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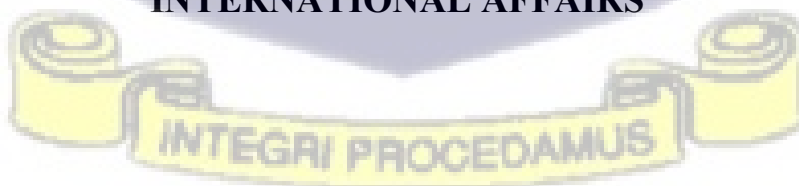
LEGON CENTRE FOR INTERNATIONAL AFFAIRS AND DIPLOMACY (LECIAD)



**DEMOCRATIC BACKSLIDE AND THE RETURN OF
COUP CULTURE IN WEST AFRICA- A CASE STUDY
OF MALI AND BURKINA FASO**

**BY
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**THIS DISSERTATION IS SUBMITTED TO THE UNIVERSITY
OF GHANA, LEGON, IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF
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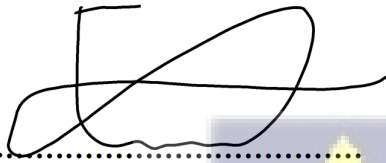


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DECLARATION

I, EMMANUEL NTIRI ASANTE, do hereby declare that this dissertation is my original work under the supervision of Dr. Juliana Appiah of the Legon Center of International Affairs and Diplomacy (LECIAD), at the University of Ghana in partial fulfillment of the award of a Master of Arts (MA) in International Affairs, and that, to the best of my knowledge have not been fully or partially submitted for any purpose other than the works duly cited.



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DEDICATION

I dedicate this work to my Family.



ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

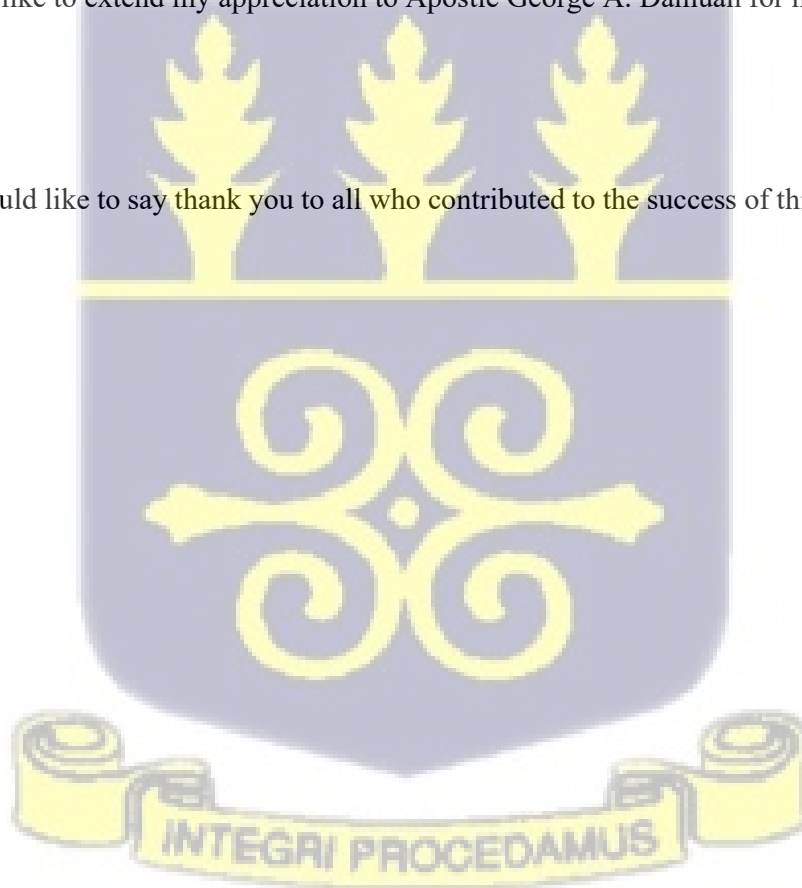
My heartfelt gratitude goes to God Almighty for seeing me through this program.

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

AU	-	Africa Union
CMLN	-	Committee for National Liberation
CSO	-	Civil Society Organization
ECOMICI	-	ECOWAS Mission in Cote 'Ivoire
ECOMOG	-	ECOWAS Community of West African States Monitoring Group
ECOWAS	-	Economic Community of West African States
EU	-	European Union
MOTI	-	Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Regional Integration
NATO	-	North Atlantic Treaty Organization
NMLA	-	National Movement for the Liberation of Azawad
OAU	-	Organization of African Unity
PDGG	-	Protocol on Democracy and Good Governance
RECs	-	Regional Economic Communities
UN	-	United Nations
UNESCO	-	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization



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ABSTRACT

West Africa was plagued by an avalanche of military coups post-independence in the 1960s. The post-Cold War era witnessed a gradual decline in the incidents of coups with several States in West Africa embracing democracy as a system of governance. ECOWAS and governments of member states have been building on this foundation to promote good governance, peace, security, and development in the sub-region. There has been a resurgence of military coups in West Africa in recent years which threatens not only the democratic gains but the peace and security of the sub-region. The objective of the study was to examine the underlying causes for the resurgence of military coups in West Africa, specifically assessing the factors motivating some military officers in Mali and Burkina Faso to stage coups in this democratic dispensation, ascertain if West Africa was in a democratic backslide due to the resurgence of military coups and if ECOWAS was to be partly blamed for the resurgence of the military coups. The study adopted the Greed and Grievance theory in explaining the research phenomenon. The study employed the qualitative method using the case study research design and relied on both secondary and primary data. Secondary data was obtained from an extensive review of literature on the research topic. Primary data were obtained from four experts who are senior officials from the Malian and Burkina Faso Embassies, the ECOWAS Secretariat, and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Regional Integration in Ghana. Findings from the study revealed that insecurity caused by jihadist activities was a major factor motivating some officers of the military in Mali and Burkina Faso to stage coups. Findings also revealed that both militaries of Mali and Burkina Faso were highly under-resourced. This resulted in high casualties during combat with the jihadist groups which infuriated some officers to stage coups. Findings further revealed that Mali had a peculiar challenge with internal ethnic unrest and external influences. The old nemesis of corruption and bad governance also persists in Mali and Burkina Faso contributing to the resurgence of military coups in the two states. Findings from the study also revealed that the recent incidents of military coups in West Africa are non-representational and that there are still thriving democracies in West Africa. This, therefore, refutes the thesis statement that West Africa is in a democratic backslide as a result of the resurgence of coups in some states. Finally, the study also revealed that ECOWAS' reactionary approach to coups and ineffective sanctions make ECOWAS partly responsible for the resurgence of coups in West Africa. Based on the findings the study recommends that the governments of Mali and Burkina Faso strengthen their democratic institutions to enable them effectively perform their constitutional mandates and prevent easy takeovers by the military. The governments of Mali and Burkina Faso should also invest in their security forces particularly the police force and the military to effectively combat the jihadist groups. The study also recommends that ECOWAS applies more punitive sanctions to coup makers to serve as a deterrent to other officers of the military with similar ambitions. The study concludes by admitting that the resurgence of military coups in West Africa poses a threat to democracy in the sub-region but at the moment does not constitute a democratic backslide. The study also concluded by noting that it will take the collective effort of governments of ECOWAS states, ECOWAS as a sub-regional bloc, civil society organizations, and the entire citizenry of West Africa to protect and advance the course of democracy within the sub-region.

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background

Edward Luttwak in his work, 'Coup d'état; a practical handbook' defined military coup as 'an infiltration of small but important aspect of the state setup, which is utilized in displacing government from its control of the remainder' (Luttwak, 1969 p.12). Historically, military coups became a common phenomenon in the political scene of most African and West African countries, with many viewing military coups as an institutional means of changing legitimately elected civilian regimes (Dwyer, 2015). Over the past six decades, 215 coups have been attempted in 43 countries across the African continent (Harkness, 2016). The 1960s post-independence and Cold war period saw the African continent become a hotbed for the prevalence of coup d'états. In the 1960s and 1970s, African countries recorded a coup or coup attempt every 55 days, and only seven African States recorded no activity of coups within the period (Kposowa & Jenkins, 1993).

West Africa has been particularly noted for its notoriety of military coup d'états since several of its states gained independence in the late 1950s and early 1960s. West Africa had the most coups on the continent between 1958 and 2008, accounting for 44.4 percent of all coups (Yoroms, 2014). Annan (2014), emphasized this point when she noted that there were over 37 successful coups and 80 failed coup attempts in West Africa between 1960 and 2004. Furthermore, of the over 40 coups and attempted coups that have occurred in Africa since 2010, twenty (20) of them have occurred in West Africa and the Sahel region (Harkness, 2016). It is worth mentioning that out of the 20 coups that have occurred in West Africa since 2010, twelve of them occurred in former French colonies which have often been the case in most of the coups that have occurred in Africa in general (Suleiman & Onapajo, 2022).

The end of the Cold War era, however, ushered in a new dispensation where many developing countries particularly African states embraced western democracy as an integral system of governance to accelerate national development and promote nation-building (Deng, 2018). This resulted in the establishment of democratic institutions, multiparty systems, constitutionalism, and rule of law through the judicial process as well as periodic elections to either maintain or change government (Gyimah-Boadi, 2015). This was a major step taken by several States in Africa and West Africa to curtail the occurrence of military coups and maintain peace, security, and stability.

The role of regional and sub-regional bodies like the African Union and the ECOWAS in achieving this feat cannot be overlooked. Within the last two decades, the Africa Union has instituted some major mechanisms to address the issues of unconstitutional change of government and to promote democracy and good governance in Africa. The first is the Constitutive Act of the African Union established in July 2000 (Souaré, 2009). Article 4 (m) of the Constitutive Act accentuated the need for African countries to uphold democratic values and principles through popular participation and good governance (Constitutive Act of the African Union, 2000). The basis for the call is to accelerate socio-economic development on the continent and also ensure peace, security, and stability (Amvane, 2015). The “Declaration on the Framework for an OAU Response to Unconstitutional Changes in Government” also referred to as the Lomé Declaration was also adopted in July 2002. The Declaration was adopted as part of efforts to curb the menace of military coups and unconstitutional change of government on the continent (Souaré, 2009). Five years later the AU again established the African Charter on Democracy, Elections and Governance at the 8th ordinary summit in Addis Ababa in 2007 (Jaafar, 2017). This was to ensure elections are conducted in a free, fair and transparent manner to prevent post-election conflicts and ensure political stability (Ibid).

In 2001, the ECOWAS also adopted an additional protocol that is the Protocol on Democracy and Good Governance. The ECOWAS viewed democracy and good governance as prerequisites for peace, security and stability in the sub-region (Addo, 2017). The ECOWAS Mechanism and recent Accra Declaration on Unconstitutional Changes of Government in Africa are just a few of several mechanisms and interventions by AU and ECOWAS to promote democracy, peace and security in Africa and within the sub-region. Collaborative efforts by the AU, ECOWAS and member states have significantly contributed to stability in West Africa and Africa as a whole (Ibid). Remarkably, military coups sharply reduced from 14 in the 1990s to 7 incidences in the 2000s (Africa Leadership Change Dataset, 2021). Despite these gains and the expansion of democracy and democratic institutions across West Africa, the sub-region is gradually relapsing into the era of military coups and unconstitutional governance.

1.2 Problem Statement

Post-independence the West African sub-region was saddled by rampant military coup d'états. This did not only distort the political stability of the sub-region but also retarded the economic growth of countries in the sub-region. Embracing democracy as a new system of governance in the early 1990s post-Cold War was considered a shift from unconstitutional changes of government and military rule to democratic governance in West Africa. The African Union and the sub-regional bloc ECOWAS have been instrumental in West Africa's gradual shift towards democratic governance.

Despite intermittent internal conflicts mostly due to election disputes, the issue of unconstitutional change of government was almost a thing of the past in West Africa. Countries like Ghana, Senegal, and Benin have been shining examples of West Africa's inclination towards democracy, particularly with smooth transfers of power from one government to

another including opposition parties (Kohnert, 2023). This has particularly been the case since the early 2000s. In recent years there has been a surge in attempted and successful military coups in West Africa. Between August 19, 2020, and February 1, 2022, there have been six military coups in West Africa; two failed and four were successful. This implies that there has been a coup attempt every three months in West Africa since that period. This situation has raised serious concerns within the West African and international community on the depth of democracy within the sub-region. There is also growing concern about democratic backslide and the return to coup culture in West Africa. The study, therefore, seeks to unravel the underlying causes of the sudden rebirth of military coups in West Africa and to also determine if these sudden events of military coups imply a democratic backslide and a return to coup culture in West Africa.

1.3 Research Questions

- What are the underlying factors that are motivating military officers in West Africa particularly Mali and Burkina Faso to stage coups in this democratic era?
- Is the resurgence of military coups a sign of recession in the democratic journey in the West African sub-region?
- Is the sub-regional bloc ECOWAS, partly to be blamed for the current resurgence of coups in West Africa?

1.4 Objectives of Study

The study seeks to accomplish the following objectives:

- To assess the underlying factors motivating military officers in West Africa particularly Mali and Burkina Faso to stage coups in this current democratic era.
- To ascertain if West African is in a democratic backslide due to the recent increase in

military coups in the sub-region.

- To assess if ECOWAS is partly to be blamed for the resurgence of military coups in West Africa.

1.5 Rationale of Study

Acknowledging the abundant literature available, this paper will be seeking to add up to the existing knowledge on this recurrent phenomenon which now seems to be a norm as well as alternative means of disposing a sitting government. Using Mali and Burkina Faso as case studies contributed to obtaining an in-depth understanding of some of the underlying factors accounting for the recent surge in military coups within the ECOWAS sub-region. The study also contributes to understanding how lapses of the ECOWAS bloc seem to have encouraged this phenomenon. The study can also be relied upon by ECOWAS, governments, and civil society organizations in West Africa in developing policies and frameworks that will enhance democracy, peace, and security within the sub-region.

1.6 Scope of Study

In consolidating the democratic gains attained after the third wave of coups in the 1990s, the African Union and ECOWAS instituted mechanisms to address the issue of unconstitutional change of governments in the West African sub-region. The institution and implementation of these mechanisms and frameworks proved successful as the sub-region witnessed a significant decline in the prevalence of military coups. The study, therefore, explored and analyzed the causal factors behind the new trend of military coups in the West African region using the events in Mali (May 2021) and Burkina Faso (January 2022) as case studies. This study was limited to West Africa due to the recent increase in the number of military takeovers in the sub-region compared to other regions on the Africa continent. The study also selected West Africa

because of the role of its sub-regional bloc ECOWAS in extensively developing mechanisms and protocols that promote democracy, peace, and security within the sub-region.

1.7 Theoretical Framework

This study is underpinned by the Greed and Grievance theory, which was propounded by Paul Collier and Anke Hoeffler (Collier & Hoeffler, 2000). The basic tenets of the theory are ‘greed’ and ‘grievance’ a two-baseline argument as suggested by name of the theory. The greed and grievance theory is often used by researchers of armed conflict to explore the causes of civil war and has currently been extended to other forms of violent conflicts including rebellion and insurgency (Ballentine & Nitzschke, 2003). The greed and grievance theory is largely premised on the perception of deprivation of certain gains and needs by one warring faction against the other (Cederman & Vogt, 2017).

Proponents of the theory of greed and grievance argue that the concept of “greed” is based on fierce competition over natural resources within the State (Hoth & Mengal, 2016). They also suggest that the motivation of warring factions in an armed conflict is the desire to better their current situation. In doing this they perform a cost-benefit analysis to assess if the rewards they will obtain by starting a rebellion or armed conflict will be greater than not engaging in such a conflict (Murshed & Tadjoeeddin, 2009). In the analysis, a rebellion, insurgency or violent conflict will likely occur when the rewards and personal gains of such actions are greater than not engaging in such violent activities. When the deprivation is premised on economic considerations it is regarded as a vertical inequality and the cause of the war or violent conflict is attributed to greed (Hoth & Mengal, 2016).

Collier, Hoeffler, and Rohner (2007) also asserted that rebellion must be of significant financial

value particularly in the case of natural resources to result in violent conflict. This is witnessed in the case of several resource-based violence like the violent conflict in Sierra Leone (1991-1999) over diamonds popularly referred to as the blood diamonds which resulted in the death and disfiguration of several Sierra Leonians (Murshed & Tadjoeeddin, 2009). The violent conflict that erupted in the Niger Delta in Nigeria in the 1990s was also oil resource-driven (Evans & Kelikume, 2019). Murshed & Tadjoeeddin (2009) also argued that combatants are also likely to start or sustain a rebellion when they are assured of a ready supply of finance from the sympathetic diaspora community. Conflicts driven by the acquisition of personal gains and power are therefore fueled by greed.

The second aspect of the theory “grievance” advances that war or violent conflicts are likely to occur when some groups or elements within the state or community feel marginalized and unfairly treated (Collier & Hoeffler, 2004). This occurs because there are visible inequalities in access to vital socio-political or economic needs or resources. The deprived group tends to wage war, start a rebellion or even join an existing violent conflict to ameliorate its self from the injustices it might be suffering from (Murshed & Tadjoeeddin, 2009). When the deprivation is caused by ethnicity, religion, or gender bias then it is regarded as horizontal inequality and the cause of the war or violent conflict is attributed to “grievances” (Hoth & Mengal, 2016). Initially, there were arguments that inequality did not contribute to the risk of civil wars. According to Fearon and Laitin (2003) ethnicity or religious diversity played very little or no role in the eruption of civil war. They suggested that the diminished capacity of the state due to poverty or inadequate resources rather contributes to civil wars. Collier and Koeffler (2004), also emphasized poverty as a major cause of conflict, especially in poor countries. They opined that poverty makes soldiering more attractive, and generally lowers the opportunity cost of war in poor nations. They further noted that violent conflicts result in greater poverty because of

the destructiveness of war creating a vicious cycle of poverty-conflict-poverty. This Collier and Hoeffler termed the poverty trap (Collier & Hoeffler, 2004).

Other armed conflict scholars and political scientists have posited a different view that relative deprivation which results in the grievance is a major source of conflict (Olson, 1965; Gurr, 2015). The argument is that ethnicity and religion have strong, easy, quick, and efficient amalgamation power compared to other transient interests that may motivate individuals or groups to engage in armed conflicts (Gurr, 2015). In essence, it is more likely for people from the same ethnic background or religion to stage a rebellion when they feel marginalized or deprived due to common or shared values, historical ties, and fraternity. The greed and grievance theory other than the basic distinction between vertical and horizontal inequality is complementary to understanding the underlying causes of wars and violent conflicts.

According to Qadir and Khan (2015), critics of the greed and grievance theory argue that the theory fails to explain how historical events and contexts affect the eruption and trajectory of violent conflicts. Murshed and Tadjoeeddin (2009) specifically, noted that horizontal inequalities or grievances were useful in explaining the cause(s) of conflicts but do not provide adequate insight into why the violent conflicts persist. Critics also argue that the presence of greed or grievance is not a sufficient condition for the eruption of violent conflicts as violent conflicts will require institutional breakdown to be successful (Murshed & Tadjoeeddin, 2009; Hoth & Mengal, 2016).

Despite these criticisms, the greed and grievance theory is appropriate for this study because it provides a foundation for deep probing of the underlying causes of the resurgence of military coups in West Africa. It provides a framework or guides to analyze and juxtapose the vertical

inequalities and horizontal inequalities and how each dependently or interdependently triggers armed conflicts and, in this regard, motivates some officers of the army to overthrow constitutionally elected governments in West Africa.

Also, West Africa has been a hotbed for military coups and violent conflict for several decades. Some of the poorest countries in the world are located within the sub-region providing some credence to the poverty trap as espoused by Collier and Hoeffler (2004), as a cause and consequence of violent conflicts. Furthermore, several violent conflicts in West Africa have had ethnic underpinnings including the Liberian Civil Wars 1989-1996; 1999-2003, the Biafran War 1967, and the Konkomba-Nanumba war in Ghana in 1994 (Anna, 2014; Rapanyane, 2021; Yaro & Longi, 2022). In considering the factors accounting for the resurgence of military coups in West Africa greed and grievance provides a good foundation to assess the role of deprivation of basic needs amongst the general population and inadequate logistics of the military and corruption in contributing to the resurgence of military coups in the sub-region. The theory also helps in scrutinizing ethnicity and religion in ascertaining their roles or otherwise in the resurgence of military coups in West Africa. The greed and grievance theory based on its tenets is therefore suitable for understanding the resurgence of military coups in West Africa particularly Mali and Burkina Faso.

1.8 Literature Review

In this section, the study reviewed journal articles and other scholarly literature on coups in Africa and the role of regional and Sub-regional blocs like the African Union and ECOWAS in preventing and addressing the coup phenomenon. The literature review also paid particular attention to military coups in the West African sub-region since the early 1960s. The objective of the literature review is to first identify some existing gaps in the literature that will be

addressed by this study. Secondly, data from the literature relevant to the study will be relied upon as secondary data to address the research objectives and questions.

Eizenga (2021) in his article “Military Coups in Burkina Faso” provided an elaborate account of military coups in Burkina since the country gained its independence in 1960. The article provided a detailed and chronological account of all the coups that had occurred from 1966 to 2015 in the country. The article was divided into two main parts, the first section reflected on the first 27 years post-independence, and the aspect focused on Blaise Compaoré’s 27 years in power after he staged the 1987 coup. The historical accounts provided by Eizenga revealed that between 1966 and 1987 Burkina Faso witnessed a successful military coup almost every four years resulting in a total of five successful coups.

The paper also reviewed the dynamics that led to the overthrow of Blaise Compaoré who had held onto power for 27 years after the last coup he staged in 1987. Compaoré was overthrown through massive street protests and demonstrations for attempting to unlawfully change the constitution to extend his tenure in office. According to Eizenga the factors that led to the overthrow of Compaoré were no different from the factors that resulted in the previous five coups that occurred between 1966 to 1987. He identified undemocratic governance and poor economic mismanagement leading to hardships as the major causes of the military coups that had occurred between 1966-2014. He also noted that aside from the 2015 failed military coup, all the successful military coups have had some popular street support. According to Eizenga, the coups from 1966-2014 have been triggered by public protests and demonstrations which are then preceded by military intervention. These public protests he opined are either organized or supported by labor organizations, civil society organizations, opposition political parties, and student movements against incumbent regimes for poor governance and economic mismanagement.

Eizenga work's although very elaborate in providing factual accounts of military coup events from independence to 2015 in Burkina Faso was extensively narrative. The study provided a general account of coup events without conducting an in-depth analysis of why the coups kept resurging. Despite mentioning that street protests almost always preceded military coups, the paper failed to mention if street protests were seen as an invitation for the military to act, a motivation for some military officers to achieve their political ambitions, or were outrightly misinterpreted by the military.

Despite these challenges, the elaborate historical recount of military coups in Burkina Faso provides a solid foundation to understand the resurgence of military coups in Burkina Faso in recent years which is an objective of the study. It also provides a basis for further analytical studies into the factors motivating military leaders in staging coups in West Africa during the current dispensation a gap in Eizenga's work that this study filled.

Matei (2021) conducted a study to ascertain the role of military interventions in undermining or consolidating democracy within a state using Mali as a case study. In her work titled "The Hot and Cold Relationship between Military Intervention and Democratic Consolidation," Matei referred to Mali as a praetorian state due to the frequent involvement of the military in the country's politics. Aside from citing the four successful military coups that occurred in Mali (1968,1991,2012 and 2020) to justify her assertion, she highlighted negative colonial legacies, weak state institutions, poor governance, the precarious security situation in northern Mali, history of military interventions and ineffective international assistance and aid as causes of military coups in Mali over the years.

According to Matei, Mali's military interventions have had both positive and negative effects

on the governance structure of the country. Matei argued that while the 1968 military intervention was a replacement of an authoritarian regime with another replica the 1991 military intervention led to the democratization of Mali. Although she admits that military intervention was not always the best approach, she acknowledged that some regimes particularly notoriously authoritarian regimes required the use of force and thus military intervention to oust them from power and develop a road map for democratic governance.

Matei, also noted that the 2012 and 2020 military coups were attacks on democracy that did not only negatively impact Mali but could have also influenced some military officers within the sub-region to take similar actions resulting in sporadic incidents of military coup attempts in recent years. Matei concluded that Mali's political institutions within the 21st century are weak, corrupt, engaged in internal fighting, and incapable of governing the country. This she argues has counted for the susceptibility of Mali to military coups and the resultant negative effects.

Matei's study helps in appreciating the causes of military coups in Mali which can be extended to the West African sub-region. Matei's conclusions on why she regards Mali as susceptible to Military coups also provide a platform to understand and further explore the recent resurgence of military coups in West Africa making a comparative analysis with the situation in Burkina Faso. Matei's study focused primarily on Mali, and therefore there is a need to conduct a study to ascertain if her findings are reflective of the situation in other West African countries like Burkina Faso which has recently relapsed into military coups. This study's approach to using Mali and Burkina Faso as case studies create an opportunity to juxtapose the findings and draw more concrete conclusions.

Ajayi and Olu-Adeyemi (2015), also conducted a study on the resurgence of military-political

adventurism in West Africa to determine its implications for the survival of democracy. The study also sought to identify predisposing factors driving the resurgence of military coups and to proffer solutions that will help sustain democracy within the sub-region. According to Ayai and Olu-Adeyemi (2015), the democratization efforts of the 1990s appeared to have quelled the prevalence of military coups which they referred to as military political adventurism in their studies. They however recounted that the turn of the millennium (the beginning of the year 2000) witnessed a resurgence of military inventions in several countries in West Africa.

Probing into the causes of the resurgence of military coups in West Africa, their study findings revealed bad governance, corruption, poverty, insecurity, nonavailability of tangible democratic dividends, the selfish ambition of some military officers, and the half-hearted response of ECOWAS to unconstitutional governance as major predisposing factors.

On ECOWAS, they further opined that ECOWAS often turned a blind eye to the unconstitutional actions of the incumbent civilian government to maintain power which is against ECOWAS' Protocol on Democracy and Good Governance. They also argued that ECOWAS' reactive approach and use of rhetoric instead of a more proactive approach in dealing with the coup phenomenon somewhat influences or emboldens some military officers to stage coups to oust unpopular and ineffective regimes within the sub-region. They proposed strict adherence to good governance, inclusive democracy, accountability, and transparency under the ECOWAS Protocol on Democracy and Good Governance as measures to enhance democracy and curb the resurgence of military coups. They also recommended that ECOWAS takes a more decisive, proactive, and leadership role in the issue of governance within the sub-region.

The work of Ajayi and Olu-Adeyemi (2015) is relevant to this study as it provides useful insight

into the causes of the resurgence of military coups in West Africa. It also helps in understanding the role of ECOWAS in curbing the resurgence of military coups within the sub-region and if ECOWAS should be partly blamed for the current coup situation in West Africa. The study, therefore, provides insight into addressing two of the three research objectives. Ajayi and Olu-Adeyemi's study assessed the resurgence of military coups in West Africa between 2000 and 2015. There have been dozens of coups within West Africa between 2015 and 2022. Between 2020 and 2022 there have been six coup attempts four successful and two failed. Ajayi and Olu-Adeyemi's study, therefore, provides an opportunity for further study to ascertain if the factors that accounted for the resurgence of military coups in West Africa years back are the same. This is an important gap this study will address and also proffer solutions if the causes are the same or similar to prevent future occurrences.

Okeke (2018), in his work *Theories of Military in African Politics*, acknowledges the existence of a coup culture among most African states, with the general African populace accepting unconstitutional military incursion in politics as a viable and legitimate means of changing corrupt and poorly performing civilian regimes which had become a major characteristic of most governments during the post-independence period. He identified how the struggle for political power along ethnic lines, in addition to the lack of economic development which led to harsh economic conditions, high living standards, and lack of social amenities played a significant role in the high prevalence of military coups during that period. The influence of external factors such as the cold war was also an underlying cause of the post-independence military overthrow of several civilian governments in Africa.

According to Okeke, the failures of military rulers and regimes to address pertaining economic and social issues caused the flurry of military takeovers on the African continent. This he opined led to the African populace desiring and embracing western democracy thus the spread

of liberal democratic values across Africa.

In his attempt to identify the causal factors for the resurgence of military coups, he outlined how weak democratic foundations of most African states enabled some military leaders to easily exchange their military uniforms for suits (overthrow civilian regimes) during the period of political reforms. He further highlighted the worsening economic conditions of several African states and the continued prevalence of corruption as factors that accounted for the gradual return of military coups in Africa. Okeke also argued that the lack of severe punishment for coups makers by the regional/sub-regional blocs AU and ECOWAS and the decision to allow some coup makers to participate in elections after they handed over power to transitional governments encouraged the return of the coup phenomenon in Africa.

Okeke's work extensively contributes to this study by addressing several aspects of the study's objectives such as the factors motivating some officers of the military to stage coups in West Africa in recent years. It also addresses the role of regional and sub-regional blocks in preventing or somewhat driving the resurgence of military coups. The study, however, focused on the entire African continent making it difficult to deeply probe into individual states to ascertain the pertinent factors that affect individual states, and how similar or different these factors may be. The current study fills the gap by conducting a case study of two West African states Mali and Burkina Faso to gain a deeper insight into the causal factors of the resurgence of military coups in the two states.



Jude Okafor and Uzodinma Okafor authors of ECOWAS and Democratic Reversal in West

Africa: Revisiting Military Incursions on the State Leadership, also acknowledge how most states in Africa after the transformational effects of the third wave of democracy have fallen short in their democratization journey (Okafor & Okafor, 2015). They point out how the winner-takes-all electoral system threatens the democratic process and poses a recipe for political instability. They further opined that the military resorted to coups as the only way to government change when self-seeking political elites, solely focus on amassing wealth and staying in the helms of power for as long as they live while ignoring their social, economic, and political duties to the state and its people.

Concerning ECOWAS, the sub-regional bloc, they argued that the bloc had put in several interventions both militarily and diplomatically. They cited the creation of ECOMOG in 1990 as a military strategy for restoring peace and political stability in conflict states within the sub-region. They also noted that the establishment of protocols including the 1999 ECOWAS Mechanism and the Protocol on Democracy and Good Governance in 2001 are all efforts by ECOWAS to promote democracy in West Africa and curb the prevalence of unconstitutional change of government in the sub-region. They further acknowledged the establishment of the ECOWAS court, and the mediation and reconciliation roles played by ECOWAS all to promote political stability through democratic governance within the sub-region. They however concluded that despite the immense efforts by ECOWAS, leaders within the sub-region are not living up to their mandate making light the efforts of ECOWAS.

The paper is relevant to the study because it contributes to the understanding of the political architecture of West Africa and the challenges to democratic sustainability in the sub-region. It also explored the role of ECOWAS in contributing to democratic sustainability in West Africa. The study took a rather general approach to analyzing military incursions in ECOWAS

and democratic reversals. This study, however, employs the case study approach to understanding the causes of military coup resurgence and democratic backslides in West Africa. The use of the case study approach affords for deeper probing and more in-depth analysis to unravel the factors militating for the resurgence of military coups in West Africa and ECOWAS' role in halting the democratic decline.

Chidume (2013) also asserted that socioeconomic factors significantly contributed to military incursions in West Africa. In his work, *Military Coups in West Africa, the African "Phenomenon that is Self-inflicted"*, Chidume describes the African armed forces as seeing itself as the only competent institution that is capable of saving its state, thus its obligation to intervene and overthrow civilian regimes that confronted by a legitimate crisis. In the article, Chidume outlined how economic hardships, continuous practice of corruption and mismanagement among governments and their agents, as well as the continuous play of tribal and ethnic politics, formed the main underlying factors that prelude military coups and interventions in the sub-region.

The work of Chidume is also relevant to this study as it highlights the existential threats to democracy and how it prepares fertile grounds for military interventions in the West African States. Chidume's work although very insightful is almost a decade old and there might be emerging threats to democracy in recent years as well as new factors motivating some officers within the military to stage coups in this democratic dispensation. This is an important gap the study will be addressing within its findings.

1.9 Research Methodology

In executing this study, the qualitative case study research method was used. This type of research method involves the empirical investigation of a particular contemporary phenomenon

within a real-life context using multiple methods of data collection (Yin, 2009). A case study entails a comprehensive study of the social unit of society which may be a person, family group, institution, community, or event (Thomas, 2021). This study also employed the purposive sampling technique in selecting four officials, one from the Malian Embassy, Burkina Faso Embassy, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Regional Integration, Ghana, and the ECOWAS Secretariat in Accra Ghana. The purposive sampling technique involves selecting respondents on the bases of their perceived knowledge, expertise, and experience about the phenomenon under study as well as the objectives of the study. The four selected respondents were selected based on their experience, in-depth knowledge, and understanding of ECOWAS and the political happenings within the sub-region, particularly the political situations in Mali and Burkina Faso.

1.9.1 Sources of Data

In gathering materials for the study, both primary and secondary data were used.

- **Primary Data Collection**

The study collected primary data through interviews of four officials from the Malian Embassy, Burkina Faso Embassy, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Regional Integration, Ghana, and the ECOWAS Secretariat in Accra Ghana. Interview is a qualitative approach to collecting data, involving direct, individual, or group discussions between a researcher and participants (Kallio et al., 2016). Interviews were deemed appropriate to understand the research topic “Democratic Backslide and the return of coup culture in West Africa-A case study of Mali and Burkina Faso”. This because interviews allowed participants to share detailed knowledge and experiences on the topic without much limitations providing useful insights to address the research objectives and questions.

A semi-structured interview guide was used to facilitate the interviews. A semi-structured

interview guide is a primary data collection instrument that contains a set of predetermined questions that do not limit the response of an interviewee (Kallio et al., 2016). Semi-structured interview guides are useful in conducting interviews as they include predetermined questions to moderate the responses of interviews but allow for adjustments (ask follow up questions) based on respondents' answers during the interview. The researcher utilized the semi-structured interview guide to ask follow-up questions, where necessary to obtain more clarity on specific issues which helped in addressing the research objectives.

All four officials purposively selected for the study were interviewed face-to-face and each interview was conducted within 30 minutes. The official from the Malian Embassy was interviewed on November 2, 2022 in his office and the interview lasted 27 minutes. The interview was voice recorded using a mobile phone to facilitate transcription after seeking and obtaining permission from the official. The interview with the official from the Burkina Faso Embassy was conducted on November 3, 2022 at his office. The interview lasted 24 minutes and was also audio recorder using the mobile phone after obtaining permission from the official.

The official from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Regional Integration was interviewed at his office on November 8, 2022 at his office at the Ministry in Accra. The interview lasted 25 minutes and was audio recorded using a mobile phone after obtaining permission form the official. The last interview with the official from the ECOWAS Secretariat in Accra was conducted on November 10, 2022 at the ECOWAS Secretariat in Accra. The interview lasted 29 minutes and was audio recorded using the mobile phone after permission was obtained. The research expressed his profound gratitude to each official and reassured them of the purpose of the interviews for academic purposes.

- **Secondary Data**

- Data from this section was obtained from:
 - Policy documents,
 - Journal articles,
 - Books,
 - Newspaper reports
 - Internet.

1.9.2 Data Analysis

The thematic analysis was used in analyzing the primary data obtained from the four expert interviews. According to Braun and Clarke (2012:57) cited in Braun and Clarke (2015), thematic analysis is “a method used for systematically identifying, organizing and offering insight into patterns of meaning (themes) across a data set. The interview data obtained through a recorder was manually transcribed verbatim. The transcribed interviews were reviewed severally to generate initial codes to reduce the large volume of data into smaller meaningful fragments. The next step was to search for themes by examining the codes to identify patterns that fit into themes that could be used to address the research objectives and questions. Preliminary themes were developed and after several reviews the final themes were developed. The interview data were coherently presented under the themes generated to address the research objectives.

1.10 Ethical Consideration

The study considered two main ethical issues which are consent and confidentiality. Consent in research refers to formally obtaining the approval of a participant or respondent to participate

in a study (Williams & Pigoet, 2017). Express permission was sought from all four respondents through formally written letters. Each participant was also briefed on the purpose of the study and was allowed to ask questions on issues they were unclear about before proceeding to conduct the interviews.

Confidentiality entails protecting the personal data (such as name or any detail traceable to the person) of respondents or participants in a study (Williams & Pigeot, 2017). It requires seeking the express permission of the respondents before publishing their names in the study or withholding their names and other personal information upon request. The four senior officials requested their names be withheld in the study as such their names were represented by respondents with a prefixed number in their responses to enable easy differentiation by readers.

1.11 Limitations of the study

This study like other studies has some limitations. The main limitation of the study is the number of respondents interviewed which is four. The number of respondents for the study could have been increased to include military officers both active and retired as the study significantly revolved around them. Military officers in Ghana could have been interviewed to ascertain why there have been no recorded military coup attempts since the fourth Republic began in 1992 and why the situation has been different in Mali and Burkina Faso. Also, interviewing military officers from the two countries (Mali and Burkina Faso) would have contributed more to understanding the research phenomenon which is the resurgence of military coups in West Africa. These limitations were a result of time constraints as well as the accessibility and willingness of the military officers to participate in the study. Despite this limitation, the study still addressed the research objectives and questions based on the in-depth knowledge, experience, and expertise of the selected expert officials. Also, the strategic

selection of the respondents from the four key institutions (Mali Embassy – Ghana, Burkina Faso Embassy – Ghana, ECOWAS Secretariat – Ghana, and Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Regional Integration – Ghana) that are relevant to the study also enhanced the quality of the data obtained and the conclusions drawn from the study findings.

1.12 Arrangement of Chapters

This work is divided into four chapters: Chapter One is the introduction which entails the background to the study, problem statement, research objectives and statements, scope of the study, rationale/significance of the study, thesis statement, theoretical framework, literature review, research methodology, limitation of the study and arrangement of chapters. Research Design. Chapter two deals with the Overview of Coup Culture and Prevalence in West Africa and the ECOWAS' management of military coups.

Chapter Two presented an overview of the ECOWAS management of military coups in West Africa. It provided an insight into the concept of a coup, the history of coups in West Africa, the causes of coups in West Africa in the past, the various ECOWAS mechanisms and protocols on democracy and good governance, and ECOWAS management of military coups in West Africa.

Chapter Three entailed a case study on the assessment of the resurgence of military coups in Mali and Burkina Faso. The capture also presented the views of the respondents interviewed for the study. Chapter Four provided a summary of key findings from the study, conclusions drawn from the findings, and recommendations proffered to the various stakeholders including governments of West African States particularly Mali and Burkina Faso, ECOWAS, Civil Society Organizations, and Policy think tanks based on the research findings.

CHAPTER TWO

OVERVIEW OF THE ECOWAS MANAGEMENT OF MILITARY COUPS

2.0 Introduction

This chapter presents an overview of the prevalence of military coup d'états and coup culture in West Africa and the ECOWAS' management of same. In detail, the chapter begins by providing an overview of the concept of coups, the history of coups in West Africa, and the underlying causes of coups in the sub-region. The second aspect of the chapter assesses the various ECOWAS protocols established to promote good governance and democracy and to avert or significantly reduce the incidents of coups in the sub-region. The final part of the chapter examines the role(s) the ECOWAS directly plays in preventing coups in the sub-region, its response when they occur, and the challenges it faces in resolving them.

2.1 Definition and Concept of Coup

The term coup d'état predates the 19th century but gained popularity in the 20th century. The word coup originally stemmed from the French word coup d'état and is literally used to describe the overthrow of a government (Selbin, 2018). The coup concept is not highly contested as compared to concepts such as democracy although there are some minor variations in the definition. While there is a consensus on what constitutes a coup in academia, the term is often subjectively interpreted within the political space (Marsteintredet & Malamud, 2019). One of the classical definitions of a coup was proffered by Luttwak (1969 p.12) who defined it as “the infiltration of a small but critical segment of the state’s apparatus which is used to displace the government from the control of the remainder”. Several years after his definition, Bogdanor (1987) cited in Bertelson (1997 p.324) also defined a coup as "a stroke of state; a seizure of power by a group using the permanent employees of the state... to capture and

paralyze the nerve ends of continuing government". A more recent definition was advanced by Powell and Thyne (2011, p.252), they defined a coup as "illegal and overt attempts by the military or other elites within the state apparatus to unseat the sitting executive". From the definitions, a coup can be generally defined as a seizure of power from a government or an illegal removal or overthrow of a government usually by elements in the state such as the military, rebel group, or political faction.

Coups are often bundled together with other internal activities within the state, which include insurrections, rebellion, and revolutions that essentially destabilize a state by overthrowing a government (Selbin, 2018). Bogdanor (1987) cited in Bartelson (1997 p.324), however, one can essentially distinguish a coup from a revolution by expressing that:

coup d'état is distinguished from a revolution in that it does not aim to alter the social and political structure, but merely to substitute one ruling group for another. The coup operates essentially by detaching the employees of the state from their loyalty to legitimate government.

A Coup is a concept that has several adjectives attached, each conveying a specific message that can be de-encrypted to determine the nature of the coup (Marsteintredet & Malamud, 2019). Military coup and constitutional coups are common adjectival usage of the concept. In recent years however, several other adjectives have emerged to qualify coups including "presidential", "electoral", "parliamentary", "judicial", neo-liberal, and a host of others (Ibid).

It is worth noting that in reality, the concept of a coup is more intricate than what is projected in academia. The subjective interpretations carry significant weight within the political space as varied interpretations are ascribed to the same event (Helmke, 2017). A belligerent opposition attempting to stage a coup or after successfully executing a coup can refer to the event as liberation or a freedom action against authoritarianism and dictatorship and often justify the act as a way to restore or institutionalize democracy (Marsteintredet & Malamud, 2019). The overthrown government will simply refer to the action as a coup and the perpetrators as coup mongers or coup makers. As Wardlaw (1989) will succinctly put it, one man's terrorist is another man's freedom fighter.

This notwithstanding, the European Union (EU) and countries like the United States take a very strong stance against coups and institute harsh punitive measures against coup regimes or countries. The United States, for instance, suspends foreign aid to recipient countries that experience coup d'état (Marinov & Goemans, 2014). The African Union also has the power to suspend member states from the organization and recently applied that power against Sudan in June 2019. Despite the seemingly global frown on coups between 1950 and 2010, 457 coup attempts were recorded with 227 (49.7%) being successful and 220 (50.3%) failing. Of these figures, Africa recorded the highest number of coups and coup attempts 36.5% (Sagdic, 2021). A coup can fail, resulting in no change of regime, replace an incumbent leader or government with a dictator or replace a dictatorship with a democratic government (Derpanopoulos et al., 2016). Whatever the cause or trigger or outcome may be, Marsteintredet and Malamud (2019) assert that a coup is the greatest threat to the survival of democracy.

2.2 History of Coups in West Africa

Coups are not new to West Africa as the sub-region has been synonymous with coup d'états over the past six decades. It is no surprise that the first coup that occurred on the continent happened in Togo, a West African country in 1963, just three years after the country gained its independence (R. First, 1970). Ghana, the first country in sub-Saharan Africa to gain independence, also experienced the first of its series of coups in 1966 (Gebe, 2008). Earlier in January that same year, Burkina Faso had witnessed its first coup d'état followed by Nigeria's bloody military coup barely two weeks after, on January 15, 1966 (Phelan, 2016; Nwosu, 2020). Two years after in 1968, the President of Mali, Modibo Keita, was overthrown by a bloodless coup led by the country's military (Matei, 2021). Almost all the coups within that period and the ensuing years involved the military. Since that period there have been several coups and attempted coups in the sub-region.

Between the late 1950s and 2012, there have been over two hundred (200) coups and coup attempt in Africa, majority of which have occurred in West Africa (Barka & Ncube, 2012). A study conducted by Yoroms (2014), revealed that between 1958 and 2008 West Africa recorded the highest number of coups in Africa constituting 44.4%. Between 2010 and 2022 there have been 40 coups and attempted coups in Africa and, unsurprisingly, half of them have occurred within the West African and Sahel regions. Since 2019, there have been seven (7) coups in West Africa, five were successful and two failed. There has also been a trend in the incidence of coups that have occurred on the continent and specifically in West Africa. The majority of the coups that have occurred in Africa post-colonial independence to 2008 occurred in former French colonies (Zounmenou, 2009 cited in Suleiman & Onapajo, 2022). Twelve (12) of the twenty (20) coups that occurred in West Africa since 2010 happened in former French colonies likewise six (6) of the last seven coups and attempted coups in the sub-region since 2019 (Suleiman & Onapajo, 2022). For easy reference, the last six coups and attempted coups that have occurred in the sub-region have been captured in Table 2.1.

Table 2. 1: Coups in West Africa Between August 2020 and February 2022

Country	Former Colonial Administrator	Coup Date	Coup Outcome	Leaders Involved	Targeted Government
Mali	France	August 19, 2020	Successful	Assimi Goita (Military)	President Ibrahim Keita
Mali	France	May 24, 2021	Successful	Assimi Goita (Military)	President Bah Ndaw
Niger	France	March 31, 2021	Failed	Unknown	President-Elect Mohamed Bazoum
Guinea	France	September 5, 2021	Successful	Mamady Doumbouya (Military)	President Alpha Conde
Burkina	France	January 24,	Successful	Paul-Henri	President.

Faso		2022		Damiba	Roch Kabore
Guinea Bissau	Portugal	February 1, 2022	Failed	Unknown	President Umaro Embalo

Source: Compiled by Researcher

West Africa has been a hotbed for coups and particularly, military coups. The next aspect of this chapter delves into the factors responsible for the high incidence of coups in the sub region.

2.3 Underlying Causes of Coups in West Africa Over the Years

It is common knowledge that Africa has the highest incidence of coups in the world. West Africa consists of sixteen countries approximately 30% of the continent in terms of representation by states. Despite the sub-region constituting about one-third of the continent, West Africa is the bloc with the highest prevalence of coups on the continent 44% between 1958 and 2008 and about 50% between 2010 and 2022 (Yoroms, 2014). This section of the chapter undertakes an in-depth review of existing literature to ascertain the underlying causes of coups in the sub-region and what makes West Africa the hotbed of coups on the continent. The causes of coups in West Africa can be categorized under internal factors and external factors. Internal factors are the factors that emanate from within the state that threatens not just the democracy but political stability, peace, and security of the state. External factors, on the other hand, involve global dynamics and powerplay and how they invariably impact a state or region.

2.3.1 Internal Factors

- **Superficial Democratic Credentials**

Although democracy appears to be thriving in most countries in the sub-region the reality is that the gains are more modest than what is projected (Suleiman & Onapajo, 2022). For

instance, a major attribute or determinant of democracy is periodic elections. Periodic elections are a common practice in West African states and this gives the impression that states are adhering to the tenets of democracy. The real issue is that most elections in the sub-region are not conducted within a transparent free and fair environment (Annan, 2014). This sparks election disputes and even when the disputes are purportedly settled losers still feel aggrieved. In light of this aggrieved elements within the state seize the minutest opportunity to create political turmoil through which they plan and execute a coup (Ibid). In closely contested elections even the “losers” have significant numbers which they can rely on in the event of a coup to give false legitimacy to their action (Norris, Cameron &Wynter, 2018). There have also been several undemocratic attempts by presidents to alter the constitution to extend term limits. While some have been unsuccessful others have been successful. In either case, one thing has been common, these actions have been met with stiff opposition some of which later result in an overthrow of the government (Tull & Simons, 2017).

An independent and functional judicial service is another important element required to classify a country as democratic. All countries in West Africa have established judicial services and a supreme court is the apex court of the various states (Suleiman &Onapajo, 2022). The challenge however lies with the independence of the courts and also accessibility by citizens and perceived adjudication of justice (Ibid). A survey conducted by Afrobarometer in 2017 revealed that very few Africans have access to judicial services specifically courts. The number is even lower among marginalized groups including women and the uneducated. In Burkina Faso for instance, only 4% of marginalized groups made direct contact with courts within the past five years, and 6% in Senegal (Logan, 2017). Low confidence in the judiciary to adjudicate justice, particularly in cases involving government over a prolonged period creates room for coup d'états (Ibid).

Press freedom is also essential to democratic governance. Much has been done to promote media pluralism in West Africa. This, however, is not an indicator of press freedom or liberalization. There are still several hurdles impeding objective media reportage (Marc, Verjee & Mogaka, 2015). Threats, murder, torture, kidnapping, and imprisonment are tools employed by some governments to intimidate, manipulate and shape the media narrative (Ibid). As Wade (2017) opined, suppression easily leads to revolts and this can be used to undermine a democratically elected government. The following highlight the fact that although states in West Africa are making some efforts at promoting democracy there is still much work to be done to consolidate the democratic gains. These democratic inefficiencies become breeding grounds for coups to be easily executed by malicious elements within the state and coup makers.

2.3.2 Corruption and Economic Mismanagement

According to Mishra and Toprak (2022) allegations of corruption and economic mismanagement have been trumpeted by coup mongers/makers as justification for coups in the sub-region since post-colonial independence. Liedong (2017) agrees that corruption and economic mismanagement are prevalent and endemic across the African continent and suggest that this makes the use of such allegations an easy and populist tool to stage a coup. Mishra and Toprak (2022) suggested that, if it (the trick) worked in the 1960s, 1970s, and 1980s it will probably work now as little has changed since then in terms of accountability and transparency. Monyake (2018) also notes that the coup-makers in a bid to win over the public promise anti-corruption measures and prudent economic management of state resources which they hardly adhere to. Data from Transparency International an organization that ranks countries based on a corruption perception index revealed that several West African countries were lowly ranked. Out of 181 countries, Guinea Bissau was ranked 165th, Nigeria, 154th, Guinea 150th, Mali 136th.

and Niger 124th (Transparency International, 2022). Corruption and economic mismanagement create widespread poverty. Poverty coupled with high levels of unemployment often results in mass public demonstrations that can create political tensions within a state (Liedong, 2017). According to Annan (2014), nefarious elements within the state and the military easily seize such opportunities to overthrow the incumbent government and assume power sometimes unwilling to hold elections and return the country to democratic governance.

2.3.3 Insecurity

There has been growing insecurity within the West African sub-region over the past decade. Insurgencies, jihadist and terrorist activities have increased in several countries in the sub-region (Ibrahim, 2017). Despite urgent calls by citizens and the security services for government to act and address the situation, very little has been done over the years (Ibid). About 7569 people have lost their lives in Burkina Faso between 2015 and 2021 due to jihadist and terrorist activities in the country, while 1.6 million people have been displaced (Moderan & Koné, 2021). In 2021 alone there was 1337 violence-related crisis resulting in 2294 deaths in the country (Ibid). These and several incidents increase tension in the country and a burning desire to change a leader (President of the country) by every means possible, particularly, when national elections seem too far (Ibid). Similarly, insecurity was also an underlying factor in the 2012 and 2020 coups in Mali (Fornof & Cole, 2020). Mishra and Toprak (2022) succinctly capture this phenomenon when they opined that the proliferation of insurgent groups, jihadists, and extremists coupled with weak, fledging, and transitional democracy have provided fertile grounds and given the military the impetus to intervene in civilian and political matters across Africa. This assertion applies to West Africa also which has become the hotbed for coup resurgence.

2.3.4 Personalization of the Military

Instead of building a national military force whose objective is to protect and maintain the territorial integrity of the state at all times, some leaders rather build the military on ethnic and political lines (Englebert, 2018). According to Herbst (2014), this phenomenon is more entrenched with African dictators who seek to hold onto power in perpetuity. They recruit more soldiers from their ethnic backgrounds and indiscriminately promote others to high ranks in the military without merit (Ibid). The first challenge is, that such actions create factions within the army and internal wranglings. This often leads to one faction staging a coup to overthrow the government and install a leader who is tribally affiliated with them (Mishra & Toprak, 2022). Secondly, the military owes little allegiance to the state. In the event of an issue with the leader (president), the military could handle it as a personal affair by toppling the leader rather than considering the broad implications for the state (Ibid). This situation is seen in Guinea where Colonel Mamady Doumbouya, a member of the French legionnaire in France, was asked by then-President Alpha Conde to return to Guinea. The main objective of the call was for Doumbouya to help him (Alpha Conde) solidify his power in the state, which was experiencing some political upheavals. The latter ended up overthrowing the former, citing widespread corruption and human rights abuse as reasons for the coup (Devermont, 2021). In 2015, an elite presidential guard with assistance from some members of the Regiment of the Presidential Security, ousted the interim president from power two weeks before the elections (Mohammed & Kuo, 2015). There appears to be low professionalism amongst the military within the sub-region due to poor recruitment practices. An unprofessional military or armed force is often a recipe for disaster even in fledging democracies (Mishra & Toprak, 2022).

2.3.5 Under-Resourced Military

As noted, the rising incidence of insurgencies and terrorist activities have been cited severally

by coup makers as reasons for staging coups in the sub-region (Ibrahim, 2017). Some of these coups have gained support from the general public due to the insecurities created by the terrorists and insurgents (Bermeo, 2016). Identifying insecurity as a cause of coup in West Africa without probing further to ascertain the underlying factors of insecurity within the sub-region, does not suffice in addressing the issue. Several of the armed forces in the sub-region are under-resourced and this makes combating insurgents and terrorist groups that are sometimes funded by well-resourced networks a herculean task (Englebert, 2018). Several of the countries in West Africa particularly, the francophone countries, rely on French military support to fight insurgents. This shows the level and capacity of most of the military within the sub-region (Addo, 2017). Although Nigeria is still battling Boko Haram, the country's military, in terms of resources, is largely internally dependent. This is, however, not the case in countries such as Mali and Burkina Faso that largely depend on French support (Englebert, 2017). When people lose faith in the ability of a government to protect them, they could seize other opportunities which can be undemocratic to remove the government from power. This has partly been the case in West Africa in recent years.

2.3.6 Relatively Low Levels of Education

Some of the countries with the lowest literacy rates in the world are in West Africa. Guinea, Niger, Mali, Burkina Faso, and Benin all have less than 50% literacy rates (UNESCO Institute for Statistics, 2017). As established earlier, allegations of corruption and economic mismanagement have been used severally to justify coups in Africa and particularly in West Africa. Some of the coups have been widely supported by citizens based on the reasons provided by the coup makers. A country with a highly educated population is less likely to support a coup or military takeover based on allegations of corruption or economic mismanagement. Citizens are more likely to demand alligators use the appropriate democratic

channels to address these issues. The same cannot be said about countries with relatively low literacy rates that rely on others for information (Hiroi & Omori, 2013). This assertion is supported by a study recently conducted by Voldant (2019), to determine the impact of literacy rates on democratic desire. Findings from the study indicated a significant positive relationship between literacy rates and democratic desires. In essence, the study revealed that higher rates of education produce a greater desire to be governed democratically. This partly explains why coup-makers in West Africa find it convenient to stage coups and justify them with allegations of corruption and economic mismanagement, a trend they continue once they ascend to power.

2.4 External Factors

West Africa has suffered the brunt of global power politics and this dates back to the Cold War era when the two major powers the United States and the Soviet Union developed means to assert their influence on the continent (Chidume, 2013). Each power block needed to have a ruling government that supported either the communist or capitalist ideology. Coups became an effective tool for regime change (Ibid). The remnants of global politics and powerplay are still present today on the continent and in West Africa. There have been a series of allegations and media reports on Russia's involvement in the recent coups in Mali. Colonel Assimi Goita the Malian military officer who led the coup and subsequently declared himself the provisional leader of the country is reported to have received training and assistance from the United States (Suleiman & Onapajo, 2022).

Foreign influence is also seen in the covert coup staged in Chad in the Sahel region. President Idriss Deby was killed by rebels in a battle just a day after he got re-elected for his sixth term as president. Despite a provision in Chad's constitution that states that the speaker of parliament should be installed as interim president upon the demise of an incumbent president the country's

military bypassed the country's constitution to install Mahamat Deby the son of the late president as the leader of the country (Akinpelu, 2022). This action was supported by France whose foreign minister Jean-Yves Le Drian justified the military's action by stating it was necessary for security reasons. The move emboldened the military to take further steps in dissolving Chad's parliament and suspending the constitution (Ibid).

At the UN Security Council China supported Russia to prevent France's motion to impose economic and border sanctions on Mali due to the military coup. This move had support from the two other members of the security council the United States and the United Kingdom but could not be implemented (Suleiman and Anapajo, 2022). China also condemned the putsch in Guinea but has been silent on the coups in Mali (Ibid). The quest for strategic influence in Africa is currently being reenacted by foreign powers. The use of coups to impose governments that suit their interest is at play and is rife in West Africa.

2.5 ECOWAS' Protocols and Inventions to Promote Democracy and Good Governance in West Africa

Democracy and good governance are prerequisites for political stability peace and security. The ECOWAS, aware of the fragile status of peace and security in the sub-region adopted some key protocols to promote democracy and good governance in West Africa. There is also effective collaboration and cooperation between the ECOWAS and the African Union to address the challenges of bad governance and unconstitutional change of government. Three major protocols that relate to good governance and democracy, prevention of unconstitutional changes of government, and conflict prevention management and resolution are discussed.

2.5.1 The Protocol on Democracy and Good Governance

Member states of the ECOWAS on December 21, 2001, adopted the Protocol on Democracy

and Good Governance (PDGG) as a supplementary Protocol to the ECOWAS Mechanism in Dakar, Senegal. The protocol, as the name suggests, was developed to address governance deficits in the sub-region and avert the consequences of bad governance which includes coups or unconstitutional changes of government (Addo, 2017). To ensure this objective is achieved, the Protocol strictly charges governments and leaders of member states to adhere to the tenets of good governance and democracy (Ibid). It further admonishes heads of government (presidents) of ECOWAS countries to refrain from unconstitutional ascension to power and unconstitutionally altering the Constitution to maintain power or extend term limits (Basiru, Salawu & Adepoju, 2019). The PDGG specifically states that there should be no substantial amendments made to electoral laws six months before elections except it is done with the utmost consent of all political actors in the country (Addo, 2017). The Protocol on Democracy and Good Governance calls on ECOWAS states to conduct, transparent, free and fair elections to elect leaders into office. In this regard governments of member states are to ensure that elections are conducted on specific dates or periods as enshrined in the constitution or electoral laws (Ibid). This is to ensure that incumbents do not manipulate the data to obtain undue advantage or disadvantage other contesting parties. Member states are at liberty to request assistance from the ECOWAS during elections in the form of pre-election assessment and monitoring during the actual elections (Ibid).

Article 19 of the Protocol on Democracy and Good Governance also enjoins governments of member states to establish non-partisan security apparatus, which includes the armed forces and police service (ECOWAS, 2001). The security services owe allegiance to the state and should not allow themselves to be manipulated by any leader or government in contravention of the constitution. To ensure that the armed forces do not interfere with executive governance Article 20 of the PDGG bars the armed forces from engaging in a trade union or political

activities, especially at the barracks (Ibid). The leadership of ECOWAS also understands the adverse role poverty plays in fueling coups and creating political instability. As a result three articles (Articles 25, 26, and 27) in the PDGG effectively capture measures to alleviate poverty in the sub-region and promote social dialogue (Ibid). The PDGG frowns on marginalization and discrimination of any sought which includes but is not limited to religion, ethnicity, and political affiliations. Such actions cause dissension and could trigger coups and instability (Addo, 2017).

In general, the Protocol on Democracy and Good Governance succinctly captures the appropriate measures and strategies that member states can adopt and implement to promote peace, security, and stability in the sub-region. The solution proffered in the PDGG is good governance and democracy. Without good governance, it will be difficult for any entity including ECOWAS to prevent an unconstitutional change of government.

2.5.2 The Protocol Relating to the Mechanism for Conflict Prevention, Management, Resolution, Peacekeeping, and Security

Members states of the ECOWAS on July 24, 1993, adopted the Revised ECOWAS Treaty. The Revised Treaty was a response to the increased intra-state and inter-state conflicts that plagued the sub-region between the late 1980s and early 1990s (Addo, 2017). The Revised ECOWAS Treaty contained provisions aimed at preventing, managing, and resolving intra-state and inter-state conflicts. While the document contained useful provisions, the ECOWAS was still working on developing a more comprehensive framework to address the rising civil wars, political conflicts, and instability still prevalent in West Africa (ECOWAS Commission, 2018). These efforts culminated in the adoption of Decision A/DEC.11/10/98 relating to the Mechanism for Conflict Prevention, Management, Resolution, Peace-keeping, and Security commonly referred to as the ECOWAS Mechanism (Ibid). Although the Decision

A/DEC.11/10/98 was first adopted on October 31, 1998, in Abuja the ECOWAS was officially signed into a Protocol in Lomé Togo on December 10, 1999. The ECOWAS Mechanism establishes a comprehensive legal framework for the prevention, management, and resolution of conflicts as well as for conducting peacekeeping exercises and maintaining security in West Africa (Ibid).

Kabia (2016) opines that despite the Mechanism being conflict prevention, management and resolution oriented it acknowledges the role rule of law, and good governance in maintaining peace, security, and stability as well as promoting sustainable development in the sub-region. This is first explicitly captured in the Mechanism's preamble and Article 2 (c, d) and. Article 2 (c) specifically enjoins member states to uphold the tenets of democratic governance and also invest in establishing democratic institutions (ECOWAS, 1999). Article 2 (d) also encourages member states to protect the fundamental human rights and freedoms of citizens and persons living within the territory and also uphold the rules of international humanitarian law. These provisions demonstrate the importance ECOWAS attaches to democratic governance (Ibid). The Mechanism's emphasis on the Early Warning System in Chapter (4), Articles 23 and 24 is essential in addressing the resurgence of coups in West Africa. The EWS when efficiently deployed can inform governments of member states on impending dangers or likely coup attempts from intelligence gathered or critical assessment of the political climate of a country (ECOWAS, 1999; ECOWAS Commission, 2018). The information can be useful in assisting governments to take alternative causes of action to avert such calamities from occurring. In the event of a conflict (coup), the Mechanism has provisions to resolve the conflict and return the country to constitutional governance. Article 25 stipulates that the Mechanism shall be applied in the event of an overthrow or an attempted overthrow of a democratically elected government (Basiru, Salawu & Adepoju, 2019). In general, the Mechanism contains useful provisions and

guidelines when effectively implemented could prevent unconstitutional changes in government in West Africa.

2.5.3 Declaration on Unconstitutional Changes of Government in Africa

The resurgence of military coups in Africa and particularly, West Africa resulted in the Africa Union and other RECs holding an urgent three-day meeting in Accra, Ghana between 15-17 March 2022 to find solutions to the menace (Kodjo, 2022). Decisions taken at the meeting pending adoption at the upcoming Extraordinary Session of the AU Heads of State and Government, in May 2022, have been referred to as the Accra Declaration. As the hosting REC and subregion with the prevalent resurgence, the Chairman of the ECOWAS Authority of Heads of State and Government and President of the Republic, Nana Addo Dankwa Akuffo-Addo, intimated zero tolerance for the unconstitutional overthrow of a government, unconstitutional manipulation to extend term limits and all other forms of unconstitutional change of government. Present at the Forum were representatives of African Civil Society Organizations, professional bodies, academia, and other key stakeholders (Ibid). The emphatic message by the ECOWAS Chair set the tone for deliberations on the imminent issue at hand. At the Reflection Forum, twenty-four (24) commitments were made by participants. The major highlights and commitments at the Forum are highlighted and discussed in this section. First participants committed to remaining resolute in condemning all forms of constitutional changes of government in Africa, coup perpetrators and attempts to manipulate or manipulation of the democratic process to alter the constitution and extend term limits without recourse to national democratic principles (Africa Union, 2022). Participants also committed to employing effective measures to address challenges, particularly socio-economic inequalities, which include but are not limited to gender, age, religion, ethnicity, and political affiliations. They also called for greater media pluralism and the need for governments to allow citizens channels

their grievances through the media without censorship and effectively respond to those issues (Ibid). The fourth commitment calls on African governments to assiduously work to address the factors that instigate unconstitutional changes of government including manipulating the constitution or electoral laws a few months before elections without the consent of the majority of political actors in the country (Ibid).

There was also a call on African leaders to decriminalize legitimate opposition party activities and to increase collaboration in with opposition parties to accelerate national development. African leaders were also encouraged to seize the digital revolution to communicate more with the citizenry particularly the youth to bridge the information gap and also steer them away from misinformation which is often used as a tool to disrupt stable governments (Ibid). Governments also reiterated their commitment to reject internal and external influences that harper peace and security and to collectively mobilize resources within the continent to fund peace initiatives (Ibid).

In general, the tenets of the Forum hinge on democracy and good governance as major solutions to the resurgence of unconstitutional changes to governments in Africa. The Accra Declaration did not contain commitments that are essentially different from those contained in other protocols, declarations, and mechanisms. This suggests that theoretically, the ECOWAS and the African Union have been consistent in accentuating the challenges on the continent and West Africa and solutions to address them. What is left is, perhaps, implementing the provisions in the various protocols and mechanisms.

2.6 The ECOWAS' Role in Preventing Unconstitutional Changes in Government in West Africa

This aspect of the study examines the ECOWAS' implementation of the various protocols, declarations, and mechanisms to address the issue of coups in the sub-region. In essence, how effective has the ECOWAS been in preventing unconstitutional changes of government in West Africa? Barely a year after the Protocol on Democracy and Good Governance and three years after the Mechanism was adopted, the ECOWAS was confronted with its first major challenge, the 2002 Ivorian Crisis (Addo, 2017). The leadership of the ECOWAS was swift in their response in calling several high delegation meetings to find solutions to the crisis. These efforts culminated in the extraordinary ECOWAS Summit held in Dakar Senegal on the 18th of December 2002 (Ibid). There was unanimous support from the various Heads of State and Government for the incumbent President Laurent Gbagbo. Despite the Mechanism and the PDGG being relatively new and still in their early implementation stages, they were useful in guiding the leadership of the ECOWAS to act (Ibid). According to Musah (2011), the Authority of Heads of State and Government, the Defense and Security Committee, and the Mediation Security Council were all actively involved in addressing the conflict because the Mechanism was triggered. He, however, noted that the ECOWAS' response was limited due to inadequate funds and logistics to unilaterally intervene in the conflict both militarily and non-militarily. The ECOWAS, therefore, had to rely on external support largely from Western countries and organizations. Also, France's unilateral decision to send 2,500 troops to enforce ceasefire agreements was seen as an affront to the ECOWAS (Osadolor, Osarhieme & Benson, 2011 cited in Addo, 2017).

On September 15, 2015, Gen. Gilbert Diendéré staged a coup in Burkina Faso against the transitional government a few weeks before the country's general elections (Eizenga, 2021). The coup was however short-lived due to the swift and effective response from the ECOWAS

and the African Union and the resolute rejection of the coup by the population (Ibid). The events that ensued immediately after the coup was squashed leaves more questions than answers. As part of efforts to restore the country to democratic governance and peace, the AU representatives from the Peace and Security Council sharply disagreed with their ECOWAS counterparts, Macky Sall President of Senegal, and the ECOWAS Chair and President Yayi Boni, another ECOWAS representative on the approach to adopt (ISS Africa, 2015 cited in Addo, 2017). While the AU's position was to restore democratic rule without any compromises ECOWAS considered a more liberal and conciliatory approach to prevent further de-escalation of the crisis. The ECOWAS representatives as part of an interim agreement requested the military withdrew from the government, released detainees, restored transitional institutions, and granted Diendéré and his men amnesty (Ibid). This, according to the AU representatives, sharply contravened the Burkinabe constitution and the AU's African Charter on Democracy, Elections, and Good Governance to which Burkina Faso is a signatory (Ibid).

The AU also imposed an asset freeze and travel ban on the coup perpetrators while suspending Burkina Faso from all AU activities and gave the military four days within which to return the country to transitional rule pending elections (Phakathi, 2018). There were other widespread sanctions imposed by the AU on both the coup makers and the country. The ECOWAS, however, remained lenient in their approach and kept emphasizing dialogue rather than sanctions (Ibid). Phakathi is curious if there is actual collaboration and cooperation between the two organizations due to the sharp divergence on the issue. Secondly, the question of who takes the lead also arises when there is an internal crisis such as a coup in a state. This also creates the impression that ECOWAS is not up to the task of effectively executing its mandate. Just a year after, there was another crisis in the Gambia. Although it was not an outright coup in its ordinary sense, it was widely viewed as a constitutional coup (Bermeo, 2016). The then

President, Yahya Jammeh, after losing the presidential elections, first conceded defeat and subsequently rescinded this decision to reject the results (Addo, 2017). The ECOWAS quickly sent a high-level delegation, comprising of former President of Ghana, John Dramani Mahama, President Buhari of Nigeria, Former President of Liberia, Ellen Johnson Sirleaf, and the former President of the ECOWAS Commission, Gambia to persuade Yahya Jammeh to rescind his decision to hold on to power (Ibid). After several failed attempts to persuade Yahya Jammeh to hand over power to Adama Barrow, the winner of the elections, the ECOWAS resorted to using military force to oust the defiant Jammeh. After swearing in the new President Adama Barrow in Senegal, some troops from Senegal, under the auspices of the ECOWAS, were deployed to surround the country. Envisaging the imminent threat, Yahya Jammeh eventually agreed to relinquish power and left the Gambia on January 21, 2017. The ECOWAS thus succeeded in using military threats and diplomacy to resolve the crisis without further escalation (Ibid).

In response to the 2021 coups in Guinea and Mali, the ECOWAS imposed sanctions ranging from travel bans to financial asset freezes on coup leaders (Avoulette, 2022). In Mali, the bloc called for elections to be organized no later than February 2022. In Guinea, the ECOWAS immediately suspended Guinea's membership and insisted on the release of President Alpha Conde, while calling for elections to be held within six months (Ibid).

2.7 Challenges Confronting the ECOWAS in Addressing the Prevalence of Coups in West Africa

Musah (2011) identified inadequate financial resources and logistics as a major impediment to the ECOWAS' efforts in asserting its influence on member states in the sub-region. The inability of the bloc to unilaterally mobilize resources in the event of a crisis to address the issue either through diplomatic or coercive means has proven to be a major challenge (Ibid).

Addo (2017) suggests that low commitment partly accounts for this challenge. In the event of a coup, for instance, several of the member states are reluctant to apply coercive measures even when all diplomatic efforts prove futile. Gichana (2022) asserts that this action boldens coup perpetrators that the ECOWAS can only "talk" and cannot back their talk with any concrete actions. In the case of the 2002 crisis in the Cote d'Ivoire, Mali refused to contribute troops to the ECOMICI, stating that they have a large population of citizens living in the Cote d'Ivoire and would not want to take any actions that would endanger them. Nigeria also did not contribute troops citing internal security challenges and the need to keep their force to address them (Adebajo, 2004 cited in Addo, 2017). Similar sentiments were expressed by Guinea Bissau, leading to troops from just five member states constituting the ECOMICI (Ibid).

Although the Accra Declaration called on governments of member states to reject external interference in the sub-region, this challenge persists as seen in the case of Guinea and Mali. The reliance on external funding gives some foreign countries the impetus to bypass the sub-regional bloc ECOWAS in the event of a coup or political crisis to impose their intervention (Suleiman & Anapajo, 2022). They further intimate that France's support for the unconstitutional installation of Mahamat Deby as leader of Chad was an affront to the AU and RECs. Lobakeng (2017) adds that the overdependence on foreign countries for aid also creates room for external interference which the ECOWAS has little control over due to its financial constraints.

According to Peksen (2019), sanctions are often seen as an effective tool that can be employed to coerce states to comply with agreed protocols and conventions. This has, however, been a troubling challenge for ECOWAS as sanctions are proving to be less effective and deterring (Saido, 2018). Furthermore, the ECOWAS is not economically integrated as some member

states trade less than 1% with other member states in the sub-region (Olayiwola, 2015). As a result, member states hardly feel the brunt of any economic sanctions (Ibid). Odigie (2019) also opined that suspension from the Community does not appear to have overarching implications for member states hence the defiance. This may be the case because inter-sub-regional trade among member states is low. The low trade volumes mean sanctions have less impact on the economy of the sanctioned State. Furthermore, ECOWAS states are aid-dependent (Mouthaan, 2022), hence they may continue to enjoy economic reprieves from their foreign donors as well as trade with bigger economies on the global market which may lessen the impact of the sanctions.

2.8 Conclusion

This chapter began by providing an overview of coup d'état, its definitions, and its dynamics. The chapter recounted the history of coups in West Africa and highlighted some underlying causes. The second aspect of this chapter discussed some selected ECOWAS protocols relevant to the issue of coups and unconstitutional changes to government. It examined the ECOWAS' role in preventing coups in the sub-region and restoring democratic rule in the event of a coup. The final aspect discussed some challenges impeding ECOWAS' ability to execute its role as the lead organization in the sub-region and persuade or coerce member states to comply with the several protocols and mechanisms they are signatories of.

The review of the literature revealed bad governance and weak democratic institutions as the major internal causes of coup d'états in the sub-region. Foreign influence from major powers surfaced as a major external factor for the prevalence of coups in West Africa. The Mechanism, Protocol on Democracy and Good Governance, and the Accra Declaration on Unconstitutional Changes of Government are protocols and mechanisms that demonstrate the ECOWAS' commitment to the fight against undemocratic governance and coups in West Africa. Financial

constraints and clout have proven to be major challenges for the ECOWAS in enforcing the measures/rules enshrined in the various protocols and mechanisms. Gaps in literature from the review conducted will be filled by sourcing relevant primary data from selected experts for the study through interviews. The findings will be presented in the next chapter.



CHAPTER THREE

ASSESSING THE RESURGENCE OF MILITARY COUPS IN MALI AND BURKINA FASO

3.0 Introduction

This chapter addresses the specific research questions and objectives set out in chapter one of this study. The chapter is divided into three main sections; the first section addresses the first research objective, which is to assess the underlying factors motivating some military officers in West Africa, particularly, Mali and Burkina Faso, to stage coups in this democratic age. Factors underpinning the military coups in Mali and Burkina Faso are separately discussed to ascertain if there are similarities and differences. The second part of this chapter discusses whether or not the resurgence of military coups in West Africa, particularly Mali and Burkina Faso, is a sign of democratic backslide in the ECOWAS in line with the second research objective. The third part discusses efforts by the ECOWAS in Preventing the Resurgence of coups in West Africa to understand if the ECOWAS is partly to be blamed for the recent resurgence of coups in the Sub-region. This is to address the third and final research objective of the study.

3.1 Demographics of Respondents

Four senior officials one each from the Malian Embassy (Accra, Ghana), the Burkina Faso Embassy (Accra, Ghana), the ECOWAS Secretariat (Accra, Ghana), and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Regional Integration (Accra, Ghana) were interviewed for the study. The four respondents were selected based on their experience, in-depth knowledge, and understanding of ECOWAS and the political happenings within the sub-region, particularly the political situations in Mali and Burkina Faso. The four respondents consisted of three males and one female. The respondents were also nationals of four West African countries. For

confidentiality and anonymity, it was agreed that the names of the respondents will be replaced by codes while direct references could be made to the organizations they represent in the study. A summary of gender, nationality, and institution to which the respondents belong is presented in Table 3.1.

Table 3.1: Demographic Summary of Respondents

Coded Identity	Gender	Nationality	Institution
Respondent 1	Male	Malian	Mali Embassy, Ghana.
Respondent 2	Male	Burkinabe	Burkina Faso Embassy, Ghana.
Respondent 3	Male	Nigerian	ECOWAS Secretariat, Ghana.
Respondent	Female	Ghanaian	Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Regional Integration, Ghana.

Source: Researcher's Construct

3.2 Objective 1: The Underlying Factors Motivating Military Officers in Mali to Stage Coups in Recent Years

3.2.1 Historical Antecedents of Coups in Mali

According to E.H Carr, history is an unending dialogue between the present and the past and inexplicably serves as a guide to understanding present situations based on past events or historical perspectives, (Elliot, 2014). Fischer and Miller (2017) also posited that history provides a crucial perspective for analyzing, understanding, and solving both current and future problems. Based on these assertions, the study considered the historical perspective of Mali regarding military coups in understanding the resurgence of coups in that country.

Barely a decade after gaining independence on June 20, 1960, Mali witnessed its first military coup on November 19, 1968 (Matei, 2021). The military coup, although bloodless, resulted in the overthrow of Mali's first President Modibo Keita. Following the overthrow of President Keita, the military established a Committee for National Liberation (CMLN) headed by Lt. Moussa Traore as president to turn around the economic fortunes of the country but the group failed due to years of internal political unrest and droughts (Boddy-Evans, 2020). The military regime led by Lt. Moussa Traore held socialist values and developed a constitution in 1974 that established Mali as a one-party state to move the country from military rule to a civilian government (Dedieu, 2020). The government, despite being adamant that Mali was not ready for what it termed full democracy, allowed for the establishment of independent press and political associations (Boddy-Evans, 2020). This notwithstanding, the oppressive nature of the regime coupled with austerity measures implemented by the regime to satisfy the International Monetary Fund resulted in widespread hardship in the country (Boddy-Evans, 2022). This led to days of anti-government student protests supported by the various workers' unions in the country. After four days of intense rioting, a group of military officers led by Amadou Toumani Touré arrested President Traore and suspended the constitution resulting in Mali's second military coup decades after the first on 26th March 1991 (Adetuyi, 2021).

Within the last decade, Mali has witnessed three military coups (2012, 2020, 2021) more than double the number of coups that occurred in the first three decades post-independence (Kante, 2021; Suleiman & Onapajo, 2022). Two of the last three coups occurred within a space of nine months the first on 18th August 2020 and the second on the 24th May 2021 (Suleiman & Onapajo, 2022). The political history of Mali reveals that the country has had a history of military coups and is susceptible to military interventions due to several factors including ethnic unrest that are subsequently discussed in this chapter. Respondent 1 from the Malian

Embassy in Ghana during the interview argued that “previous coups that occurred in Mali, without tough consequences for the coup makers, could have emboldened other military officers to take similar actions in the future”.

3.2.2 Internal Ethnic Unrest

Mali has been saddled by internal unrest right after independence fueled by ethnic tensions between the Northern territories dominated by the Tuaregs and ethnic Arab tribes and the South (Ritter, 2014). Between 1960 and 2012, there have been four major Tuareg rebellions which ended up with several ineffective peace agreements (Chauzal & Van Damme, 2015). Historically, the underlying factors for the rebellions have been economic deprivation, political neglect, under-representation of the northern tribes within the national governments, and general underdevelopment of the region (Ritter, 2014; Chauzal & Van Damme, 2015).

Respondent 3 from the ECOWAS Secretariat Ghana in an interview suggested that the failure of successive governments to effectively address these issues have consistently created tensions between governments from the south and northern tribes led by the Tuaregs. Respondent 1 also opined that the north-south clashes were exacerbated by the return of former Tuareg exiles in Libya after the overthrow of the Gadhafi regime in 2011. Ambassador Toure further argued that the ethnic Tuaregs boosted by returnee exiles from Libya, who had acquired sophisticated ammunitions and war experience, mobilized minority tribes within the region to form a separatist group in 2011 called the National Movement for the Liberation of Azawad (NMLA). The NMLA, led by Iyad ag Ghali, began an insurgency in January 2012 that sought to establish Azawad as an independent territory in the north separate from Mali (Zounmenou, 2015). The rebellion encountered its own challenges as a result of an internal power struggle among different elements within the movement. This resulted in the creation of several other rebel groups in the north some infiltrated by terrorist groups all seeking to capture and take control

of northern Mali (Chauzal & Van Damme, 2015).

This exposes the deep-rooted ethnic division in the country as the northern tribes seeking to break away from the south are themselves not united (Zounmenou, 2013). While infighting and power struggles between the various rebel groups heightened insecurity in the North, a coup broke out in the south on 22 March 2012 (Chauzal & Van Damme, 2015). A faction of the military seized power from the ruling government citing the president's poor handling of the rebellion in the north and the resultant widespread unrest in the country as reasons for the coup. Members of the rebelling group that seized power noted that the military was mostly constituted of southern soldiers, not adequately trained, and were generally ill-equipped in fighting the NMLA rebels (Chauzal & Van Damme). According to Respondent 1, part of the allegations leveled against the government by the mutinying soldiers suggests ethnic dissension within the army, which further exposes the extent of ethnicity in Mali that overlaps with the country's armed forces.

The 2012 military coup, which had ethnic underpinnings, deepened Mali's crises and opened the country up for subsequent unrest that resulted in the 2020 and 2021 military coups (Chauzal & Van Damme, 2015; Adetuyi, 2021). Respondent 3 also opined that "the 2012 coup created a power vacuum in the North as the military had almost withdrawn entirely from the region". This he argued festered the activities of the various insurgent and terrorist groups in the region that neither recognized the authority of the new regime nor the constitution of Mali. Additionally, the military junta did not receive the full support of the southern population and also recognition from the international community led by the ECWOAS (Chauzal & Van Damme, 2015). According to Respondent 1 and Respondent 3, the ethnic wrangling in Mali has increased the country's susceptibility to military coups in recent years.

3.3.3 Moral Responsibility of the Military to Restore Security and Order

Fundamentally, it is the responsibility of the police force to maintain internal security (peace, law, and order), while the military protects the state against external aggressors (Orwa, 2019). This notwithstanding, there are moments the military is called upon to augment the efforts of the police in maintaining law and order within the State (Orwa, 2019). Increasing terrorist activities have created the need for the military to intervene in counter-terrorist operations to maintain the territorial integrity of the State from terrorist and insurgent groups that may be operating within the country or from outside the territory (Adelaja, Labo & Penar, 2018).

According to Respondent 4 from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Regional Integration Ghana, “the military’s continuous involvement in internal state security operations over time in Mali has given some officers the impression that it is their moral obligation to protect the country and ensure there is stability”. Respondent 1 mentioned that “when they perceive a lack of government support in logistics and training to combat terrorist groups, they resort to illegal, unconstitutional, and undemocratic measures, including overthrowing the government to gain full control”.

Respondent 3 noted that this was evident in the 2021 coup where officers who partook in the coup cited a lack of commitment on the part of the government in supporting the military in fighting the rebels in the north as a major reason for the coup.

Respondent 3 also advanced that, mass demonstrations and public protests against democratically elected governments give some military officers the false notion that the people want the government toppled and the only way to do that is to get the military involved. He

expressed that:

in 2020 for instance several street protests were calling for the resignation of President Ibrahim Boubacar Keita. Subsequently, the military got involved and arrested President Ibrahim Boubacar Keita and his Prime Minister Boubou Cisse thus overthrowing the government.

Respondent 1 also argued that public perceptions of the military as a disciplined and well-organized unit also contribute to some officers of the military believing that they are or will be better managers of the State than civilian regimes. In providing further explanations he opined that:

there is this perception about the military in terms of how disciplined, organized, and in some cases uncorrupt they are. When the public start complaining about massive incidents of mismanagement, corruption, and economic neglect some officers of the military assume this is the right opportunity to take over and clean up the system. Sometimes sections of the public involuntarily allude to the point that the military can perform better than the civilians particularly when the country is going through serious economic and political crises (Respondent 1, 2022).

He added, *we have seen large sections of the public jubilate and cheer the military after successful coups in West Africa.* This emboldens the military and encourages some of the officers to take similar steps which are undemocratic, he concluded.

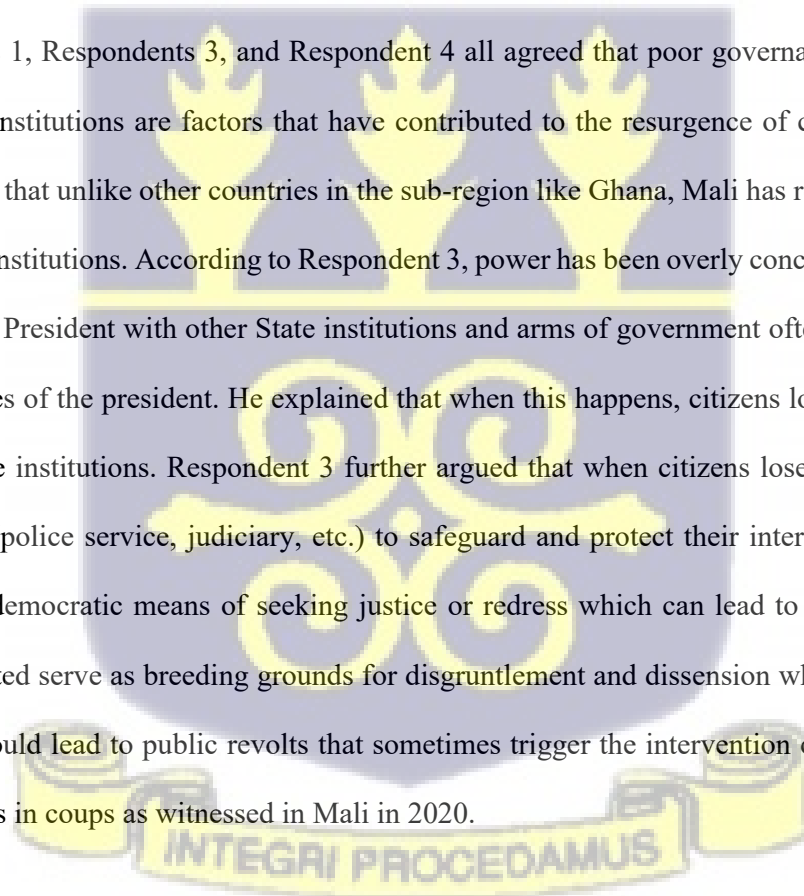
3.3.4 Under-Resourced Military

The military in several developing countries, particularly those in Africa, are often under-resourced and rely extensively on donor support (Englebert, 2018). The poor resource nature of some of the militaries in the sub-region, including Mali, makes their fight against insurgents ineffective. They are also unable to early detect threats of insurgencies and terrorist activities

to enable them to curb them (Mishra & Toprak, 2022). This is one of the major issues officers within the Malian armed forces have trumpeted over time and also cited as a reason for the 2020 coup respondent 4 recounted. According to him, when the military is ill-equipped its ability to fight and defeat insurgent and terrorist groups is hampered. This emboldens the insurgent or terrorist groups in their fight and creates wider insecurity and instability in the country. The military also loses several of its men due to inadequate logistics which sometimes infuriates them. This handicapped position influences some officers to stage coups in an attempt to redeem the country (Chauzal & Van Damme, 2015).

3.3.5 Poor Governance Weak Democratic Institutions

Respondents 1, Respondents 3, and Respondent 4 all agreed that poor governance and weak democratic institutions are factors that have contributed to the resurgence of coups in Mali. They argued that unlike other countries in the sub-region like Ghana, Mali has relatively weak democratic institutions. According to Respondent 3, power has been overly concentrated in the hands of the President with other State institutions and arms of government often subservient to the dictates of the president. He explained that when this happens, citizens lose trust in the various State institutions. Respondent 3 further argued that when citizens lose trust in State institutions (police service, judiciary, etc.) to safeguard and protect their interests, they will resort to undemocratic means of seeking justice or redress which can lead to total anarchy. These he noted serve as breeding grounds for disgruntlement and dissension when not timely addressed could lead to public revolts that sometimes trigger the intervention of the military which results in coups as witnessed in Mali in 2020.



3.3.6 External Influences

According to Respondent 1, the first of the three Malian coups in 2012 had foreign imprints which again manifested in the recent 2020 and 2021 coups. There have been several accusations and counter-accusations among foreign countries, particularly, between France and Russia, about the involvement of either country in the coups that were staged in Mali (Suleiman & Onapajo, 2022). France and some of its western allies accused Russia of sending mercenaries to fight in the northern parts of Mali in December 2021 during the crises that ensued after the coup (Doxsee, 2022). This claim has, however, been strongly refuted by the Malian government as well as Russia (Risemberg, 2021).

Initially, France intervened in Mali in 2013 after Islamist groups had taken over the northern part of the country. The French military was initially warmly received by the local population when they first arrived but public sentiments towards the French army began to change with time leading to massive protests calling for the departure of the French (Risemberg, 2022). After nine years of fighting Islamist groups in Mali France fully withdrew all its troops from the country (Africanews, 2022). Respondent 4 stated that the partial withdrawal of troops began in June 2021 which led to the Malian government seeking assistance from Russia to support the Malian military in combating the Islamist groups in the North. Mali further signed a military agreement with the Russian government in acquiring military hardware a move that has further strained the already deteriorating relations between Mali and France (Wires, 2021).

The government of Mali in October 2022 accused France at the UN Security Council briefing of violating its airspace to collect intelligence that it shares with terrorist groups (Wires, 2022). This claim has been vehemently refuted by the French government which claims France has been supporting the Malian military in fighting Islamist groups for nine years and hence would not engage in such acts (Wires, 2022). According to Respondent 3, there have been allegations

of France promising to assist the Tuaregs in establishing Azawad as an independent state in Mali should they support the NATO operations to oust Gadhafi during the 2011 Libyan uprising. These claims substantially remain mere allegations as sufficient evidence have not been provided.

While Respondent 1 was emphatic about France's activities in Mali as a contributing factor to the current crises in the country, Respondent 3 took a more general approach noting that external influences from various countries have partly contributed to the current insecurity as well as the relapse of military coups in Mali. Respondent 4 also expressed that the inability of the indigenous army to defend its territorial integrity but extensively relying on foreign countries for support in the form of training, logistics and intelligence make them very vulnerable to foreign interferences as can be seen in Mali. This position was also affirmed by Respondent 1 who asserted that Mali's over-reliance on France for military aid has given the French the opportunity to interfere in its domestic security issues.

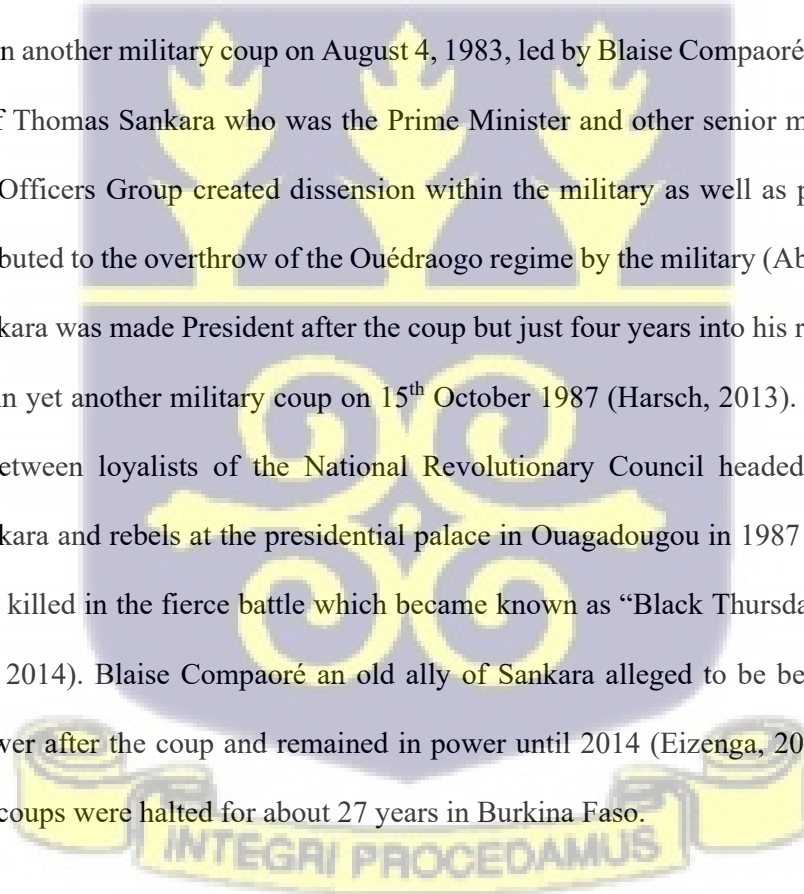
3.4 Factors Motivating the Military Officers in Burkina Faso to Stage Coups in this current Democratic dispensation

3.4.1 Historical Antecedents

Delving into the political history of Burkina Faso it is evident that the country has experienced a series of military coups and popular uprisings that have overthrown constitutionally elected governments. Six years after gaining her independence Burkina Faso then Upper Volta witnessed its first coup on January 3, 1966 (Phelan, 2016). The coup was triggered by mass protests involving union workers against the country's first President Maurice Yaméogo in Ouagadougou which began on December 31, 1965 (Gira, 2014). After several days of unrest, the military intervened, forced President Yaméogo to resign, suspended the constitution, and dissolved the National Assembly on January 5, 1966 (Gira, 2014). The military then replaced

the president with Lieutenant Colonel Aboubakar Sangoulé Lamizana.

After 14 years of ruling Burkina Faso, Lt. Col. Lamizana was also overthrown through a military coup on November 25, 1980, by Colonel Saye Zerbo (Abdoulie, 2017). This coup, like the first, was also triggered by mass protests led by trade unions in the country, which led to the military intervention and subsequent overthrow of the Lamizana regime. Just two years after the 1980 coup Colonel Zerbo was overthrown in another military coup on November 7, 1982, by a faction of the military led by army chief of staff Col. Gabriel Yoryan Somé (Abdoulie, 2017). The military named Major Jean-Baptiste Ouédraogo, a military physician as the President of the country. President Ouédraogo's rule was short-lived as his government was overthrown in another military coup on August 4, 1983, led by Blaise Compaoré (Grira, 2014). The arrest of Thomas Sankara who was the Prime Minister and other senior members of the Communist Officers Group created dissension within the military as well as public protests which contributed to the overthrow of the Ouédraogo regime by the military (Abdoulie, 2017). Thomas Sankara was made President after the coup but just four years into his regime, he was overthrown in yet another military coup on 15th October 1987 (Harsch, 2013). Fierce clashes broke out between loyalists of the National Revolutionary Council headed by President Thomas Sankara and rebels at the presidential palace in Ouagadougou in 1987 (Grira, 2014). Sankara was killed in the fierce battle which became known as “Black Thursday” in Burkina Faso (Grira, 2014). Blaise Compaoré an old ally of Sankara alleged to be behind the coup assumed power after the coup and remained in power until 2014 (Eizenga, 2021). Thus, the incidents of coups were halted for about 27 years in Burkina Faso.



A series of intense demonstrations and riots broke out in Burkina Faso in October 2014 after President Compaoré attempted to manipulate the constitution by seeking a third term to extend his 27 years in office as president (Engels, 2015). Following a massive protest by civil society organizations, trade unions, and the youth which resulted in the burning of the National Assembly and other government buildings President Compaoré dissolved the government, declared a state of emergency and absconded to the Ivory Coast (Sylvestre-Treiner & Roger, 2019). On 31st October 2014, the 27-year rule of Blaise Compaoré was ended through another coup. The military dissolved parliament and announced the formation of a transitional government led by Army Chief of Staff Honore Traore Nabéré (Engels, 2015).

The transitional government was tasked to steer government affairs until elections were conducted within twelve months (Grira, 2014). A few weeks before the country's general elections a group of soldiers led by Gen. Gilbert Diendéré attempted a coup on September 16, 2015, but failed due to the swift response of ECOWAS, the African Union, and resolute rejection of the coup by the Burkinabe population (Eizenga, 2021). This was the last coup/coup attempt before the recent coup that occurred on January 24, 2022.

Respondent 2 from the Burkina Faso Embassy in Ghana in an interview, asserted that the long chain of coups in Burkina Faso does not just indicate the susceptibility of the country to coups but also embolden and motivate other officers of the military to stage coups in the face of the slightest public protest or agitations. He further explained that several of the coups in Burkina Faso have involved public protest which leads to military interventions but until the failed coup in 2015, the citizens had hardly protested against the previous coup makers. This he asserts gives other military officers the impetus to undertake similar actions.

3.4.2 *Insecurity*

Burkina Faso like Mali has witnessed prolonged periods of insecurity caused by Jihadist groups since 2015 (Suleiman & Onapajo, 2022). The jihadist groups have frequently targeted civilians including teachers, judicial staff, and other government workers resulting in the deliberate avoidance of public places in conflict-prone areas (Moderan & Koné, 2022). The military has also suffered several casualties through indiscriminate guerilla attacks executed by these jihadist insurgents (Adibe, 2015). Between 2015 and 2021 jihadist attacks on both civilians and security personnel claimed over 7500 lives and displaced over 1.6 million people (Moderan & Koné, 2022).

Insecurity in Burkina Faso was further heightened in 2021 as the country recorded an estimated 1337 terrorist-related violent incidents that resulted in 2294 casualties (Moderan & Koné, 2022). In a bid to address these security issues, President Kabore's government increased the country's defense budget from €240, 746, 280 to €652, 759, 680 between 2016 and 2021 representing a 271% increase within five years (Moderan & Koné, 2022). The government also established the *Volontaires pour la défense de la patrie* in January 2020, to mobilize about 50,000 civilian defense volunteers to support the national security forces in combating the jihadist groups and improving security within the country (Demuyneck, 2021). These efforts however yielded very little results as incidents of violent jihadist attacks continued (Demuyneck, 2021). In June 2021 a jihadist group attacked and killed about 130 civilians in Solhan a village in the Yagha province (Mishra & Toprak, 2022). Months later in November of the same year, 53 police officers stationed at a military post awaiting logistical support and other supplies were horridly killed in a terrorist attack (Demuyneck & Julie Coleman, 2022). This intensified public agitations against the government resulting in calls for the president to resign (Demuyneck & Julie Coleman, 2022).

Barely two months later, a section of the military led by Paul-Henri Sandaogo Damiba, overthrew the government of President Roch Marc Christian Kabore on January 24th 2022 after detaining the president (Moderan & Koné, 2022). The mutinous group cited insecurity in the country and the inappropriate handling of the crises by President Kabore as reasons for staging the coup. They claimed the military lacked the needed logistics and support to effectively combat the jihadist insurgents (Marsi, 2022). They further demanded the removal of several army chiefs and better healthcare for wounded officers of the army (Mishra & Toprak, 2022). Respondent 1, Respondent 3 and Respondent 4 agreed that insecurity played a major role in ousting President Christian Kabore from office although they did not believe that was the appropriate medium to address the security crises. Respondent 3 also expressed that people took to the streets to celebrate after the overthrow of Kabore's government which depicts the grave nature of the security crises and the adverse effects it had had on the population. Insecurity has thus played a major role in the recent score of military coups that have occurred in West Africa.

3.4.3 Under-resourced Military

The military has raised several concerns about the president's seemingly lackadaisical approach to the fight against jihadist groups in Burkina Faso. According to some officers, the military was under-resourced first in terms of logistics and secondly several of the soldiers were not equipped with counter-terrorist training (Ochieng, 2022). Although the defense budget had increased significantly over the period, that did not address the challenges as the terrorist attacks persisted (Mishra & Toprak, 2022). Also, the funds pumped into the military to aid the military in their fight against the jihadist groups were mismanaged (Moderan & Koné, 2022). According to Respondent 3, this explains why the military after the January 2022 coup called for the removal of several army chiefs in the country's military.

3.4.4 Other Factors that are Contributing to the Resurgence of Military Coups in Mali and Burkina Faso

In Burkina Faso, like Mali, the insecurity caused by the jihadist attacks and the inadequate resources to facilitate the efforts of the military in their fight against jihadist insurgents proved to be the immediate factors that motivated some military officers to overthrow the government. Corruption, weak democratic institutions, and poor governance by civilian administrations were identified as other factors that motivate some military officers' to stage coups in recent years in West Africa (Respondents 1, 2022; Respondent 3, 2022).

Respondent 1 explained that in 2014 the attempt of President Blaise Compaoré to change the constitution to enable him to run for office without the appropriate state institutions resisting him vividly depicts how weak some democratic institutions are in West Africa. Respondent 3 added that the failure of civilian governments to deliver basic social and physical infrastructure to the population makes some citizens question the relevance of democracy thereby giving some military officers the impetus to stage coups.

3.5 Objective 2. To Ascertain if the Resurgence of Military coups in West Africa, particularly Mali and Burkina Faso, is a Sign of democratic backslide in West Africa

There is no doubt that West Africa, in recent years, has become a hotbed for military coups. Between August 2020 and February 2022, there have been six coup attempts in the West African Sub-region of which two failed and four succeeded (Suleiman & Onapajo, 2022). These events have not only raised concerns for the ECOWAS member States but also generated debates among pro-Western democracies if democracy is under threat in West Africa (Ibrahim, 2022). There have also been fears both within the sub-region and beyond that, these recent military coups could have spillover effects if left unchecked (Ochieng, 2022). One of the questions that keep coming up within academia and the mass media is whether West Africa is

in a democratic crisis or backslide (Gyimah-Boadi, 2021; Ibrahim, 2022). The study based on primary and secondary data collected obtained three major responses to the questions raised on democratic backslide in West Africa.

3.5.1 There is No Perfect Democracy

Democracy is a system of governance practiced by several countries in the world in various forms. Proponents of democracy have often touted it as the bedrock for good governance, peace, security, and economic development due to some of its basic tenets which includes rule of law, respect for human right, separation of powers, and checks and balances (Gursozlu, 2018). Proponents of democracy argue that democratic countries are often peaceful, politically stable, and prosperous compared to undemocratic States yet still several democratic States have witnessed periods of turmoil and political instability (Hobson, 2017).

A major cause of conflict in most developing democracies, including countries in West Africa, is election disputes (Annan, 2014). Respondent 4 opined that the 2020 United States elections where the incumbent President Donald Trump rejected the election results and called for mass public protests demonstrate that even among the most perceived democratic States there could be situations that threaten the political stability of the State. Countries that seek European Union membership must satisfy the “Copenhagen criteria” which includes a stable democracy (European Union, n.d.). In recent times, however, EU member States like Poland and Hungary have been accused of several undemocratic practices such as manipulation of the judiciary in the case of Poland and attacks on press freedom, and manipulation of the electoral system in the case of Hungary (Bozoki, 2012; Walsh, 2019). According to Respondent 3, these issues suggest that there are no perfect democracies. He explained that States can go through periods of political turmoil that test their democratic resolve. He further noted that democracy is an

unending process that requires consistent work to keep functioning appropriately.

Respondent 1 also opined that several countries in West Africa began practicing democracy in its current form after the end of the Cold War. This means several of the West African States have been practicing democracy in the western form for about three decades. He argues, that West African and African countries in general, still require time to build and consolidate their democracies, and such recent incidents of military coups in some countries within the West African sub-region are not sufficient reasons to conclude that the entire sub-region is in a democratic crisis.

3.5.2 Recent Incidents of Military Coups in West Africa are Non-Representational

ECOWAS consists of 15 member states. Although six coups have been staged within two years, these coups have occurred in five countries which is approximately one-third of the fifteen countries within the ECOWAS bloc (Sulieman & Onapajo, 2022). It is worth mentioning that some of the coups have occurred multiple times in the same country in the case of Mali. According to Respondent 4, the rampant occurrence of coups within the past two years creates an impression that the sub-region is under serious threat of democratic collapse which is not necessarily the case. She added:

this is because two-thirds of the countries that constitute the larger bloc of ECOWAS have not witnessed any military coup within the last decade. This, therefore, suggests that the number of coups staged in recent years does not represent the entire political situation in West Africa.

Respondent 3, also expressed that, five out of the six coups that occurred in West Africa between August 2020 and February 2022, occurred in Francophone or French-speaking

countries. Within the same period, there were no coups in Anglophone or English-speaking West African countries he recounted. He concluded that it was challenging to state that West Africa is in a democratic backslide due to the recent coups that have occurred in the sub-region.

3.5.3 There are Still Thriving Democracies in West Africa

Despite the recent surge in military coups in West Africa, there are still thriving democracies in West Africa, Respondent 1 asserted. According to him, countries like Ghana continue to be a beacon of hope and a shining example of a thriving democracy not only in West Africa but Africa as a whole. Respondent 2 also stated that how Ghana managed the 2020 presidential and parliamentary elections was highly commendable. He expressed that the opposition party's decision to go to court for redress over presidential and some parliamentary results rather than resort to violence indicates citizens believe in democracy and democratic institutions (judiciary) in the country. Respondent 3 also noted that there were several other countries in West Africa with stable democracies including Senegal, Benin, and Sierra Leone with no imminent threats of coup d'états. He stated that:

although there are still challenges with democratic governance in West Africa, some countries are making giant steps. In as much as democracy is not limited to elections, we cannot deny the fact that elections have always been a major test of democracy in Africa. Recent elections in Senegal and Benin have been generally incident-free although there were pockets of issues raised by some contesting parties which are normal for most elections even in western democracies (Respondent 3, 2022).

Respondent 4 also argued that the media space in West Africa is still expanding with new media organizations rapidly springing up across the sub-region. This according to her was also a sign of deepening democracy in West Africa. Respondent 1 suggested that the media

especially the mainstream western media often highlighted negative political stories in the sub-region which clads to the positive democratic gains made in the sub-region. According to him, this creates a false picture of democracy in West Africa.

All four respondents held the strong view that democracy is thriving in some West African countries and that the current military coups in Mali and Burkina Faso cannot be used as a yardstick to determine the democratic state of West Africa.

3.6 Efforts of ECOWAS In Preventing the Resurgence of Coups in West Africa

Under this objective, the study sought to determine if the ECOWAS is partly to be blamed for the resurgence of coups within the sub-region. The ECOWAS despite being established as an economic bloc in 1975 has expanded its scope over the years to cover socio-political issues confronting member States (Addo, 2017). To this end, the ECOWAS has the responsibility of ensuring peace and security within the sub-region which are panaceas of economic development. Furthermore, the ECOWAS has established several protocols and mechanisms including the Protocol on Democracy and Good Governance and the Protocol Relating to the Mechanism for Conflict Prevention, Management, Resolution, Peacekeeping, and Security as measures to safeguard the peace and security within the sub-region as well as promote democracy and good governance. Despite these efforts, West Africa in recent years has witnessed a surge in military coups i.e, six in the last two years (Suleiman & Onapajo, 2022). This raises the question of why the recent resurgence in military coups in West Africa despite the several interventions and protocols, adopted by the ECOWAS, and whether the ECOWAS should be partly blamed for the resurgence of coups in the sub-region. Although the ECOWAS cannot be entirely blamed for the recent resurgence of military coups in West Africa some actions and inactions of the bloc have partly contributed to the resurgence of coups in the sub-

region. Four of these inefficiencies by the ECOWAS that have partly contributed to the resurgence of military coups in West Africa are discussed in the next section.

3.6.1 Inadequate Intelligence Gathering

Chapter (4) of the ECOWAS Mechanism, Articles (23) and (24), are essential in addressing the resurgence of coups in West Africa. This is because the provisions in the articles enjoin the ECOWAS to establish a subregional peace and security observation system referred to as the Early Warning System (EWS) as a means of conflict prevention (Addo, 2017). The ECOWAS, through the EWS, is expected to gather intelligence and early warning signals within the sub-region that will be shared with members of the Community to provide them with prior data or intelligence on imminent threats to the peace and security of member States (Cousins, 2019). According to Article 24 (a), the EWS shall consist of an observation and monitoring center located at the Secretariat, while (b) states that observation and monitoring zones be created with the sub-region thus dividing the sub-region into zones based on proximity and to facilitate easy communication and efficiency (ECOWAS Mechanism, 2019). The ECOWAS Early Warning and Response Network (ECOWARN) was thus established to implement the provisions in the article (24) of the ECOWAS Mechanism.

Since 2003 when the ECOWARN began its work, the Network has been collaborating with civil society organizations within the sub-region such as the West Africa Network for Peacebuilding (WANEP) to monitor elections in Ghana, Côte d'Ivoire, Togo, and other West African countries (Annan, 2014). This has partly resulted in the decline of election-related conflicts that could have resulted in coups in the sub-region (Annan, 2014; Eze & Frimpong, 2021). This notwithstanding the ECOWAS over the past decade has been fraught with a different threat that is terrorism and jihadist insurgencies (Mishra & Toprak, 2022). These have increased insecurity not just in the countries experiencing these jihadist activities but the sub-

region as a whole (Suleiman, 2022). The rapid increase and spread of jihadist activities within the sub-region over the past decade raise concerns about ECOWAS' intelligence gathering ability in this area (Cousins, 2019). There have been several instances where it has taken the intelligence agencies of foreign countries including the United States, France, and Britain to warn countries in the sub-region about imminent terrorist threats (Akilatan, 2021).

At the moment, the ECOWARN operates in seven West African countries due to its zonal approach to data gathering. This means that the (8) remaining countries do not have working ECOWARN secretariats which in several ways could hinder the observation, monitoring, and gathering of relevant data for early warning (IOM, n.d.). Respondent advanced that the ECOWAS' response to the crises in Mali was initiated only after the coup had occurred in 2012 at which point the insurgency was rife. This occurred despite the presence of ECOWARN in Mali. Respondent 1, therefore, suggested that better early warning signals and effective collaboration with the Malian government could have helped in tackling the insurgency and preserving Mali's democracy a step ECOWAS is taking Respondent 3 intimated.

3.6.2 Limited Powers

The ECOWAS has a history of non-State interference in the internal affairs of member States which emanates from the Protocol on Non-Aggression and the Protocol Relating to Mutual Assistance on Defense (Addo, 2017). These initial protocols have significantly shaped the ECOWAS' approach to handling internal crises in member states. Cousin (2019) argued that the ECOWAS through the ECOWARN has collected relevant data on security threats and risks on several instances using its monitoring tools and has shared the data with the governments of the member States involved. He however suggested that there is a lack of action from the ECOWAS to mitigate the risks as it leaves that responsibility solely to the State involved. This

may be attributable to the non-interference sentiments often echoed by States when they are confronted with internal political crises.

Mr. Augustin Sagna, Head of the ECOWARN Zone Office IV, when quizzed in an interview on why the ECOWAS only keeps issuing warnings but is unable to take concrete steps to prevent conflicts using the case of Guinea Bissau and Guinea remarked:

It is true that in Guinea Bissau and Guinea, we knew what was going to happen. The question is to know how to respond to these crises. As ECOWAS member countries are not yet ready to give up some of their sovereignty to their regional organization, we cannot intervene before the crises. It is a bit frustrating for an organization like ours to have signs of red alert but no mandate to act (the Sahel and West Africa Club Secretariat, n.d.).

This position was also affirmed by Respondent 1 who explained that it was difficult to intervene based on intelligence no matter how credible they were. He asserted that even in the initial stages of conflict or internal crises, the ECOWAS prefers to respect the sovereignty of its member State not just based on previous protocols but trust the State's ability to mobilize its human and other resources to resolve the issue. He also mentioned that the ECOWAS only steps in when the issue is getting out of control and could have spillover effects.

According to Respondent 3, this does not imply that the ECOWAS is weak but rather the organization respects the sovereignty and dignity of its members. He expressed that “*you cannot just enter another country because they are having internal issues. It is a very delicate issue but often people make it look very simple and blame the ECOWAS*” he concluded.

However, the case may be, the ECOWAS' inability to intervene in time to prevent internal

unrests that could escalate and lead to military coups is a contributory factor to the resurgence of coups in the sub-region. This is partly because, governments' knowledge of the non-interference approach by the ECOWAS could make them reluctant in addressing concerns raised by the ECOWAS, which often degenerates into bigger crises (Odigie, 2019).

3.6.3 Reactionary Approach

The ECOWAS has more often than not intervened only after crises have occurred like in the cases of Mali, Guinea Bissau, and Burkina Faso (Teipar & Albuquerque, 2015; Odigie, 2019; Moderan & Koné). This calls into question the ECOWAS' preventive protocols as well as its early warning systems. To some critics, the ECOWAS has become more of a reactionary organization than one that is keen on taking preventive steps (Odigie, 2019). Respondent 3 argued that it was not enough to sanction member states after a coup has occurred as lives lost in the event cannot be restored. ECOWAS has stated severally that it cannot directly intervene in the internal issues of member states without concrete grounds due to issues of sovereignty. This being said, Respondent 4 believes that the ECOWAS when in possession of substantial intelligence obtained from its EWS that a coup is likely to occur due to some actions of an incumbent is imperative for the ECOWAS to first advise the government and subsequently issue strong warnings of sanctions if the situations do not improve. This could prompt some leaders to change course and take actions that could prevent coups from occurring she expressed.

Jihadist insurgencies have been identified as the major cause of insecurity in Mali and Burkina Faso which have resulted in the recent military coups (Mishra & Toprak, 2022, Suleiman & Onapajo, 2022, Moderan & Koné, 2022). There are other States in the sub-region that are also

struggling with terrorist activities such as Nigeria. Sections of the public have demonstrated against the government for failing to tackle the issues. Fortunately, in the case of Nigeria, citizens decided to change the incumbent government led by President Goodluck Jonathan through the ballot rather than through violence (Bappah, 2016). Respondent 3 advanced that the situation has still not changed and it is incumbent on the ECOWAS to liaise with the government of Nigeria to resolve the issues and prevent them from escalating, which could trigger the public to protest and possibly lead to a military coup. In effect, the ECOWAS has been more passive in its approach to handling the security challenges that have bedeviled the Community.

3.6.4 Ineffectiveness of Sanctions

Respondent 1 identified the application of sanctions particularly economic sanctions as a contributing factor to the resurgence of coups in West Africa. According to Respondent 1, inappropriate application of sanctions sometimes leads to a coup within a coup. He explained that when heavy economic sanctions are placed on a country that is already struggling economically, the probability of the country falling into deep crises is greater. Economic hardship can force citizens to revolt against the new military government which could result in another coup as in the case of Mali.

Respondent 2 also opined that sanctions are not always effective because ordinary citizens are the ones who suffer the most when a country is sanctioned. He noted that these sanctions when they become burdensome can either cause citizens to revolt which will lead to another coup and deepen the security crises or influence citizens to rally behind the military regime to overcome the economic challenge. He explained that some coup leaders once in power cleverly use sanctions imposed on the country as a means of generating public sympathy and mobilizing

public support. They create a situation of "we against them" where the public sees the sanctioning authority as the cause of the country's woes rather than the military leader. In either situation, the sanctions would have failed to achieve the intended objective he bemoaned.

3.7 Conclusion

Jihadist insurgencies and insecurity were identified as the major cause of coups in West Africa particularly in the cases of Mali and Burkina Faso. The jihadist insurgents indiscriminately attack and terrorize both citizens and the military in the countries they operate in within the sub-region. This has often led to public protests and agitations that influence the military to intervene. Also, factors such as an under-resourced military were identified to have contributed to the recent coups in both Mali and Burkina Faso. The study also discussed if West Africa was in a democratic backslide due to recent coups that have occurred in the sub-region and if the ECOWAS was partly to be blamed for the resurgence of coups in West Africa.

There are no doubts about the resurgence of military coups in West Africa. It is however evident that the military coups have been limited to very few countries within the West African sub-region. Also, in some countries such as Mali and Burkina Faso where military coups have been staged in recent years, there have been counter-coups within a short period which fuels the belief that West Africa is in a democratic backslide. There are more than ten states of the sixteen West African states that have recorded no events of military coups. Countries like Ghana have also conducted peaceful elections without major violent incidence which demonstrates that democracy is still striving in the sub-region despite some challenges. ECOWAS' inability to cajole or coerce member states to comply with its protocols on democracy and good governance partly accounts for the resurgence of military coups in West Africa and as such are partly to be blamed. ECOWAS' seemingly ineffective use of sanctions does not serve as a strong deterrent for military officers from stage coups. This also makes

ECOWAS' partly responsible for the resurgence of coups in West Africa.



CHAPTER FOUR

SUMMARY OF FINDINGS, CONCLUSIONS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

4.0 Introduction

This chapter presents a summary of key findings, conclusions, and recommendations based on the research topic; “Democratic Backslide And The Return Of Coup Culture In West Africa- A Case Study Of Mali And Burkina Faso.”

4.1 Summary of Findings

The major findings from the study are summarized under the three specific research objectives the study set out to achieve which are:

- To assess the underlying factors motivating military officers in West Africa particularly Mali and Burkina Faso to stage coups in this current democratic era.
- To ascertain if West Africa is in a democratic backslide due to the recent increase in military coups in the sub-region.
- To assess if ECOWAS is partly to be blamed for the resurgence of military coups in West Africa.

The first objective was to assess the underlying factors motivating some military officers in West Africa particularly Mali and Burkina Faso to stage coups in this current democratic era. Findings from the study revealed that the history of a state has a significant impact on its future socio-political development. Findings from the study revealed that there is a historical antecedent of military coups in Mali and Burkina Faso shadows of which still lingers today. In the case of Burkina Faso, a trend analysis showed that military coups have almost always been

inspired, triggered, or preceded by mass demonstrations in the past. It was therefore not much of a surprise as the January 22 military coup was triggered by anti-government protests. States with high historical antecedents of military coups need to be on alert and work towards addressing the systemic causes of the coups in their history.

Findings also revealed that heightened insecurity was a factor that motivated some military officers to stage coups in Mali and Burkina. Although the underlying cause of the insecurity was jihadist activities in both countries, the jihadist insurrection in Mali was triggered by internal ethnic unrest and a quest for secession. In Burkina Faso, the jihadist activities had nothing to do with ethnicity but rather, with insurgents from Libya that had entered the country and terrorized the population. This perhaps indicates the porous nature of borders in the sub-region and the capability of the military to gather intelligence to avert these incidents.

Findings from the study further revealed that the military was not just ineffective in collecting intelligence but also under-resourced to engage and defeat the jihadist groups. Findings from the study showed that both militaries of Mali and Burkina Faso echoed their discontent severally on the inadequate logistics and other resources to effectively fight and defeat the jihadist groups. Feeling frustrated and let down by their governments, some military officers decided to seize power by a staging coup. Findings also revealed that external influences contributed to the political turmoil in Mali which resulted in some Military officers staging coups to change the incumbent regimes.

Finally, the study revealed that the old nemesis of corruption, economic mismanagement, weak institutions, and poor governance which resulted in the overthrow of several regimes both civilian and military in West Africa persists. Some military officers in Mali and Burkina Faso

attributed the under-resourced nature of the military to corruption while the weak nature of state institutions in Mali and Burkina Faso also made it easy for officers of the military to stage coups. From the study, the underlying factors motivating some military officers to stage coups in Mali and Burkina Faso were largely the same despite a few peculiarities.

Regarding the second objective to ascertain if West Africa is in a democratic backslide due to the recent increase in military coups in the sub-region, the study revealed that West Africa is still a budding democracy and as such is just going through a challenging face and not necessarily a democratic decline or return to coup culture. Findings from the study also showed that some of the advanced democracies including the United States have moments of political unrest that could not or would not be interpreted as a democratic backslide hence the same metrics could be applied to the West African situation. Also, findings from the study revealed that recent incidents of military coups in West Africa are non-representational as the states that have witnessed coup incidents are relatively few. The study further revealed that there are still thriving democracies in West Africa such as Ghana and Senegal. Overall West Africa's democracy is still fragile and hence governments and ECOWAS must work to protect and nurture it.

The third objective was to assess if ECOWAS is partly to be blamed for the resurgence of military coups in West Africa. Findings from the study revealed that ECOWAS cannot immune itself from the recent resurgence of military coups in the sub-region. Findings from the study revealed that ECOWAS through its ECOWARN initiative still has challenges in gathering intelligence timeously and is often dependent on the intelligence of foreign agencies, particularly in the areas of terrorism and jihadist insurgents. The rise in jihadist activities in the sub-region gives credence to this challenge confronting the sub-regional bloc. Findings also revealed that the reactionary posture taken by ECOWAS does not help in forestalling incidents

of military coups in the sub-region. ECOWAS' reluctance to directly intervene in member States prior to a conflict also suggests the limited power of the bloc as revealed by the study. This stems from ECOWAS' initial approach of non-interference in the internal affairs of member states which some member states still hold dear. The study also revealed that ECOWAS' use of sanctions was ineffective as it hasn't been able to serve as a deterrent to military officers from staging coups.

The issues raised do not in any way undermine the credibility or efforts of ECOWAS as the bloc has contributed in diverse ways to promote peace and security within the sub-region through mediation and sometimes direct military intervention in the case of ECOMOG in Liberia and Sierra Leone. This is a call on ECOWAS to accept greater responsibility as the sub-regional bloc and to do more to galvanize governments of the Community to adhere to its protocols on democracy and good governance which they are signatories to. Perhaps ECOWAS needs to rethink its approach to the incidents of coups and develop more suitable strategies or mechanisms that will appeal to governments to incline toward democracy and good governance and in worse-case scenarios coerce member states to adhere to its Protocols. An effective “carrots and sticks” strategy will help.

4.2 Conclusion

The old threats of corruption, mismanagement of state resources bad governance, and ethnicity/tribalism persist in West Africa and are major factors militating the resurgence of military coups in the sub-region. There are however some emerging threats including Jihadist insurgencies causing widespread insecurity in the sub-region. The government's inability to provide the needed support to the armies to combat the Jihadist activities in some West African states such as Mali and Burkina Faso have festered the activities of these Jihadist groups in

the two countries. The existence of the old threats after several years of practicing or attempting to practice democracy reveals that democracy is not as buoyant or entrenched in West Africa as some may perceive.

State Institutions are still weak and often at the mercy of incumbent governments leading to bad governance and misuse of power in several instances. These provide fertile grounds for dissension which easily lead to public revolts creating an opportunity for self-seeking officers of some West African states to exploit. This partly explains why some sections of the public jubilate when there are military interventions motivating other officers to take similar actions given the slightest opportunities.

The political situation in Mali for instance also provides some insight into geopolitics and how Western powers still influence their former colonies and could also contribute in some ways to the political instability of their former colonies leading to military takeovers. It must be noted however that despite the rise in military coup incidents in West Africa, most of these attempted and successful coups have occurred in the same countries and within a short period creating an impression of a widespread event which is not the case. Other West African countries might be confronted with their own democratic, and socio-economic challenges but the majority of these states have not recorded any form of coups in recent years.

Based on these observations and findings the study refutes the assertion that West Africa is in a democratic backslide. Rather, democracy in West Africa is still budding and the foundations of democracy in several West African country are been tested. It's unfortunate that despite the efforts of ECOWAS in promoting democracy and good governance in West Africa through its numerous protocols and initiatives, the lack of political will of several governments is making light the efforts of the sub-regional bloc. It will therefore take the collective efforts of

ECOWAS as a regional bloc, governments of member states, civil society organizations, and the entire ECOWAS citizenry to make democracy work in West Africa and avert the incidents of military coups and unconstitutional change of governments in the sub-region.

4.3 Recommendations

Based on the research findings the study makes the following recommendation to the governments of ECOWAS member states particularly Mali and Burkina Faso, ECOWAS as a sub-regional bloc civil society organizations and policy think tanks in West Africa.

- The governments of Mali and Burkina Faso must do more to strengthen their state institutions by providing them with the needed resources and granting them the independence to work according to their constitutional mandate. This will promote checks and balances, independence to perform without compromises, and generate public trust. This recommendation also goes to other states in West Africa that might have similar challenges.
- Mali and Burkina Faso should invest in their security particularly the armed forces and the police service to equip them to maintain law and order within the country and to also combat and defeat jihadist groups within the country. The two countries can invest through budgetary allocations to the ministries of interior and defense. In doing this, the government should effectively engage with the leaders of the security services to ascertain their needs before providing them with the resources rather than assume what their needs will be. This will enhance the capacity of the security forces to perform their duties and also boost their morale.
- West African governments, ECOWAS, and Civil Society Organizations should intensify civil education on the relevance of democracy despite some challenges associated with its practice. Some sections of the public in are gradually losing hope

in democracy as an effective governance system due to the low tangible dividends it produces in some states. The prevalence of corruption and economic mismanagement leading to growing poverty and underdevelopment in some West African states makes sections of the public feel that military regimes with their perceived disciplinary track record will be a better option. Governments, ECOWAS, and Civil Society Organizations must intensify education on the benefits of democracy and the adverse effects of military takeovers to win back public trust in the sub-region.

- ECOWAS must develop strong sanctions targeted at coup makers including travel bans across the sub-region, asset freeze, and judicial proceedings against culprits by member states should they be found in their country. ECOWAS can expand this scope to the entire African continent and other continents by liaising with their governments and regional blocs such as the governments of the United States, Great Britain, France, China, and the European Union. This will serve as a strong deterrent for coup makers.
- ECOWAS needs to rebrand to make the bloc more attractive to its members. This will compel member states to comply with its protocols particularly those on democracy and good governance to enjoy the benefits and avoid being sanctioned or expelled from the bloc.
- Governments in West Africa should develop strategies that promote unity, particularly among tribes and ethnic groups given the history of tribal conflicts in several countries in West Africa. This will ensure internal peace and prevent the outbreak of conflicts that could trigger the military to intervene.
- Finally, governments of West Africa particularly Mali and Burkina Faso should intensify their fight against corruption and invest in the productive sectors of their economies to accelerate the needed development most citizens crave for. This will enable citizens to embrace democracy as a viable system of governance that promotes

not only peace and security but prosperity and development as well.



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