

Leadership Change and Foreign Policy Behavior in Black Africa

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The studies of linkage politics which have been popular in recent years reveal two features. First, they focus on the relationships between national attributes and various types of foreign policy behavior, particularly between domestic disorder and foreign conflict behaviors. Second, they are based on aggregate data.⁽¹⁾ My primary purpose in this study is to test whether there is any correlation between these two dimensions.

I will focus on one area of linkage politics which has not yet been explored: the relationship between change in political leadership and foreign policy behavior. More specifically, the following hypotheses will be tested:

Hypothesis I: Leadership change is more likely to bring about change in foreign policy than continuous leadership. (This hypothesis is derived from Rosenau's hypothesis (1971: 111-117). If the individual role is important, it should follow that a change in the incumbent leadership will bring about a change in foreign policy.)

Hypothesis II: Regime change is more likely to bring about policy change than personal change (The change of a regime affects both individual and governmental variables. Thus regime changes bring about more profound alterations in a political system.)

Hypothesis III: A violent leadership change is more likely to bring about

(1) James Rosenau is certainly the founding father of linkage politics. His theoretical formulations are found in "Toward the Study of National-International Linkages," James Rosenau, *The Scientific Study of Foreign Policy* (New York: Free Press, 1971), pp. 307-38; "Pre-theories and Theories of Foreign Policy," *ibid.*, pp. 95-149; "Theorizing Across Systems: Linkage Politics Revisited," Jonathan Wilkenfeld, ed., *Conflict Behavior and Linkage Politics* (New York: David McKay Company, Inc., 1973), pp. 25-56.

policy change than a peaceful leadership change. (A violent leadership change is more likely to install a new regime whose ideological position is different from that of the incumbent.)

Hypothesis IV: A country experiencing leadership change is likely to change its policies on a wider range of issues than a country experiencing no leadership change. (This hypothesis is logically derived from the first hypothesis, because the scope of foreign policy change is likely to be greater in a country which is more likely to change its foreign policy than in one that is less likely to change its foreign policy, and because once a country changes its foreign policy, it is likely to change its policies on more than one issue area.)

To test the above hypotheses I will investigate both the changes in political leadership in black African countries and the voting behavior of these countries at the United Nations General Assembly from 1957 to 1975.⁽²⁾

There are several reasons why Africa has been chosen. First, all the African countries are officially committed to non-alignment as their foreign policy doctrine. By using non-alignment as a common yardstick we can measure and compare, more clearly and easily, changes in political leadership and foreign policy behavior.

Second, most African countries will be placed under the same category when nations are classified according to the national attributes most commonly used by students of linkage politics. For instance, James Rosenau (1971: 111-113) hypothesizes that size, political accountability, and economic development have considerable value in explaining international behavior. In

(2) In this study black Africa includes the following 35 independent states in Africa south of the Sahara: Botswana, Burundi, Cameroon, C.A.R., Chad, Congo, Dahomey, Equatorial Guinea, Ethiopia, Gabon, Gambia, Ghana, Guinea, Ivory Coast, Kenya, Lesotho, Liberia, Madagascar, Malawi, Mali, Mauritania, Mauritius, Niger, Nigeria, Rwanda, Senegal, Sierra Leone, Somalia, Swaziland, Tanzania, Togo, Uganda, Upper Volta, Zaire, and Zambia. The reason why the 1957 is chosen is that in that year the first black African colony—Ghana—gained independence since World War II.

subsequent studies made by other students of linkage politics similar attributes are identified as having explanatory value (Sawyer, 1967; Russett, 1967; Rummel, 1969).

In terms of the above three variables mentioned by Rosenau, most black African countries are the same. With a few exceptions they are small, underdeveloped, and closed polities.⁽³⁾ Many African specialists support Rosenau's hypothesis that, in Africa, personality is the most important determinant in foreign policy behavior (particulary Zartman, 1966: 65; Cowan, 1966: 121-122). However, no one has empirically tested the hypothesis. It will be interesting to investigate, therefore, whether personality is the determining factor in foreign policy making in Africa.

Finally, the most intriguing hypothesis for students of linkage politics asserts a causal relationship between domestic disorder and foreign conflict behavior of states.⁽⁴⁾ Most African countries are unstable. Of course, political instability is a relative concept, depending on how many countries

(3) Rosenau and Hoggard's classification based on 1963 data included all the black African countries in the group of small and underdeveloped societies. Of the 36 countries 14 were classified as open and the rest as closed. But at present with one exception (Gambia) all those countries classified as closed by Rosenau and Hoggard are either under a one party system or under military rule. See James Rosenau and Gary Hoggard, "Foreign Policy Behavior in Dyadic Relationships: Testing a Pre-Theoretical Extension," James Rosenau, ed., *Comparing Foreign Policies* (Hollivood, Calif.: Sage Publications, Inc., 1974), pp. 117-49. No matter what kinds of criteria you use, these countries will be classified as closed societies. According David Moore, four variables—freedom of the press, horizontal power distribution, representative character of the current regime, and electoral competitiveness—are statistically significant for distinguishing open from closed societies. Of the 27 black African countries four (Uganda, Madagascar, Sierra Leone, and Liberia) were classified as open. However, these four countries classified as open will be classified as closed if more recent data are used. See Moore, "Governmental and Societal Influences on Foreign Policy in Open and Closed Nations," Rosenau, *op. cit.*, pp. 171-96. More recently, Freedom House has published a comparative survey of freedom. Except for Botswana, Mauritius, and Gambia, all the other black African countries are classified as countries having no freedom. See *Congressional Record*, Sept. 23, 1977, E. 5807-5808.

(4) Jonathan Wilkenfeld collected representative works on the subject in his anthology, *Conflict Behavior and Linkage Politics* (New York: David McKay Company, Inc., 1973).

are compared. If we compare only black African countries, some may be more stable than others. However, if the entire world is divided into dichotomous categories—stable and unstable—most black African countries fall under the latter category.⁽⁵⁾ Therefore, Africa is an ideal case for testing the hypothesis.

I will investigate the relationship between one measure of domestic disorder and one area of foreign policy behavior, not the relationships between multiple domestic disorder and foreign conflict variables. The measure of domestic disorder chosen here is leadership change, and the foreign policy behavior to be examined is the voting behavior of black African delegates at the United Nations General Assembly.⁽⁶⁾

Violent leadership change is the most representative variable of domestic disorder, mainly because all the other conflict behaviors are to change, or at least to influence, the incumbent political leadership. For example, Rummel's (1973: 68-9) nine measures of domestic conflict (assassination, general strike, guerrilla warfare, major government crisis, purge, riot, revolution, anti-government demonstration, and people killed in domestic violence) are all directly or indirectly related to leadership change. Leadership change is an end result of these conflict activities.

Leadership change here is defined as change of the head of state or government, or change of the regime. When the head of state and the head of government are not identical, the change of one or both is regarded as leadership change. However, the simultaneous change of both leaders is

(5) According to David Moore, governmental stability, competitive party system, party stability, and military participation are most potent measures for political stability (See "Governmental and Societal Influences on Foreign Policy in Open and Closed Nations," James Rosenau, ed., *Comparing Foreign Policies*, pp.171-199). Morrison and others rank black African countries according to degree of political instability, using various measures including Moore's variables (See *Black Africa: A Comparative Handbook* (Riverside, N.J.: Free Press, 1972), pp.100 and 128-31).

(6) The data on the votes of African countries were collected from *Roll Call Votes at the General Assembly, 1963~1975* compiled by Reference and Documents Section, Bureau of International Organization Affairs, Department of State and *United Nations, General Assembly, Official Records, 1957~1962*.

treated as a single change. The change of a regime automatically involves the change of a government leader.⁽⁷⁾

Leadership change is divided into two categories according to the constitutionality of leadership change. One is leadership change through a peaceful process, and the other through a violent means. The former includes a voluntary transfer of power as well as a transfer of power according to the constitutional process.

The change of a head of state (or government), or of a regime, will inevitably bring about the change of the top foreign policy maker. This is the reason why leadership change is chosen for this study. Leadership change is the best measure by which we can test the relationship between domestic disorder and foreign policy, because it is not only the most representative measure of domestic conflict but also the most easily quantifiable one. Since only successful changes in leadership will be included, the question of what kind of revolution, coup, or government crisis should be counted will not arise. Rummel's nine measures have definitional problems. Let us take one measure: assassination. Rummel defines it as "a politically motivated murder or attempted murder of a high government official or politician." Questions immediately come to mind: How high is high? How can politically motivated murder be separated from those which are not politically motivated? Was an attempted murder really an attempted murder?

It is perfectly possible and probable in the African context that an

(7) Some might consider my approach too formalistic. Of course, the head of state or government is not necessarily the real decision maker. Moreover, in some countries the head of state is a figure head. However, only in two countries—Uganda and Zaire—the heads of state and government were not simultaneously replaced. In the case of Burundi two premiers were assassinated under the reign of King Mwami Mwambutsa IV. More importantly, the top leadership is the ultimate source of legitimacy for decisions and no decisions can be made without the official consent of the top leadership. Finally and most importantly, the very purpose of this study is to see whether the top leadership of a country is an important determinant of foreign policy.

attempted murder, reported in the mass media, is a political ruse concocted by the incumbent leadership.⁽⁸⁾ Under the circumstances, subjective evaluation is likely to play a considerable role in counting the number of assassinations. In contrast, there is almost no room for subjective evaluation in counting the number of leadership changes.

The voting behavior of black African states at the General Assembly is chosen for the same reasons. First, voting is easily quantifiable. Moreover, at the General Assembly all African countries participate in voting, and they vote on the identical issues. Since this study is interested in the longitudinal aspects of the voting behavior of black African states, only issues which had been voted on continuously were selected. They include disarmament, the Palestine question, South Africa, Portuguese territories, South West Africa, Rhodesia, China, Korea, and economic development.⁽⁹⁾ By examining these, it will be possible to find out not only how black African states voted on the same issue over time but also on what issues they changed their policies.

In order to distinguish various types of leadership African countries were divided into three groups, and these three groups into two sub-groups respectively. In terms of kind of leadership change they were grouped into the countries in which regime change occurred; the countries in which personal change occurred; and the countries in which no leadership change occurred. The first group of countries were again subdivided into the countries in which a violent regime change occurred and the countries in which a peaceful regime change occurred; the second group into the countries in which a violent personal change occurred and the countries in which a peaceful personal change occurred; and the third group into the countries in which no leadership change had occurred since independence

(8) Morrison and others were also aware of this possibility. See Morrison and others, *op. cit.*, p. 128.

(9) These nine issues had been debated and voted on continuously during the period of 1957~1975. The Chinese question was resolved in 1972 when the People's Republic of China replaced the Republic of China.

Table 1. Type of Leadership Change and Policy Change

Policy Change Type of Leadership Change	Korea Question	China Question	Palestine Question
Violent regime change and policy change (22)	14(68)	4(29)	12(54)
Violent regime change and no policy change	8	10(71)	10(46)
Violent personal change and policy change (10)	2(20)	0	2(20)
Violent personal change and no policy change	8	7	8(80)
Peaceful regime change and policy change (5)	2(40)	0	1
Peaceful regime change and no policy change	3	5	4
Peaceful personal change and policy change (4)	0	1	2
Peaceful personal change and no policy change	3	2	2
Continuous regime and policy change (15)	6(40)	8	13
Continuous regime and no policy change	9(60)	7	2
First regime and policy change (18)	8(44)	12	7
First regime and no policy change	10(56)	6	11

Note: The numbers in parentheses in the first, second, and third columns indicate percentages.

Source: Tabulated from the roll call votes at the General Assembly of the United Nations, 1957~1975.

and the countries during the control of the initial leaderships.

For the selection of resolutions, the following criteria were used:

- 1) Resolutions as a whole and those on operative paragraphs in both plenary and committee.
- 2) Resolutions in plenary if the same resolutions voted on in both plenary and committee.
- 3) Votes on only "key" procedural questions. Key procedural questions are defined as the questions of whether a simple or absolute majority is required and of whether or not an issue is important.⁽¹⁰⁾

The voting positions of black African states were classified as western, eastern, and third world. A country's position is regarded as western if it is identical with the U.S. position; eastern if identical with the Soviet position; and third world if identical with the position of the majority of third world countries.

(10) Bruce Russett and Hayward Alker used similar criteria in their book, *World Politics in the General Assembly* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1965), pp. 23-27.

The votes of black African countries were investigated in terms of the east-west division on the Korean, Chinese, and Palestinian questions, and in terms of the north-south division on the disarmament and developmental issues. Scholars have already discovered that there is not only the east-west division but also the north-south division in the General Assembly. They have found that on disarmament and developmental issues third world countries show the strongest cohesion, while the two superpowers align each other occasionally (particularly Alker, 1964).

Instead of the positions of the parties directly involved, those of their strongest supporters were used as the criterion for determining black African countries' voting positions. On the Palestinian question, for example, not the positions of Israel and Arab countries but those of the United States and the Soviet Union were used to classify the positions of black African states. Since, on the colonial issues, black African countries on the one hand, and Portugal, South Africa, and Britain on the other were the parties directly involved, the positions of the two superpowers were used as the criterion.

In the case of colonialism the U.S. and the Soviet Union may not be the strongest support and opponent, but they represent the west and the east respectively.

From 1957 to 1975 there were 32 violent leadership changes (22 regime and 10 personal changes) in the 32 black African countries examined. It does not mean that 32 countries experienced leadership change. Actually there were violent leadership changes only in 19 countries since in some countries leadership changed more than once.⁽¹¹⁾ Peaceful leadership changes numbered nine, which occurred in five countries. There were no leadership

(11) The 19 countries are Chad, Congo, Dahomey, Ghana, Madagascar, Niger, Rwanda, Togo, Ethiopia, Uganda, Upper Volta, Zaire, Central African Republic, Burundi, Mali, Nigeria, Somalia, Sierra Leone, Lesotho. The countries which experienced violent leadership change more than once are Central African Republic, Ghana, Niger, Upper Volta, Burundi, Congo, Dahomey, Ethiopia, Madagascar, Nigeria, Sierra Leone, Togo, Uganda and Zaire.

changes in 15 countries.

On the Korean question violent regime changes brought about policy changes in 68 percent of the cases; peaceful regime changes, in 40 percent of the cases; and continuous regimes, also in 40 percent of the cases. On the other hand, violent personal changes brought about policy changes in 20 percent of the cases, while peaceful personal changes brought about policy changes in no case. As far as the Korean question is concerned, therefore, violent leadership change is more likely to bring about policy change than peaceful leadership change (50 percent vs. 22 percent).

Of the two types of violent leadership change—regime and personal—violent regime change is more likely to affect policy change than violent personal change.

In 1975, 15 countries (43 percent) were ruled by the same leaderships which had come into power at independence. If leadership change is more likely to affect foreign policy, it should follow that the countries whose leaderships do not change are less likely to change their foreign policies. My data, however, do not bear this out.

On the economic, disarmament, and colonial issues these 15 continuous regimes had not changed their original foreign policy positions. However, the same was true of the other countries which had experienced leadership change. More surprising is the fact that on the Palestinian issue most continuous regimes had switched their positions, while on the Korean and Chinese questions no inference is warranted on the relationship between leadership and foreign policy.

The examination of what kind of continuous regimes had changed their foreign policies reveals an interesting fact. Ideologically moderate countries are more likely to change their foreign policies than ideologically extreme (either pro-western or pro-eastern) countries, and they adopt pro-eastern rather than pro-western positions. Another fact is that regardless of leadership change and kind of leadership change, black African countries tend to change their foreign policies simultaneously in a particular period.

Table 2. Same Regime and Policy Change

Korea Question	China Question	Palestine Question	Korea Question	China Question	Palestine Question
Policy Change					
Bot (74) Mta (65) EqGui (70)	Gab (61) IC (61)	Bot (72) EqGui (70) Cam (71) Ken (72) Sen (68) Swa (74) Tan (69)	Tog (61)	Bur (65) Con (61) Dah (61) Lby (61) Mad (61) Ngr (61) Som (62) UV (61)	Cha (70) Gha (65) Ngr (71) Les (73) Mad (69) Rwa (71)
Cam (WNE) Mor (NENEWSW) Sen (WNWNE) Tun (WNEWNENWN) Ken (EWN)	Cam (NWNWNE) Mta (WNE) Sen (EWEWE) Tun (NENE) EqGui (WNE) Gui (ENE) Mts (WSW) Mor (EWE)	Mlw (NWN) Gab (WSE) Mts (WESE) Gam (WNE) IC (WNE) Zam (NENE)	Som (ENE) Cha (WNW) Nga (ENE) Eth (WNESNW) Rwa (WNWNWNW) Gha (ENE) SL (NEN) Lby (WNEN)	CAR (NWE) Cha (NWNW) Nga (ENE) Rwa (WEW) SL (ENEW)	Eth (NSE)
No Policy Change					
Gab Gam Gui Mlw IC Mts Swa Zam Tan	Bot Gam Ken Mlw Swa Tan Zam	Gui Mta Mor Tan	Alg Bur Mli CAR Con Dah Les Mad Ngr Ugr UV	Alg Eth Gha Les Mli Tog Uga	Alg Bur CAR Con Dah Lby Mli Nga SL Som Tog Uga UV

Notes: W=Pro-Western; E=Pro-Eastern; N=Non-committal; S=Split vote.

In the early 1970's, for instance, 13 black African countries changed their votes on the Korean question.⁽¹²⁾ The present data are not able to explain why African countries were "radicalized" in this period. This finding, however, may throw some light on a contagious or chain effect of environmental factors on the foreign policies of African countries.

The above findings, in conclusion, do not support any of the four hypotheses with the exception of the Korean question. Even in the Korean case only Hypothesis III is supported by the present data.

This study did not attempt to identify all the sources of foreign policy change. It was simply to test the popular hypothesis that frequent leadership change is responsible for frequent foreign policy change. Since this hypothesis is not confirmed, we have to explore other possible sources. One possible source is the personality characteristics. Margaret Hermann (1974) has explored this avenue vigorously and has come up with some significant findings. The hypothesis tested and confirmed by Hermann can be tested again in the African context. One hypothesis is that the more authority a head of state has over foreign policy, the more likely his personality characteristics are to influence foreign policy behavior. The other one is that the more dogmatic heads of state with experience in foreign affairs are, the more likely they are to change foreign policy positions.

Another possible arena to explore is environmental variables. Rosenau (1971) hypothesizes that the systemic variables are a salient influencer next to the individual factors in small, underdeveloped, and closed countries.

I would be gratified if this study has made some contributions to the studies of foreign policy in general and African foreign policy in particular.

(12) Violent leadership change—Chad, Dahomey, Ethiopia, Ghana, Madagascar, Niger, Rwanda, and Uganda.

No leadership change—Botswana, Cameroon, Equatorial Guinea, Kenya, and Senegal.

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