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THE WAVE OF MILITARY COUP D'ÉTAT IN WEST AFRICA: LESSONS
AND ITS IMPLICATIONS IN THE SUB-REGION

BY

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DECLARATION

I, Naomi Amerley Aduamoah, hereby declare that this dissertation is the final product of my own studies under the supervision of Dr. Daniel Dramani Kip-Sunyezi of the Legon Centre for International Affairs and Diplomacy (LECIAD), University of Ghana, towards the award of a Master of Arts (MA) degree in International Affairs. To the best of my knowledge, this dissertation is an original research work with the exception of references to other works which I have duly recognized. I also declare that this dissertation has not been submitted either in part or in whole for any degree elsewhere.

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16/01/2023

16/01/2023



INTEGRI PROCEDAMUS

DEDICATION

I dedicate this work to my family and friends.



ACKNOWLEDGMENT

I am grateful to the Almighty God for his goodness and mercies. I am grateful for this providence and grace upon my life.

I say a big thank you to my wonderful supervisor, Dr. Daniel Dramani Kipo-Sunheyzi, for his advice and contributions towards my work.

I am grateful for the contributions of all participants and for their invaluable contributions towards my work.



LIST OF ACRONYMS

AU	-	Africa Union
CSO	-	Civil Society Organization
DRC	-	Democratic Republic of Congo
ECOWAS	-	Economic Community of West African States
GDP	-	Gross Domestic Product
ICCPR	-	International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights
LECIAD	-	Legon Centre for International Affairs and Diplomacy
MFA	-	Ministry of Foreign Affairs
MINUSMA	-	Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in Mali
SSA	-	Sub-Saharan Africa
UN	-	United Nations
UNHCR	-	United Nations Human Rights Commission

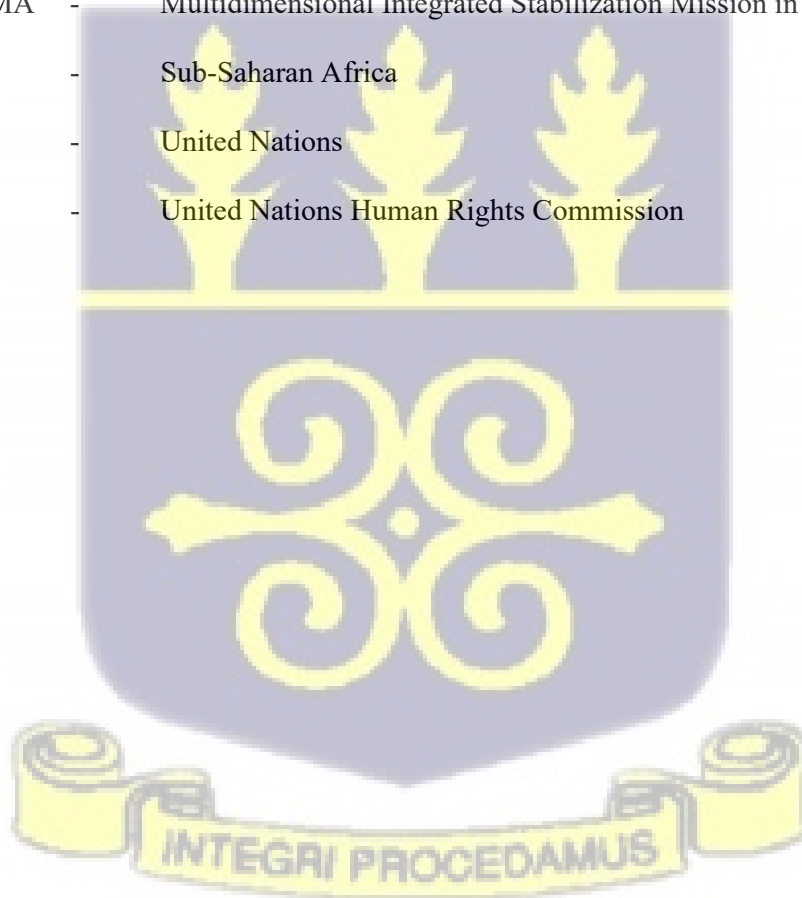


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ABSTRACT

Military coup was a common phenomenon after decolonization of Africa. Recounting recent happenings within the political space in West Africa, military coup has become an all too familiar subject of scholarly scrutiny, and there seems to suggest that there is a return of military coups in the sub-region. The military in Africa, and particularly in West Africa have had common reasons for coups, and the destabilizing factors have predominantly been security crises, poor economic performance, poverty, autocratic regimes, ethnic politics, detentions and convictions without trial, and corruption among others. From 2020 to 2022 only, there have been six coup d'états in Africa of which four were in West Africa, with the most recent happening in Burkina Faso on January 24, 2022. This research therefore examined the political and economic implications of military coups in the sub-region and interventions that can be put in place to end them. The study used a qualitative research methodology to collect and examine data. Both primary and secondary data sources were used, and a purposive sampling technique was used in the selection of participants. The study found that military coups weaken ECOWAS and promote unconstitutionalism and tyranny. The study further revealed that the recent coups have contributed to slow economic growth, rise in prices of essential commodities, loss of human resources and increase in refugees across the sub-region. The study recommends that political leaders across West Africa should respect regional, sub-regional and national protocols, should protect human rights of their citizens and should prioritize their national security.



CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

1.0 Introduction

Military coup has been a major problem of many African governments after decolonization and was a common way of changing government. It is known that the primary role of the military is to protect the country against external aggressions, defend the country's territorial integrity, assist the police where necessary to maintain internal peace and security, and other duties assigned to them by the government but unfortunately, military interference to democratic governance continues to be eminent across the continent (Rabinowitz & Jargowsky, 2018).

Coups are normally staged by the military and sometimes with civilians. According to the four models of coups developed by Ferguson, (1987) the first model postulates that there are coups that are orchestrated by the military within the highest ranks. The second model proposes that some coups happen as a result of combined efforts by the civilian and the military. He further explains that the civilians may be opposition politicians or top government officials. The third model identifies foreign troops or assistance to some disaffected politicians in the country and the last group identified is junior ranking members of the military. All four models are applicable to the sub-region because all groups identified in the model have ever led a successful coup in the sub-region, but the commonest occurrences is by the first and last group. According to Birikorang (2013), each decade determined the group that seized power in Africa. Therefore, in the 60s to the 80s, the top military officials together with the junior ranking members combined efforts to take over governments. In the 1990s to the early 2000s, the second

model was applicable because combined efforts of the military and civilians, who were mostly top government officials, orchestrated majority of the coups in the sub-region (McGowan, 2005). Currently, the third model has been identified as the causes of coups in the sub-region, as foreigners have been fingered in current military coups that happened in countries like Mali, Guinea and Burkina Faso (Pellegata, (2021). Holistically, the military is arguably one of the most resourced security agencies of most countries, exposing them to resources and information that make their operations easier. They have the capacity to contribute to the management of the affairs of a country (Ngoma, 2010).

Recounting recent happenings within the political space of Africa, military coup has become an all too familiar subject of scholarly scrutiny, raising concerns for policymakers and Heads of State. Post-independence, more than 215 attempted coups have been staged in Africa (Harkness, 2016) of which more than fifty percent have been deemed successful, weakening the long-chartered democratic governance. As compared to other continents, coup occurrence in Africa within the last seven decades is as much as 31 percent. The years following 1980 saw a reduction in coups nevertheless, it “remained a commonly used method of talking power” (Miller, 2011. p. 5). The last decade has registered a total of 20 coups, which is relatively an all-time low but with highest rate of success which should certainly be a cause of concern.

Democracy across the continent has been threatened, with an increasing number of insurgencies which have crippled the years of hard-earned political stability post independent. Post-independence, civilian constitutional regimes had high hopes of building inclusive society to foster sustainable growth and development but were only

met with internal conflicts and violations of fundamental rights (Jenkins & Kposowa, 1900). As noted by (Staffan & Clark, 2008. p. 2) “Africa was notable for its high incidence of military coups d’état in the post-independence era”.

The military in Africa, and particularly in West Africa have had common reasons for coups, and the destabilizing factors have predominantly been security crises, poor economic performance, poverty, autocratic regimes, ethnic politics, detentions and convictions without trial, and corruption among others (Okolo, 1981; Thompson, 1975; Jenkins & Kposowa, 1990). As noted by Souaré (2014), popular uprisings since 2010 have specifically aimed at changing autocratic rulers who have long held on to political rule but have failed to deliver the needed development demanded by the general populace. These regimes however manage to grip on to power through illegal amendments to constitution which eliminates age limits and terms of service, and flawed electoral processes. Illegal means of sustaining democratic regimes “has made coup seem more palpable” (Miller, 2011. p. 3) and this is evidenced by the coup d’état that took place in 2019 in Sudan, Libya, 2017 in Zimbabwe, 2011 in Egypt and 2011 in Tunisia. Political oppositions were suppressed and fundamental freedom could not be guaranteed. Recent occurrences in Mali, Guinea Bissau and Burkina Faso are not too different from past experiences. Onapajo (2022) commented that since 2019, the coup attempts and success in some of these countries could be attributed to the old age problem of political, historical and geopolitical influences, but most importantly, foreign influence.

Staffan & Clark (2008) opined that if sustainable economic development, protection of fundamental freedom and liberties were achieved in democratic civilian rule, military

coups could have been curtailed, but many years of corruption, and abuses have often characterized democratic regimes. Increasing poverty gap and inadequate access to resources have fueled discontent and agitation among the lower ranks (Musavengane & Zhou, 2021). Citizens, and most often, the military are left with little or no choice but to demand better governance through the use of brutal force including coups. “What options are left for an oppressed people, when the oppressors constrain all avenues of peaceful change” (Ikome, 2007. p 13). It is therefore uncommon to witness some level of support populace have for military take overs. As in the case of the 2010 coup in Niger, the Junta promised to “make Niger an example of democracy and good governance... save the country and its population from poverty, deception and corruption” (Perry, 2010. p 2; Miller, 2011) but subsequent years of rule revealed a lack of willingness and/capacity to do so (Miller, 2011).

The African Union (AU) as a regional body which seeks to promote democratic governance and sustainable development has over the years openly condemned military take overs, expressing deep concerns over the evolving situation to the peace and security in the region. The assembly of heads of state and government at the thirty-sixth ordinary session in July 2000 categorized military coup as an unconstitutional change of government and adopted measures to deal with such. Affected countries are often suspended from engaging in any activities of the organization (AU) until restoration of constitutional rule, and could further lead to targeted sanctions against military regimes including trade restrictions, visa denial among others. Mali in June 2021 was suspended from engaging in activities of the AU until the restoration of constitutional rule following a second military coup in May 2021.

Similarly, the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) on 9th January, 2022 imposed economic and diplomatic restrictions on Mali all in an attempt to pressure the military into restoring civilian government. Similar actions were undertaken against Guinea in September 2021, and Burkina Faso in January 2022. Ngoma (2004. p. 2) has earlier indicated that per the policies adopted by the AU “it would not be expected that a coup would be attempted, let alone accepted” but this has proven otherwise. Critics have however indicated the involvement of autocratic regimes in the AU could impair decision-making on coup interventions. Such instances are common and in Sudan for instance, “critics accuse the AU of not responding to government crackdown but was quick to condemn the military’s role in overthrowing President Omar Al-Bashir” (Ndubuisi, 2021. p. 4). Thus, the AU is seen as doing less with internal issues that pave way for military takeover or coups on the African continent. This is a worrying trend in Africa especially West Africa.

1.1 Problem Statement

Military coups were frequent concurrences in Africa at the advent of independence, but recent happenings suggest that they are on the rise after decades of independence. Suleiman (2022) estimates that there have been a little over 200 different coup attempts in Africa only from the era of independence to 2012. He further asserts that in the 1960s and 1970s, there was an attempted coup every fifty-five (55) days and over ninety (90) percent of all African countries have had a coup experience (Suleiman, 2022).

After the Cold War, Africa was introduced to a neoliberal democratic dispensation which was set to promote pluralism and the rule of law in place of military and authoritarian rule (Onapajo, 2022). In the estimation of the promoters of democracy and the rule of law, coups were supposed to be in extinction and dictators were to be completely eliminated from the politics and governance of Africa countries.

Unfortunately, that has not been the situation because from 1958 to 2008, there has been a lot of coups, of which most occurred in former French colonies. It is worth noting that it is not necessarily the shift in formation of government or the introduction of constitutional rule that lead to coups as mentioned by Ndubuisi (2021). He further affirms that it could not be constitutional amendments per say because they could lead to impactful changes in the lives of citizens, but rather, the challenges lie in the fact that some governments and constitutions are designed to keep an individual in power till death, which may bring stagnation in the progress of the country (Ndubuisi, 2021).

Mwal et al (2021) recount that between this period, that is from 1958 and 2008, West African countries did not only have the highest number of coups in Africa, also, their coups accounted for almost 44.4%. Mwal et al further contribute that from 2010, the total attempted coups in Africa are approximately forty (40), out of which twenty (20) occurred in West Africa and the Sahel, and from 2017 till date, there have been seven attempted coups, out of which five (5) were successful and two (2) failed. Suleiman (2022) also posits that twelve (12) out of twenty (20) and six (6) out of seven (7) successful coups that happened from the years 2010 to 2022 and 2019 to 2022 respectively happened in French-spoken countries.

Countries like Sudan, Mali, Guinea Bissau, Chad and others have undergone military coups in the last couple of years. From 2020 to 2022 only, there have been six coup d'états in Africa of which four were in West Africa only, with the most recent happening in Burkina Faso on January 24, 2022. The “return” of military takeovers in Africa suggests that democracy was an active component of their political structure and governance, and could be enough to eliminate or significantly reduce occurrences; “to

say African democracies are dying is to accept that they were alive” (Devermont, 2021. p. 16).

Mwal et al (2021) account that although coups are frequent in Africa, they happened at a decreasing rate. They further explained that almost all coups in Africa have common themes and not much has been done to significantly reduce them. Occurrences in Mali, Chad, Burkina Faso and Guinea have young military officers between the ages of 38 and 41, who are mostly from Special Forces within the Armed Forces, ousting democratically elected aged leaders. The effects and impact of coups on the above-mentioned countries should have been enough deterrent to countries like Benin, Cote d’Ivoire, and Niger who later on had similar occurrences. Arguably, coups in West Africa occur in waves and are almost contagious.

The overthrow of the government in Burkina Faso and other countries by the military is symptomatic of emerging coups in the sub-region, which has been met by condemnation and sanctions from both regional and international organizations. ECOWAS is still struggling to bring normalcy and democracy to three (3) of its coups-infested countries, where the military has seized power in a space of a year and half. Coups do not only alter the social and economic policies of a country; it has significant impact on the political structure of the country and the sub-region, making democracy superficial. An appalling situation in most coup-prone countries is that of no or very low expectation from government. The populace normally lose confidence in the economy, the government and their general wellbeing, all of which may be improving at a very slow pace. Although coups are nothing new in the sub-region, their effects in the past are not the same now due to current socio-economic changes and development

around the world. This study therefore examined the political and economic implications of coups in the West African Region, and the lessons that can be learnt from them to prevent further occurrences.

1.2 Research Questions

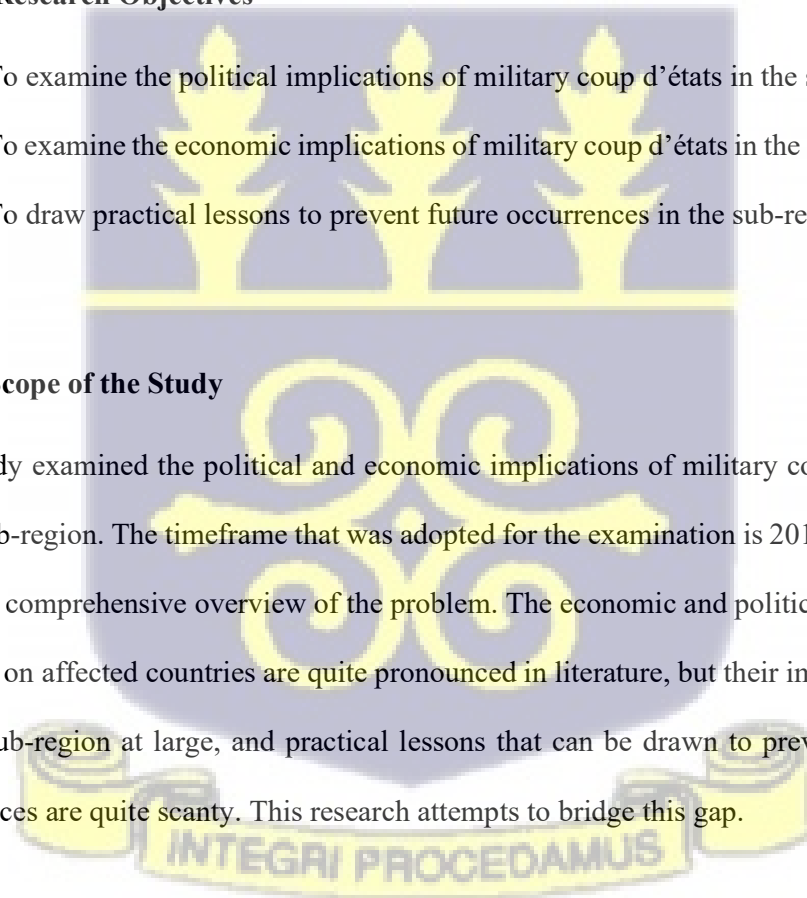
1. What are the political implications of military coups in the sub-region?
2. What are the economic implications of military coups in the sub-region?
3. What practical lessons can be drawn to prevent future occurrences in the sub-region?

1.3 Research Objectives

1. To examine the political implications of military coup d'états in the sub-region
2. To examine the economic implications of military coup d'états in the sub-region.
3. To draw practical lessons to prevent future occurrences in the sub-region.

1.4 Scope of the Study

This study examined the political and economic implications of military coup d'états in the sub-region. The timeframe that was adopted for the examination is 2010 to 2022, to give a comprehensive overview of the problem. The economic and political impacts of coups on affected countries are quite pronounced in literature, but their implications on the sub-region at large, and practical lessons that can be drawn to prevent future occurrences are quite scanty. This research attempts to bridge this gap.



1.5 Rationale of the Study

Military coups in the sub-region have increased in the last seventeen months, destabilizing the political atmosphere. This study therefore examined the political and economic implications of the frequent coups in the sub-region. It also highlighted practical lessons that can be drawn from past experiences to shape future decisions. The study identified various stakeholders such as ECOWAS and the citizenry, and the effects of the coup on these stakeholders. Findings from this research contribute to literature as research around this area is scanty.

1.6 Thesis Statement

Military coup d'états have political and economic implications on the sub-regional body, ECOWAS. Therefore, practical lessons can be drawn from recent coups that could help prevent frequency of occurrences.

1.7 Theoretical Framework

This study was guided by the theory of neo-patrimonialism, which is a theoretical framework for understanding contextualized African politics spanning from the colonial period till now. Patrimonialism from which neo-patrimonialism was developed is a dominant traditional form of government practiced in most African countries and the theory was propounded by Max Weber. Patrimonialism refers to a system of rule whereby power is centralized, and absolute power is exercised by a superior.

Right after colonization, the colonial rule and political systems that were introduced to African countries eliminated the absolute traditional rule in most countries. A system of governance was introduced known as neo-patrimonialism, which is a blend of the

traditional with the modern system of government. It was a combination of the known (traditional system of ruling) and the unknown (modern method of ruling).

Neo-patrimonialism is known as a modern form of the conventional patrimonial ruling structure, and it is a mixture of characteristics from patrimonialism and “legal-rational rule” (Bratton and Van de Walle 1994). The term was first used by Eisenstadt (1973) but its main proponents are Christopher Clapham, Robert H. Dahl, Seymour Martin and William E. Canolly. Christopher Clapham defines neo-patrimonialism as a form of organization in which relationships of a broadly patrimonial type (traditional) pervade a political and administrative systems which are formally constructed on rational-legal lines. The ‘neo’ attached to the traditional system (patrimonialism) explains the contemporary legal-rational reasoning, institutions and governance attached to the existent prevalent system of authority (Mkandawire 2013).

According to Bratton and Van de Walle (1994), neo-patrimonialism is a common feature in Africa politics, and it transcends both rural and urban politics. Right after independence, the legitimacy of neo-patrimonialism was wide spread as liberation movements and joint military and police forces found themselves taking over power from civilian governments, leading young democratic countries in attempt to salvage collapsing economies. In an attempt to contribute to the development and growth of the economies and politics of a country, leaders become brute, inconsiderate and selfish. Erdmann and Engels (2006) described this phenomenon as “Africanization of the bureaucracy.” This means neo-patrimonialism explains a system in which an office of power abuses it for personal uses and gains, as opposed to a strict division of private and public spheres.

Neo-patrimonialism is widely understood as a part of the nature of the African state, characterized by the lack of separation between the public and the private sphere and is found as fundamentally inhibiting state capability on the continent. Individuals use state resources in order to secure the loyalty of clients in the general population with the aim of overthrowing a legitimate government. In view of the above, issues of multiplicity of actors in local, regional and international systems, are accepted as players influencing certain activities including coups (Soest, 2021). Notable among these actors at various levels are the security agencies such as the armed forces and police, who are noted for overthrowing constitutional elected civilian governments.

Neo-patrimonial systems, power is concerned with few powerful or influential individuals for their personal gains. Armed forces or joint military juntas in patrimonialistic regimes are mostly autocratic, abusive and oligarchic, who exclude a chunk of the populace from the administration of the country and run government to their benefit (Ogundiya 2009). According to Kojo and DeMarco (2009), such administrations are unceremonious, pervasive and abuse of formal institutions (Erdman, & Engel 2007). In their worst forms, the rights and freedom of the citizens and the press are grossly abused. Bratton and Van de Walle (1994) further posit that clientelism is a central theme in neopatrimonialism. Clientelism can be identified as schemes to obtain legitimacy and safeguard power to achieve parochial interests and objectives in a political and economic environment that is highly unstable (Bratton, & Van de Walle 1994). It corrodes social growth and political development in a country and downplays concepts such as accountability, legitimacy and democracy.

Defenders of the concept of neo-patrimonialism assert that it is a central theory underpinning the various distinct features of governance in the African state, which distinguish them from its counterparts in other world regions (Ogundiya 2009, Erdman and Engel, 2007). Also, some argue that patrimonialism is not bad in and of itself, and cannot be justified as “a synonym for corruption, bad governance, violence, or evidence of a weak state” (Weber,1947; Pitcher et al, 2009).

Critics are of the view that the term is vague because the theory is concentrated on African politics only and cannot be classified as a universal theory because it has failed to take into account the politics of non-African states (Bach and Woode, 2015). Others argue that the theory is analytically unprecise, because it is seen as “state in operation” against the rational-legal form as it should be, painting a pessimistic type of authority that does not promote development and wellbeing of Africans (Mkandawire, 2015; Bach, 2015; Soest, 2021)

Despite the criticism, this theory is deemed most appropriate for this study because it clearly and adequately describes the political space of Africa post-independence, and elaborates how political structures and institutions are designed in Africa. It also acknowledges various actors at the national level, and points out the military as an actor capable of capturing political power and influencing decisions in a country.

1.8 Literature Review

Coup is defined as the use of brutal force or threat “by the military or other elites within the state apparatus to unseat the sitting executive using unconstitutional means” (Powell and Thyne, 2011. p. 2; Derpanopoulos et al., 2016) and therefore constitute “an affront

to stability, legitimacy, and democracy” (Varol, 2017. p. 1). Fundamental reasons for unseating democratically elected president by coup is to bring about political and economic transformation, with the introduction of a new Head of State (Derpanopoulos et al., 2016).

In the works of Ndubuisi, (2021) he cited that the OAU during and after its formation was nonchalant about military takeovers from constitutional elected governments due to the rippling wave of democracy in Africa, and was only concerned about protecting the territorial integrity of newly constituted or independent states on the continent. Murithi, (2009) also in his debated affirmed this assertion by Ndubuisi (2009) by contributing that, over three decades after the formation of AU, there were series of coups but the primary focus of the organization was to eradicate all forms of colonialism from the continent according to Article II of the Charter, taking less consideration of the effects of coups which could be more or less catastrophic as colonialism itself. With the advent of ECOWAS, there were frequent coups but at a decreasing rate, amid coup crises and frequent political instability, the primary purpose of the sub-regional organization was to promote economic integration (Kioko, 2013). These two bodies have undergone transformational changes in recognition that bad governance, coups and human rights abuses are transboundary due to shared economic and developmental interest (Ndubuisi, 2012). In search for the missing link, a couple of factors have been identified.

Ngoma (2010) mentioned that the first to be identified was the explanation attached to the traditional democracy-stability theory that postulates that illegal overthrow of government, or even an attempt at it, is enough indication to create hostility and

destabilize harmonious environment. States were therefore encouraged to create peace to promote development and the general wellbeing of every citizen. Diamond (2018) also agrees that the premises could be identified from democracy, which could serve as an effective tool to end uprisings. He further contributes that traditional or modern democracy is the solution to end coups on the continent today and in the future, but structures of democracy must be put in place. Sophia et al (2015) add that weak civil societies and corruption is enough indicators for a possible military takeover, because there is a strong link between democratic governance and the concept of stability.

Foreign influence has been mentioned as another link, and has over the years triggered military coups in Africa but this has largely been considered as a conspiracy theory (Ngoma, 2004). As noted by Suleiman & Onapajo, (2022. p. 6), “Like coups in the post-independence era, recent coups in West Africa also have foreign fingerprints. For instance, Russia is cited in both the 2021 and 2020 coups in Mali, as well as the latest one in Burkina Faso. External support could be in the form of military training, technical support or financial aid. Ndubuisi (2021) is of the view that this is essentially true because African countries still rely on external markets popularly from the West, and they largely rely on Western grants, aid and support to grow their home economies. Ayitteh (2018) shares similar opinion that external factors cause fragilities in government structure, especially in Africa, could be partially blamed for the political mishap. He further noted that African leaders are characterized by selfishness and personal interest, therefore they fail to develop their local economies to support the growth and welfare of their citizens, and prefer to rely on foreign aid and easy-generating revenue sources. Tossell (2020) in his work also demonstrated how African

leaders develop hogwash manifestos to attract foreign aid, which could lead to foreign influence not only on the economy, but also on the political structure of the country.

Whether a coup will lead to democratization or authoritarian regime has been a subject of scholarly scrutiny. Powell (2014) applied multivariate analyses to assess the hypothesis of democratic group in Africa within the period of 1952 to 2012. The undemocratic nature of coups usually attracts wide condemnation from regional and international communities but the scholar argued that the likelihood of initiating democratic transition post-coup, after the unseating of a dictator is four times more likely in comparison to regimes that have not experienced any coup. The study concluded that although political development is adversely affected, “now more than ever, non-democratic regimes are actually witnessing democratic improvements following coups, even full transition to democracy” (Powell, 2014. p. 2). Derpanopoulos et al., (2016) however have indicated that only 14% of all military coups against authoritarian regimes led to democratic transition in less than three years from the period of 1950 to 1989, and 40% from 1990 to 2015 with more than 50% initiating new autocratic regimes. Moreover, an increase in human rights abuses were recorded within the same periods. Coup is therefore not a viable tool in ushering democratic regimes.

Rabinowitz & Jargowsky (2018) studied how rural coalition contributes to the risk of coup using a continuous-time Cox proportional hazard regression model for 44 sub-Saharan countries within the period of 1960 to 2000. The dynamic nature of most African societies includes people of different ethnicity and culture. As in the case of the Liberian coup of 12th April, 1980, a major ignition to the coup was the Americo-

Liberians political party known as True Whig Party that griped on to power for more than a century although constituted less than 1 percent of the total population but had the biggest shares of the nation's wealth (Okolo, 1981). Political appointments featured a large percentage of this few groups in comparison to indigenous rural coalitions. The coup leader therefore promised of building an inclusive society without discrimination. Rabinowitz & Jargowsky (2018), concluded by highlighting the importance of building inclusive societies where resources and opportunities are equitably distributed without skewness to a particular group. Bodea & Houle, (2021. p. 6), argued that “high income and wealth inequality between ethnic groups, coupled with within-group homogeneity, increases the salience of ethnicity and solidifies within-group preferences vis-à-vis the preferences of other ethnic groups, increasing the appeal and feasibility of a coup”.

Yukawa et al., (2022) work examined the nexus between civilian protests and coups post-cold war era. Nonviolent protests provided a convincing opportunity to stage coups, justifying the action as democratic because international organizations condemn violent protests. Conclusion from the study revealed an increased in coup attempts following nonviolent protests (Johnson & Thyne, 2016. p. 24) analyzed global coup attempts within the periods of 1951 to 2005 and found that “protests signal regime illegitimacy, which incentivizes coup and provides a favorable climate for post-coup reforms”.

Political stability has been a major determinant of economic growth. The work of Fosu, (2002), shared light on the relation between political instability and economic growth of 31 Sub-Saharan Africa countries using data from World Bank. The findings indicated that post-colonial period, all forms of political instability – abortive coups, coup plots, or successful coups are inhibitors to economic growth, but the effect was more

pronounced for abortive coups, followed by successive coups, with coup plots being the last. Although political instability has a positive short-term relation to economic development, but many years of political instability have contributed to increased corruption and less development in ECOWAS countries (Abu et al., 2015).

The African Union's adoptive framework against coup regimes has been a contributing factor to the relatively decreasing number of coups within Africa. Souaré (2014), however opined that the current six-month period transition deadline offers a coup regime enough time to strengthen rule hence, immediate reinstatement of disposed democratic leader could be adopted to enhance policy efficiency. Piaplie, (2019), study comparatively analyzed the sanctions regime of the African Union (AU) against unconstitutional change of government, and highlighted the shortfalls. The posture of the AU in the case of Zimbabwe coup (2017) suggested support for the military, as it did not clearly specify sanctions against infringement on rights and freedoms. Its response has largely remained "reactive, incomprehensive and dubious at times (Piaplie, 2019. p. 100).

1.9 Methodology

Different approaches are used in different researches to collect, analyze and interpret data. According to Silverman (2005) research methodology is defined as selection of an appropriate field for the research, gathering data and the use of the best technique to interpret data to get the right information to contribute to literature. To critically examine the economic and political implications of military coups in West Africa and to draw practical lessons to inform future occurrences, various research tools and techniques have been employed as explained below;

1.9.1 Research Design

There are three different research designs namely; quantitative, qualitative and mixed method. This study was conducted using a qualitative study approach. Crossman (2002) defines a qualitative design as the gathering of data on the social lives of a specific chosen sample, of which the data gathered are non-numeric to deduce information out of it. Kothari (2004) explains that qualitative research design is the most prudent option to take if the researcher wants to critically assess and evaluate participants' opinions and contributions about a specific subject matter. Creswell (2013) also contributes that qualitative research design helps the researcher to create meaning out of the varied experiences of various participants.

A qualitative research design was the most appropriate design for this research because it helped in understanding and appreciating the experiences of the various participants. It also provided contextual meaning to the situations described by the participants, by providing insightful meaning and an exclusive thought on shared experiences.

1.9.2 Sources of Data

There are two sources of data, primary and secondary sources. For the purposes of this research, both primary and secondary data were used. Wilson (2010) posits that primary data is collected by the researcher using information collection tools such as interviews guides, and without relying absolutely on already existing information in literature. Primary data was gathered from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Regional Integration, Ministry of Defense, Kofi Annan International Peace Keeping Training Centre, Ghana Armed Forces, and the National Security, all of which are located in

Accra, the capital of Ghana. Besides the officials from these organizations, the researcher also interviewed international relations experts in the University of Ghana, the Department of Political Science, and some Fellows at the Legon Centre for International Affairs and Diplomacy (LECIAD) and the Ghana Institute of Management and Public Administration (GIMPA) at the Department of Public Management and International Relations.

Secondary data, according to Ghauri and Gronhaug (2005) is cheaper and more organized as compared to primary data. Secondary data for this research was gathered from articles, books, newspapers, journals, reports, policy briefs and institutions' website.

1.9.3 Sampling Method and Sampling Size

In order to get credible and reliable information that satisfy the research objectives, snowball sampling was used for this study. According to Dudovskiy, (2001) snowball sampling is a chain referral sampling technique which is non-random, and used when features that are being looked for in participants are difficult to come about. As a result, the researcher identifies one participant who refers the researcher to another participant who could be helpful in providing useful information. As such, one person leads the researcher to another person who could contribute knowledge and experience to the study.

A snowball sampling technique was used in selecting participants for this study because the researcher did not know enough people who could be included in the population, and this also gave the researcher the opportunity to come into contact with hidden populations who had knowledge or whose works are concentrated in peace and stability

in the sub-region. Also, the researcher had the opportunity to be referred to participants who will best meet the objectives of this research. All participants were selected on the basis that they were referred by another participant who could vouch for their credibility in answering the research questions.

Sunders et al. (2009) argue that gathering large data from a populace is not enough guarantee that information obtained is absolute accurate or credible because a larger sample size sometimes leads to contradiction. Creswell, (2008) opines that an ideal sample size should be within the limits of five (5) to thirty (30) participants. As such, a total of fifteen (15) participants were selected for this study;

Four assistant directors from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Regional Integration (MFA), each from the United Nations Security Council Unit, Multilateral Bureau, Africa Bilateral Bureau and the Africa Regional Integration Bureau; three participants from the Ghana Armed Forces, two lecturers from Kofi Annan International PeaceKeeping Training Centre and one participant from the National Security; three student nationals of Burkina Faso and Niger currently residing in Ghana, a retired ambassador, and one journalist from TV3 Ghana. Thus, a total of 15 participants for the study.

1.9.4 Method of Data Collection

A semi-structured interview guide was designed by the researcher and used in conducting all interviews. The researcher employed a face-to-face method. A face-to-face interview was employed because it provided extra information using non-verbal means such as body language, body posture and tone of voice. All interviews conducted

were recorded with the help of a tape recorder to help the research transcribe verbatim from audio to text.

1.9.5 Data Analysis

After gathering both primary and secondary data needed to meet the research objectives, they were sorted out. Coffey and Atkinson, (1996) mention that it is very important to sort data gathered into themes or codes as this is an indispensable process when using a qualitative research approach. After conducting interviews with participants, data gathered were transcribed to help sort the needed information. Every interview was deemed to be extremely useful in reaching the overall objectives of the research, therefore each transcription was labeled to help in easy identification. Sandelowski, (1996. p. 25) states that “analysis of individual cases enables the researcher to understand those aspects of experiences that occur not as individual units of measurement but as part of the pattern formed by the confluence of meanings within individual accounts.” The transcription was done from audio to text to make it easier to be grouped. The texts were further grouped based on the research objectives.

A thematic content analysis was adopted for the grouping of the texts. Thematic analysis in the view of Braun & Clarke, (2006) is the process of identifying salient patterns or themes and use them to address the research problem and objectives within a qualitative data. Not only primary data will be grouped into themes, but both primary and secondary data. Thematic analysis was adopted for this research because Denzin (1989) emphasized that this method has been specifically designed to be used for either individual or cases to provide in-depth evaluation and analysis that will contribute to meeting research objectives.

1.10 Ethical Consideration

Ethical considerations were made throughout the entire research. Vanclay et al (2013), are of the opinion that ethics are central to any research. As such, ethical considerations such as seeking the consent of participants, voluntary participation, confidentiality and anonymity were employed. All participants were informed of the purpose of the research, and introductory letters were sent to each of them to seek their consent. Participants who asked to be kept anonymous were tagged as officials throughout the study to ensure confidentiality. Participants voluntarily participated and were at liberty to withdraw at any point in time.

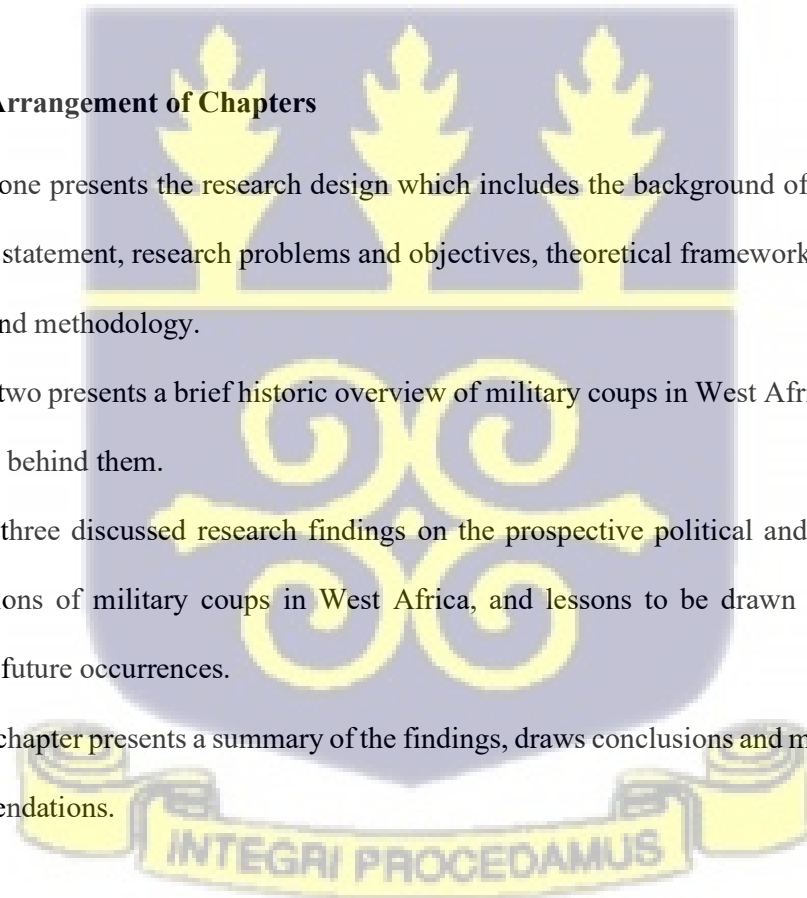
1.11 Arrangement of Chapters

Chapter one presents the research design which includes the background of the study, problem statement, research problems and objectives, theoretical framework, literature review and methodology.

Chapter two presents a brief historic overview of military coups in West Africa and the rationale behind them.

Chapter three discussed research findings on the prospective political and economic implications of military coups in West Africa, and lessons to be drawn to prevent possible future occurrences.

The last chapter presents a summary of the findings, draws conclusions and makes some recommendations.



CHAPTER TWO

AN OVERVIEW OF MILITARY COUPS IN WEST AFRICA

2.0 Introduction

This chapter presents a historical overview of military coups in West Africa. It analyzes the coups right from the inception of independence, January 1955, to the most recent successful coup that happened in the sub-region in January 2022. This chapter also covers discussions on some proposed rationales behind military coups in West Africa, and finally draws a conclusion.

2.1 Historic Overview of Military Coups in West Africa

Military coups were frequent occurrences all over the world including Africa, but in Sub-Saharan Africa (SSA) and particularly in West Africa, the occurrences were unparalleled. Decades later, all others have seemingly embraced a particular system of government that thwarts coups but unfortunately, the phenomena still persist in West Africa. Therefore, to effectively analyze the frequency of coups in West Africa, the time periods have been grouped into three main categories; early independence, which spans from 1955 to 1980; late independence, from 1981 to 1999; and early twenty-first century, which is from 2000 to 2022.

2.1.1 Early Independence (1955 – 1980)

The twilight of independence brought instability to the entire continent of Africa, as countries struggled to gain back power lost to colonial rulers. Some common features of governance as at that time were violent political conflicts, civil wars and coups. The

widespread military coups were to some extent quite common in “third world” countries, but incidences in Sub-Saharan Africa (SSA) and particularly in West Africa were copious (McGowan, 2006).

The period between 1955 and 1980 could be tagged as the “independence era” because most African countries gained independence from their respective colonial masters, and natives of those countries assumed leadership role. Nevertheless, those periods were politically catastrophic. Almost all independent West African states, with the exception of Cape Verde experienced either a successful coup, attempted coup, plotted coup or alleged coup.

The first coup that was staged in the sub-region happened in Togo in January 1963, and was led by Togolese military officers such as Emmanuel Bodjolie, Etienne Eyadema (who was later known as Gnassingbe Eyadema), and Kler Dadjo (Skinner, 2020). This opened the gateway to series of military interventions in the sub-region. The coup was characterized by bloodshed as the president, Sylvanus Olympio, was assassinated. Seven months later, the second coup in the sub-region was staged in Congo Brazzaville (now Democratic Republic of Congo) by Debat, and was a bloodless coup with zero casualties (Navarro, 1975). In October same year, the third military coup in the sub-region was staged and executed at Benin (formerly known as Republic of Dahomey), led by General Christophe Soglo (Augustyn, 2019; Navarro, 1977). The coup was violent, and as a result about nine hundred and ninety-nine civilians lost their lives (Augustyn, 2019 Navarro, 1977).

The coups continued in subsequent years, and Zolberg gives a reason for the subsequent happenings. He opines that “coups can happen anywhere at any time, but once the West African military lost its virginity and seized power, it has generally been the case that more plots and attempts soon follow” (Zolberg, 1973. p. 15). With this background, Benin and Congo Brazaville had their second coup in 1965, which were led by Congacou and Mobutu Sese Seko respectively (Navarro, 1977). Countries like Ghana, Nigeria and Upper Volta (now Burkina Faso) joined the terrain in 1966 when these countries experienced their first coup in their respective countries. The coup in Ghana was staged by the Armed Forces led by Colonel Emmanuel Kwesi Kotoka, Major A. A. Afrifa, and J. A. Ankrah as they toppled down the Kwame Nkrumah government. In Nigeria, the coup was led by Major Chukwuma Nzeogwu and Emmanuel Ifeajuna, which was characterized by bloodshed after twenty-two people died, including the Prime Minister and other top government officials (Luckham, 1994). Lt. Col. Sangoule Lamizana led the Upper Volta coup and overthrew Maurice Yameogo (Goldsmith, 1990).

According to Zolberg, (1973) the entire of 1960 was once classified as the military decade of Africa. This is because between 1963 and 1969 alone there were fourteen (14) successful coups in the sub-region, and they affected countries such as Togo, Benin, Burkina Faso, Nigeria, Ghana, Sierra Leone, and Mali; and the number of incidences in the aforementioned countries were two, five, one, two, one, two and one respectively (Zolberg, 1973).

Other countries such as Cape Verde and Senegal are arguably different from the rest of the fourteen West African countries because of the absence of coups in those countries

(Fabricius, 2004). Cape Verde in particular has never experienced any form of military intervention in the country right from independence in 1975 till date.

Moreover, a country like Guinea did not record any military coup in the 50s and 60s not because there were no attempts, but rather all attempts to overthrow the government at that time failed woefully. Gabon also holds a good spot with respect to military coups because they have recorded one incidence only in 1964, when the Gabonese military overthrew President Leon M'ba, and nominated Jean-Hilaire Aubame as the Head of Government after establishing a provisional government (England, 2008). The government was short-lived because the provisional government was overthrown by France, and reinstated the former President Leon M'ba.

According to Navarro (1977), there was an alleged coup in 1965, two plotted coups in 1968 and 1969 and one attempted coup in 1970 initiated by the National Liberation Front of Guinea, M. Foderba Keita together with Col. Kaman Diaby, and Guinea exiles in Guinea-Bissau respectively. On the other hand, countries like Guinea Bissau, Cote d'Ivoire (formerly Ivory Coast) and Liberia had a clean record and experienced no incidents because these three countries were still under colonial rule in the 60s and early 70s. Meanwhile, Mali had one successful coup in 1968, and two alleged coups in 1969 and 1978 (McGowan, 2006).

In the 70s, the first successful coup that happened in the sub-region was in Ghana in the year 1972, after Colonel Ignatius Kutu Acheampong staged a successful coup to tumble a constitutionally elected government led by Kofi Abrefa Busia, just three years after ascending power. In October same year, Benin had another coup led by Major Mathieu Kerekou and overthrew the Presidential Council which was the government in

charge for that period, and in 1975, Nigeria had their third successful coup led by Gen. Murtala Ramat Mohammed (Tilly, 2002). The last coup of the decade happened in June 1979 in Ghana and was led by Flt. Lt. Jerry John Rawlings as he overthrew the Akuffo government although an attempt was made a month earlier but was unsuccessful.

In estimation from 1960 to 1979, there had been thirty-four (34) attempted coups in West Africa only, with a success rate of fifty-one percent (51%) (Goldsmith, 2005). Some West African countries that had recorded numerous successful coups in the sub-region were Benin, which had had five successful coups in the years 1963, 1965, 1967, 1969, and 1972; Ghana, which had recorded four successful coups in the years 1966, 1972, 1978 and 1979 respectively; and Nigeria, in the year January 1966, July 1966 and 1975 (McGowan, 2006).

Years	1960-1964	1965-1969	1970-1974	1975-1979s
Attempted Coups	4	14	8	8

Source: McGowan, 2006).

2.1.2 Late Independence (1981-1999)

During this period all West African countries had gained independence from their colonial masters but the military of most countries were unhappy with the African rule. Although most African leaders at that time had learnt lessons from the past to control military infiltration, the mayhem continued nevertheless and at this point, it was easier for the military to take over the government of its country due to antecedents in the 60s and 70s. These periods, according to McGowen (2006), saw a decline in coups in West Africa. As compared to the earlier decades, there were few coups in the 80s and 90s (successful, failed, alleged, and attempted) in West Africa, but their success rates were

significant. He further explained that between 1980 to 1984, and 1990 to 1994, the frequency of successful coups in the sub-region were seventeen and fifteen attempts respectively (McGowen, 2006).

Notwithstanding the success rates, leaders may have learnt to prepare themselves better than what their predecessors did to prevent coups from becoming successful by improving intelligence, sharing intelligence with other governments, and “taking cues from what is happening to other leaders in neighboring countries” because coups can be contagious and affect politics throughout the region (Goldsmith, 2005). Therefore, there were lots of incidences of failed coups and attempted coups within that decade too.

In April 1980, Liberia had its first successful coup after a failed attempt a month earlier led by Gabriel Matthews, but in a determination to oust William Richard Tolbert Jr. who has been in leadership from 1971 to 1980, Samuel Kanyon Doe staged a violent coup of which the sitting president was killed, making the latter the president of the country from 1980 to 1990 (Dunn et al, 2000). In the same year, 1980, Guinea Bissau which had its independence in 1974 had its first military coup led by Maj. Joao Bernardo Vieira who ruled from 1980 to 1999, and had his second term from 2005 to 2009 (Decalo, 2004). Other countries such as Burkina Faso and Mauritania followed also in the same year, but there is something peculiar about coups in Burkina Faso.

Burkina Faso had the most coups in the 80s; in 1980, 1982, 1983 and 1987. The country had independence in 1960 and has had two successful coup attempts in 1966 and 1974. In 1980, Burkina Faso, which was known as Upper Volta at that time experienced a

successful coup which was led by the military leader and third president of the country, Saye Zerbo (McLean, 2022). Zerbo's candidature was resisted by trade unions and the general populace, and therefore stayed in office from November 1980 to November 1982 when he was also overthrown (McLean, 2022). His military successor Major Jean-Baptiste Ouédraogo, who was popularly called JBO, also came into power after eliminating his predecessor, but his term of office was relatively the shortest (November 1982 to August 1983) after being removed by Blaise Compaoré (Benjamin, 2015). Interestingly, Compaoré did not assume office in 1983 after the coup but made Thomas Sankara who was under house arrest to do so. The latter, Sankara, was also a military leader who was described as a pan-Africanist, and a revolutionary leader whose charisma drew the support of many (Mohammed, 2020). He formally changed the name of his country from Upper Volta to Burkina Faso. Unfortunately, Sankara also stayed in office for a short while (from 1983 to 1987) after he was assassinated by Blaise Compaoré, a top member of his government who in the past helped Sankara to seize power in 1983 (Hubert, 2019). Fortunately for Compaoré, he stayed in power from 1979 till 2014 when he was forced to resign and went into exile in Ivory Coast. This describes a country that has never experienced a failed coup.

Mauritania also had two successful coups in 1980 and 1984; the first was led by Mohamed Khouna Ould Haidalla who overthrew the incumbent president Mohamed Mahmoud Ould Louly, and in 2003 and 2007 stood as a candidate for the presidential election but lost to his opponents (Tore, 2018). The second was in 1984 which was led by Maaouya Ould Sid'Ahmed Taya, who stayed in office from 1984 to 2005. Around the same period in the 80s, Nigeria had two successful coups in 1983 and 1985. The

first was led by the current president of the republic, Muhammadu Buhari who after his overthrow in 1985 re-contested and won in 2015 and 2020 (Mohammed, 2020).

2.1.3 Coups in the Twenty-first Century (2001-2022)

The beginning of the twenty-first century brought new hopes for a fresh start in West African because the decade right before it was characterized by coup decline. Nevertheless, some countries like Burkina Faso, Mali, Mauritania and Guinea did not relent.

Burkina Faso before the 2000s had five successful coups with no failed attempt. In 2003, its first attempt failed woefully, but that did not deter the military. Subsequently, there were two successive failed attempts in 2015 and 2016 and two successes in October 2014 and January 2022. In October 2014, Lt. Colonel Yacouba Isaac Zida led the military in forcing the incumbent president Blaise Compaoré to resign after an uprising, and for the interim declared and served as the president of Burkina Faso, sidelining the senior military officers before singlehandedly choosing Michel Kafando as the new Head of State (ABC, 2014). To be seen as the savior of the country, Lt. Colonel Zida appointed Kafando, a civilian, through whom he would run the affairs of the state, and according to ABC (2014), the appointee (Kafando) after a day of his appointment also selected the appointer (Lt. Colonel Zida) as the Prime Minister of the State. This could not settle the political unrest in the country regardless of the unanimous decision of the military to support Zida in the 2015 election race (Tore, 2018). A month before the presidential election, Kafando was overthrown in a coup led by Gilbert Diendéré, who was the head of the presidential guard. However, the coup could not stand the test of time, and Kafando was reinstated a week after he was ousted.

The most recent coups in the sub-region is the successful January and attempted February 2022 coups in Burkina Faso and Guinea-Bissau respectively. After seven years of seemingly peace and tranquility in the political sphere in Burkina Faso, a coup erupted right in the country's capital. Although the act was denied by the president and his cabinet, the military later announced the dissolution of the presidency, the parliament and the constitution on national television after taking the president hostage. The coup was led by Paul-Henri Sandaogo Damiba who is now the interim president of the country. Guinea-Bissau on the other hand suffered a bloody failed coup after many members of the military were killed and dozens injured (Mohammed, 2022).

Furthermore, Guinea has had similar experiences, with the latest happening in February 2021. In 2008, the country experienced its second successful coup after several failed and alleged attempts. The first was in 1984 when Lansana Conte took over the administration of the country and stayed in office till his death in 2008. Shortly after his demise, Moïse Dadis seized power but his administration faced several opposition from citizens until he was shot in the head during an assassination attempt in 2009, which took him into exile in Morocco and later to Burkina Faso (Le Monde, 2010). In 2021, Mamady Doumbouya led the most recent coup in the country, overthrowing Alpha Conde. In October 2021, Doumbouya was sworn into office as the interim president, after declaring on national television the repealing of the constitution and the government.

In Mauritania, all two coups that happened in the 2000s were in August; in August 2005 and August 2008, the military temporary seized power in 2005 and handed it over to a civilian government in 2007. Ironically, Ely Ould Mohamed Vall, the military leader

who helped Maaouya Ould Taya into office through a military coup in 1984 was the same person that took power from him in 2005 (Vogt, 2006). Shortly after that, another coup orchestrated by Mohamed Ould Abdel Aziz in 2008 brought the civilian rule to a halt, but for political reasons, he resigned and later contested in the 2009 presidential elections which made him the eighth president of Mauritania (AU, 2014). Hysterically, Abdel Aziz became the Chairman of the African Union from 2014 to 2015 (AU, 2014) despite him being a two-time coup leader, and was jailed in 2021 after he was charged with corruption.

The last country to be examined is Mali, which has had three successful coups in the 2000s; March 2012, August 2020 and 2021. The March 2012 coup was unwarranted because Mali had enjoyed almost twenty (20) years of constitutional democracy but the middle-ranked military men were unhappy about the government's position on the Tuareg rebels who subjected the Northern territory to constant attacks (Hirsch, 2014). The president at that time Amadou Toumani Touré was forced into hiding. Dioura et al (2012) mention that the coup received wide condemnation especially from the sub-regional body, ECOWAS, and imposed sanctions on the country. To lift the sanctions imposed on the country, the military handed over power to a transitional government led by the speaker of parliament, Dioncounda Traoré. After eight years of stability, the country suffered a mutiny. This caused mayhem for a short period of time after some top government officials were detained together with the president, and were coerced to resign and suspend the government. Mclean (2020) opines that the 2020 coup had roots in the insurgency from 2012 which divided the country into two; the southern and northern parts. She further contributes that several calls were made for president Keïta to resign with respect to the way he handled the Tuareg insurgency, the rising levels of

corruption, poor management of the COVID-19 pandemic, and a near collapse of the economy (Mclean, 2020). Nine months later, the 2021 coup happened when Vice President Assimi Goïta overthrew the sitting President Bah N'daw, and called for new election in 2022 (Jeune, 2021).

2.2 Rationale Behind Coups in West Africa

In literature, a lot has been said with respect to the possible causes of military coups in West Africa. There have been coups all over the world, and various reasons and models could be ascribed to them depending on various factors. Coups in Africa are quite peculiar, especially the recent ones in West Africa. Therefore, perspectives that are Afrocentric in literature will be used in describing reasons for coups in West Africa. The perspectives or theories that will be discussed are the political-economy perspective, the world system perspective and the rational choice perspective.

2.2.1 The Political-Economy Perspective

This module postulates that coups are likely to happen because of political instability, and political instability is mostly influenced by economic factors. Gallego and Pitchik (2004) in their findings indicated that slow and backward economic growth is a big trigger for military coups. This means, coups could indirectly be traced to economic failures in a country, although it rides on politics. Sanders (2009) in his analysis found that countries such as Mali, Guinea Bissau, and Ghana were susceptible to coups because of poor economic management and near collapse of their economies. He further indicated that the Guinea Bissau coup of 2003 happened because the countries had recorded a negative seven (-7) percent of Gross Domestic Product (GDP) growth a year before the coup occurred (Tore, 2018).

On the other hand, Sanders (2009) further argues that economic growth is another trigger for military coups in West Africa. This is evident in countries such as Sierra Leone in 1992 and Gambia in 1994 which had successful coups when both countries recorded a two (two) and three (3) percent GDP growth respectively a year before the coups happened. The cause of the coup could be traced to the economic growth both countries experienced. Acemoglu and Robinson (2005) and Sanders (2009) sum the discussions up by saying there are two classes of coups in West Africa; the first class is initiated by “money hungry” military and rebel groups who want their share in the economic growth realized in their county, and the second is led by “benevolent rulers” who believe they have an opportunity to salvage the poor economic situations in their countries. A classic example of the first class of coup is the autocratic regime of Lt. Yaya Jemeh of Gambia who on July 22, 1994 overthrew the semi-democratic rule of President Dawda (Schweid, 2004). He was only twenty-nine (29) years old when he overthrew the then government, and at age thirty-nine (39), after he had won “elections” in 1996 and 2001, he became one of the richest Gambians and also one of the richest West African Presidents at that time (Kennan, 2004). It was alleged that his riches could not be attributed to his presidential salary which was less than \$19,000 a year (Kennan, 2004). Sayid (2022) also opines that similar instances have been cited in Mali and Guinea, where in the former, a “self-righteous” military man in August 2021 overthrew the incumbent President, Ibrahim Boubacar Keita. The initial arrangement after the coup was to hand over power back to a civilian government after eighteen (18) months, but upon being in office and experiencing the economic and other benefits, the military government postponed the transition to a later date; after five years. Should the military

get to taste of the economic benefits accrued from being in power, coups by the military will forever be part of West African government.

The second class of coup is what Finer (1998) explains as coups that are somehow supported by the citizens. He opines that economic situations could get worse in some countries to the extent that there could be an 'erosion of popular support' for the present government. People would prefer the economy to be salvaged, therefore benevolent rulers who are mostly military men take over the affairs of the country. Studies conducted by Houle (2016) also affirms this position that slow or downward economic growth is a trigger to military coup in any country because citizens would want a solution to a likely collapse of their economy.

Wallerstein, (2000) are of the view that poverty and weak political structures have increased the likelihood of coups in the sub-region. Jackson (2004) also sustains the above claims and mentions that weak states could be attributed to political instability in different way, and this has been the fate of most West African countries for over forty (40) years. Olsen (1993) insists that weaker institutions and brutal political spheres in the late 60s to 80s created hostilities and unfavorable atmosphere for development, therefore leaders of such countries selected temporary development models over permanent ones. This way, leaders do very little to develop their economies and channel the rest of the resources toward their personal gains. Keeping the country in constant political chaos and creating divisions among the people become an excuse for development, while they enrich themselves and their families with state resources. Chieub et al., (2017) state that this huge income inequality between the political

leaders and their citizens make coups more susceptible and the existence of democracy less likely as seen in most West African countries.

Guest, (2004) is conclusive that Africans are poor, and leaders will do very little about this condition because they use same resources for developing the country to make their lives comfortable whilst in power and after they leave office.

The political economy perspective is relevant to this research because it explains how economic failure of a country is likely to influence its politics. This perspective helps the researcher to appreciate the interconnectedness of a country's economy and politics, and how failure in one will likely lead to failure in the other.

2.2.2 The World-System Perspective

The world system theory was propounded by Immanuel Wallerstein in 1974 in his seminal paper, *The Rise and Future Demise of the World Capitalist System: Concepts for Comparative Analysis*. Wallerstein situated this theory on three core assumptions; the Annales school, Marx, and dependence theory (Wallerstein, 1974). The dependency theory best describes the coup contagion in West Africa. According to Chirot and Hall, (1982), the entire theory acclimatize to dependency theory, and its principles draw heavily from it. Martínez-Vela (2001, p. 4) also hypothesizes that “Wallerstein draws heavily from dependency theory, a neo-Marxist explanation of development processes, popular in the developing world, and among whose figures are Fernando Henrique Cardoso, a Brazilian. Dependency theory focuses on understanding the periphery by looking at core-periphery relations.”

To begin with, Wallerstein defined world-system as "a social system, one that has boundaries, structures, member groups, rules of legitimation, and coherence. Its life is

made up of the conflicting forces which hold it together by tension and tear it apart as each group seeks eternally to remold it to its advantage. It has the characteristics of an organism, in that it has a lifespan over which its characteristics change in some respects and remain stable in others... Life within it is largely self-contained, and the dynamics of its development are largely internal" (Wallerstein 1974, p. 347).

The theory postulates that there is a power hierarchy between developed and developing countries, and the former has significant impact or control on the latter. The relations between these two divergent systems put one at the core and the other at the periphery, one is rich and powerful whereas the other is poor and weak and one ultimately controls the economy, politics and development of the other. The structures of such a system is predominately based on exploitation of the weak by the powerful. Popular assertions are that coups that happen in West Africa could be traced to earlier governance impositions and foreign direct or indirect influences on Africa (Suleiman, 2021).

With respect to the governance impositions on Africa, Suleiman (2021, p.1) argues that Africa's inherited democracy is "one step forward, and two steps back, in a reverse motion" towards disaster. The earlier years of democratizing between the late 80s and early 2000s saw some level of progress in some African countries, but in retrospect, there were huge failures too. The inherited democracy in West Africa has progressively become illegitimate. Suleiman (2021, p. 2) perfectly described the situation as such; "within that period, there were regular elections but also democratic rollbacks; democratic institutionalization but also endemic corruption; institutionalization of political parties but also widespread ethnic voting and violent politics; increased number of civil societies but also local realities of incivility and violence; and political

freedoms and economic growth but also political controls and inequality” (Sueliman, 2021, p. 2). This became a recipe for coups because the military under the guise of restoring normalcy and salvaging the economy of their respective countries engaged in coups, mostly bloody at various periods.

Also, the direct or indirect interference of the developed countries in the affairs of their former colonies through the military was quite pronounce from the 1970s to the 1990s. External interest and prying eyes of the developed countries were fixed on struggling developing West African countries, and coups were set against Cold War politics (Suleiman, 2021). Pellegata (2021) affirms that countries such as Russia and France have been fingered in coups that happened in West Africa. Suleiman (2021) also confirms the above assertion and mentions that the military junta that removed Mali’s president Ibrahim Boubacar Keita was purposely trained and equipped in Russia for some period of time before returning to their country to execute the mission. The second Malian coup that happened in 2021 initiated by Vice President Assimi Goïta which led to the overthrow of the sitting President Bah N'daw has equally been attributed to Russia’s influence. Other countries such as the United States of America and powerful European countries have equally contributed resources in the form of military training, financial assistance, intelligence, machinery and technology to ensure successful coups in West Africa. In reality, coups are fueled by individual greed and foreign interests (Pallegata, 2021).

The world-system perspective helps the researcher to appreciate the assertion that colonial rulers directly or indirectly contribute to recurring coups in West Africa. The borrowed concept of democracy and governance from colonial rulers to some extent influence current military coups because its failure in a country incites the military to

intervene. Countries such as France and Russia have been cited as contributors to recurring coups in West Africa by training the militia.

2.2.3 The Rationale Choice Perspective

The rationale choice theory for explaining military coups was propounded by Olson and Goldsmith (1993). In this theory, they implied that coup leaders are deliberate about their doings, and they calculate their operations based on the personal interest at the expense of the country's interest. Goldsmith in simple terms asserts that "we can begin with the assumption that African leaders are usually trying to do what they think is best for themselves. We can posit that they choose actions that appear to them to produce the greatest benefit at least cost, after making allowance for the degree of risk involved." (Goldsmith, 1993 p. 79). The promoters of this theory are of the view that no West African leader in particular fits exactly into this model, but the theory is able to explain and predict how leaders found in the sub-region behave or will behave in political uncertainties. Bevir and Rhodes (2001) mentioned that rational choice defines why an actor makes a precise decision or follows a particular terrain, with the hope that it will yield the best results at the end of the period putting into consideration all other relevant factors. Fornasier and Franklin, (2019 p. 338) state that "because rational choice theory conceptualizes actions as rational strategies for realizing the preferences of the actor, there is a sense in which it seems to reduce the motives of political actors to self-interest."

The political atmosphere in West Africa from independence till date has been highly unpredictable and extremely precarious for its leaders. For the unknown and uncertainties of the future, political leaders will choose temporary economic and physical investments over long-term development because they may never stay in

power longer enough to benefit from their long-term investments. A classic example is what happened to Dr. Kwame Nkrumah of Ghana, Ahmed Sékou Touré of Guinea and William Tubman of Liberia, who anticipated a long-term investment in their country for the benefit of generations to come but were overthrown before the end of their tenure. Taking lessons from previous happenings, political leaders in West Africa with indeterminate terms of office have decided to be corrupt, and grapple state's resources available at their disposal to build empires whilst they can (Goldsmith, 2005).

Esterhuysen (2002) and Goldsmith (2005) made an analysis on how some West African leaders lost their office from 1960 to 2004. In their assessment, the rationale choice theory was employed. They found that most African leaders at those times lost their office primarily to coups and conflicts in the sub-region. From 1960 to 1969, approximately fifteen (15) West African leaders were either overthrown, killed in a coup (whether successful or not) or died as a result of a civil war. Eight (8), twelve (12), eleven (11) and one (1) were killed in same fashion from 1970 to 1979, 1980 to 1989, 1990 to 1999, and from 2000 to 2004 respectively. Following the trend, this is one of the most common form of losing power in West Africa, followed by creation of interim governments and resignation; of which the latter is mostly forced (McGowan, 2006). The table below indicates the number of times various West African governments have changed either leadership or government from 1960 to 2005 basically through military coups. The number indicates the frequency of happenings, with the least being Gambia and the most being Benin.



LEADERSHIP TURNOVER IN WEST AFRICA

NUMBER OF TRANSITIONS	COUNTRY
1	The Gambia
2	Cape Verde, Guinea, Senegal
3	Côte d'Ivoire, Togo
4	Mali, Mauritania
5	Burkina Faso, Guinea-Bissau
6	Niger
9	Ghana, Liberia
11	Nigeria, Sierra Leone
12	Benin

Source: Esterhuysen, (2002); McGowan, (2005).

The rationale choice model equally explains why some African leaders will prefer to stay in power for decades, to exploit the country for the benefits of themselves and close allies. An example is Togo's long-term president, Gnassingbe Eyadéma, who stayed in power (from 1967 to 2005) for exactly thirty-eight (38) years and was willing to stay for more years if not death (Britannica, 2022). After his demise, his son, Faure Gnassingbe "inherited" the presidential seat and has been in power for seventeen years (from 2005 till date, 2022). There's also Dennis Sassou Nguesso of Congo who has been in power for almost thirty-seven years (from 1979 to 1990 for the first term, and from 2002 onwards). Félix Houphout-Boigny who was a former president of Côte d'Ivoire ruled for about thirty-three years (from 1960 to 1993) and Senegal's past

president, Léopold Senghor, who ruled for about twenty years within same period (1960 to 1980) (Renou, 2004). Amuwo, (2003) mentions that Mathieu Kérékou of Benin also trod the same path and stayed in office for thirty-one years (from 1972 to 1991, and from 1996 to 2006). Benjamin (2015) also posits that similar trend happened in Burkina Faso, when Blaise Compaore occupied the presidency for twenty-seven (27) years, from 1987 to 2014. Also, Sékou Touré, Guinea's first president stayed in office for twenty-six years (from 1958 to 1984). The second president of Guinea, Lansana Conté after his assumption of power in 1984 towed the same line of his predecessor, and stayed in office for thirty-two years until he died in December, 2008 (Valentine, 2004). Mauritania has had no different situation, as Maaouya Ould Taya was in office for eleven years, from 1994 till 2005 when he was removed through the same means he became president (Al Arabiya, 2013).

On the other hand, there is a group of West African leaders who left office after serving over a decade on the basis that a constitution was drawn to debar them or they lost an election that was run in their respective countries. Of such are Aristides Pereira of Cape Verde's who governed for sixteen years, Jerry John Rawlings of Ghana who ruled for nineteen years, and Abdou Diouf of Senegal who stayed in power for almost twenty years (McGowan, 2006).

The rationale choice theory concludes on the premise that politics and governance in West Africa in particular is highly unpredictable, a zero-sum game which is full on uncertainties, therefore leaders who come into office make temporary decisions to their advantage and to the detriment of their countries in order to secure their future should they be removed from office. This also explains the depth of corruption and why so

many West African presidents choose not to develop their countries by formulating long-term development policies, but rather prefer to weaken the economy and politics. These decisions feather their nests while it plunder the country's economy into chaos, causing a cycle of military coups and illegitimate governments. Atypically, most of these leaders could not materialize their ultimate goal of living comfortably off their reserves. It was found that nineteen (19.2) percent of such leaders who stayed in office for decades were killed, about twenty three (23.3) percent were exiled, and a little over twenty eight (28.8) percent were arrested in their respective countries (Goldsmith, 2005).

TERM OF OFFICE FOR SOME AFRICAN LEADERS

Name	Country	Years in office
Gnassingbe Eyadéma,	Togo	38 (1967 - 2005)
Dennis Sassou Nguesso	Congo	37 (1979 -1990)
Félix Houphout-Boigny	Cote d'Ivoire	33 (1960 -1993)
Lansana Conté	Guinea	32 (1984 - 2008)
Mathieu Kérékou	Benin	31 (1972 -1991, 1996 to 2006).
Blaise Compaore	Burkina Faso	27 (1987-2014)
Sékou Touré	Guinea	26 (1958 - 1984).
Léopold Senghor	Senegal	20 (1960 -1980)

Faure Gnassingbe	Togo	17 (2005 – 2022)
Maaouya Ould Taya	Mauritania	11 (1894 – 2005)

Author’s compilation, (2022).

The rationale choice theory is relevant to this study because it explains how military juntas deliberately plan coups to plunder resources and amass wealth for themselves and their generation. It also provides a fundamental reasons for the recurring coups in West Africa despite the propagation of democracy in the sub-region.

2.3 Conclusion

There have been numerous coups in various countries all over the world. While all other continents seem to have moved on, and are contending with other equally mortifying political and social upheavals, Africa, and specifically West Africa is still contending with military coups and political stability. The early 60s through to the 90s were difficult for most African countries, as they tried to grapple with changes and political consolidation.

The wave of democracy that was adopted in Africa right after decolonization in countries such as Nigeria, Benin, Ghana, Togo, and the rest might have paid off in the 2000s, but happenings in countries such as Guinea-Bissau, Burkina Faso, Mali and few others in the sub-region prove otherwise. The military has risen against civilian rule in some countries creating an idea of a re-emergence of military takeovers in Africa. Against this backdrop, there has been significant decline in rule of law and an increase in human rights abuse, according to Onapajo (2022). Contemporary coups in the sub-region have different causes, effects and origins but largely hinge on poor security and economic situation in West Africa (Ncube, et al, 2022).

CHAPTER THREE

RESEARCH FINDINGS

3.0 Introduction

This chapter presents research findings on the implications of military coups in the sub-region. It delves into the economic and political implications of military coups in the sub-region and suggests some practical ways of preventing future occurrences.

3.1 The political implications of military coups in the sub-region (West Africa)

Undoubtedly, military coups affect the politics of countries and their ripple effects are felt at the sub-region at large. The purpose of coups as mentioned by respondents is mainly to change an obsolete authoritarian, traditional or democratic regime of a country, in an attempt to improve the well-being of society at large. Coups, in retrospect, are seen as a revolutionary break from political failures of a country. Not countries only are affected by coups, as mentioned by Suleiman (2022). This section therefore discusses the political implications of military coups in the sub-region.

3.1.1 *Weakens the Sub-regional Organization, ECOWAS*

The wave of military coups and takeovers that have swept over the sub-region in the past 24 months calls into question the credibility and ability of ECOWAS to uphold and sustain democratic principles, peace and stability. ECOWAS is expected to instill in its member-states democratic governance to prevent unconstitutional change of power, violation of human rights and breakdown of rule of law. Although the sub-regional organization has condemned and opposed coups, and on numerous occasions promoted democracy by putting down measures and mechanisms to sanction coup

leaders and their allies, nevertheless, these do not serve as enough deterrent. This is partly because, some ECOWAS leaders that partake in criticizing coup leaders, suspending coup countries and imposing various sanctions either assumed power by rigging elections, changing the constitution or declaring flawed election results in their favor. Informant 1, 3, 6, 8, 11 and 16 agree that coup instigators are confident that ECOWAS is not fortified enough to enforce stringent measures against them, and after some period of condemnation, they can retain power. Informant 6 further alludes that;

“The old method of censuring coup leaders, suspending their countries and imposing

sanctions against them has not worked. This is because these measures are temporary, and are not completely expressive of ECOWAS’ desire to promote democracy in the region. Most West African leaders are aware that ECOWAS cannot control its politics and administration, making it a toothless bulldog, therefore are nonchalant about what the organizations stand for. The worse that can happen is for ECOWAS leaders to condemn and sanction the coup leader, period!”

Informant 16 also asserts that;

“...the norm in West African politics is that once a section of the military captures power, various condemnations will be pronounced against them. After some few months, the news dies out and the military junta officially ascends to power. This is the case of Burkina Faso. Captain Ibrahim Traore who seized power from Paul-Henri Sandaogo Damiba has been appointed as the interim president of the country in October. The trend has been the same since the 1960s.”

On another hand, Ziankahn (2012) mentions that military officers that take over offices after successful coups do not have any advanced training in specific areas like economics, politics, trade and commerce, arts and culture, agriculture and the likes to

effectively run the government, more often than not, they receive training as military officers and nothing else. In essence, there is no concept of professional military that is trained to take over governments and manage their politics. Informants 4, 5 and 11 are of the view that military personnel are not politicians, therefore, they cannot contribute to the political growth of ECOWAS.

Informant 4 advances that;

“Military coups weaken the political structure of ECOWAS in many dimensions. Military politics are sometimes associated with low levels of professionalism and institutionalization as some elected leaders have low levels of education, no professional training on the role that they assume and are unwilling to learn from best practices.”

According to informant 5;

“Some coup leaders do not have the requisite knowledge and skills. Some completed high school and joined the military right away. Others who completed tertiary did not serve enough to build capacity for governance. In governance, experience is built over time therefore the more one stays in government, the more experience he/she builds. This is same for the military too.”

Informant 11 also adds that;

“Captain Traore of Burkina Faso joined the military in 2009 after completing his tertiary education. 13 years later he is now the interim president of the country at age 34. In Mali, same occurrence happened. Colonel Assimi Goita who completed a military academy in Kati and has no training and experience in economics and governance was appointed the Vice President of the country at age 38 because he led a successful coup. This is a worrying trend as military coups have become one of the surest routes to becoming a political Head of State of West African country.”

Following from the argument, as military takeovers are quite rampant, the politics of various military-controlled states cannot contribute to make ECOWAS any better. Should the trend continue, ECOWAS leaders overtime will have no practical economic and governance experiences to contribute to the development of the structures of ECOWAS. ECOWAS will be a mere sub-regional body that cannot contribute meaningfully to its own growth and development, and that of its people. As opined by Dr. Kwame Nkrumah, “for those who practice it, it means power without responsibility and for those who suffer it, it means exploitation without redress.”

3.1.2 Promotes Tyranny and Un-constitutionalism

In the year 2000, the Organization of Africa Unity, now the AU made the Lomé Declaration in response to unconstitutional change of government in Africa. More so, the African Charter on Democracy, Election and Governance identifies coup as a threat to the political growth and security of the entire continent, and West African countries are signatories. Nevertheless, the Democratic Index (2020) of all ECOWAS countries postulates that only Ghana seems to practice what is called “flawed democracy”, that is democracy where elections are fair and free and basic civil liberties are honoured but may have issues such as media suppression, while the rest of West African countries practice ‘hybrid democracy’ at best or authoritarian regimes at worst. Although democracy has become popular in the sub-region as various governments claim to be democratic, there are very few democratic features about West African governments. This is evident in the manner in which most governments in West Africa conduct elections. According to Suleiman and Onapajo (2022) coups could be attributed to the manner in which elections are conducted in the sub-region, and vice versa also holds.

Informants 4 and 6 are of the view that coups perpetuate tyranny and unconstitutionality as coup instigators do not respect regional and sub-regional declarations, charters and instruments. There is no support for legal instruments that seek to promote democracy and its principles in the sub-region, and ECOWAS on the other hand is obstinate in the face of “constitutional coups”, where incumbent leaders abrogate constitutions and change parts or whole to allow them to run for extra terms when their legal term of office is exhausted. This has been the case of Guinea and Ivory Coast.

It is also evident that new military governments can gather support from other West African leaders to support their agendas, thereby thwarting the collective agenda of ECOWAS against military coups in the sub-region. This has been the situation of the military government in Burkina Faso. Their neighboring country, Mali, has supported the military government and is unwilling to enforce collective sanctions pronounced by ECOWAS against Burkina Faso. Again, after ECOWAS announced its decision to close air and land borders between Mali and other member countries, the military government in Guinea explicitly condemned the move and stated categorically that it would not comply with the directive as a form of support to the newly established military government. Informant 4 says;

“...As democracies support democracies, tyranny and unconstitutionality support its own too....”

Informant 6 opines that;

“ECOWAS is going through crisis of legitimacy and credibility. The organization is being accused of applying double standards with respect to its democratic efforts.

This is largely because the heads of state double as decision-making body of the organization, therefore they will not make laws or decisions that will go against their

personal interest or solidarity to their coup allies. This is why some countries can support tyrant governments against the orders of ECOWAS. The tyrants and unconstitutional governments end up as the decision-making body of the sub-regional organization.”

In 2015, the initiative of banning third term in office for all presidential candidates in the sub-region was started following the ousting of Burkina Faso’s veteran leader Blaise Compaore the previous year in an uprising. A lot of political conversations were raised on this subject as a way of preventing coups and subsequent tyranny and brings legal instruments and efforts of ECOWAS to practice democracy into disrepute. Informants 2 and 5 conclude that the move was not supported by some governments whose presidents had overstayed their term in office by changing constitution or refusing to step down. Informant 11 and 15 also agree for now, it may be impossible for the ban to be implemented. They argue that;

“...some ECOWAS leaders are unwilling to support legal instruments that could promote democracy in the sub-region because they may be affected in the long run. Who knows, they may change constitutions or declare flawed elections in their favor in the near future to continue their term in office.” (Informant 11)

“lets not forget that these ECOWAS heads of state are allies, especially the military heads. They have a common background and may share common military experiences that make them sympathize with one another. Therefore, their unwillingness to promote democracy within the sub-region.” (Informant 15).

3.2 The economic implications of military coups in the sub-region

The frequent coups that happen in West Africa impinge its economy. UN (2011) report on the economies of the 16 West African countries attests that states within the sub-

region are among the poorest countries globally, and 13 ECOWAS states are among the top 50 poorest countries in the world. Coups have further deepened the economic plights and woes of member-states, and collectively, affecting the economies of the entire sub-region. This section delves into the economic implication of military coups in the sub-region.

3.2.1 *Economic Sanctions and Suspension of Membership in Regional Organizations*

Countries that embark on military coups are normally slapped with economic sanctions that are expected to affect economy, trade and finance. States such as Mali, Burkina Faso, Guinea, Guinea Bissau and Togo have all been sanctioned in the past due to coups. Recently, sanctions were imposed on Mali due to its coup. On January 9 2022, ECOWAS together with the West African Economic and Monetary Union (also known under the French acronym, UEMOA) imposed diplomatic and economic sanctions against Mali which led to the freeze of Malian assets deposited in the Central Bank of West African States (BCEAO), commercial banks within ECOWAS and also the central banks of all ECOWAS member countries.

Informant 1, 6 and 9 reveal that all financial aid that was supposed to be given to the country by the regional organization ECOWAS to the country was cut, borders between Mali and other member countries were closed, all economic transactions with Mali were cut, and all Malian ambassadors in other West African countries were immediately withdrawn. Informant 6 stresses that;

“The ulterior motive of every coup leader is to control the economics and politics of the country. Normally, the politics and administration of every country are run with money, which is the reason why finances and assets are frozen by the sub-regional organization to frustrate the coup leaders to hand over power to civilian government.

Without money, the economy will fail and this will put pressure on the military to hand over power. It is as simple as that.”

Informant 9 also explains that;

“the freeze of assets by ECOWAS is done to prevent military rulers from looting the country as most military juntas are led by young men. With the knowledge that they may not be in power forever, may be tempted to loot resources from the country for safe keeping in offshore accounts. There were times in the past where presidents were more richer than the countries they ruled. This was in the case of Gambia and its ex-president Lt. Yaya Jemmeh who at the time of leaving office was richer than the country and was counted as one of the richest West African leaders.”

Also, membership is frozen for some period, and this decision is in response to failing security situation in coup-ridden countries, and the unwillingness of states to trade with military administrations. Temporary removal of membership includes a halt in trade agreements, financial deals and economic agreements between any ECOWAS country and the affected country. Informants 2, 3, 7, 10, 13 and 15 agree that after the Malian coup in 2021, ECOWAS suspended its membership to frustrate economic agreements between Mali and any ECOWAS country to discourage the military junta from benefiting from any agreement, either economic or trade. The coup that broke out in September 2021 in Guinea was also met with widespread condemnation, and the membership was suspended for a period. Keita's (2021) findings agree with the above analysis as he mentions that “membership suspension of Mali and Guinea have certainly raised concern and created uncertainty over the economic situation in the two countries, negatively impacting the goals and plans for completing regional economic integrations”. Informant 13 further contributes to the suspension of coups countries and its effects on the sub-region;

“When countries are suspended, it halts all economic operations. Trade agreements are put on hold, economic agreements are suspended. Sometimes, contracts and economic deals are suspended between countries, which goes a long way to affect the economic health of countries and ECOWAS at large. Although ECOWAS countries are not forced to abrogate agreements, no country is willing to trade with a military junta.”

Informants 10 and 12 explain the implications of the suspension on ECOWAS. They pronounce that;

“Member countries who are suspended may decide not to contribute to the subregion in anyway possible. From boycotting meetings to deliberately frustrating processes. At worst, sanctioned member states may refuse to pay ECOWAS dues or allow its military to participate in peacekeeping missions in other countries. They may be uninterested in deals that may promote development within the sub-region and may seek support from countries outside the sub-region.” (Informant 10).

“...suspension creates division and tension within the sub-region as ECOWAS decision to sanction may not be supported by all member countries. This is because when trade deals and economic relations are equally affected by the suspension. Investments are likely to run down the drain and exports are sometimes affected. This is not a pleasant situation for the parties involved.” (Informant 12).

3.2.2 *Slows Economic Development*

Africa as a whole is lagging behind with respect to all forms of development, being it infrastructural, economic, health and others. West Africa in particular is a struggling sub-region with an average annual Gross Domestic Product (GDP) of \$726 million with Nigeria possessing half of the total GDP (Sunders, 2020). Agenda 2063 which was

developed as framework for the growth of the region has become a struggle for many West African countries due to combined factors. Informant 2, 6, 7, 9, 13, 14 and 15 agree that the goal of building a strong and resilient West African economy may not be realized due to recurrent coups. An important aspiration of silencing all guns by 2020 (AU, 2015) has not also been achieved so far as coups keep reoccurring. Informant 14 and 15 allude that;

“...coup regimes are not able to develop countries. Some developments may be realized during their first year in office but further deteriorates as time passes. Coup is not the solution to Africa’s development challenges.” (Informant 14)

“political resilience may translate into economic resilience, a stable political atmosphere may help West African countries to grow as they desire.” (Informant 15).

All informants harmonize that coups prevent both foreign and local financiers from investing in the country due to fear of loss due to corruption, tension and instability. Military governments are largely unaccountable to the populace putting investors off. Tore (2018) cites that over the past decades, coups in Nigeria brought to light how military juntas and their civilian allies plundered natural resources, in the case of Nigeria its oil sector, pushing the country to top the list of the most corrupt country in Africa. Moreover, 15 African countries were ranked as the most fragile in 2021 out of 20 identified countries globally, and dominating the African list were West African countries such as Guinea, Mali, and Burkina Faso (Fragile States Index, 2021). One common feature of these West African countries is the recurrent coup. Informant 8 contributes that;

“There is no accountability during coups, and this has been a common feature from 1960 till date. There are a lot of structural and administrative adjustments in government which make investors lose confidence because economic and monetary

changes can be made at any time which may affect their investments. This makes the economy stagnant with no real growth and development. Also, during coups, especially palace coups, people are more concerned about their lives and that of their families, therefore citizens and those in authorities that can push the government to make it accountable are more concerned about their lives than the economy.”

In Mali, Suleiman (2020) analyzed that its coups plundered the country into economic recession in 2020, and projections that were made about its recovery were weaker than anticipated increasing poverty, underdevelopment and economic stagnation. Although Mali's GDP's contraction was blamed on COVID-19 pandemic, the coup and other administrative shortfall was largely the cause (Suleiman, 2020). The expected recovery was cut short by the May 2021 coup and violence continued to ravage the economy of the country. Consequently, the national poverty rate grew to 44.4 percent, and about 50,000 Malians live in extreme poverty (Suleiman, 2020). According to Informant 13; *“Economic growth in Guinea has remained stagnant from 2021 due to deceleration in mining activities and payment of taxes due to institutional change.”*

Again, because of the coup, inflation increased from 10.6 percent in 2020 to 12.6 percent in 2021, as food prices continue to increase creating interruption in both internal and external supply. Public debt in Guinea continue to rise, from 38.2 percent in 2020 to 42.2 percent in 2021 due to excessive borrowing and halt in disbursement of development funds to various projects in the country. Informant 14 argues that; *“Inflation pressures, ECOWAS sanctions and disruption in economic activities are the principal reasons for the economic shocks and stagnation in economic growth in coup-ridden countries. Development projects that are started are mostly abandoned by coup leaders. Coups that are characterized by destruction further raid the country of any development. In some coups, schools, hospitals, factories and government*

organizations are destroyed making development backward. In peaceful democratic countries in Africa how is their development trajectory, and how much more countries that are politically unstable? Development is mostly stagnant and poverty is rampant.”

Insecurities accompanying coups also impede reforms and international contributions toward strengthening governance, public sector and finances. Financial performances worsen, contributions are delayed, and private investment as well as spending on social reforms may reduce. This finding is in synch with Jackson (2004) and Pellegata (2021) as they argue that coups destroy economies other than build them up; coup leaders often than not think they could be better managers of the economies but over time, they are worse managers of the economies and administration of countries.

3.2.3 Rise in Prices of Essential Commodities

Coups slow down major economic activities like agriculture, oil and gas extraction, mining, export and import of goods and services. During coups, military juntas take control of resources or disrupt imports and export to put pressure on the government. Unfortunately, after a successful coup some of these disruptions continue, putting pressure on production of essential commodities and revenue generation. This phenomenon pushes up prices of goods and services, and disrupts the market chain of demand and supply. In Africa, the mining and quarry industry account for about 20 percent of GDP, is a major source of revenue for a lot of countries, and coups disrupt its production.

Guinea's coup affected production of essential commodities and production of minerals. Guinea is a major producer of bauxite, holding about 26.4 percent of the world's reserve and producing about 22 percent of the total world's production (Abu et al., 2015). Unfortunately, the September 2021 coup in Guinea interrupted bauxite production,

forcing prices to soar to about 40 percent of original price, the highest price since May 2011. Although other factors such as Covid-19 pandemic, and demand from the automotive industry pushed demand, the coup impacted supply. Informants 1, 4, and 14 narrate that in countries such as Mali, Burkina Faso and Guinea where recent coups occurred, supply of essential goods such as food and medicines have been affected. Mali in particular has been severely affected, especially in its capital Bamako. Informant 7 informed that;

“During coups, supply of essential products are sometimes affected. This is in the case of Mali which imports about 5 million tons of goods annually and are shipped through various ports across West Africa. The sanctions that were given to Mali by ECOWAS has affected its exports as borders have been closed impeding transporting their goods from ports across West Africa to Mali.”

The last successful coup in Cote D’Ivoire and the recent coup that foiled in 2012 somehow affected its cocoa production. Keita (2021) claims that the Ivorian government and rebels used exported cocoa proceeds to fund military operations and training, which heightened the political tensions, created civil wars and an almost successful coup. This resulted in reduction in production of cocoa and other essential commodities as factories and farms were destroyed during the chaos. According to informant 9;

“When prices increase, it is civilians who are mostly innocent about the coup that are really affected. They lose their purchasing power as most of them are unable to work because of the chaos but still have the responsibility of taking care of their families. This deepens the poverty situation of the people and thousands are forced into starvation.”

Another factor that influences increment in price of goods is illegal trade and authorized smuggling of goods during political instability. Military juntas, groups and rebels carry out illegal trades within and outside the borders of the country because of little or no supervision during that period. Soest (2021) recounts that West African countries such as Burkina Faso and Niger to be specific have lost revenue from illegal mining, trade and smuggling to the tune of about 30 tons of gold, and also other essential commodities amounting to about \$ 4 billion USD. The loser at the end of the day is the country and civilians whilst the military junta and its supporting fighters gain from the mayhem. The above findings are in sync with research made by Pitcher et al, (2009) and Rabinowitz and Jargowsky (2018) who identified that coups worsen the economic situations of the affected country due to corruption and sometimes halt in the production of goods and services.

3.2.4 Increased Number of Refugees and Loss of Human Resource

Coups force people into displacement, and currently, Africa hosts one-third of the world's forcibly displaced people as of 2020 (Amnesty International, 2021). People in coup regions are forced to move to stable regions and areas to ensure their safety. The refugee crises in West Africa has created economic burden and slowed economic growth rate, increased poverty, low-income levels, family systems and value breakdown, kidnapping, human trafficking and children recruitment into rebel and terrorist groups.

Recurrent coups in Burkina Faso have forced about 10 percent of the total population into displacement (Groupe de Coordination Opérationnelle de Réponse Rapide, 2022). Violent attacks by rebels and insurgents drove people away from their homes, starting from 2020 through 2022. Currently, Burkina Faso is the third fastest-growing country

with refugees, next to Ukraine and Mozambique (OHCR, 2022). Over 600,000 Burkinabe are in emergency and at various degrees of humanitarian crises such as acute hunger. People fled to safer places leaving behind their homes, livelihood and livestock and many displaced families eat once a day. Situations have become deplorable as refugees keep moving from one camp to another due to constant attacks by rebels at refugee camps. Informant 2 contributes that;

“The situation of refugees in coup context is desponding. Children make up a chunk of this population, and able bodies that can contribute to economic growth and production are forced to leave their homes behind to survive which robs them of the opportunity to build their lives.”

Towns such as Sevtenge and Dori host over 40,000 refugees, some of whom migrated from Niger to Burkina Faso. About a quarter of these refugees have subsequently migrated to Côte d’Ivoire, fleeing vicious attacks by armed groups. The UNHCR (2022) reports that in 2021, about 19,000 Burkinabe fled to neighboring countries such as Côte d’Ivoire, Mali, Niger and Benin, and in 2022 over 34,000 are in exile across West Africa. Currently, humanitarian situation in West Africa has worsened. And Burkina Faso is ranked 179 out of 188 countries globally. Situations are not any better in Mali as over 49,000 refugees from various countries seeking asylum are constantly faced with insecurity. From 2014 to 2022, over 333,000 Malians have been displaced after rebels took over a third of the entire country and about 85,000 have returned to their homes (UNHCR, 2022). Informant 5 retorts that;

“When refugees increase within a country or at the sub-region at large, there is an increment in vices, crime, abuse of human rights, and sexual violence. This is the situation in West Africa currently. The entire sub-region is in distress due to constant coups and its human resources are frustrated even in stable countries. Human

resources keep deteriorating and diminishing due to coups and people who have the strength and knowledge to contribute to nation-building are seeking asylum in other countries and are unemployed.”

To salvage the humanitarian crises in the sub-region the UN constituted the Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in Mali (MINUSMA) and was supported by AU forces. Most refugees across West Africa do not have the permit to work in the countries where they find themselves, thereby relying on foreign aid and benevolence of their host countries. This situation has also worsened the unemployment figures in the sub-region.

3.3 The Practical Lessons to be Drawn to Prevent Future Occurrences in the Sub-Region

Countries that experience frequent coups have some indicators in common. Their governance structure, respect for human rights, economic development and compliance with legal instruments and most importantly the constitution deteriorates. This section of the research explains some lessons that can be drawn to prevent future occurrences in the sub-region.

3.3.1 Addressing Abuse of Human Rights and Freedom, and the Recognition of the Role of Civil Society Organizations (CSOs).

Countries that have no respect for human rights and freedom, and do not recognize the important role CSOs play are susceptible to coups. In Burkina Faso for example, there has been constant deterioration for the respect of human rights and freedom, and according to the Ibrahim Index of African Governance (2021), the country's score for respect of human rights is lower in 2019 than in 2010. This indicates that as the years

progress, respect for human rights decline. There have been reports in the media about the restriction in freedom of expression (Al Jazeera, 2021), division and stratification in society for the enjoyment of human rights and liberties (France 24, 2020a) and abuse of the rights of citizens in the opposition party (Al Jazeera, 2021). Informant 1 argues that;

“West African governments and leaders have accepted democracy but are not willing to exercise the power thereof. Democracy allows people to feed their grievances to the government, it is inclusive and all-encompassing, therefore if respect for the views and opinions of relevant stakeholders should be ignored, citizens will definitely lookout for alternatives.”

Some circumstances that lead to coups are mostly classified under state of emergency, as in the case of Burkina Faso and Mali where terrorists and armed men took over parts of the country. In this situation international human rights recognizes the need for states to put on hold some human rights obligations during a state of emergency. Article 4 of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR) entreats states to “take measures derogating from their obligations under the present Covenant to the extent strictly required by the exigencies of the situation’ when they are facing ‘public emergency which threatens the life of the nation and the existence of which is officially proclaimed” (ICCPR, 1996).

Nevertheless, the abuse and restriction of human rights that happened in Mali, Chad and Burkina Faso are far from the prescriptions of the ICCPR. In 2021, Burkina Faso continued to record deterioration in human rights due to insurrection by armed Islamist groups, which led to unlawful killing of state security forces and civilians. The then President, Roch Marc Kaboré, who was elected in November 2020 failed to address the lapses. As the extermination continued, over 135 civilians were killed in Solhan in a

single attack leading to demonstrations and civilian activism. Protestors and leaders of civil society organizations were detained and jailed for criticizing the government, heightening tensions. Again, laws were passed criminalizing media reports of state security forces abusing rights of women and children, and the government implemented a de facto ban on reports and criticisms by journalists and CSOs by covering incidences of giving sex in exchange for humanitarian relief. All these contributed to the eruption of the coup, and informant 4 and 7 contribute that;

“Should West African governments learn effective and efficient ways of addressing human rights abuse, coups could be prevented to some extent. In the case of Mali and Burkina Faso, the government failed to execute its duties. Most African governments do not listen to their people and are not willing to involve all stakeholders in proper consultation and extensive deliberations when there are national crises.” (informant

4)

“CSOs and the media have a huge role to play in any democracy. The media is popularly referred as the fourth arm or government because of its role in democracy. Both are institutions that can protect the rights of citizens and keep the government in check....”

3.3.2 Compliance with the Constitution and Legal Instruments

Breakdown of law and order, noncompliance to legal instruments and no respect for the rule of law are other threats to peace and tranquility in West Africa. In the case of Guinea, Burkina and Mali, legal instruments and the constitution to be specific were restricted. Therefore some significant articles and sections were sidelined and the country was governed by the whims and caprices of the ruling political leaders. In Guinea for instance, although Article 19 calls for “strict respect for human rights and

fundamental freedoms, for the independence of the media, for the protection of journalists, pro-democracy activists and all civic and political opinions, including dissenting ones” (Constitution of Guinea, 2010), this articles is dormant. Since 2010, there has been limited space for political pluralism, media and civil society’s freedom. Nevertheless, Article 1 of the Guinean constitution explicitly warrants digital and media freedom, yet still, there is limited flow of information due to bans and threats of death. Findings by Conley (2021) resonate with the above statements as he mentioned that the judiciary in Burkina Faso and Guinea are partial, judicial processes are not as rigorous as it should be and there is no compliance to the rule of law, especially among the executive arm of government. All these, according to him are triggers from military coups in the sub-region. Informant 3 further asserts that;

“The breakdown of law of order in West African societies emanates from unconstitutionality and nonconformance to binding legal instruments. This affects all other organs and aspects of democracy, giving power to militants who think they can do better when in government. Peace is a prerequisite to democracy, and respect for the constitution and all other legal instruments to a large extent promote peace and tranquility in a state.”

In May 2020, the Malian government inaugurated a new military division called the Special Forces, whose directives involved “counterterrorism operations”, among others. A month into operations a statute was passed stating that all actions of the Special Forces during operations cannot be questioned nor pursued before the law court. This immunity clause led to violation of rights and inability of victims to seek justice and reparations (Amnesty International, 2022). Informant 7 suggests that;

“checks and balances are not only necessary for the president and appointees, the military needs to be checked too. Those who are supposed to protect the people cannot abuse them because there is no proper control and accountability.”

In Burkina Faso, the French Council of State in July consented to the extradition of François Compaoré, the brother of former Burkinabe president Blaise Compaoré, who was cited for the murder of investigative journalist Norbert Zongo in 1998. The process was interrupted, and justice failed to take its course. The year ended with no substantial progress made toward the investigation and prosecution of culprits who were involved in the unlawful killing and disappearance of 50 and 66 people respectively in the village of Yirgou in Sanmatenga province in January 2019. The crime was alleged to be committed by the armed group Koglweogo.

These among others contributed to the military takeover by the current military government. Informants 2, 5 and 6 contribute that the military envisaged the nonchalant response of the government towards protecting the constitution and the citizens, and sought to provide solutions. When citizens register their displeasure through waves of anti-government protest, the military in multiple occasions rises to take over government. This finding resonates with Chigozie and Oyinmiebi (2022) and Barka and Ncube (2012) who identified that the military mostly take over when it anticipates constitutional failure on the side of the government. The military often than not supposes it can salvage the country and restore calm, but even if that happens, it is for a short period of time before circumstances worsen.

3.3.3 *Biased Electoral Processes and Flawed Electoral Results*

Flawed elections are another determinant for coups in West Africa. As incumbent presidents and their governments manipulate election results, opposition parties forcefully take over. This was the situation in Guinea in 2020 when ex-President Condé

amended existing constitution to enable him run for two more terms after his constitutionally allowed term in office expired. There were existing electoral issues that needed urgent redress before ex-President Condé amended the constitution. All grievances expressed about the flawed elections were treated with contempt, motivating the 2021 coup in Guinea.

In Mali, the same trajectory was followed; the integrity of elections and political pluralism has significantly declined over the years, and Amnesty International report (2020) attests that the country had better political systems in the early 2000s as compared to the past 10 years since the country's politics has been at its lowest for the past 10 years. Also, distribution of political power has been unevenly distributed among political leaders and in society at large. Situations were worsened in 2020 when presidential and parliamentary results were overturned to favor President Keïta. After declarations were made at the end of the elections, 31 legislative seats were overturned in favor of President Keïta, heightening insecurity and violent extremisms amidst accusations of corruption and crimes. In August same year, the military took over office ousting President Keïta, and majority believe that the above-mentioned precedence was the trigger for the coup. Informant 12 contributes that;

“When the citizenry vote for change, it is for a course. Therefore, should election results be manipulated to favor an unpopular government, the citizens may react. African leaders should understand that government is elastic, therefore they should willingly hand over power when their term elapses. In the case of Guinea and Mali, ex-Presidents Keïta and Condé could have handed over power to ensure a smooth transition. Other West African governments should learn from this mistake, especially the unpopular one.”

All informants concur that most African countries are not particular about their electoral registrar, and more often than not some citizens are disenfranchised during elections. In other countries, new electoral registers are created whenever there is a new government, and in countries such as Ghana, Kenya and Nigeria, several issues have been raised about the legitimacy of new electoral registrars. Informant 4 reports that;

“Electoral registrars play important part in ensuring a free and credible election. From stakeholders’ consultation, registration, voting and counting, and declaring election results, none should be considered unimportant. West African leaders and African leaders at large should commit enough resources to maintain credible elections. If people are disenfranchised, they will employ alternative means for their favorite candidate to assume power.”

3.3.4 National Security

Upholding national security is important to maintaining peace in any country, as such, countries invest in their security needs to ensure their safety from internal and external threats and aggressions.

Security in Burkina Faso has deteriorated since 2010, and it dropped from the 7th position in Africa in 2010 to 46th in 2019 with respect to security and safety (Mo Ibrahim, 2021). The decline is spurred by an increase in armed conflict in the country and continuous violence against civilians, especially women, children and non-state actors. Informant 5 and 10 assert that;

“There is no country in Africa with so much increased violence and deteriorated security as Burkina Faso. It all started as rebels kept on attacking civilians in villages and smaller towns. The military felt the government could do very little or nothing about the situation thereby ousting the government and taking over control. If the government had taken drastic measures about the situation, who knows, this wouldn’t

be the situation. The mistake of most African leaders is that so far as their families and kin are not affected, they care less about whatever the situation is. Security is paramount, and it should be treated as such” (Informant 5).

“West African leaders should learn a lesson from recent happenings in the sub-region. The pledge to protect the people and keep the territorial integrity of the country should be honoured. There is no doubt that failing security in West Africa as a result of terrorist operations and the fear of being attacked by terrorist groups force the military to act especially when the government looks on unconcerned. The spread of terrorist groups to the West is a worrisome situation and military coups make the situation more worrisome as the country becomes more volatile” (Informant 10).

The government has had issues dealing with the worsening security situation in the country because most of the civilian attacks are carried out by extremist groups and the rest by state forces. The inability of the government to contain the situation led to the breakout of military coup in 2022. The situation is similar in Mali and other countries in the past. In Guinea, deteriorating security situation and violence against civilians were key triggers to the coup. Failure of the government to uphold Justice and Rule of Law as armed conflict and violence persist is also a key trigger to coups. Therefore if West African governments can maintain high security in their various countries, coups situations may not be as frequent as it is now.

3.4 Conclusion

Analysis of recent happenings in the sub-region has brought to light that although coups happen in individual countries, their impact could be felt at the sub-regional level at large. Coups do not only affect the country in which they happen but have ripple effects on the sub-region and even at the regional level at large. This chapter examined the economic and political impact of coups in the sub-region and findings show how

devastating the situation is at the country and sub-regional levels. The politics and economy of individual countries have been extremely affected thereby increasing volatility within the sub-region. This is because the politics and economies of individual member state put together cast a reflection on ECOWAS, and has been largely described as precarious.



CHAPTER FOUR

SUMMARY OF FINDINGS, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

4.0 Introduction

This is the concluding chapter of the study. It brings together the summary of findings, a conclusion and some recommendations for all stakeholders.

4.1 Summary of Findings

- **The political implications of military coups in the sub-region (West Africa)**

The literature establishes that military coups have been prevalent in West Africa from post-colonial political era till date. The frequency of coups in West Africa peaked from 1960 to 1980, and some common features of governance at that time were violent political conflicts, civil wars and coups. The first coup that happened was in Togo and was led by Togolese military officers such as Emmanuel Bodjolie, Etienne Eyadema (who was later known as Gnassingbe Eyadema), and Kleer Dadjo in January 1963. The coups continued in subsequent years, some successful and were either violent or nonviolent, while others failed. As compared to the earlier decades, there were fewer coups in the 80s and 90s (successful, failed, alleged, and attempted) in West Africa, but their success rates were significant.

The study found that the beginning of the twenty-first century brought new hopes in the democracy and governance of West African countries. Although coups happened, but at a decreasing rate. Unfortunately, there has been a return of coups in West Africa. From 2020 to 2022 only, there have been six coup d'états in Africa of which four were in West Africa only, with the most recent happening in Burkina Faso on January 24, 2022. The copious military takeovers have triggered reactions in the sub-region, questioning its implication on the stability of democracy and economic growth, as well

as the legitimacy of ECOWAS. This finding agrees with Derpanopoulos et al., 2021 who believe that there is heightening fear and tension in West Africa, ECOWAS is gradually losing its credibility to handle its affairs and citizens have lost trust in their governments.

The study has revealed that military coups affect the politics of West African countries. This is because the military leaders that take over the administration of their countries after coups mostly do not have the capacity to contribute to the political growth of their countries. They have little knowledge about governance, end up worsening the political structure of the country, and can contribute very little to the political development of ECOWAS. Coup leaders are largely politically unaccountable to their countries and ECOWAS. There are low political expectations from coup governments because there is no legitimacy, goodwill and constitutional support for coup governments.

Moreover, the findings of the study show that coups also potentially promote tyranny and unconstitutionality in ECOWAS. This is because military leaders who assumed positions as heads of state through coups were not sanctioned effectively, and ultimately retained their seats. Therefore, among ECOWAS heads of state, are leaders who took over power unconstitutionally through military coups, rigging elections, changing the constitution, or declaring flawed election results in their favor. As such, the legitimacy of ECOWAS has been questioned. It was revealed that the sub-regional organization has failed to effectively promote democracy through various designed frameworks such as the ECOWAS Protocol on Democracy and Good Governance and the ECOWAS Early Warning and Response Network, and also through adopted frameworks such as the AU Charter and Agenda 2063. More so, there has been little support and no respect for these instruments and charters as ECOWAS leaders continue to abuse constitutional power and support coup leaders and governments. Evidently in 2015, ECOWAS

leaders kicked against the initiative of banning third-term elections and military leaders from contesting elections during a transition from military rule to democratic government. This finding is in synch with Varol, (2017) and Ndubuisi (2021).

- **The economic implications of military coups in the sub-region (West Africa)**

Again, the study brought to light the implications of coups on the economy of West African countries. It was identified that 13 ECOWAS member states are among the top 50 poorest countries in the world, partly because of frequent military coups and unconstitutional governments that control the economy of states. It must be reemphasized that the military is not trained to control the economies of countries, and mostly appoint underqualified trusted families and friends to head strategic positions such as the finance and economic ministries. The study identified that when there is a coup in a country, sanctions are mostly placed on its trade and finance by regional and international organizations. As such, trade and finance deals are sometimes canceled, which ultimately affects the economy. Sometimes also, exports and imports are banned, as in the case of Mali, when on 9th January 2020 borders of all West African countries, especially neighboring countries were made inaccessible to Mali. These economic sanctions have affected countries such as Burkina Faso, Guinea, Chad and others. Furthermore, the study identified that military coups affect investors' confidence and drive investors away. Such economies are underinvested, there are no cash inflows and outflows, and there is high unemployment and slow business growth as evident in Mali and Burkina Faso. Notably, there are high humanitarian situations and increase in refugees.

The study identified that most times assets of West African coup-ridden countries are frozen for some time by ECOWAS. Typified in the case of Mali and Guinea, assets deposited in the Central Bank of West African States (BCEAO), commercial banks and

central banks of all ECOWAS member countries were frozen. On top of freezing assets, all financial aid was suspended. This largely affected these countries as development projects were halted and revenue sources were crippled. It was revealed that West African countries are heavily dependent on foreign aid and investment, therefore an economic sanction that affects aid and investments is detrimental to economic growth and development. Mali for example strongly depends on external aid to finance government machinery, and external donors contribute about 33% of its total health expenditure, therefore if aid is cut because of coups some social services cannot be financed by the government.

- **The Practical Lessons to be Drawn to Prevent Future Occurrences in the Sub-Region**

Lastly, the study identified that there are common trends and indicators of coups among West African countries. There are common triggers to coups, and the most dominant are poor governance structure, lack of respect for human rights, biased and flawed elections, noncompliance to the constitution and legal instruments, disregard for CSOs, and deteriorated national security such that there is a struggle to contain armed extremist groups. At least, two of the above-mentioned determinants are evident in Mali, Burkina Faso, Chad and Guinea.

4.2 Conclusion

The study brought to light the current political situation in West African countries. Coups and their occurrences were a “thing of the past” but recent occurrences and findings of this study suggest otherwise. The military in West African countries such as Chad, Mali, Burkina Faso and Niger have seized power in the last two years, worsening economic growth and increasing humanitarian situations in the country.

It is evident that countries such as Nigeria, Ghana, Cameroon, and others that practice democracy and enjoy political stability have fewer experiences of military coups. As such, it can be concluded that good governance and democratic values at all levels can mitigate coups across West Africa. West African governments should provide economic opportunities for all citizens and create an enabling and thriving environment for poverty reduction and socio-economic development. West African countries must invest in their citizenry at large and find ways of dealing with the corrupt middle class that incites citizens to remonstrate.

Ending military coups in West Africa is a multilayered responsibility that must be borne by various stakeholders such as AU, ECOWAS, individual member states, CSOs, individuals and international development partners.

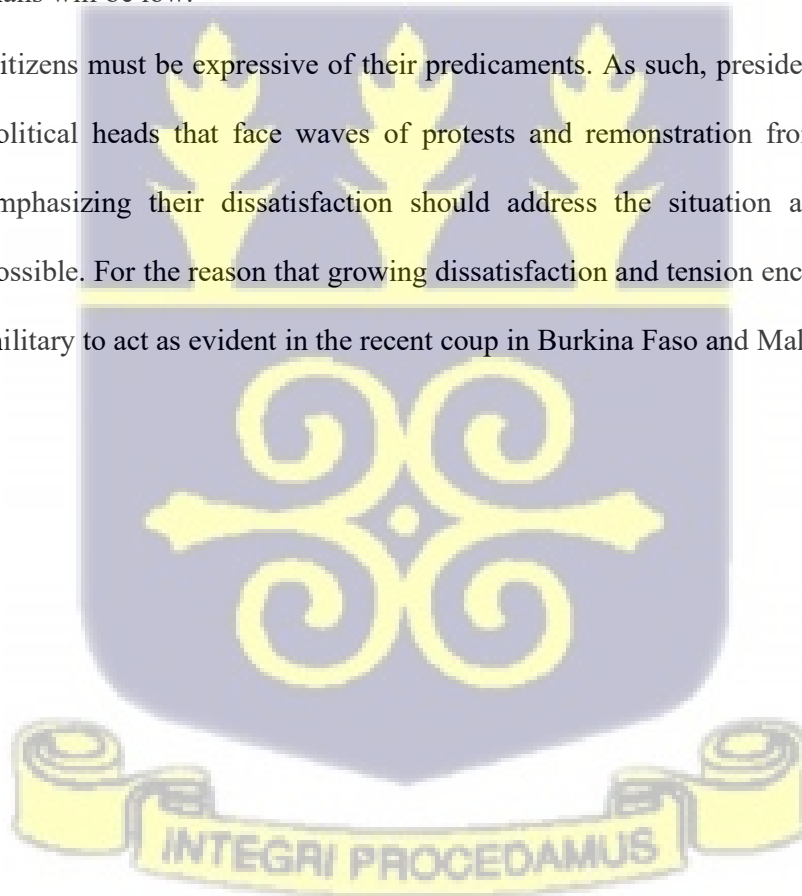
4.3 Recommendations

- ECOWAS should as a matter of urgency intensify their efforts at strengthening democracy in the sub-region and should be willing to effectively monitor elections and ensure that democracy is largely adopted by member countries. Importantly, ECOWAS should enforce stringent measures to prevent Heads of State who assumed office through military coups from joining and contributing to the organization.
- ECOWAS should ensure that sanctions that are put on military Heads of State and their countries are not temporary. The sanctions should continue until the country transitions back to democracy. Nevertheless, sanctions should be enforced in such a way that it is not targeted at citizens but at the military government that assumes power.

- ECOWAS should not only focus on punishing countries that are taken over by their military but should also establish humanitarian structures that shall provide relief for refugees and lessen humanitarian situations in affected countries. This is because economic sanctions that are put on member states mostly affect helpless citizens, especially women and children. Also, there is the likelihood of impending refugees as humanitarian situations worsen, therefore measures should be put in place to curtail human displacement within ECOWAS.
- The military should be encouraged to carry out their responsibility of protecting the territorial integrity of their countries and not to take over governments in their respective countries. Structures must be put in place to control military dominance in any West African country to prevent further coups.
- The various arms of government in individual countries should ensure that they uphold rule of law, respect constitutional mandates and protect the rights of citizens. There should be adequate checks and balances to maintain democracy and its principles. The military is likely to take over when unconstitutionalism prevails and democracy fails, therefore ensuring that the constitution is upheld may stabilize the country politically.
- CSOs and all stakeholders should carry out sensitization and public education on the rights and responsibilities of citizens. Citizens should be encouraged to be committed to electing responsible leaders who have the country at heart and will not manipulate elections to extend their stay in office above the constitutionally mandated term. Citizens should be encouraged to make lawful changes should need be, and not support the military to intervene and make coups a tool for political change. When this happens, the military is likely to

take over every time a president is underperforming or running the country aground.

- CSOs and citizens should exercise their rights and make their governments accountable. Legal instruments should be invoked should political heads decide to abuse their mandate and stay above their term of office.
- When there is limited or trust crisis in the military leadership of a country, the president should be courageous to reshuffle and reassign them. Military coups do not happen in a day, it takes time to plan and execute. Therefore should the military be reshuffled when there are trust crises the likelihood of executing plans will be low.
- Citizens must be expressive of their predicaments. As such, presidents and all political heads that face waves of protests and remonstrations from citizens emphasizing their dissatisfaction should address the situation as soon as possible. For the reason that growing dissatisfaction and tension encourage the military to act as evident in the recent coup in Burkina Faso and Mali.



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APPENDIX

INTERVIEW GUIDE

Background to the Study

Military coup has been a major problem of many African governments after decolonization and was a common way of changing government. Recounting recent happenings within the political space of Africa, military coup has become an all too familiar subject of scholarly scrutiny, raising concerns for policymakers and heads of state. Post-independence, more than 215 attempted coups have been staged in Africa (Harkness, 2016) of which more than fifty percent have been deemed successful, weakening the long-chartered democratic governance.

Countries like Sudan, Mali, Guinea Bissau, Chad and others have undergone military coups in the last couple of years. From 2020 to 2022 only, there has been six coup d'états in Africa of which four were in West Africa only, with the most recent happening in Burkina Faso on January 24, 2022. The “return” of military takeovers in Africa suggests that democracy was an active component of their political structure and governance, and could be enough to eliminate or significantly reduce occurrences. The overthrow of government in Burkina Faso and other countries by the military is symptomatic of emerging coups in the sub-region, which has been met by condemnation and sanctions from both regional and international organizations. Although coups are nothing new in the sub-region, their effects in the past are not the same now due to current socio-economic changes and development around the world. This study therefore examined the political and economic implications of coups in the West African Region, and the lessons that can be learnt from them to prevent further occurrences.

Ethical Considerations

All interviews and analyses in this research are based on five pivotal ethical principles; avoidance of harm to participants or respondents; respect for participant, and their ability to make independent decisions; informed consent of participants or respondents;

maintaining confidentiality, and lastly avoiding deception. In all, there will be confidentiality, trust and full consent before and after data collection.

Interviews will be recorded, and participants are assured of confidentiality, anonymity, and voluntary participation.

Background Information

1. Self-introduction
 - Name of organization
 - Location
 - Position

What are the political implications of military coups in the sub-region?

1. Why does the military get involved in the politics of West African countries?
2. Do you think the military has a role to play in the politics of West African countries?
3. How does the military's involvement in the politics of West African countries affect ECOWAS today?
4. In what ways do military coups affect the political structure of ECOWAS?
5. Are military coups relevant for the political development of ECOWAS?
6. Do you think the political structure of West African countries and ECOWAS at large could be better without recurring military coups?
7. Please are there any suggestions or recommendations on the political implications of military coups in the sub-region?

What are the Economic Implications of Military Coups in the Sub-region?

1. Do you think the military has a role to play in the economies of West African countries?
2. In your view, do military coups have any impact on the economies of ECOWAS?
3. How does a military coup affect the economic performance of countries today?
4. Do you think the economic structure of ECOWAS could have been better without recurring military coups?
5. Are military coups relevant for the economic development of ECOWAS?
6. Please are there any suggestions or recommendations on the political implications of military coups in the sub-region?

What Practical Lessons Can Be Drawn To Prevent Future Occurrences in the Sub-Region?

1. Is there a causative trend for military coups in West Africa?
2. In your view, do military coups have ripple effects?
3. What lessons can be learnt among West African countries to prevent coups in the sub-region?
4. What external lessons can be learnt to prevent coups in the sub-region?
5. Please are there any suggestions or recommendations on preventive measures to adopt to end military coups in West Africa?

