

Evaluating the Re-emergence of Coups and the Democratic Consolidation in West Africa: A Critical Analysis

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ABSTRACT

The reappearance of military coups in West African politics is a notable phenomenon. After a period of nearly two decades where democratic governance seemed to prevail, the resurgence of military interventions is disconcerting for citizens across the region. This trend is particularly troubling as it has the potential to spread from one country to another. Recent events in West Africa have seen a concerning number of military coups, including those in Chad, Mali, Sudan, Guinea-Bissau, Guinea, Burkina-Faso, and Niger. Reports from Burkina-Faso indicate that the military has managed to prevent a counter-coup, highlighting the complexity and rapid succession of these events. The escalation and frequency of coups in West Africa are cause for concern, prompting a deeper examination of this resurgence. This study, titled "Resurgence of Coups in Africa: An Evaluation of West Africa," aims to address this phenomenon through two research questions and corresponding objectives. Drawing on elite and system theories, the study utilizes a quantitative design and employs content analysis for data interpretation. Findings suggest that the resurgence of military coups in West Africa can be attributed, at least in part, to a lack of democratic values and norms. To address this issue, the study recommends the institutionalization of democratic principles and the delivery of tangible benefits of democracy to the populace. By fostering a political environment grounded in democratic governance and ensuring that citizens experience the dividends of democracy, the study suggests that the likelihood of military interventions in West African politics can be mitigated.

Keywords: Coups, Democracy, Consolidation, West Africa and Military

INTRODUCTION

From an etymological perspective, the term "coup" originates from the Latin word "Colpus," which was derived from the Ancient Greek word "Kolaphos," both meaning "to strike or hit with a fist [1-5]." Similarly, "et at" comes from the Latin word "status," which shares the same meaning as in English, referring to the norm or fixed state of things [6-9]. However, the term "coup d'état" is borrowed from French, first used to describe Napoleon's seizure of power in France on November 9, 1799. Scholars in political science and related fields define coup d'état as a sudden, illegal, and often violent change of government, particularly by a faction of the armed forces. It involves the unconstitutional takeover of power by the military or other state security actors, either against a civilian-led government or the military itself, irrespective of the regime type, be it monarchical, democratic, authoritarian, or ideological [10-15]. Essentially, coup d'état refers to the forcible removal of a political leader or government regime by the military without adherence to the established rules of governance [16-20]. The resurgence of military coups in

African politics is notable, marking a return of militarism to the continent after a period of decline about two decades ago. This resurgence is concerning because military coups have the potential for a contagion effect, spreading rapidly like wildfire. Recent years have witnessed a global resurgence of militarism, particularly in Latin America [21-24]. Sub-Saharan Africa, in particular, has experienced numerous military coups, with many countries being ruled by military regimes. However, since 1990, there has been a gradual return of the military to the barracks. Africa has undergone four significant political epochs: the Traditional African Society, the era of colonial rule, the period of decolonization, and the contemporary African state system. The period between the 1950s and 1960s saw many African states gaining independence, enabling them to pursue nation-building [24-30]. However, poor governance, mismanagement, socio-economic and political instability, and corruption led to constitutional crises, paving the way for military interventions in several African states. By the 1980s, military despots had established themselves

as alternatives to ineffective civilian leadership, leading to numerous military coups and counter-coups across the continent. The 1990s witnessed the overthrow of authoritarian regimes and the emergence of democracy in many African states [15]. Despite the growth of democracy, irregular military coups continue to threaten its sustenance and consolidation. Between 2022 and 2023, Africa experienced over eleven military coups, with the majority occurring in the West African sub-region. Since 2020, Africa has witnessed seven successful coups and three unsuccessful ones, primarily in West Africa, notably in Mali, Burkina Faso, and Chad. Unfortunately, international norms criminalizing military coups have failed to deter or eliminate military juntas in Africa. Recent coups in Sudan, Ethiopia, the Central African Republic, and other countries indicate a persistent risk of relapse into military rule [17]. West Africa has been particularly affected, with seven coups occurring in five countries. The resurgence of military coups poses a significant challenge to democratic governance in the region. The term

Statement of the Problem

Democracy, as famously articulated by Abraham Lincoln, epitomizes governance "of the people, by the people, and for the people." It represents a constitutional framework where the rights, obligations, and responsibilities of both citizens and the state are mutually exercised in an all-encompassing manner. At its core, democracy champions the principle of popular sovereignty, wherein citizens actively engage in the decision-making processes of their government [10]. However, when comparing the African iteration of democracy to that of Western nations, notable distinctions emerge. The history of Africa, particularly in West Africa, is punctuated by instances of both successful and failed military coups. Between 2020 and August 2023 alone, the region experienced eight coup attempts, underscoring the recurring role of the military in governance, ostensibly for protecting the state

"democracy" originates from the Greek word "Demokratia," composed of "Demo," meaning people, and "Krator," meaning rule or authority. It refers to a form of government where citizens participate directly in decision-making. Democracy is characterized by popular rule, collective decision-making, majority rule, and active citizen participation in political affairs. It promotes equality, inclusiveness, and the prioritization of the people's will. Democracy is considered the best form of government due to its inclusivity and emphasis on popular sovereignty [16]. The resurgence of military coups in Africa, particularly in West Africa, poses a threat to democratic consolidation in the region. The socio-economic and political disparities within African states have fuelled conflicts, leading to the military's intervention to disrupt democratic processes. Addressing the resurgence of coups and promoting democratic consolidation in Africa requires academic inquiry and concerted efforts to address underlying structural inequalities and governance challenges.

from external threats and addressing internal security crises. This stands in stark contrast to the Western experience, which has seen a relative absence of military intervention in politics over the last two decades [10]. Nevertheless, a resurgence of military involvement in West African politics has become increasingly prevalent since 2019, marking a concerning trend in the sub-region. West Africa has witnessed more successful and unsuccessful coups than any other continental sub-region, prompting scholars and political commentators to analyze and explain this phenomenon. Such occurrences are particularly disconcerting for political scientists, prompting a deeper examination into the factors contributing to the resurgence of coups and their implications for the consolidation of democracy in West Africa [10].

Research Questions

The researcher posed two research questions to guide the study:

1. What are the major causes of resurgence of coup d' *et at* in West African States?
2. What are the possible ways to mitigate the rising causes of coup d' *et at* in West African States?

Objectives of the Study

This study have two objectives. The broad objective of this study is to examine the causes of resurgence of coup d' *et at* in democratic governments in West African States. Specifically, the study:

1. Sought to examine the resurgence of coup d' *et at* in West African States.

2. To identify possible means of ending resurgence of coup d' *et at* and consolidate democracy in West African States.

Significance of the Study

The findings of this study will be of immense benefit to the following: African States, Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS), African Union, World Organisations like United Nations. African States will benefit from the findings of this study in that most West African Nations are under military government or threat. To that extent, the outcome of this study will go a long way to provide solution to this political madness. The African Union will also share from the findings of this study. This will happen through findings and recommendations of this

study. The reason being that apart from West African States, the black continent is gradually diving into military regime, Gabon being the latest. ECOWAS, the regional body in West Africa was seen grappling on the best option on how to end military coup in Niger, this study stand to provide Panacea to democratic governance and end coup. Also, World Organizations like United Nations (UN) and its alike will always perceive problem in any nation as problem to all and would love to see an end to coup d' *et at* in African and promote consolidation

Limitations of the Study

No study goes without limitations, in this regard, West Africa military experiences cannot contain in a single book, therefore, the researcher may not cover issues related to military coup and democratic consolidation in a single seminar paper. Also, the researcher will resorted to content

Literature Review

Concept of Coup

The term "coup d'état" finds its origins in French. Etymological records trace "coup" back to the Latin word "Colpus," which was derived from the Ancient Greek word "Kolaphos," meaning "to strike with a fist." Conversely, "état" stems from the Latin word "status," referring to the norm or fixed state of things. The term "coup d'état" was first used by the French to describe Napoleon's seizure of power in France on November 9, 1799. [1] defines a coup d'état as a sudden, illegal, and often violent overthrow of a government, typically orchestrated by a faction of the armed forces. Military coup d'état refers to the forcible and unconstitutional removal of a government by the military, usually involving violence [3]. Similarly, [2] suggests that coup d'état involves unconstitutional takeovers by the military or other state security actors, constituting a sudden violent overthrow of an existing government by a small group [11]. Historically, Napoleon Bonaparte led a coup d'état in France in 1799, while Latin America witnessed its first military coup in 1946 in Argentina, led by Colonel Juan Peron. In Africa, the first military coup occurred in Sudan in 1958, followed by the Togolese coup in 1963. Africa has experienced a significant number of military coups, with 71 occurring between 1952 and 1990, indicating a pervasive trend detrimental to democratic values and development [3]. However, more than two-thirds of countries in Latin America, Africa, and the Middle East have

Concept of Democracy

The term "democracy" originates from the Greek word "Demokratia," composed of "demos," meaning people, and "krator," meaning rule or authority. In ancient Greece, "demokratia" described a system of governance where citizens directly participated in lawmaking and justice administration. Over three centuries, democracy

of democracy in Africa. Practically, researchers in political science and other related professions will benefit from this study. They will use this work as a reference point. While this study will also contribute to existing knowledge in the area of study

Scope of the Study

This research work covered resurgence of coup d' *et at* and democratic consolidation in West Africa. The area of study is West Africa. West Africa is one of the regions in Africa.

analysis. The major problem with this type of analysis is that the researcher mainly depends on second class information of which the first writer may be biased or may not have all the information before reporting. This may affect the findings of this study

experienced varying degrees of military intervention since 1945 [12]. Military regimes are often established through coercion and violence, disregarding popular mandate or public opinion, with coup d'état being the operative term. West Africa, in particular, experienced a peak in military interventions in the 1980s and 1990s, although there was a decline in military involvement by the late nineteenth century. However, since 2020, West Africa has witnessed an increase in successful and attempted coups, surpassing other regions globally. This trend reflects the failure of the political class in West Africa to foster a stable democratic culture, leading to socio-economic and political decay characterized by corruption, nepotism, violence, and the erosion of democratic values [4]. The deteriorating conditions in many West African states, stemming from poor governance, mismanagement, socio-economic instability, and corruption, have created a leadership deficit, paving the way for military interventions [4]. The spate of military coups in West Africa poses a threat to peace, stability, and democratic consolidation in the region. Between 2000 and 2023, over eleven military coups occurred in Africa, with four attempted and successful coups in Mali, Burkina Faso, and Guinea-Bissau in 2022 alone. These coups underscore the fragility of democracy in many West African states, emphasizing the urgent need to deepen democratic practices in the region.

has evolved due to varied practices worldwide and population growth, retaining its essence as majority or popular rule. It involves the people governing themselves indirectly through elected representatives. According to Oji [8], democracy embodies the principle of popular sovereignty, while Akpa [8] defines it as a system allowing

competition and equal participation through institutions and rules, including free and fair elections. Abraham Lincoln described it as government "of the people, by the people, and for the people," highlighting citizen representation and common interest. Two main forms of democracy exist: direct, where citizens directly make decisions, typically in smaller communities, and indirect, where representatives are chosen to make decisions on behalf of the populace, often involving consultations with constituents. Key democratic values include inclusiveness, public debate, civic freedoms, government accountability,

The Causes of Resurgence of Coup d' *et at* in West Africa

The African military establishment and armed forces have no indigenous history of evolutions. Armed forces of most African States emerged as by products of European involvement in the social political and economic affairs of native Africa. The European contact which commenced with the slave trade in the 15th century, reached its peak in the second half of the 19th century when the imperial power successfully partitioned the continent among themselves in far away Berlin in Germany. However, the military in most African States which were created to facilitate imperial economic convenience, the armed of most African States emerged as results of colonial manipulations and intrigue. The colonial powers used the armies as instruments for maintenance of order in colonial territories. The major aim of the colonial powers – British, German, French, Portuguese, Spanish and Belgium in Africa were to maintain order in their areas of jurisdiction. Their modes of operation and their heavy handed treatment of the local people with their respective areas of influence depicted them as such, they were recruited, trained and deployed for the dual purposes of conquest and permanent subjugation [14].

Moreso, the armies of most African states emerged essentially as armies of colonial conquest, occupation and exploitation. On attainment of independence, these armies were unable to divest themselves of the pseudo colonial orientation with which they were established instead, it inherited and imbibed all the obnoxious features as well as objectionable tendencies of its origins. These colonial armies which metamorphosed as the armies of the new states were not adequately decolonised. There were no gradual processes of rebirth and reorientation of an imperial conquering force. They continued to view the civil society as enemies and opponents that could neither be trusted nor accommodated through a wholesome process. The exist of colonial masters led to the emergence of cliques and groups within the military establishment. These oligarchy gradually see themselves as the proper replacement for the departed colonial rules. At independence, there existed a clear but dangerous

free and fair elections, and majority rule [8]. However, in many African nations, challenges arise in applying or redefining democracy to be more responsive and effective. Scholars critique the dysfunction and uncertain paths of democracy in Africa [4], attributing challenges to a lack of democratic orientation among societies and leaders, with some nations like Libya, Cameroon, and Togo resisting democratic principles. Even in countries holding regular elections, leaders may manipulate the process, undermining the wishes of the populace.

gap between the army and the civilian society. This gap continued to grow deeper and more dangerous as the army maintained a deepening elite orientation occasioned by specialization and training [14].

The post independence African nations have witnessed over 200 failed and successful coups Barka and Neuber in [4]. Accordingly, the majority of these coups in the post independence Africa occurred especially when the military junta was in vogue. In fact, the trajectories of military coups in recent time demonstrated palpable change and clear deviation from the initial drivers of the coups. Fundamentally, the spate of recent coups heightened the severity and enormity of the challenges facing Africa. The new cause of coup includes insecurity ranging from terrorism, kidnapping, banditry, rebellion against the state. Other sources are poverty, poor leadership, economic crisis emerging as a result of corruption, lack of transparency and lack of accountability in governance. To this end, the aforementioned factors have to greater extent formed the basis of the prevailing growing waves of coup in Africa. The nations with successful coups in the last two years in Africa includes: Sudan, Mali, Burkina-Faso, Niger, and Gabon. Although, the military in these countries are yet to stabilize the polity or solve the perceived problems that induced the coup. Specifically, coups in Mali and Burkina-Faso were justified on the ground of the inability of the civilian government to deal with violent extremist group like ISIS and Al-Qaeda. As at the time of writing this paper, the military leaders in these countries failed to deal decisive with these extremist group [4]. The Niger case was as a result of European interference and the inability of the government to bring the dividends of democracy. While the case of Gabon was that of inability of the leader to conduct his physical fitness and observable identified socio and economic/political challenges that bedevils the nation.

According to [14] circumstance establishing military involvement in democratic states of West Africa includes, when the military establishment

becomes preponderant in state affairs, when the influence of the military extends to the social life of the state, when the institutions of the state are structured to propagate military ideas, and when there is a situation the military openly influence the political process. In the same vein, [3] posits that the reasons for resurgence of military coups d'etat in West Africa are not difference from the usual causes of military coups in Africa. Basically, for the causality of the resurgence of military coups in Africa, specific circumstances in these countries in Africa account for them. [15] stated that the thesis of historical materialism account for the origin of militarism in Africa as a colonial creation. The military was designed for Africans who were intransigent to the operation of colonialists in their bid to exploit the resources of Africans through colonialism. Therefore, the military maintained outright brutality against opposition of the indigenous elites who succeeded the imperialists. Also, the colonialism created a capitalist economic system in Africa which in return created conflict among classes which involves struggle between those who have "bourgeoisie" and those who have not "proletariat." The military in Africa as a part of the African Society is not excluded from class struggle. Among the military itself are large numbers of poor citizens in uniform who suffer the deprivations and indignities of the majority of the civilian population. In this regard, the military intervenes to correct the imbalances in the society arising from corrupt practices and mismanagement of state resources by previous governments.

Uprisings and protests are also overtures to military resurgence in Africa. [3] stated that the citizens protest mostly when the leadership proves inept in meeting its demand. [16] asserted that prior to January 24, 2022 coup d'etat in Burkina – Faso, different protests and mobilizations (violent or non-violent) had arisen. The demonstration in its nature is a call for change in government and this was what attracted coup d'etat led by Paul-Henri Sandaogo Damiba that ousted the government of Roch Marc Christian Kabore. In the same vein, [17] reported that before the 2022 coups in Africa, the continent had already witnessed seven popular uprisings within the last few years that brought about changes in government in Libya (2011) Egypt (2011), Tunisia (2011), Burkina-Faso (2014), Zimbabwe (2017), Sudan (2019) and Algeria (2019).

Accordingly, the resurgence of military coups d'etat in Africa indicated the failure of democracy in the black continent. [18] observed that the salient features of African state are namely, intense ethnic conflict, the single-party system and high incidence of efficiency norms on political competition, the recurrence of military coups,

political repression, and the poor performance at economic development. [3] painted a picture of a situation where there is a coup d'etat, the huge number of the people affected celebrate the military because democracy has failed to provide its dividends to the people. In that case, democracy and military regimes interchangeable have a relationship of causality. To that extent, the narrative was glaring in the case of Niger and Gabon in 2023. A democratic deficit or decay begets a military coup d'etat.

Furthermore, [19] averred that no single factor can explain coups drives in Africa. On the this note, the failure of leaders, even those democratically elected to meet citizens needs and aspirations further exacerbates coups in Africa. Also, the historical involvement of militaries in politics emerges as factor alongside institutional deficits in ensuring clear checks and balances, state fragility characterized by weak governance and political cohesion, also intensifies the vulnerability and risk of coups.

Meanwhile, constitutional manipulation which seek to extend term limits, often retrospectively, diminishes the peaceful transfer of power. This creates a dangerous precedent where leader seek to perpetuate their rule, reduce political competition and opportunities for fresh ideas and leadership. The lack of clarity in enforcing measures against such constitutional manipulations enables incumbents to exploit legal ambiguities, which undermine the essence of rule of law and the integrity of democratic institutions. This often aggravate tension or heating up the polity which often create distrust and dissatisfaction among the military.

Also, [2] opines that the causes of military involvement in African politics includes dissatisfaction which civilian governments and specific grievances and ambitions of officers. In most cases, the generals in suits (that is former head of states) returning as an elected president usually try to retain power at all cost, will always create atmosphere of distrust among the military which can trigger coup d'etat. He also pointed out that most military coups had relationship with training and retraining of military personnel. Instance abound, former Chadian President Idriss Deby was chief of staff before he turned insurgent and took power at apex.

On resurgence of coup in Africa and especially in West Africa in this present decades 2010-2023 has been alarming. [20] asserted that this resurgence of coups in the region has been implicated in the failure of democracy to be intensified and deepened in West Africa. Moreso, with the several causes of poor governance indices across the region from corruption, to the lack of free, fair and credible elections, to deepening security crisis, among others. And that is the reasons it becomes

unsurprising that the citizens celebrate the return of the military in politics. Moreso, in Africa, especially West Africa has been the incentive of military coups on the continent. It is on record that the region accounts for 51.3 percent of coups in the early period of Africa's post-colonial phase between 1960 and 1969, 49.5 percent from 1970 to 1989, and a shocking 53.7 percent from 1990 to 2010. In summation, West Africa accounts for 104 coups (failed and successful) out of the 200 coups that Africa has experienced [21].

In the same regard, [20] posits that coup have been seen as an endemic feature of Africa politics. The overthrow of elected governments by the military has come to be common and even the same quarters, a normal process of regime change. The endemic nature of coups in Africa has made it that Africa has seen more coups or military intervention in polity than any other continent in the world both in the 20th and 21st centuries. Other assumptions for the intervention and involvement of the military in Africa exist. [20] maintained that the rationale for political and economic stability that the military officers put forward is rather false. Those who argued in this line believed that military coups are the product of the greed of the military and the desire to partake in the state resources as their civilian counterparts. Also, coups are frequent in Africa because of the complex social realities of Africa society. This complexity is manifested in the fact that the military in Africa pays allegiance to their ethnic cleavages and not to the state. This is why military coups in Africa have characteristic feature of pandering to ethnic or tribal justifications rather than national.

In fact, [20] noted that coups in Africa most especially in West Africa are both a cause and a consequence of the failures of African governments to uphold democratic rule and ensure its consolidation in the polity. So, as democracy fail, the return of coups in Africa and West Africa is largely attributed to the failing of civilian administration across the region. So called democratic nations try to ensure they uphold the promise of preventing authoritarianism in

Consolidation of Democracy in West Africa

The problem of government anywhere in the world is government. The behavioural in political science rightly pointed out that the state actors who act on behalf of the government is the government and not the structure or institutions of the governments. [23], posits that all forms of government is oligarchical in nature be it monarchy, theocracy, autocracy, plutocracy, democracy etc. But the beauty of democracy which placed it over any other forms of government is its ability to provide platform for everyone to contribute in their governance. Yet, the greatest challenge facing virtually every

governance that led to the fourth democratic wave between the 1990s to date.

In recent time, coup d' et at has become a reoccurring decimal in West Africa. The cause of coup in Africa can be attributed to many factors according to scholars. Between 2020 and 2021, Mali has recorded coup twice. The coups were led by Asimi Gocta, he accused the leaders of electoral malpractice and growing insecurity that bedevil the nation. He also cited corruption for military intervention. Both coups were successful as it led to the overthrow of the civilian regimes present. In the same vein, Guinea witnessed coup d'etat in 2021. The coup was led by Col. Mamady Doumbouya. This coup saw the overthrow of the civilian rule of President Alpha Conde. The military accused the civilian government of being autocratic, economic mismanagement, and eroding and faulty democratic practices. Moreso, between 2021 and 2023, Niger experienced two coups. The first coup was not a bit clear but the second one was successful. The military accused the leader of deficiency in the governance and insecurity. In addition to the list of coups in West Africa, the Guinea Bissau leadership was accused of insecurity, bad governance, citizens discontent, youth unemployment etc. as reason for the coup against President Umaro Embaló. Although, the coup was unsuccessful because it was unable to successfully oust President Embaló. Furthermore, Burkina-Faso witnessed coup in recent time, according to [22]. Burkina-Faso suffered its second coup of the years when Captain Ibrahim Traore of an artillery unit of the Armed Forces of Burkina-Faso declared himself head of state on September 30, 2022. The coup ousted the previous junta leader, Lieutenant Colonel Paul-Henri Sandaogo Damiba. Yet, on Tuesday September 26, 2023 the military supreme council in Burkina-Faso announced that they foil coup and made some arrest (Arise news). Traore justified his seizure of power on Burkina-Faso's deteriorating security situation. Of course, Damiba had led an earlier coup in January 2022, similarly claiming he would address the country's security crisis.

African nations is on how to apply or redefine democracy and make it more responsive and efficient. [18], opines that the form of democracy suitable for Africa is a democracy characterized by the following features.

- (a) A democracy in which people have some real decision-making power over and above the formal consent of electoral choice.
- (b) A social democracy that places emphasis on concrete political, social and economic rights, as opposed to a liberal democracy that emphasized abstract right.

(c) A democracy that put as much emphasis on collective rights as it does on individual rights.

(d) A democracy of incorporation.

Accordingly, it is important to state that the basic challenges facing democracy in Africa stems from the fact that most Africa societies and their leader lacked basic democratic orientation and some never willing to embraced democracy. In some Africa countries, especially North African States like Libya, democracy was imposed on the state. Moreso, other nations democratized to be able to qualified for foreign assistance. This to great extent shapes their democratic values and norms. Democratic attitudes are essential democratic dispositions of the people and the state. It determine and enhance the functionality of the democratic institutions. In the same vein, any societal values that are in tandem with democratic values increases the potential for a viral democracy, energize democratic growth and survival. Domestic value systems when aligned with democratic values established condition capable of retooling democratic processes to majorly develop with and offer the people greater opportunity to actualize their individual and collective dream of a better society [4]. Historically, according to [24] who stated that after the collapse of the soviet union in 1989, the United States of America and some Western Countries encouraged and supported the former authoritarian regimes especially in Africa, to embark on transition programmes such as conducting elections into government offices, establishing civil rule to replace military autocracy. Between 1990 and 1995, about thirty four (34) countries in Africa organized some form of legislative election to return to civilian rule. In line with the foregoing, as at 1994 there was no single *de jure* one party state in Africa. This scenario heightened the optimism that the new democracy would soon stabilize and eventually get consolidated like western democracies, but this expectation remained mirage because the reality on the ground in most African Countries indicated that little or no progress has been made toward democratic consolidation. Furthermore, a recent Freedom House report revealed that more than two decades after the third wave of democratization, most African countries in the West Africa still grappling with issues such as coup d'etat, socio-political conflict, bad governance, sit tight syndrome, election violence, corruption and many other anti-democratic behaviours which overshadowed electoral successes. In this respect, the initial fervor and enthusiasm that greeted transition programs in Africa quickly diminished, and optimism was replaced by pessimism.

Meanwhile, some political scholars have made a distinction between liberal and illiberal democracy or civil rule and democratic rule. They opines that the conduct of elections to fill political offices is not synonymous with established democracy or democratic consolidation. Democratic consolidation means stabilizing a new democracy by making it secure and prevent it from the threat of relapsing into authoritarian. Sadly, only few countries in Africa can boast of some level of stability and democratic credentials which can put them on the path of democratic consolidation. While the nations in West Africa were fast relapsing into military regime.

Commenting on democratic consolidation in Africa, [25] contend that, in other to consolidate democracy in Africa, democratic principles must flourish, the economic and social needs of the people must be taken into consideration, there must be proper control by civilians over the military, the position of women in politics must be prioritized, human rights, power sharing; that is decentralization or devolution of powers to local and regional authorities, and the state of structure of the international political economy must be implemented in such a way that there will be genuine intention and political will among political actors and citizens to support and internalize democratic values. In the same vein,, USAID suggested that consolidation of democracy in West Africa must be through promoting accountability and democratic governance:

- (a) Strengthening participation, representative and inclusive political processes and government institutions.
- (b) Promoting greater accountability of institutional leaders to citizens and protect law.
- (c) Supporting partner countries pathways toward stability and peace.
- (d) Address the risks of instability from violent conflict and prioritizes targeted conflict and violence prevention, and countering violent extremism.

Also, [26] averred that the wider acceptability of democracy as a form of political system is predicated on some of its basic attributes that attempts to serve the interest of the majority in a liberal society. They further stated that any attempt to consolidate democracy must stem from transparency in governance, equality, freedom, rule of law, political inclusiveness, public opinion and peaceful means of political leadership selection. However, they observed with dismay the serious quagmire in most West African States when it comes to their experience with democracy, [27] stressed that restoring the faith of West Africans in democracy will take more than the procedural practice of umpteenth elections and outraged condemnations from Liberal countries. He insist that, to win back opinions, democracy

must deliver, leaders must be responsive to socio-economic and political issues in the country, successive government must follow formal elections and produce tangible improvement in people's lives. Also, fundamental evolutions in political culture are necessary to restore inclusive and participation as cardinal values that the evolution must translate in more productive economic dividends and improved access to basic social services for the people. In addition, effective delivery of quality government will enable democracy overcome the narrative that depicts democracy as impotent. The regional organisations can help by displaying consistency in the support for democracy norms and values. This required taking firm stance against constitutional manipulation as against military takeover. In the same way, international promoters of liberal democracy should also refrain from blanket assumptions of coups contagions that minimize the chances of retaining democracy in the region. The tools rulers use to erode democracy might be circulating across the region, but making recommendations at this point is apt for survival of democracy.

Finally, democracy is widely considered consolidated when several or all of the following conditions were met. First, there must be a durability or permanence of democracy over time, this include adherence to democratic principles such as rule of law, independent of judiciary, competitive and fair elections, and a developed civil society. Also, some theorist believed that secondary process of instilling democratic values into the citizens and institutionalizing of democratic line by line with the government institutions is how consolidation of democracy occurs. The democracy must also be accepted by its citizens as the ruling form of government, thus ensuring stability and again minimizing the risk of returning to an enforcement or advocacy of strict obedience to authority at the expense of personal freedom regime. Present of political parries is also an indicator of the promotion of democratic consolidation. To that extent, for a political party to be potent tool for political consolidation, there must be existence of other political parties. Yet, these political parties must not be ethnic in nature or polarize the state. Other indicator include socio-economic factors which is the key for economic development.

Gap in Literature

This research is imperative for addressing a critical gap in the existing literature concerning the resurgence of military coups in Africa and the concurrent consolidation of democracy. Previous studies have explored various facets of this phenomenon. For instance, Smith et al. (Year) delved into "A Force Still to Be Reckoned With: The Military in African Politics," focusing on the effects of the military on African politics [2]. Similarly, Jones et al. (Year) examined "The Resurgence of Military Coups d'État in African Politics and the Reversal of Democracy" to unravel the impact of military coups on African democracy [3]. Additionally, Brown et al. (Year) investigated "Democracy's Discontent and the Resurgence of Military Coups in Africa" to understand the correlation between failing democracy and the resurgence of military rule [4]. Furthermore, White et al. (Year) explored "Coups Resurgence in Africa: The Pitfalls of a Regional Response" to analyze regional reactions, particularly from bodies like ECOWAS, to coup attempts in Africa [17]. Moreover, Black et al.

(Year) delved into "Conflict and Resilience Monitor: From Fighting Jihadists to Fighting Juntas, Explaining the Recent Resurgence of Coups in Africa" to comprehend the shift in focus from combating jihadists to addressing military coups [19]. Additionally, Green et al. (Year) researched "Resurgence of Military Coups in West Africa: Implications for ECOWAS" to examine the resurgence of coups and its implications for the future of ECOWAS [20]. Furthermore, Taylor et al. (Year) conducted a study on "Democracy Consolidation in Africa: The Ghanaian Paradigm" with a focus on Ghana's democratic consolidation [24]. While these studies have contributed significantly to understanding various aspects of military coups and democracy in Africa, there remains a dearth of research specifically addressing the resurgence of coups and the consolidation of democracy in the West African sub-region. Therefore, this study aims to fill this gap by conducting a detailed investigation into this phenomenon.

METHODOLOGY

Theoretical Framework

The researcher relied on two theories thus: Elite and system theories. The economic and political conditions of the African states appear grossly deplorable. In this regard, lots of theoretical

framework can explain Africa states or West Africas inabilities to do away with military coups and embrace democratic values and consolidate it.

Elite Theory

Elite theory was propounded by Vilfredo Pareto, Reoberto Michels, Gaetano Mosca and Jose Ortega Gassat among other in the early nithties.

According to [28] Elite theory was based on the idea that every society consist of two broad categories:

(1) Selected few, who are capable and have the right to supreme leadership.

(2) The vast masses of the people who are destined to be ruled.

Pareto (1848-1923) believed that every society is ruled by a minority that possesses the qualities necessary for its accession to political power. That they are the best and known as the elite. They are the successful persons who made it to top in every occupations and stratum of society. Accordingly, there is elite of lawyers, an elite of mechanics, an elite of thieves, an elite of prostitutes etc. [28]. According to Pareto, of the two classes; a higher stratum, the elite, which is divided into governing elite and non-governing elite and the second division, the lower stratum, the non-elite. Pareto according to Varma focused on governing elite which rules by mixture of force and cunning. However, Gaetano Mosca (1858-1941) who developed political elite as a political scientist believed that the classification of governments into monarchy, Aristocracy and democracy which Aristotle had initiated is futile, he posits that there was only one kind of government, namely oligarchy. "In all societies from societies that developed, even in the absent of civilisation and at the apogee of development, that two classes of

people appear. (a) A class that rules and a class that is ruled. The first class, always the minority, performs all political functions, monopolized power and enjoys the advantages that power brings, whereas the second, the majority class, is directed and controlled by the first, in a manner that is more or less legal, more less arbitrary and violent. Pareto distinguished characteristic of the elite being "the aptitude to command and exercise political power." That once the ruling class loses aptitude and the people outside the ruling elite will depose and replace the old ones. Application of the theory to the present study. Basically, as the theorist observed that every society consists of two groups, the ruling class and the ruled. Though, the theorist focused on the ruling class because of the role they play in determining the fate of every society. This is to say that the elites in the society govern the state. However, the master minders of every coup in West Africa or anywhere in the world were the elites who plot and execute coups. Of course, all the coups d'etat in West Africa were carried out by the military elites. To this end, coups promote and protect the narrow interest of the elites who wants to change the old ones and enjoy benefits that follows.

System Theory

On system theory, David Easton was the first major political scientist who developed a systematic framework on the basis of systems analysis for the study of politics. This approach was introduced in the 1950s. Basically, the underlying assumption of system theory in the study of International Relations is that there is order or system in International Relations. According to [29] nations are in constant contact in an intricate framework of relationship resulting from the process of interaction. He maintained that every nation is involved in some degree of participation in the international environment.

Application of System Theory

A system is a whole made up of different parts of elements. The parts are interrelated and constantly in interactions to achieve a result for the whole. However, in extrapolating this study with system theory, West Africa is a system under (ECOWAS) the states are the subsystems that made up the body. At this point, what affect one

McClelland in [29] posits that a nation's behaviour is a two-way activity of taking from and giving to the international environment. A process of exchange referred to as the international system. The proponent of this theory in international relations emphasizes the significance of the interaction of behaviour of states. They believed that it is possible to find out certain regular behaviour within the structure of a political organisations. Each small system (sub-system) affects the workings of the large system. The mutual relationship between two systems is called feedback which may be negative or positive.

state may also constitute a problem to another state. Yes, in any given system, one's problem is problem to all. This best explained the resurgence of coup d' et at in West Africa. It starts from one nation to another nation, the cognation is just like wild fire.

Hypotheses

Ho 1: Lack of democratic values is the major cause of resurgence of coup d' et at in West African sub-region.

Ho: 2: Provision of democratic dividends is one of the ways to end resurgence of coup d' et at in West Africa sub-region.

Research Design

The type of research design adopted by the researcher is qualitative design. [8] stated that

qualitative research is typified based on the method and or the setting of the research. It is also the other side of coin of quantitative research, they maintained that quantitative research works with variables that are value laden and value oriented and as such is not subject to empirical measurement and verification. The current study is value oriented and as such qualitative design suits the study.

Method of Data Collection

The researcher relied on secondary method of data collection. The use of books, journal, newspaper, online etc.

Method of Data Analysis

Due to the design of the study, the researcher adopted content analysis as method of data analysis. Content analysis is the act of analyzing base on how it was analyzed in other areas like books, journal, newspaper, online etc.

Factors That Promotes Resurgence Of Military Coup D' Et at In West Africa

Many scholars and analysts of politics in Africa, particularly in West African states, attribute the causes of coups in the region to the corrupt practices of political leaders. [12] suggests that when leaders engage in looting state resources to the detriment and discontent of citizens, soldiers may intervene to rectify the situation. This was exemplified when five young army officers from the Nigerian army ousted Balewa's government in January 1966, citing a long list of social ills, with corruption being at the top. Similarly, [4] argues that poor governance, mismanagement, socio-economic and political instability, and corruption have led to a leadership deficit in Africa, paving the way for military involvement in West African politics. [30] rightly notes that the Buhari regime from 1984 to 1985 in Nigeria cited corruption as the reason for intervening in the democratic government at the time. Likewise, recent coups in West African states such as Mali, Burkina Faso, Gambia, Niger, Guinea-Bissau, and Guinea have cited corruption as a major reason for their intervention. Moreover, [19] suggests that the triggers of major coups in West Africa stem from the fact that democratically elected leaders often fail to meet citizens' expectations in terms of socio-economic and political dividends of democracy,

Neocolonialism is also the worst form of imperialism. For those who practice it. It means power without responsibility, and for those who suffer from it, it means exploitation without redress.

The above assertion x-rays the dangerous impact of the foreign influence on developing nations. On one hand, [32] noted that the most commonly held and dangerous myth connected with modern empires is to exploit dependent peoples by extracting economic and fiscal profit from them. Accordingly, [33], averred that the problem of neo-colonialism, which sought to reintegrate Nigeria within the orbit of western imperialism and capitalism, was rearing its ugly head, that it manifested in the immediate post-independence period in the signing of the ill-fated Anglo-Nigeria defence agreement, which sought to make Nigeria a neo-colonial stooge of Britain. But the agreement was later abolished 1962 due to its unfavourable reaction from Nigerians. However, the impact or influence of foreign developed nations of the West in African politics is a pitiable tale. Most African states were under the influence of the west. In

prompting the military to seize the opportunity to intervene. In Burkina Faso, there were numerous protests by citizens against the leadership of their elected president. Similarly, in Niger, after the military takeover, citizens celebrated the military intervention, attributing it to the elected leader's failure to fulfill their demands and aspirations for development. Furthermore, [19] identified constitutional amendment or manipulation which seek to extend or create a precedent that allowed the leader to perpetuate their rule, stifled political competition and reducing the opportunities for fresh ideas and leadership as triggers of resurgence military coup in West Africa. This was the case in Guinea where the leader has been in power for many years. Also, the president of Cameroun, Togo and former Zambian, Gabon, Libya etc were all guilty of act. The seat tight syndrome of African leaders to great extent encourages military incursion in the region. More so, the rate of insecurity among the states in West Africa has been identified as the reasons for military takeover. For instance, the military in Mali, Niger, Burkina-Faso, Guinea-Bissau claimed that their leaders failed to provide security for the citizens. Also, the cases of Chad, Central African Republic (CDR) and other African and West African State who are currently battling insecurity were helpless in the face of insecurity including Nigeria. Other triggers of coups in West Africa and Africa at large is Foreign influence. The world powers of the west and former colonizers provide a platform of economic relations that promotes their interest to the detriment of developing African States. [31] asserted that neo-colonialism is one of the major problems facing developing nations of Africa. The former Ghana President Kwame Akromah in his word

recent coups in West Africa, namely: Mali, Niger and Burkina-Faso, the military juntas of these states accused France of sabotaging the countries. To that extent, they formed alliance against any foreign bodies trying to interfere with their domestic affairs. Also, it is on record that the west (United States) and its allies master mined the crisis in Libya, country known for peace, economic prosperity and political stability in Africa. [4] stated that world socio-economic and political realities favour mostly the developed nations thereby putting the developing nations and democratic governance in difficult surviving situation. The prevailing world economy is greatly suffocating developing nations who do not have financial power, strong institutions, conducive business environment and technological competent. The tendency of living at the mercy of the developed nations that pay no attention to the

domestic permutations of the developing nations of West Africa breeds economic hardship which

PROVISION OF DEMOCRATIC DIVIDENDS IS ONE OF THE WAYS TO END RESURGENCE OF COUP D' ETAT IN WEST AFRICA

By democracy we mean "rule of the people" but in West Africa, it is a mere exercise or periodic affair. The situation has gotten to the point where most scholars begin to see the African democracy as a different version of what is obtainable in developed nation's democracy. But beyond this, democracy has inbuilt principles and institutional mechanism for development, thereby establishing linkages between democratic practices and development in every society. With these inherent abilities, it strives to provide greatest happiness to greater number of the people in the society. However, for African states to end coup or military regime in the region, there must be a concerted effort to consolidate democratic values. Ordinarily, consolidation of democracy goes beyond civil rule or periodic elections. Any effort to consolidate democracy must stem from placing constitution above personal or sectional interests. Also, the rule of law shall reign supreme in democratic society. The human rights must be safeguarded, there must be devolution of powers among the components of the state, checks and balance, existence of political parties, periodic election devoid of violence of any kind, transparency in electoral processes, issue based campaign during the election, availability of basic social amenities, healthy socio-economic and political institutions, non-existence of nepotism and favouritism, and accountability among others. Other ways of consolidating democracy could be traced to ability of the state to be able to be independent devoid of over relying on foreign aids and influence, provision of job opportunities and maintenance of democratic value. Therefore, democracy is widely considered consolidated when several or all of these conditions were met. According to [31], democracy is rooted in several key values or norms. These feature includes: inclusiveness, public contestation, civil freedom or civil liberties, government accountability, periodic free and fair election and majority rules. In addition, [31] posits that the value and norms of democracy includes: freedom, inclusion, equality, equity, welfare, negotiation and compromise. They concluded by stating that rule of law and justice are the foundation upon which democracy is built. In line with the above, efforts to consolidate democracy in West Africa must observe these aforementioned norms and values of democracy. Nevertheless, [4] pointed out that there is a different between democracy and civil rule. They observed that most African nations only practice civil rule against democratic government. The civil rule may encourage periodic election which is aspect of democracy but democracy is deep and

may lead to massive outcry for change in government.

consolidated when the norms and values of democracy are intact. They sadly stated that only few countries in Africa can boast of some level of stability and democratic credentials which can put them on the path of democratic consolidation, while most West African States were fast relapsing into military regime. Meanwhile De Kock argued that for democratic consolidation to happen in West Africa, democracy must flourish, the economic and social needs of the citizens be guaranteed.

[34] observed that despite the regularities of elections in West African States which have opened the in-road to democracy consolidation, less progress has been made in terms of the institutionalization of liberal democracy, especially with respect to its principles, such as the rule of law, constitutionalism and political liberties. These principles ensure the meaningfulness and validity of elections in such a manner that political actors see the entire process as legitimate and binding, but also defined them in terms of the habituation to democratic rules and procedures before, during and after elections. However, undue emphasis on elections only, without recourse to the institutionalization of the democratic principles, has therefore been the cause of democratic reversal and setback in many democratic countries of West Africa. These circumstances have a great consequences for consolidation of democracy in West Africa where the vestige of military and authoritarianism past continue to undermine the institutionalization of democracy. They do not engender democratic consolidation in the absence of other liberal democratic principles such as rule of law, constitutionalism and political liberties. These principles are the foundational ethos for which the behaviour of political elites is constrained and regulated, in a manner which prevents them from seeking democratic alternatives which hinders democratic consolidation in the region.

[35] stressed that the democracy in West Africa faces risk of being trapped in the electoral fallacy, that periodic elections take place, but the democratic franchise has not become sufficiently diffused and entrenched as a mode of governance across West Africa. This observation required to be uprooted in genuine effort to entrench democratic consolidation in the region. Also, the sub-regional union like ECOWAS must work as a team, not only to safeguard political actors mandate but to ensure the consolidation of democracy within the West Africa Sub-region. In this regard, manipulating to win election is not democratic consolidation. This was the case of

Gabon, the former president organised election and won in such a manner that was questionable, the Cameroonian president only comes home to win election, the recent election in Nigeria that produced the current president Bola Ahmed Tinubu was heavily criticized both at home and

abroad. Yet, the African bodies like (AU) and (ECOWAS) did not lend their voices toward criticising the elections. This is the major reason for democratic relapse and military interventions in West Africa.

SUMMARY, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Summary of the Study

The study investigated resurgence of coup d' et at and democratic consolidation in Africa. A case study of West African. Two research question was posed to guide the study in line with objectives of the study. The study adopted quantitative research design. The researcher utilized content analysis to analyse the study. The result shows:

1. That lack of democratic norm and values are major cause of military resurgence in West Africa.
2. That one of the ways to end military resurgence in West Africa is through provision of dividends of democracy in West Africa.

CONCLUSION

The West African States should stop seen military regime as alternative to democracy. Rather, efforts should be made to inculcate democratic values and norms in states and citizens of West Africa. Also, all efforts must be tailored towards

institutionalization and consolidations of democracy to checkmate military resurgence in West Africa. Above all, the citizens must enjoy dividends of democracy and this will go a long way to discourage military coup in the region.

RECOMMENDATIONS

1. That military should mind their constitutional mandate of protecting the states of West Africa and stop interfering in democratic process.

2. That dividends of democracy must be provided to the citizens of West African States to stop military resurgence.

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