist linkages that connect them to a cross-section of ethno-regional groups, as well as localities where the state cannot make itself felt. In this context, patronage serves as an instrument for regulating intra-elite competition, permitting the leader to ration state resources in placating aggrieved groups or punishing would-be challengers. Bayart (1993) argues that this use of patronage has facilitated the integration of ethnic representatives, bureaucrats, and business leaders into a more or less cohesive elite, united by their common interest in accessing the state resources on which their positions depend.

That clientelism might contribute to regime stability is evident when resources are abundant. However, economic conditions in most African states have either stagnated or deteriorated since the late 1970s. Leaders who relied on patronage to buy acquiescence to their rule have inevitably faced a difficult situation under conditions of economic stress, yet the Africanist literature offers no consistent guidance in this regard. Médard (1991) claims that Félix Houphouët-Boigny weathered the economic crisis in Côte d'Ivoire by introducing semicompetitive elections in 1980. This political opening enabled Houphouët to eliminate those barons who had established independent sources of patronage over several years in office (thereby becoming a threat to his authority) and to replace them with newer and presumably cheaper clients. Widner (1992) argues, however, that Daniel arap Moi held onto the Kenyan presidency in the early 1980s by making the political system even more restrictive, concentrating the distribution of patronage into his own hands through his control of the Kenya African National Union and systematically purging his predecessor's allies from the government. But Clapham (1982) offers the same explanation to account for the opposite outcome: the destabilization of Liberia and Sierra Leone. He argues that greater centralization of patronage by party leaders effectively shrank the political arena and so made the entire system less responsive to the periphery's growing demands for state resources.

Although the Africanist literature suggests that leaders actively use patronage to insulate themselves from challenges, it remains unclear whether there is a systematic relationship between patronage and political stability. I argue that absent other institutional mechanisms, leaders rely on high-level government appointments to make credible their promises to maintain the distribution of patronage among select elites and the constituencies whom they represent. If most individuals in African societies have access to patronage, as clients of one well-connected person or another, as Chabal and Daloz (1999) suggest, then the observable distribution of government posts, across elites with ethnic constituencies, can be used by leaders to signal who qualifies for access to state resources as a member of the patronage coalition.

My claim is that African leaders have sought to deter extraconstitutional challenges by recruiting more elites into their patronage coalitions. Leaders visibly expand their coalitions through government appointments to discourage potential rivals from coordinating other elites against them. To be sure, a rational leader who is concerned with amassing power or wealth might prefer to build a minimum winning coalition by buying off only those politicians necessary to keep oneself in power. But under conditions of

political uncertainty—precisely when the loyalty of political allies might come into doubt—leaders may seek to expand the size of their coalitions as a means of reducing dependence on any single ally (Riker, 1962). And it need not be the case that the new partners will be any more loyal. Leaders can simply complicate the coordination among their potential rivals by increasing the number of individuals to whom state resources are directly transferred or are licensed to collect rents in a sector of the economy.

Consider a situation in which a rival is interested in deposing a leader. To realize such coup plans, that rival has to enlist conspirators among the leader's coalition partners. The number of conspirators required to successfully undertake such a plot is most likely a function of the size of the leader's coalition, given that any coup attempt would be met with resistance (Charap & Harm, 1999). In this context, a leadership challenge becomes less likely with each additional coalition partner who has to be convinced that a rival can offer a better patronage deal once installed in office, which is itself a difficult promise for any out-of-power challenger to make credible. Most elites would have little interest in risking the patronage access ensured through their existing government appointments for an outcome that depends on a series of conditional events—namely, that the rival's conspiracy actually succeeds and that the rival rewards supporters with their promised payoffs.

This patronage-based argument offers a straightforward hypothesis: A leader can minimize the likelihood of an extraconstitutional threat to power by expanding the patronage coalition. Assessing such a claim presents a real challenge because there are no direct or systematic measures of patronage in Africa. I follow van de Walle's intuition (2001) by using cabinet data as a proxy. Cabinet size is employed in this analysis to represent the number of elite clients sustained by a regime's leader, whether a democratically elected president or a coup-installed dictator. An increase in the number of cabinet ministers is interpreted as an attempt to expand the leader's base of political support—for example, buying off critics of the government or bringing in representatives from particular ethno-regional groups.[3]

A cabinet minister in Africa is considered "a kind of superrepresentative" (Zolberg, 1969, p. 283) who is expected to speak for the interests of co-ethnics, as well as channel resources to them. Ministers not only have a hand in deciding where to allocate public resources, presumably in their home districts, but are also in positions to supplement their personal incomes by offering contracts and jobs in exchange for other favors. Van de Walle (2001) uses cabinet size as a measure of consumption by the top levels of the political hierarchy in Africa. He finds that most governments

shielded their elites from austerity measures despite the persistence of the region's economic crisis: "African states have long been notorious for their large cabinets, with ministerial appointments that often have little relevance to policy-making priorities or the size of actual budgets" (p. 103).[4]

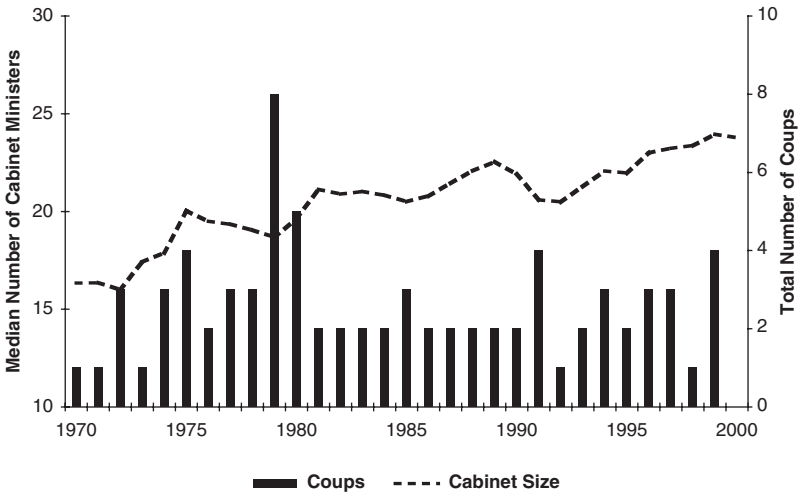
All African leaders have used ministerial appointments to the cabinet as an instrument for managing elite relations. Returning to the examples cited earlier, their divergent outcomes might be explained by whether leaders chose to expand or contract their patronage coalitions. While Houphouët used the 1980 elections to eliminate Ivorian politicians who had become too independent, he expanded his coalition by appointing more politicians to the government: His cabinet grew from 31 people in 1980 to 38 by 1982. Likewise, Moi in Kenya added several new members to his cabinet during his first insecure years in office: Their number increased from 20 in 1979 (about the average under his predecessor) to 27 by 1982. By contrast, in the same period, Sierra Leone's Siaka Stevens reduced the number of ministers in his cabinet from 32 in 1979 to 23 in 1985, when he transferred power over to his successor, Joseph Momoh. And by the time Momoh was overthrown in 1992, he had further reduced the cabinet to 17 ministers.

Because African leaders have used cabinet appointments to reinforce their patronage-based rule, it is no surprise that the average cabinet size has grown over the last 30 years. Based on data for 40 countries, Figure 1 shows that the median cabinet size climbed from about 18 ministers in the 1970s to 22 in the 1990s. One significant interruption in the trend coincides with the onset of political liberalization in the region: The average falls from 22.5 in 1989 to 20.5 in 1992. The dip may be due to the alternations in power that were seen at the time. The upward trend resumes after that point, and the average recovers its pre-1989 level, reaching 23.8 by 2000.

Figure 1 overlays the median cabinet size and the total number of coups for each year. It shows that the African cabinet undergoes its most erratic changes (including its greatest expansion) when the region is at its most unstable—that is, in the 1970s. The rate of expansion then decelerates in the 1980s as most countries entered a period of relative stability, although it continues to rise nearly monotonically throughout that decade and then again after the transition to multiparty politics in the early 1990s.

Coupled with the trend in cabinet expansion, the pattern in coup frequency raises concerns about possible endogeneity: A regime's cabinet size in a given year might be caused by the leader's anticipation of political instability. Failing to recognize such endogeneity could lead to biased estimates as well as erroneous conclusions about the causal mechanism. One solution is to identify an instrument for cabinet size—another variable

Figure 1
Cabinet Expansion and Coup Frequency in Africa



Source: Cabinet data come from annual volumes of *Africa South of the Sahara*. Data on coups are from Goldsmith (2001) and McGowan (2003).

associated with changes in cabinet size but not produced by the anticipation of political instability. Because there have been no previous studies regarding the determinants of cabinet size in Africa, it is difficult to identify an adequate instrument that can have reasonable explanatory power and yet be uncorrelated with the disturbance term. I take a first cut at addressing these concerns in the next section by examining whether indicators of political crisis affect cabinet change.

The trends seen in Figure 1 can nevertheless put alternative explanations into doubt. First, changes in political stability can not likely be attributed to shifts in geopolitics brought about by the end of the Cold War. Figure 1 shows that although the rate of coups dropped significantly from the 1970s to the 1980s—coinciding with the appreciable increase in median cabinet size—it remained relatively constant across the 1980s and 1990s. In fact, the average coup risk was relatively unchanged immediately before and after 1990. Goldsmith (2001) calculates that the probability of being overthrown in any given year was 0.048 in the 1980s and 0.046 in the 1990s. Second, cabinet expansion does not likely serve as a mere reflection of

increasing government institutionalization or growing service provision. Government expenditure, as a share of GDP, actually declined across Africa over much of this period. Cabinet size initially increased in tandem with government expenditure in the 1970s. But when government expenditure began to decline in 1979, with the onset of the region's economic crisis, the median cabinet in Africa continued to expand through 2000.

On the whole, Figure 1 suggests that African leaders use the cabinet as an instrument for managing their political environment. My claim is that absent other forms of institutional representation, increasing the number of cabinet ministers reflects a leader's intent to expand one's patronage coalition.[5] The observable appointment of additional ministers enables a leader to convince elites that their prospects are better served by supporting the current regime rather than betting on an uncertain alternative. Not only does an expanded client base makes the current leader's regime less dependent on the loyalty of any one politician, but a larger number of cabinet members makes coordination among conspirators more difficult to successfully carry out.

Data and Method

To examine the relationship between patronage and stability, I proceed in two steps. I first estimate a between-groups regression model of cabinet size that focuses on cross-sectional comparisons and essentially reduces variables to group means and computes an ordinary least squares estimator. I have hypothesized that leaders enlarge their cabinets to insulate themselves from extraconstitutional challenges, but little is actually known about the determinants of cabinets—one of the few observable representations of the coalitions built by African leaders. Understanding the variation across countries is therefore an essential first step. For cabinet size, I count the number of individuals with cabinet-level status for each country–year in the sample. This figure represents only individuals accorded full ministerial rank; as such, deputy ministers and secretaries of state are excluded. It also excludes the chief executive, regional ministers, and members of other executive bodies—for example, the party politburo, a military council.[6]

Next I use a proportional hazards model with robust standard errors to estimate regime duration.[7] The dependent variable for the duration model is the time to an extraconstitutional change in the chief executive. A dichotomous variable indicates whether such an event occurs in a particular country–year. Despite substantive reasons for separately studying changes in power owing to coups and civil wars, I treat both as instances of a

broader phenomenon of elite conflict over the distribution of resources. As discussed above, the clientelism literature suggests that patron–client relations regulate conflicts not only at the center but also between center and periphery. Furthermore, the nature of political violence in Africa makes it difficult to distinguish outcomes produced by either a coup or a civil war, given that both can lead to extraconstitutional changes in power.

I use the duration model to generate predicted hazard rates—the probability that a leader will be overthrown in a particular year, presuming that a regime has survived to that point. Increasing the number of cabinet members is expected to lower the coup hazard and thereby extend a leader's tenure. This variable enters the model as a quadratic to allow for the possibility that the relationship between patronage and coup risk is curvilinear. Because each additional minister brought into a leader's cabinet entails some form of cost, there are likely declining returns to cabinet expansion beyond a certain threshold. Leaders may well foment rebellion among their partners when they attempt to expand the patronage coalition by reallocating ever-thinner slices of a fixed pie.

The time-series cross-sectional data used in the analyses are based on a sample of 40 African states. Missing values limit the sample to approximately two thirds of the potential country–years. Countries enter the sample in 1971 or the year after they achieved independence, as is the case with most of the Portuguese colonies. The tenure of each leader is known, so observations are not left-censored; however, the data are censored on the right because some long-lived regimes had not ended by 2001. Countries leave the sample if a chief executive cannot be identified (e.g., post-1991 Somalia) or if no data are available on the cabinet. Volumes of *Africa South of the Sahara* were used to calculate cabinet sizes and identify leaders, regimes, and coup events. These data were cross-checked with other relevant sources (Beck, Clarke, Groff, Keefer, & Walsh, 2001; Chazan, Mortimer, Ravenhill, & Rothchild, 1992; Goldsmith, 2001; Morrison et al., 1989).

In estimating both models, I employ a set of time-varying covariates that have proven significant in previous studies of coups and civil wars (Bates et al., 2000; Collier & Hoeffler, 2000; Fearon & Laitin, 2003; Londregan & Poole, 1990). The political variables are intended to capture the influence of regime type and executive power. I employ a set of dummy variables based on Ferree and Singh's classification (2002) of executive competition: leaders who are not elected, who are elected in one-party systems, or who are elected in multiparty contests. For robustness, I alternate these measures with Polity-based dummy variables for full democracies, partial democracies, and autocracies.[8]

Economic variables such as GDP per capita and GDP growth are used to capture a regime's resource constraints. Separate dummy variables are used to indicate whether either oil or minerals represent one third or more of a country's merchandise exports. I also control for the potential impact of foreign aid per capita in fueling cabinet expansion. Information on economic controls was obtained from various volumes of the World Bank's World Development Indicators (e.g., 2007).

Cabinet Size Analysis

The regressions reported in Table 1 show the results from the between-groups estimator of cabinet size. Columns 1 through 3 include the same set of economic and demographic variables; only the political variables are alternated between the Polity score, the Polity-based regime types, and the executive selection categories. All models in Table 1 indicate that differences in cabinet size across African countries can be largely attributed to four factors: regime type, resource constraints, ethnic fractionalization, and total population. Column 4 shows a reduced model, limited to these consistently significant variables.

A leader's ability to expand the patronage coalition is conditioned by political constraints. Columns 1 through 3 show that the nature of executive power in Africa directly influences cabinet size. Nearly all regime indicators are statistically significant at the .05 level or better. Leaders whose authority is limited by institutions or other actors are less able to deploy patronage. Authoritarian leaders systematically make more ministerial appointments than do democratic leaders, regardless of how regime type is operationalized. According to the estimated coefficients from column 4, a 2-point improvement in the Polity score would lead to the loss of a minister, with all else being equal. Moving from a Polity score of –7 to 0, from the 75th to the 25th percentile among African countries, is associated with the dismissal of at least three cabinet ministers. The regime categorical variables offer similar conclusions, although their estimates vary in magnitude. The Ferree–Singh executive selection variables indicate that leaders in multiparty systems have at least 6 fewer ministers than do the leaders of one-party systems, whereas the Polity-based democracy dummy suggests that they have about 11 fewer ministers than do autocracies.

Leaders of wealthier countries are able to mobilize greater resources to expand their patronage coalitions. Higher per capita income is significantly related to a larger cabinet. The estimated coefficient on the log of GDP per

Table 1
Regression Analysis of Cabinet Size

Variable	1	2	3	4
Polity	–0.686*** (0.145)			–0.530*** (0.108)
Log (GDP per capita)$_{t-1}$	4.554*** (0.802)	4.840*** (0.772)	3.949*** (1.220)	3.519*** (0.577)
Aid per capita$_{t-1}$	–0.010 (0.025)	–0.001 (0.024)	0.031 (0.029)	
Oil exporter	–3.704* (1.913)	–3.974** (1.814)	–2.343 (2.818)	
Mineral exporter	–1.136 (1.179)	–1.244 (1.134)	–1.062 (1.481)	
Ethnic fractionalization	5.588** (2.720)	5.613** (2.579)	6.253* (3.595)	4.837* (2.560)
French colony	–0.110 (1.003)	–0.475 (0.970)	0.607 (1.252)	
Log (population)$_{t-1}$	2.129*** (0.633)	2.309*** (0.596)	2.889*** (0.765)	2.240*** (0.379)
1980s indicator	8.189 (7.849)	8.082 (7.415)	5.217 (9.920)	
1990s indicator	3.736 (5.067)	1.262 (4.677)	0.049 (6.336)	
Full democracy		–11.329*** (2.106)		
Partial democracy		–6.063** (2.446)		
Executive: Multiparty			–6.764** (3.043)	
Executive: Nonelected			–0.007 (2.409)	
Constant	–48.474*** (12.472)	–47.792*** (11.862)	–51.960*** (16.544)	–39.714*** (7.521)
R^2	.744	.777	.614	.703

Note: Standard errors in parentheses. GDP = gross domestic product. $N = 893$ observations. $n = 40$ countries.
*$p < .10$. **$p < .05$. ***$p < .01$.

capita from column 4 suggests that a $100 increase in per capita income is associated with, on average, an additional cabinet appointment, with all else being equal. However, resources such as aid, oil, and minerals show no consistent statistically significant effect. This finding on aid may seem counterintuitive, given that African leaders have long been thought to appropriate it for political purposes, but the estimated effect is similar even when other measures for aid are used or are interacted with the decade dummies.

As might be expected, African leaders expand their patronage coalitions to accommodate the social diversity of their countries. Higher levels of ethnic fractionalization lead to larger cabinets, as indicated across all models. Its estimated coefficient in column 4 suggests that moving from the median of .77 to .86 (the 75th percentile) leads to a .44 increase in cabinet size. Perhaps more surprising is that a country's population size influences the number of cabinet ministers. Leaders in more populous countries bring more ministers into the cabinet. This may be due to the nature of patron–client relations, which entail the disbursement of individualized benefits—for example, a job, a contract, a scholarship. Because patron–client relationships are based on exchange between individuals, a leader probably needs to recruit more "big men" into the coalition to manage the distribution of discrete rewards in a fast-growing population. According to the estimates from column 4, each additional million in population leads to an additional one third of a cabinet post, ceteris paribus.

Although the between-groups model can help to explain differences in cabinet size across countries, it cannot account for year-to-year changes. Table 2 reports the estimates based on a fixed effects model that controls for unobserved country-specific correlates.[9] Columns 1 through 4 include the variables that proved to be statistically significant in the cross-sectional analysis, with the exception of ethnic fractionalization because its value is constant across time. I include the lag of cabinet size to assess change in cabinet size as the dependent variable. Different indicators of political insecurity are included in each model—that is, whether the regime is fighting a civil war, undergoing a period of instability (a greater than 2-point change in the Polity score), or experiencing a crisis or antigovernment demonstrations.[10]

As the results in Table 2 indicate, the annual changes in cabinet size are not being driven by discrete political events. None of the indicators for political insecurity appear to be statistically significant. This holds true even when other similar variables are used, including riots, guerrilla warfare, and assassinations. This finding goes some way towards addressing

Table 2
Regression Analysis of Change in Cabinet Size With Fixed Effects

Variable	1	2	3	4
Cabinet size$_{t-1}$	0.655*** (0.057)	0.655*** (0.057)	0.654*** (0.057)	0.654*** (0.057)
Polity$_{t-1}$	0.025 (0.035)	0.024 (0.037)	0.030 (0.035)	0.027 (0.035)
Log (GDP per capita)$_{t-1}$	0.595 (0.810)	0.427 (0.802)	0.317 (0.842)	0.392 (0.808)
Log (population)$_{t-1}$	2.515*** (0.733)	2.652*** (0.751)	2.649*** (0.748)	2.684*** (0.774)
Civil war$_{t-1}$	0.622 (0.580)			
Instability$_{t-1}$		0.059 (0.364)		
Government crises$_{t-1}$			–0.322 (0.738)	
Antigovernment demonstrations$_{t-1}$				–0.074 (0.389)
Constant	–36.018*** (12.170)	–36.832*** (12.135)	–35.921*** (12.352)	–37.047*** (12.451)
R^2	.475	.474	.473	.473

Note: Standard errors in parentheses. GDP = gross domestic product. $N = 743$ observations. $n = 39$ countries.
*$p < .10$. **$p < .05$. ***$p < .01$.

the endogeneity problem raised earlier, since cabinet size itself does not appear to be caused by a leader's anticipation of political instability. In fact, a close examination of patterns in the data show that changes in cabinet size do not systematically occur in advance of these events.

The impact of per capita income on cabinet size similarly proves to be limited from year to year. Given that the mean per capita income in the region fell by 12.9% between 1980 and 2000, it is apparent that cabinet expansion in Africa is not due to development or modernization. It is instead being driven by the region's rapidly increasing population, which grew by 72.7% in the same period. Evidently, African leaders are not simply using the cabinet as an institution for collective decision making in governance. The cabinet is simultaneously a mechanism for coordinating the distribution of patronage along a chain of dyadic relationships that run from the capital to the village. Demographic pressure has compelled African leaders to expand their patronage coalitions.

Regime Duration Analysis

Table 3 presents the results from the duration analysis. Hazard ratios are reported rather than coefficients. A hazard ratio greater than 1 indicates an increased coup risk, whereas a value less than 1 indicates a decreased coup risk. Columns 1 through 3 include cabinet size, its quadratic, and a set of political, economic, and demographic controls. Only regime measures are alternated across the columns. The estimated effect for cabinet size is substantively and statistically significant across all specifications of the model.

Recruiting more ministers into the cabinet is an effective coup-inhibiting strategy for the leader who fears being overthrown. Each additional cabinet appointment lowers the coup hazard by 23% to 25%, with all else being equal, depending on the regime variables used in the model. Figure 2 graphs the mean hazard rate generated by the model specified in column 3. The downward sloping line indicates that the mean coup hazard declines almost monotonically as the cabinet is expanded from 18 to 31 ministers.

But the benefits of this patronage strategy are bounded. The estimate for the quadratic term on cabinet size indicates that the relationship between patronage and stability is nonlinear: There are declining returns to each additional appointment beyond a country-specific threshold, where they then marginally begin to increase the hazard rate. Consider how the predicted hazard rate would change when variables are set at their median values for

Table 3
Analysis of Regime Duration

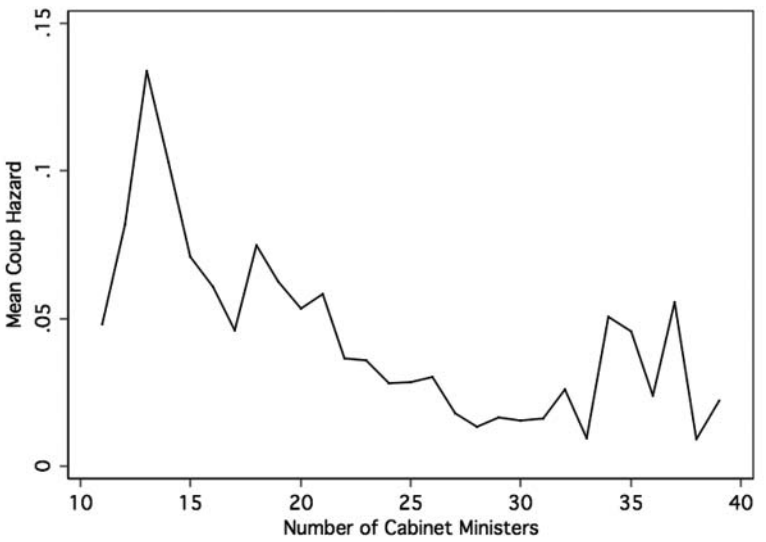
Variable	1	2	3
Cabinet size	0.767*** (0.074)	0.753*** (0.074)	0.766*** (0.078)
Cabinet size (squared)	1.004** (0.002)	1.004** (0.002)	1.004** (0.002)
Polity	0.974 (0.029)		
Executive years in power	0.985 (0.023)	0.982 (0.023)	1.038 (0.029)
Civil war	2.365** (0.818)	2.196** (0.764)	1.975* (0.689)
Log (GDP per capita)$_{t-1}$	0.360** (0.148)	0.408** (0.178)	0.508 (0.226)
GDP growth$_{t-1}$	0.975*** (0.008)	0.975*** (0.009)	0.972*** (0.009)
Oil exporter	5.731*** (3.775)	4.735** (3.287)	3.232* (2.096)
Mineral exporter	1.601 (0.596)	1.512 (0.522)	1.865 (0.797)
Ethnic fractionalization	0.590 (0.508)	0.623 (0.501)	1.361 (1.158)
French colony	1.530 (0.500)	1.387 (0.464)	1.421 (0.430)
Urbanization	1.016 (0.023)	1.016 (0.023)	1.006 (0.023)
Trade (% GDP)	0.993 (0.008)	0.994 (0.007)	0.991 (0.009)
Log (population)$_{t-1}$	0.939 (0.107)	0.952 (0.117)	0.983 (0.124)
Full democracy		0.220 (0.254)	
Partial democracy		0.326* (0.200)	
Executive: Multiparty			3.111** (1.670)
Executive: Nonelected			6.817*** (4.380)
γ	–0.013 (0.025)	–0.006 (0.022)	–0.015 (0.025)
Wald χ^2	75.46	154.03	195.97
Log likelihood	–54.6517	–52.0703	–46.6560

Note: Hazard ratios reported. Standard errors in parentheses. GDP = gross domestic product. $N = 939$ observations. $n = 40$ countries. Probability greater than chi-square < .0001.
*$p < .10$. **$p < .05$. ***$p < .01$.

the leader of a multiparty system who heads a 20-member cabinet and has been in office for 5 years—that is, the leader of a median country.[11] Such a leader can lower the coup hazard by nearly a third, from .024 to .017, by adding five ministers. However, adding another five has less of an impact, reducing the hazard by only 15%. For this leader, additional appointments beyond 30 cabinet ministers begin to marginally increase (rather than decrease) the hazard rate. Figure 2 illustrates this shift. As the cabinet is expanded beyond 31 ministers, the hazard rate climbs toward the levels seen at a cabinet of 20 ministers.

The patronage effects represented by cabinet expansion hold regardless of how regime type is operationalized or what political controls are included in the model. Unelected authoritarian leaders without a ruling party face a higher coup risk than do their one-party or multiparty counterparts. Political liberalization appears to decrease the likelihood of a violent overthrow,

Figure 2
Mean Estimated Hazard Rate and Cabinet Size



although the estimates are inconsistent across the various regime indicators. Experiencing a civil war nearly doubles the likelihood of an extraconstitutional change in power, holding all else equal.

The main economic variables attain statistical significance and move in the direction found in earlier studies. Higher income levels and growth rates reduce the coup hazard, although only GDP growth is statistically significant in all specifications of the model. By comparing the estimated effects of economic growth versus cabinet expansion, a leader's preferred coup-inhibiting strategy becomes clear. If the leader of the median country introduced above were able to stimulate economic growth, raising it from the annual regional median of 3% to 6%, that leader could effectively lower the predicted hazard rate. However, this leader could achieve a larger reduction in the hazard rate by enlisting 3 more ministers and increasing the cabinet to 23 members. Put simply, one additional cabinet minister lowers the risk of a coup by a greater rate than that generated by 1 additional percentage point in GDP growth.

Cabinet size, as a proxy for a leader's patronage coalition, appears to be a more significant predictor of extraconstitutional changes in power than patterns of economic development. The State Failure Task Force (Bates et al., 2000) found that development indicators such as urbanization and trade levels had a stronger impact on political stability than did per capita GDP. However, the duration model indicates that the coup hazard is not significantly affected by these development variables. Coups do seem to be more likely in oil exporters, although the effect does not hold for mineral exporters. Among the controls, French colonial legacy, ethnic fractionalization, and population size are statistically indistinguishable from zero.

Conclusion

How do leaders who preside over weak institutions and poor economies attempt to keep themselves in power? Although patronage-based governance is now widely thought to create an unstable political environment, the Africanist literature has shown that leaders can employ patronage to facilitate intra-elite accommodation and thereby stabilize their regimes. I adapt this intuition in arguing that leaders who use cabinet appointments to expand their patronage coalitions are less dependent on the loyalty of any single supporter.

The cabinet enlargement seen across Africa over the last 30 years may reflect the growth of the state apparatus, given that the economy and society at large have become more complex. But in a region where most governments have fostered neither growth nor development, this is unlikely to be the story. The cross-sectional analysis shows that cabinet size is not only affected by resource constraints, as represented by per capita GDP, but also largely determined by regime type, ethnic fractionalization, and total population. In fact, the growth in cabinet size over time trends with population, not income (given that most countries did not experience any growth over the three decades under review). African leaders have apparently sought to deal with the demands of a rapidly expanding population by relying on the clientelistic connections embodied in the “big men” of different ethnoregional groups.

The results from the duration analysis show that leaders can extend their tenure by recruiting more clients into government, even after controlling for variables conventionally used in the study of coups and civil wars in Africa. A leader who wants to lower the risk of being deposed has essentially two options: one, focus on stimulating the economy to raise per capita income; two,

use state resources to buy off key elites. In these terms, patronage is an optimal strategy because it more likely results in a leader's goal: Whereas forces beyond a government's control influence economic outcomes, a leader can directly monitor the members of the patronage coalition.

Although I have sought to amend the conventional wisdom regarding the relationship between patronage and stability by employing data from Africa, the argument that I advance in this article is not region specific. Leaders across Latin America, the Middle East, and Southeast Asia have long used patronage to hold their regimes together. The Africanist intuition developed here can be easily adapted and tested using data from those countries. To do so, comparativists will need to further define the mechanisms by which patronage might be used to forge stable coalitions not only at the center but between center and periphery. They will also need to develop more systematic measures of patronage to enable cross-national comparisons.

Notes

1. I thank Arthur Goldsmith for the use of his data on African leaders.

2. There is no consensus on the operationalization of patronage. I follow Lemarchand and Legg (1972) in conceiving of patronage according to their definition of *clientelism* as "a more or less personalized, affective, and reciprocal relationship between actors, or sets of actors, commanding unequal resources and involving mutually beneficial transactions that have political ramifications beyond the immediate sphere of dyadic relationships" (pp. 151-152).

3. This proxy cannot account for the distribution of patronage across ethnic groups. Additional appointments made to the cabinet may come exclusively from the leader's own ethnic group or from groups most likely to challenge the leader. However, the data set that I have begun to assemble on the ethnic composition of African cabinets suggests that expansion is associated with diversity. In Kenya, for example, Moi's surprising durability might be partly attributed to the wide ethnic representation found in his cabinet. As Moi expanded the cabinet during the one-party era, he allocated 32% of all cabinet years to Kikuyus and related groups; 23%, to minority groups; 13%, to Luos; 12%, to Luhyas; and 10% each, to Kambas and his own Kalenjins. It was during the transition to multiparty politics that economic constraints forced Moi to scale back the cabinet's size. In doing so, he cut the number of Kikuyus and Luos (who overwhelmingly voted for the opposition in the 1992 election) while preserving the numbers from other ethnic groups.

4. The comparative literature has used the stability of cabinets as an indicator of government performance (Huber, 1998; Strom, 1990) and executive strength (Lijphart, 1984), claiming that the distribution of portfolios significantly affects relations within a coalition. Laver and Shepsle (1990), in their formal model of government formation, treat portfolio allocation as a mechanism by which coalition members can make credible promises about future policy.

5. To supplement the intuition linking cabinet size to the prevalence of patronage, I examined the Transparency International corruption scores available for 18 African countries between 1996 and 2000. The scores range from 10 (highly clean) to 0 (highly corrupt). There

is a correlation of –.51 (p = .0001) between cabinet size and corruption score: Countries with larger cabinets have greater corruption, as would be expected in patronage-dependent regimes.

6. Although deputy ministers, regional governors, and similar posts enjoy considerable privileges, I exclude them from the count because the data across countries are less consistent.

7. A test on the Schoenfeld residuals from a Cox regression shows that none of the variables violate the proportional hazards assumption. The model's functional form is selected by comparing Gompertz, Weibull, log-logistic, and log-normal hazard functions and ranking them by the Akaike information criterion. The Gompertz distribution performs best, indicating that the hazard function either monotonically increases or decreases over time, which is consistent with Bienen and van de Walle's study of leadership duration (1989).

8. Full democracies have a Polity score of 7 or higher; partial democracies have scores between 1 and 6; autocracies are states with scores that fall below 0.

9. The Hausman specification test indicates that a fixed effects model is preferred.

10. The data for government crises and antigovernment demonstrations come from Banks (2005). A government crisis is a situation that threatens the downfall of a regime. Antigovernment demonstrations are public gatherings of 100 or more expressing discontent.

11. This median country takes on the following values: gross domestic product per capita, $311; gross domestic product growth, 3.33%; ethnic fractionalization, .77; population, 6.2 million; urbanization, 27.33%; trade, 55.01%. It is not a mineral or oil exporter; it is not a former French colony; it is not experiencing civil war.

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