Cline Center Coup D'état Project Dataset Codebook

(v2.0.0)

November 16, 2020

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The Coup D'état Project (CDP) identifies coups, attempted coups, and coup plots/conspiracies in 136 countries (1945-2019). The data identifies the type of actor who initiated the coup (i.e. military, palace, rebel, etc.) as well as the fate of the deposed executive (killed, injured, exiled, etc.).

This version of the dataset improves on the data published in September 2013 by: (1) reconciling duplicate events (2) filling in missing event data; (3) removing events with irreconcilable event dates; (4) removing events with insufficient documentation so that each event in the dataset is now confirmed by at least two sources; (5) removing events that were erroneously coded as coup events; and (6) added new coup events post-2005 to extend the time period covered to 1945-2019.

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Acknowledgements

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SUMMARY

Coups d'état are important events in the life of a country. They constitute an important subset of irregular transfers of political power that can have significant and enduring consequences for national well-being. There are only a limited number of datasets available to study these events (Powell and Thyne 2011, Marshall and Marshall 2019). Seeking to facilitate research on post-WWII coups by compiling a more comprehensive list and categorization of these events, the Cline Center for Advanced Social Research (previously the Cline Center for Democracy) initiated the Coup D'état Project (CDP) as part of its Societal Infrastructures and Development (SID) project.

More specifically, this dataset identifies the outcomes of coup events (i.e. realized, unrealized, or conspiracy) the type of actor(s) who initiated the coup (i.e. military, rebels, etc.), as well as the fate of the deposed leader.

The first version of this dataset (v.1.0.0) was released in 2013. Since then, the Cline Center has taken several steps to improve several aspects of the previously-released data and incorporate additional sources material. These include:

- Reconciling missing event data
- Removing events with irreconcilable event dates
- Removing events with insufficient sourcing (each event needs at least two sources)
- Removing events that were inaccurately coded as coup events
- Extending the time period covered from 1945-2005 to 1945-2019

While making improvements to the data, several items that had been included in the previous release were also removed from the current version:

- Certain variables fell below the threshold of inter-coder reliability required by the project
- The spreadsheet 'CoupInventory.xls' was removed because of inadequate attribution and citation in the event summaries

The first section of this codebook provides a succinct definition of a coup d'état used by the CDP and an overview of the categories used to differentiate the wide array of events that meet the CDP definition. It also defines coup outcomes. The second section describes the methodology used to produce the data.

DEFINITIONS AND VARIABLES

CDP Definition of a Coup d'état

The CDP defines coups d'état as *organized efforts to effect sudden and irregular (e.g., illegal or extra-legal) removal of the incumbent executive authority of a national government, or to displace the authority of the highest levels of one or more branches of government.*

In order to satisfy this definition, the following criteria must be met:

1. **Initiating actor(s)**: There must be an actor or group of actors initiating the event.
2. **Incumbent Targets**: Actors targeted for removal may include any incumbent that exercises control over national policy. Primary targets of a coup are individuals or groups that commands executive authority, including presidents, prime ministers, dictators, members of an established executive collective (rotating presidency, collective executive councils, juntas, single-ruling party systems), and so on. Coups may also target the authority of non-executive branches of government, provided that they have meaningful control over policy.
3. **A threat to leaders' hold on power**: A relevant coup event must be a credible, short-term, and direct threat to an incumbent leader or leaders.
4. **Irregular Means**: Initiators must use irregular means to seize, remove or render powerless the incumbent target. Typically, this is done by the threat or use of coercion or force. Some events involve violence, but coups may also be bloodless. Some relevant events are auto-coups[1], in which a chief executive uses irregular means to seize or dismantle competing centers of state power, including legislative and judicial authorities with influence over national policy. Relevant non-executive targets are limited to formal branches of national government, and can include legislative leadership and high-ranking members of official judicial bodies. Constitutionally legitimate leadership changes, including impeachments, no confidence votes, and resignations triggered by a loss of popular support are regular removals, and are not CDP events.
5. **Organized effort:** There must be an organized effort (whether successful or unsuccessful) that leaves the incumbents in a titular, *de jure* position of power subordinated to a higher authority (a military junta or supervisory council) that is the *de facto* executive leadership.

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[1] Also known as 'self-coups' or '*autogolpes*'.

Outcomes

Coups can be unrealized or realized. A coup is unrealized if it fails to achieve the effective removal or displacement of the targeted incumbent, or fails to end their ability to direct national governance.

Unrealized events include two sub-types: conspiracies and attempted coups. A conspiracy is a plot that is discovered and disrupted in the planning stages. An attempted coup is planned and initiated, but fails to achieve the effective removal or displacement of the targeted incumbent. In general, all coups begin as conspiracies, and include actions that may or may not succeed.

A coup is realized (i.e. successful) if incumbents lose their capacity to control the state by irregular means. Success, in the CDP definition, requires only that targeted incumbents lose power, and does not require evidence that the conspirators form an effective government or exert positive control of the state. In cases where legislative or judicial leaders are targeted, a coup may entail removal, replacement by fiat, and/or the irregular displacement of their designated functions.

To summarize:

> **Unrealized Coup** - A coup that fails to achieve the effective removal or displacement of the targeted incumbent actor, or fails to end their ability to direct national governance.
>
> These include:
>
> > **Coup Conspiracies -** A coup plot discovered and disrupted in the planning stages.
> >
> > **Attempted Coups -** An initiated coup plot that fails to achieve the effective removal or displacement of the targeted incumbent actor, or fails to end their ability to direct national governance.
>
> **Realized Coup** - A coup that achieves the effective removal or displacement of the targeted incumbent actor, or fails to end their ability to direct national governance. The plotters need not accomplish the effective takeover of the state apparatus.

<h1 style="text-align:center">Coup Typology</h1>

A considerable range of events fall within our definition of a coup. Because variation exists within situations we define as coups, we constructed a typology consistent with the objectives and reach of the CDP that focuses on the circumstances surrounding the execution of the coup (who initiated it, the immediate setting, its resolution, etc.). The typology and operational definitions of the coup categories are provided below. It should be noted that these categories are not mutually exclusive and that, where warranted, a coup may be placed in more than one category.

Military Coup

Coups initiated by military actors who are not a formal part of the governing apparatus (i.e., a military junta). This category does not include security forces, police, or retired/former officers because these groups/people are not part of the military or no longer in the active military.

Dissident Coup

Coups initiated by a small group of discontents to include ex-military leaders, religious leaders, former government leaders, members of a legislature/parliament, and civilians. This category does not include security forces or police as they are organized arms of the government.

Rebel Coup

Coups initiated by organized, militarized groups that have broken with the existing government and are actively contesting government forces.

Palace Coup

Coups initiated by members of a faction within the existing government (i.e., ministers, cabinet members, or other high-ranking people in the executive branch). This does not include members of the legislature/parliament. This category can include military personnel if they are members of a ruling military junta.

Foreign-backed Coup

Coups with a foreign power as the force behind the event. In many instances the foreign power works in collaboration with a set of domestic actors to remove the incumbent leader and install a government more sympathetic to its interests.

Auto Coups

Coups where the existing chief executive takes extreme measures to eliminate, or render powerless, other components of the government (legislature, judiciary, etc.). It also includes situations where the chief executive simply assumes extraordinary powers in an illegal or extra-legal manner (i.e., goes beyond extraordinary measures included in the country's constitution, such as declaring a state of emergency).

Forced Resignations

A soft coup where there is no formal deposing of the chief executive. Instead, the chief executive resigns from his or her position under the imminent threat of illegal or extra-legal removal. If the threat of removal is through legal means spelled out in the constitution, it is not a forced resignation (i.e., President Nixon's resignation in 1974).

Popular Revolt

An irregular regime change driven by widespread popular dissatisfaction expressed through large-scale civil unrest. An event falls into this category if a large-scale popular rebellion overthrows existing leader, forces their resignations, or elites use irregular means to force leadership changes in order to conciliate the populace. It is not a popular revolt if elites overthrow incumbents they consider "soft" on dissent in order to facilitate a crackdown.

Counter Coup

A coup where the newly installed, post-coup leadership is removed by members of the prior regime within one month of the preceding, realized coup.

Other

A residual case where the initiators do not fit the above categories (military, rebel, dissident, etc.) or the actors in a coup are not identified.

PROCESS FOR PRODUCING THE DATA

The main goal of this dataset was to improve the quality of the event data found in the 2013 CPD data (Nardulli et. al. 2013). To do so, we focused on the following:

- Reconciling missing event data
- Improving only on the variables from the 2013 dataset that had reliability statistics
- Removing events with insufficient sourcing (each event needs at least two sources)
- Removing events with irreconcilable event dates
- Identifying new coup events beyond 2005

The first step was identifying the events and variables we wanted to re-evaluate. To do so we filtered on the following four items:

1. Re-evaluate events that contained missing data (i.e. data with missing values). In the 2013 dataset, a decision was made to turn all missing values for a variable for an event into zero. However, after revisiting this decision, it was unclear if this lack of information was enough to indicate whether a value should be zero or not. Therefore, for this version of the dataset we wanted to verify whether the missing data for these variables were indeed zero (i.e. lacking information). Therefore, all of the cases that originally had missing values were re-evaluated.

2. Only focus on the variables from the 2013 dataset that had reliability statistics available. After revisiting the 2013 dataset, it was determined that only select variables had reliability statistics associated with them. We therefore excluded variables from the 2013 dataset with no reliability statistics as we were uncertain about the quality of these variables.

3. Identify and re-evaluate all events in the 2013 dataset that contained only one source or had incomplete event dates (i.e. events that were not given a precise day date).

Next, student analysts were hired, trained, and assigned to search and examine sources that contained coup events. This list of sources can be found below in Table 1. Before each student could re-evaluate events, each student needed to pass a gatekeeper test[2] where each student needed to achieve a score of .80 or higher on accuracy for each of the categories against a gold standard set of coup event codings. If an analyst failed to achieve this threshold for a particular question, the analyst had to take another gatekeeper test on the variables he or she failed on, and would continue being tested until he or she achieved a score of .80 or higher on accuracy.

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[2] See the Reliability Appendix for information on the construction of the gatekeeper test.

Table 1
List of Sources for Deriving Coup Data

The Center for Systemic Peace (Marshall and Marshall, 2007)
The World Handbook of Political and Social Indicators (Taylor and Jodice, 1983)
Coup d'état: a Practical Handbook (Luttwak, 1979)
The Cline Center's Social, Political, and Economic Event Database (SPEED) Project
Government Change in Authoritarian Regimes project - 2010 Update (Svolik and Akcinaroglu, 2006)
Powell and Thyne's Coup Data (2011)
News articles from ProQuest's Historical Newspapers collection
Wikipedia

Students who passed the gatekeeper test were assigned the events that were identified for re-evaluation to do the following:

1. Re-evaluate existing source material for the event to make sure the event was coded properly; fill in values for variables that were missing values; and reconcile event dates. If there was conflicting information, the analyst was to use his or her own best judgment to resolve the situation. Typically, this was resolved by going with the most recent source.

2. Search for new source material to see if there was any new information that could be added to the event to help fill in values and to reconcile event dates. If there was conflicting information, the analyst was to use his or her own best judgment to resolve the situation. Typically, this was resolved by going with the most recent source.

The original 2013 data release covered the period from 1945-2005. We set out next to extend the time period to 2019. Potential new coup events were identified by first using updated versions of two sources in Table 1 (Powell and Thyne, and the Center for Systemic Peace). We produced an additional list of potential coup events by querying the Cline Center's Global News Archive. The queries identified country-months were coup events may have occurred. Sources for potential coup events were identified with searches of ProQuest's Historical Newspaper Collection. Events were coded according to the typology definitions using available sources and as with the re-evaluation of events, conflicting information was resolved by using the most recent source material.

After all of the events were re-evaluated, and new events coded, those with fewer than two sources or that had irreconcilable event dates were separated from the dataset and set aside in a separate file.[3] Lastly, each qualifying event was assigned a coup id# which is used to reference the event and link the event to the source file which lists all of the sources used to produce the events. The variables used in the final dataset can be found below in Table 2.

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[3] These events were put into a new 'inventory' list just in case new information arises which allows us to include these events in futures versions of the dataset.

Table 2
Cline Center Coup D'état Project Dataset Variable Descriptions

Variable	Description
coup_id	Unique number assigned to each event. It consists of the country's **cowcode** and the eight digit date of the event in MMDDYYYY.
cowcode	Unique country code number drawn from the Correlates of War (COW) project (v4.0) identifying the country where the coup event occurred.
country	Name of the country where the coup event occurred.
year	Year of the coup event.
month	Month of the coup event.
day	Day of the coup event.
event_type	Indicates whether the event is a coup, attempted coup, or conspiracy.
unrealized	A dummy variable where one indicates an unsuccessful coup or plot and zero otherwise.
realized	A dummy variable where one indicates a successful coup and zero otherwise.
conspiracy	A dummy variable where one indicates a coup conspiracy thwarted prior to execution and zero otherwise.
attempt	A dummy variable where one indicates a coup was attempted by failed and zero otherwise.
military	A dummy variable where one indicates a military coup/attempt/conspiracy and zero otherwise.
dissident	A dummy variable where one indicates a dissident coup/attempt/conspiracy and zero otherwise.
rebel	A dummy variable where one indicates a rebel coup/attempt/conspiracy and zero otherwise.
palace	A dummy variable where one indicates a palace coup/attempt/conspiracy and zero otherwise.
foreign	A dummy variable where one indicates a foreign-backed coup/attempt/conspiracy and zero otherwise.
auto	A dummy variable where one indicates an auto coup and zero otherwise.
resign	A dummy variable where one indicates a forced resignation and zero otherwise
popular	A dummy variable where one indicates a popular revolt and zero otherwise.
counter	A dummy variable where one indicates a counter-coup and zero otherwise.
other	A dummy variable where one indicates the coup event does not fit into any of the above categories or the actors were not identified and zero otherwise.

noharm	A dummy variable where one indicates the deposed executive was not harmed during the coup event and zero otherwise.
injured	A dummy variable where one indicates the deposed executive was injured during the coup event and zero otherwise.
killed	A dummy variable where one indicates the deposed executive was killed during the coup event and zero otherwise.
harrest	A dummy variable where one indicates the deposed executive was placed under house arrest and zero otherwise.
jailed	A dummy variable where one indicates the deposed executive was jailed and zero otherwise.
tried	A dummy variable where one indicates the deposed executive was tried and zero otherwise.
fled	A dummy variable where one indicates the deposed executive fled the country and zero otherwise.
exile	A dummy variable where one indicate the deposed executive was banished from the country and zero otherwise.

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RELIABILITY APPENDIX

The gold standard was produced by randomly drawing 120 cases from the coup d'état dataset (v1.0). The sample was independently analyzed by two analysts who trained on the concepts of the coup definitions. Results were evaluated by using percent agreement, Krippendorff's Alpha, and Brennan and Prediger's Kappa (see Table A.1 below). These results show a very high level of agreement within in all of the categories by the two analysts assigned to produce the gold standard. Disagreements between each pair of analysts were reconciled and the final reconciled dataset became the gold standard used in the gatekeeper test.

Table A.1
Inter-coder Reliability Results for Analysts Who Produced the 'Gold Standard'

Variable	Number of Categories	Number Of Cases	Percent Agreement	Expected Percent Agreement	Krippendorff's Alpha	Cohen's Kappa	Brennan and Prediger's Kappa
realized	2	120	.93	.57	.85	.85	.87
unrealized	2	120	.93	.51	.85	.85	.85
attempt	2	120	.91	.57	.79	.79	.82
conspiracy	2	120	.96	.61	.89	.89	.92
military	2	120	.83	.50	.65	.65	.65
rebel	2	120	.93	.90	.27	.27	.85
palace	2	120	.88	.73	.56	.56	.77
popular	2	120	.93	.86	.52	.52	.87
dissident	2	120	.79	.74	.17	.19	.58
foreign	2	120	.93	.84	.53	.53	.85
resign	2	120	.91	.89	.11	.13	.82
counter	2	120	.97	.97	-.01	.01	.93
auto	2	120	.99	.96	.80	.80	.98
other	2	120	.92	.90	.13	.12	.83
noharm	2	120	.92	.74	.67	.67	.83
injured	2	120	1.00	.98	1.00	1.00	1.00
killed	2	120	.98	.95	.66	.66	.97
harrest	2	120	.95	.90	.48	.47	.90
jailed	2	120	.94	.91	.34	.34	.88
tried	2	120	.99	.99	.00	.00	.98
fled	2	120	.95	.94	.23	.23	.90
exile	2	120	.93	.90	.30	.30	.87