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RESURGENCE OF MILITARY COUPS IN WEST AFRICA: EFFECTS ON EFFORTS AT ESTABLISHING RESILIENT DEMOCRATIC ORDER

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Abstract

The resurgence of military coups in West Africa has raised concerns about the impact on the establishment of resilient democratic orders in the region. This paper delves into the factors contributing to the prevalence of military coups, analyzes the effects of these coups on democratic institutions, and provides suggestions to curb their recurrence. Drawing on analytical research method, the study explores two key theoretical perspectives, praetorian and conflict theories, to explain the resurgence of military coups in West Africa. By examining recent cases of military coups in Mali, Guinea, Burkina Faso, and Niger, the paper highlights the political instability, security challenges, and dissatisfaction with governance that have fueled these coups. The analysis reveals a complex interplay of factors such as weak political institutions, military independence, conflict situations, corruption, bad governance, and economic problems as underlying causes of recurring military coups in West Africa. Ultimately, this research aims to shed light on the critical issues surrounding military interventions in the region and offers insights to support the maintenance of democratic stability and governance in West Africa.

Keywords: *Resurgence, Military Coup and Democratic Order*

Introduction

The military worldwide is tasked with the constitutional responsibility of protecting and defending the territorial integrity of the country against external invasion (Adedire&Ogoma, 2014).They are equally burdened with the responsibility of responding to internal security threats that are beyond the control of the conventional police and other internal security agencies.When the military therefore departs from its constitutional roles and becomes actively involved in the politics of the country, we talk of military intervention.This direct intervention usually takes place via coup d'états (Adedire & Ogoma, 2014).

Coup d'états are classified in different ways according to the level of officers who carried out the coup and the methods by which the coup was executed.If a coup is led by combat officers, similar to the 1952 coup led by Gamal Abdel-Nasser in Egypt and the January 15, 1966 coup led by Major Kaduna Nzeogwu in Nigeria it is called "Combat Officer Coup".If on the other hand a coup is carried out by high-ranking officers of the military, who were believed to have political influence, likethe Buhari/Idiagbon 1983 coup, which overthrew the democratically elected government of Alhaji Shehu Shagari, it is called "Elite Coup" (Albrech & Eibl, 2018).Coups are also categorized on the basis of how they were carried out.On that basis, if a coup involves shedding of blood like the January 15, 1966 coup and that of February 13, 1976 Dimka coup, it is calleda bloody coup.There is also the soft or bloodless coup if it does not involve the shedding of blood(Adedire&Ogoma, 2014).

In Africa, the first military coup occurred on July 23, 1952, when a group of Egyptian army

officers removed King Farouk from power amid popular support from the masses (The New Arab, 2022).This particular coup was remarkable in Egypt's political history as it signified the transition from a monarchy to a republic. The Egyptian coup was followed by an unsuccessful coup in Sudan on August 18, 1955 (Tazoacha, 2022). This was, however, followed by another successful one on November 17, 1958, which was believed to have been orchestrated by the then Sudanese Prime Minister, Abdullah Khalil – a retired army general. The coup ushered in the military government of Ibrahim Abdoud and Ahmad Abdal Wahab (26th, September 2021, Punch Newspaper).

Less than a decade after independence, African countries began to witness military coups.These coups were blamed on the inability of African leaders to effectively govern their respective countries after the departure of the colonialists.On January 13, 1963, Emmanuel Bodjolle, GnassingbeEyadema, and KleberDadjo led a bloody coup in Togo. The plotters of this coupnot only overthrew the government of Sylvanus Olympio but also assassinated him (Tazoacha, 2022).This coup marked the first military coup in the West African sub-region.Subsequent coups across West Africa include the January 3, 1966 coup in Upper Volta (now Burkina Faso), which was blamed on widespread discontent among the people against the government of President Maurice Yameogo (Boas& Hagberg, 2016). There was also the January 15, 1966, military coup that toppled the Balewa government in Nigeria, the February 24, 1966 coup in Ghana, and the November 19, 1968 coup in Mali, among others (Boas& Hagberg, 2016).

The continuous occurrence of military coups throughout Africa, especially in West Africa, has put the advancements made toward the consolidation of democracy at risk. The security and viability of democratic institutions have been threatened by the recurrence of military interventions, even though many African countries had made the initial transition to democratic administration by 1990. This phenomenon raises concerns about the vulnerability of democratic governance throughout West Africa and constitutes a danger to the practice of democracy in the impacted countries. It is as a result of this that this paper seeks to examine the effects of the recurring military coups on efforts at building resilient democratic orders in West Africa.

Objectives

Objectives of this article are to:

a. Examine the factors contributing to the prevalence of military coups in West Africa.

b. Analyze the impacts of the resurgence of military coups on the establishment and sustenance of democratic institutions in West Africa.

c. Offer useful suggestions that will curb the menace of recurring military coups in West Africa.

Conceptual Review

A number of researches have been carried out on military coup. However, for the shake of clarity the following concept are hereby reviewed.

Resurgence

Resurgence according to Merriam-Webster Dictionary of English Language is the growth or increase that occurs after a period without growth or increase. Lattal & St. Peter (2009)

conceive resurgence as previously reinforced behaviour when an alternative source of reinforcement is terminated or decreased. This presupposes that a particular pattern of behaviour must have been put to a halt and later re-emerged probably as a result of certain reinforcing factors.

Resurgence in relation to military coup is the re-emergence of military rebellion against the political authority within the state with the aim of taking over of power after a long- or short-term break from the military regimes. Resurgence of military coup according to Odigboe'tal (2023) is an expression of the audacious re-emergence of military incursions and the preposterous dismantling of democratically elected civilian government.

Military Coup

The concept of military coup has been extensively studied and analysed in various academic literatures, as such, the concept has attracted varied explanations by the scholars. In the western world where military coup is less prominent, military rebellion is referred to as "Mutiny by the Military". This is because, rebellion acts of the military are not usually led to the overthrow of the constituted authority. However, when military coup is been mentioned, attentions are usually directed to African and Asian countries where military rebellion usually geared towards an attempt at dislodging the constituted authority. Inthis regard, military coup is explained as the removal or attempted removal of the state chief executive by the regular armed forces through the use of threat of force (Thompson, 1973). In the same vein, Powell & Thyne (2011) conceived military coup as successful or unsuccessful efforts by the military within the state apparatus in order to sieze and hold power of the current regime typically in an unconstitutional means. These definitions of the military coup presuppose that not every act of rebellion by the military can successfully dislodged the constituted regimes, some attempts may be successful, others may not. Also, military rebellion is not only directed to democratically constituted authority alone, it (the military) can also rebel against itself. In this case, we will be talking of counter coup.

Democratic Order

Any attempt at reviewing the concept of democratic order must begin with the review of the concept of democracy itself. It is by so doing that one would be able to understand what constitutes democratic order. Democracy is a form of government in which government is under the control of the people (citizens) either directly or through their elected representatives. This is why Abraham Lincoln (2004, p.91) defines democracy as the "government of the people, by the people, and for the people". However, much as this definition seems to be catchy, scholars were of the opinion that it is deficient in capturing the whole essence of democracy. According to Baradat (2000) there are two broad categories of scholars on the concept of democracy: the process scholars and the principle scholars. The process scholars see democracy as way or process of making decision on behalf of the people, while the principle scholars were of the opinion that democracy has a very important theoretical base. To them, eventhough the process is important, it is secondary to the basic intents and objectives of democracy as expressed in democratic theory.

The principle scholars were of the belief that the basic principles of modern liberal democracy include; individual is of major importance in the society, that each individual is basically equal to all other individuals regardless of their status, and that each individual has certain inalienable rights. Central to democracy is the assumption of freedom of choice that individual

has from fear or coercion and the liberty to make choice and equality before the law. Therefore, if any regime falls short of these assumptions, democratic order can be said to have been distorted.

Methodology

This study uses a qualitative research approach with secondary data analysis to better understand the resurgence of military coups in West Africa, the factors contributing to the prevalence of military coups in West Africa and the impacts of the resurgence of military coups on the establishment and sustenance of democratic institutions in West Africa, qualitative research is preferred for investigating complicated phenomena.

This paper adopted an analytical research method. Therefore, secondarysources from reputable published works such as textbooks, journals, pamphlets, newspapers, and magazines were utilized.The information gathered wereevaluated using the content analysis technique.

Theoretical Perspectives

Scholars have developed many theories of military intervention; however, two of those theories are explored in explaining reasons for the resurgence of military coups in West Africa. These theories are praetorian andconflict theories.

a. The praetorian theory

b. The Conflict Theory

The Praetorian Theory

Praetorianism means the excessive political influence of the armed forces in a country. Praetorianism according to Watkins (1934) is a situation whereby the military class of a given society exercises independent political power within the state. It suggests that praetorianism flourishes only where the weakness of political institutions encourages military independence.

The theory is found applicable to the resurgence of military coups in West Africa if the following factors are considered;

a. *Weak political institution*: praetorian theory suggests that a country with weak political institutions is more likely to experience military coups. This was the situation of most West African countries; they are vulnerable to military coups due to the institutional deficiencies in those countries. Democratic institutions in countries like Mali, Burkina Faso, Guinea, Niger, etc. were at the merciesof their military.

b. *Military Independence*: The praetorian theory also suggests that military coups are more likely to occur in a country where the military class exercises independent political power. The military has played significant roles in most of the West African countries. Theyhave for a long time held power intermittently with the civilians and have developed a taste for political power. Where democracy is being practised, the military is usually used as an instrument of oppression against the opposition, especially during the electioneering process. This has also exposed the military more to the political game of their countries. This was the situation that nearly plunged Ivory Coast into civil war in 2011.

c. *The inability of the democratic leaders to provide goodgovernance*: Democracy is about providing good governance for the people. Praetorian theory suggests that coups are likely to occur when democratic leaders fail to provide good governance for the citizens. In West Africa, democratic leaders catered less to the needs of the people including the military class. Past military coups in West Africa were blamed on the inability of the civilian government to provide good governance for the people. Guinea coup of 2021, that of Burkina Faso of 2022 and the recent July 2023 coup in Niger were all blamed on the inability of leaders of those countries to provide good leadership for their people.

The Conflict Theory

Conflict theory according to Itugbu (2023) is a sociological perspective that views society as a system of groups in conflict over limited resources. The theory argues that social order is established through the exercise of power and domination, whereby those who are wealthy and influential use any means necessary to retain their status. It emphasizes that individuals and groups within society strive to maximize their wealth and power (Hayes& Barnier, 2022). Conflict according to Edeh &Ikechukwu (2014, p. 2050) is part of human history and the military is not insulated from this history.

The democratic institution is designed in such a way that a country with ethnic diversity can be governed with every part or ethnic group having their say in their government. In West Africa, democratic institutions were unable to wield different ethnic nationalities within their countries together. This has resulted in internal conflicts in most of these countries. These conflicts have insome instances served as invitations to the military. They usually took over power with the belief that doing so would enable them to quench the flame of the conflicts and guarantee the security oflives and properties of their people.Mali coup of 2020 and that of Burkina Faso in 2022 were blamed on the inability of the deposed government to contain the conflict situations that were ravaging those countries around that time (Ayoko-Shaba, 2022).

Recent Cases of Military Coups in West Africa

Mali 2020 Military Coup

On August 18 2020, the military led by Colonel AssimiGoita launched a coup that toppled the civilian administration of President Boubacar Keita. Prior to the coup, Mali had been experiencing political instability and security challenges for several years occasioned by the presence of terrorist groups in the northern and central parts of the country. There wereseries of protests by various opposition groups and civil society organizations, especially the June 5 Movement demanding the resignation of President Keita over what they termed as the government's many failures, most specifically, corruption, insecurity and instability (Ena & Joseph, 2021).

Following the coup, President Keita was forced to resign and announced the dissolution of the National Assembly (Okon, 2021).A transition government was thereafter formed with Colonel AssimiGoita assuming the leader of the country under the National Committee for the Salvation of the People (CNSP). The coup was greeted by wider condemnations by the international community. The coup was executed at a time when the regional body ECOWAS was addressing the country's lingering conflict. The regional body in its response to the coup condemned the coup and invoked a series of sanctions on the coup plotters and their illegal government (Okon, 2021). Following the intervention by the international community, the CNSP

appointed the Former Minister of Defense Bah Ndaw as President, while Colonel Goita assumed the position of the country's Vice President with a mandate to oversee the security and defence of the country. However, on May 24, 2021, President Bah Ndaw was removed from office by the military, while Colonel Goita assumed office as interim President (Okon, 2021). The CNSP promised to return the country to democratic rule within eighteen months; however, four years after the coup, the country is still under the grip of the military junta.

Guinea 2021 Military Coup

The coup that terminated the democratic regime of President Alpha Conde was staged on September 5 2021. The coup was carried out by the Guinea Special Forces led by Colonel Mamady Doumbouya, who was a former officer in the French Foreign Legion (Roland, 2021).The coup was blamed on widespread dissatisfaction over the decision of President Conde to extend his two-term tenure through a fraudulent referendum (Ernest, 2021). It was also not unconnected from the widespread dissatisfaction over the conduct of the 2020 presidential election which was widely believed to have been rigged in favour of President Conde (Ernest, 2021).Despite the widespread dissatisfaction over President Conde's government, the coup was widely rejected by Guineans and the international communities but was supported by the main opposition party in the country (Washinton Post, 2021). The opposition political parties in Guinea not only threw their support to the military Junta but openly calledfor a transitional government of national unity and a new era of governance and economic development by the Doumbouya-led military government (Ernest, 2021).

There were coordinated calls for a return to democratic government in Guinea by local, regional and international organisations. ECOWAS played a significant role in this regard with the imposition of sanctions against the military junta and setting deadlines for them to present a reasonable and acceptable timetable for the return to civilian rule (France24, 2021). In response to this call, the military junta initially proposed a three-year transition programme but later reviewed and adjusted it to 24 months in response to calls by the international community (France24, 2021). This transition timetable has attracted varied reactions from Guineans, while some supported the time frame given by the military junta, others rejected it and demandedan immediate return to democratic rule.The pro-democracy group, 'Bloc pour l'AlternativeenGuinee (BAG) led by German exile Sadio Barry, had a virtual meeting with the European External Action Service (EEAS) Cooperation and Development representatives for Guinea and West Africa. The EEAS representatives thereafter called for the support of domestic and international actors for the transition programme of the junta without calling for the reinstatement of the deposed government (Roland, 2021).

Burkina Faso 2022 Military Coup

On January 24, 2022, eight years after the popular uprising that ousted former President Blaise Compaore, the Burkina Faso military staged another coup which resulted in the removal of President Roch Marc Christian Kabore from power. The coup was led by Lieutenant-Colonel Paul-Henri Sandaogo Damiba who later became the head of state and leader of the Patriotic Movement for Safeguard and Restoration, MPSR (Aljazeera, 2022). The military blamed the coup on the failure of the government of former President Kabore to halt the insurgency by the Jihadist groups who were terrorizing the northern part of the country (Augustus, 2022). Also, there was serious discontent within the military over the inability of Kabore's governmentto provide them with the logistics required to fight the insurgent groups, which resulted in fatal loss within the military. The military base Inata was reported to have run out of food supply weeks

before they were attacked by an armed group (Augustus, 2022).

The coup was greeted by wide condemnation by the international community. The United Nations Secretary-General, Antonio Guterres expressed deep concern about the situation in the country and condemned any attempt to seize power by force or arm (UN News, 2022). African Union Chairperson equally condemned the coup attempt against the democratically elected government (Aljazeera, 2022). The regional bloc, ECOWAS in its reaction announced the suspension of Burkina Faso from the regional body and threatened the country with military intervention if democratic order is not restored. In response to the condemnations by the international community, the military leader, Damiba promised to return the country to democratic rule when the security situation in the country improves (Reuters, 2022). Damiba's government barely settled down for business when a counter-coup was staged.

On September 30, 2022, the military junta led by Captain Ibrahim Traore staged a counter-coup which terminated the Damiba's government. The coup was blamed on the inability of Damiba's led military government to address the deteriorating security situation of the country. This was confirmed by the statement credited to the coup leader, Traore, where he was reported to have said that they had tried to persuade Damiba to refocus the transition on the security question and that Damiba's actions gradually convinced them that his ambitions were diverting away from what they have set out to do (Reuters, 2022).

On the return of the country to democratic rule, Traore pledged to abide by the transition agreement his predecessor had with ECOWAS leaders. He promised to conduct the transitional elections in July 2024 (Africannews, 2022). However, Traore actions, especially the dismissal of the transitional government, and the suspension of the legislature and constitution have raised concerns about his genuine commitment to democratic transition.

Niger 2023 Military Coup

On July 26 2023, the Nigerien military headed by Commander of the Presidential Guard, General Abdourahamane Tchiani staged a coup which ousted the civilian regime of President Mohammed Bazoum. The landlocked country had witnessed a series of successful and unsuccessful military coups which have shaken thesocio-political scape of the country in the past. In fact, the swearing-in of President Bazoum in April 2021 marked the first transfer of power between two civilian regimes since the country's Independence in 1960 (Gilles, 2023). The junta after the success of the coup announced the suspension of all democratic orders including the Constitution, and President Bazoum and some key government functionaries were placed under arrest by the military (Acled, 2023).

Prior to the coup, there had been grown discontent within the military hierarchy in the country and General Tchiani who was the leader of the junta that staged the coup was rumoured to have in his capacity as the Commander of the Presidential Guardsuccessfully defended the regime of former President Muhammed Issoufou and that of President Bazoum against numerous coups attempts with the latest one being the coup attempt carried out two days to the inauguration of President Bazoum in 2021 (Acled, 2023). Asidethe grown discontent within the military, the July 2023 coupwas also blamed on the unabated worsening security situation in some parts of the country occasioned by the activities of the terrorist groups operating in the Sahel region (Mohammed, 2023). In addition to the unabated worsening security situation in Niger, the military junta equally cited the worsening economic outlook of Niger as one of the factors responsible for the coup.Niger was rated as one ofthe poor economies in Africa with a

per capita income of $533 in the year 2022 (The Republic, 2023).

The coup was greeted with condemnations by the international community. The Economic Community of West African States, ECOWAS, issued an ultimatum to the coup leaders, threatening military intervention if the deposed President is not returned to power (Gilles, 2023). This was asideother sanctions the international community placed on the country. In response to the condemnations by the international community and to douse the grown tension created by the coup within the country, the coup leader, General Tchiani in a televisedbroadcast on August 20 2023 announced athree-year transition programme and inclusive dialogue (Gilles, 2023). The three-year transition programme was however rejected by the regional bodies. ECOWAS called for immediate and unconditional reinstatement of the deposed President (Gilles, 2023). The coup has however created divisionswithin the country with certain section of people supporting the military junta, seeing the coup asa step toward building a secured and economically viable country, while other section rejected the coup claiming that the country had witnessed military regimes longer than civilian regimes without any remarkable improvement.

Causesof Recurring Military Coupsin West Africa

The following factors were found to be responsible for recent cases of military coups in West Africa.:

Insecurity: Immediately afterthe return to democratic rule, nearly all the West African countries were engulfed in one form of crisis or the other. Some of these crises emanated from the conduct of elections and decisions of certain political leaders to perpetuate themselves in power through fraudulent altercationsto the provisions of the constitutions of their countries. The decision of Former President Alpha Conde to extend his two-term tenure through fraudulent amendment of Guinea's constitution and the crisis that engulfed the country after the election that paved the way for his third term served as an invitation to the military. Also, after the return to democratic rule, the wave of terrorism that was ravaging the world hit West Africa, especially the Sahel region. The activities of the terrorist groups did not onlyresulted inthe loss of many lives but also created serious humanitarian crises in the region. The Global Terrorism Index Report (2023) put Burkina Faso as the second most terrorized country in its global rating, while Mali and Niger were listed 4 and 10 respectively. In Mali for instance, the security situation of the country worsened especially in the northern part in 2012 as a result of the activities of the rebel group who accused the government of not showing serious commitment to the development of the northern part of the country (Gorman, 2023). The insecurity situation of the country was exacerbated further when the Jihadists and fighters who returned from Libya capitalized on the fragile security situation in the country to launch their terrorism campaigns (Gorman, 2022).

In the same vein, nearly 40% of the Burkina Faso land mass was reported to have been in control of the armed groups before the coup that ousted President Kabore (Augustus, 2022). The situation was the same in Niger as the country was plagued with insecurity and President Bazoum was faulted over his inability to decisively tackle the situation. Therefore, the inability of the civilian regimes in West Africa to nip the insecurities in the bud angered the military and led to the displacement of civilian regimes in countries like Mali, Burkina Faso and Niger.

Corruption and Bad Governance:Since the return to democratic rule, West African leaders have not lived up to the expectations of their people in terms of good governance, rather, they saw

their emergence in the corridor of power as an opportunity to enrich themselves through fraudulent means. So, the military saw thecoup as the only way through which they could intervene to salvage the situation and rid their countries of bad governments and corrupt leaders.

Economic Problem: Economic difficulties such as poverty, unemployment, inflation and lack of economic opportunities have contributed to social unrest in West Africa. In the recent global GDP rating released by the World Bank, out of 177 countries rated, Niger Republic was rated 132, while Mali and Burkina Faso were rated 119 and 117 respectively (Worldometer, 2023). Asidethe fact that these countries were rated low economically, their economies show little or no signs of improvement (Worldometer, 2023). The civilian leaders who are expected to be the best manager of resources, both human and material, lack the ability to effectively address these worsening economic situationsand were instead lootedthe meagre available resources to the detriment of the wellbeing of their people. These economic woes as resulted in crises in some of these countries. The Tureg uprising and economic crisis led to the 2012 coup in Mali and its persistence reinvited the military in 2021 (Lecocq & Raffesting, 2015).The inability of civilian leaders to effectively harness the economic potentials of their countries serves as an invitations to the military juntas.

Precedent of Coups and External factor: History they say replete, the recent upsurge of coups in West Africa is also blamed on the past history of military coups in the region. External factors also contributed to the growing rate of military coups. Recent coups in Mali, Burkina Faso and Niger were all said to have been influenced by Russia through the Wagner group, a private security firm based in Russia. The protest by the opposition that preceded the August 2020 coup in Mali was a result of misinformation by a pro-Russian group which disparaged the government of President Boubacar Keita (Joseph & Daniel, 2021). The protest was used as one of the justifications for the coup by the military. More so, there were reports that some of the leaders of the military juntas that plotted the coups received pieces of training in the US, Russia, France and Germany Prior to the coup (PSC Insight, 2023). In fact, Colonel Mamady Doumbouya was alleged to have led the 2021 coup in Guinea while receiving military training in the US (PSC Insight, 2023).

Effects on Democratic Institutions

In all four countries that recently experienced military coups in West Africa, the military came into power with the promise to salvage the situations of their countries and better the lots of their people. However, their emergence via forceful seizure of power has had devastating effects on democratic institutions in these countries in the following ways.

Undermining of Democratic Values: Military rule has undermined democratic principles, such as the rule of law, respect for human rights, and free and fair elections which democracy is known for and they imposed control restrictedcivil liberties and diminished democratic values that were in place before the coups.

Political Instability: The resurgence of military coups in West Africa has resulted in political instabilities in those countries. Military coups have also resulted in counter coups leaving the people in the cloud as to who truly their leaders are. There have been a series of protests in the Niger Republic since the coup. While some protesters expressed their anger against the actions of the military junta, others expressed their support for the military calling for the suspension of France's military operation in the country (Reuters, 2023).

Escalation of Insecurity: The military often blamed the seizure of power on the inability of civilian governments to address the security challenge facing their countries. Experiences from countries that recently recorded military coups have shown that the military did not fail to address the security challenges facing their countries but have ended up compounding the situations as a result of the crises that engulfedaftermath of the coups. There was counter blame by the military itself in Burkina Faso especially by the of the counter-coup plotter, Ibrahim Traore, over the inability of Damiba's government to address the security situation of Burkina Faso which was the basis upon which the preceding civilian government was toppled.

International Isolation: Recent military coups in West Africa have attracted international condemnation and isolation. Many regional and international organizations, as well as individual countries, have expressed strong disapproval of the coups, and this has led to economic sanctions, diplomatic isolation and loss of international aids and supportsagainst the countries under military rule. The withdrawal of aids and supports by donor organisations has further impacted negatively on the lives of citizens of those countries. Leading the pact of international isolation is the regional bloc, ECOWAS. The four countries that recently experienced military coups were not only suspended by the regional body but were also threatened with military intervention should democratic orders not return immediately. In reaction to the threat by ECOWAS, Mali Niger and Burkina Faso recently announced the withdrawal of their membership from the regional body (Human Right Watch, 2024).

Suppression of Oppositions and Dissent Views: Military regimes are reputed for the suppression of opposition and dissent views. Military coups in these countries have resulted in unwarranted arrests, intimidations and persecutions of perceived enemies, nuzzling of the media and restrictions of the activities of civil society organizations.In Mali for instance, the Minister of Territorial Administration recently ordered the dissolution ofthe students association, "LÁssociation des Ele'ves et Etudiants du Mali" (Human Rights Watch, 2024), amid other sanctions aimed at silencing the opposition.

Conclusion and

This study has examined the effects of the resurgence of military coups on efforts at establishing a resilience democratic order in West Africa. Findings from the study revealed that factors such as insecurity, corruption bad government poor economic outlook and external influence are all accounted for the recent military coups in West Africa.

From the study, it was revealed that coup d'état is detrimental to the institutionalization of democratic norms in West Africa and has resulted in political instabilities in the affected countries. The insecurity that was part of the excuses used by the military to justify the coups became worse in the affected countries despite having military regimes in place. These are in addition to the isolation and sanctions imposed by the international community on the affected countries.

Therefore, to forestall the incessant cases of military coups in West Africa the following recommendations were suggested.

a. Efforts should be made by West African countries to address insecurity plaguing the region. Increased regional cooperation in the area of security should be encouraged, in addition to strengthening the security architectures of various West African countries to improve their abilities to respond to security threats from within and outside. More so, the international community should also assist West African

countries in the area of security by providing them with the needed arms and ammunitions required to prosecute anti-terrorism campaigns. Doing so will go a long way in strengthening democratic institutions in the region as democracy thrives best in an atmosphere of peace and tranquility.

b. Corruption is a cankerworm which has eaten deep into the fabric of most West African countries. Efforts should be made locally by these countries to institutionalise strong anti-corruption campaigns. These campaigns must be adequately backed by relevant laws and perpetrators must be made to face severe sanctions in order to serve as deterrents to others. In addition to this, democratic institutions should also be strengthened to ensure good governance.

c. Socioeconomic disparities should be addressed. This involves tackling economic problems such as poverty, unemployment and social inequality. Various West African countries should create enabling environments that will engender economic growth and development. The regional economic bloc, ECOWAS should be alive to its core mandate by engendering economic integration within the region. This will go a long way in ensuring regional economic development.

d. Finally, there should be international collaboration against anti-democratic tendencies. Autocratic regimes should be discouraged globally and any regime that climbs unto power through undemocratic means should be denied recognition by the international community.

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