

Why they struck: Rethinking the *impetus agitat* of recent surge of military coups in sub-Saharan Africa

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Abstract:

This study aims to provide an analysis of the recent surge of military coups in Africa, by examining the implicit factors, patterns, and implications of these coups to the region. It seeks to deepen the understanding of this phenomenon, through an extensive review of quantitative and qualitative historical data and other related literatures. The study employed an *ex post facto* research design and a documentary research approach to generate secondary data. It then used graphs, tables, and pictures to descriptively analyze the data obtained from secondary sources, using the "frustration-aggression theory" as a framework for interpretation and discussion of the findings. The study identifies problematic electoral process as an underlying factor that has contributed to the increase in military coups across Africa. Further findings also indicate that African economic conditions are also a significant factor in the current military interventions. This account maps into the conversation on the motivation for the increasing coup d'états in African post colonial milieu

Key Words: Democracy, Military Resurgences, Election Management, African economy, Political Elites

Introduction

The stability of democratic regimes in Sub-Saharan Africa has been under scrutiny due to an unsettling surge in military takeovers in the region in recent times. These military interventions, characterized by the violent overthrow of democratically elected governments, have had a tremendous impact on the governance, democracy, and peace in the area. Democracy has been adjudged as the only tested alternative to government by coercion by many countries in Europe, America, Asia, Africa, including Australia. Despite countless postulations associated to democracy, the concept could be construed as a form of governance in which the people directly or indirectly exercise their power of election through representatives chosen by the people regularly (Appadorai, 2004). Understanding the factors causing this rise in coups d'états is necessary to develop effective policies to address the root causes and advance democratic principles throughout Sub-Saharan Africa. The purpose of this

study, therefore, is to investigate the fundamental causes of this trend and its various effects on democratic governance.

In the past decade or so, there have been substantial positive developments toward democracy in Africa (Cilliers, 2016 Bassey, & Udoudom, 2018). This notwithstanding, issues associated with poor handling of intractable conflict arising from democratic processes appear to have found expression in the current upsurge in military coups (Sombatpoonsiri, 2017). This includes politicians using voter suppression, electoral fraud, and political intimidation to steal the mandates of the people during general elections (cf. Burke, 2023; Human Rights Watch, HRW, 2020). Conversely, the positive aspects encompass the successful 2021 presidential election in the Gambia, the 2021 transition of the ruling party in Zambia, and the first-ever democratic handovers of power in Niger 2020/2021 along with Seychelles 2020 (Kittichaisaree, 2023). Afrobarometer (2023) notes that this includes the depose of long-standing autocrats in Sudan and Zimbabwe, as well as the February 2020 ruling by Malawi's Constitutional Court to nullify the outcomes of the tainted 2019 presidential election and call for fresh elections. With this development, the democratization process in these African nations appeared to have entered a new phase. Nonetheless, African leaders have persisted in manipulating the electoral process and constitutional provisions to support "executive coup d'état" – a term used here to describe a variety of political misdeeds, such as some incumbent presidents elongation of tenures and massive electoral fraud – despite the continent's democratic growth and spread (Adibe, 2023).

The international community, which constantly witnesses the "executive coup d'état" while monitoring the electoral procedures, typically, takes little to no action in response to these criminal activities, and so are the security personnel tasked with upholding order (cf. HRW, 2020; Henry, 2017). Jibrin Ibrahim specifically emphasized how the inaction of ECOWAS and other regional election monitors in the face of "executive coups" across Africa has fuelled voter discontent and led to various social upheavals, including acts of civil disobedience in the area (Jibrin 2022). After changing their countries' constitutions to allow for more than two terms in office, some African political figures, including Mamadou Tandja of Niger, Abdoulaye Wade of Senegal, and Alpha Condé of Guinea, were forcibly removed from office as president by the military (Adibe, 2023). It seems that as a result of these election administrative issues, sporadic military takeovers started to occur and have persisted in endangering the continuation and strengthening of democracy in certain African nations. It seems that the global anti-coup standard of the recent past, which made military coups illegal, hasn't deterred military juntas in Africa from seizing democratic power in their nations. Many African states are still on the verge of returning to military autocracy if immediate action is not taken to strengthen democracy in the region, as evidenced by the coups that occurred in Sudan, Ethiopia, the Central African Republic, Mali, Burkina Faso, Niger, Gabon, and Guinea-Bissau and Gambia (Odigbo, et al., 2023)

Available data indicates that nearly 20 percent of African countries have succumbed to military coups since 2013 (Siegle, 2021), Afrobarometer's 2019/2021 study of 34 African countries, conducted in light of these developments, found that although some Africans still think elections are the best way to choose their leaders, popular support for elections has weakened and that only a small minority believes elections produce true representative and accountable leadership (M'Cormack-Hale & Dome, 2022). Based on that, every attempt is made by politicians on both sides of the aisle to seize state power by any means necessary, as the majority of Africans no longer trust election results to select authentic representatives of the people. These tendencies no doubt transform political competition in Africa into something that ultimately has a far different texture than it ought to. Elections in Africa are occasionally perceived as platforms for politicians who have risen to positions of authority to undermine democratic institutions in an effort to strengthen their hold on power (Onyulo,

2017). Some Africans have become convinced by this political behaviour that a military takeover may be their last chance for social justice, which explains their celebrations during a military takeover (Mimault & Ndiaga, 2022; Melpy, 2023). The aforesaid reaction contrasts the informed propositions on coup d'états.

Dominant discourse on the internal factors and variables that contribute to military coups in Africa have mostly concentrated on issues like cultural pluralism, soldiers' avarice, bad governance, corruption, poor economic conditions, and low-income levels (Barka, & Ncube 2012; Harkness, 2014; Fombad, Fiseha, & Steytler, 2023). The foreign influences on change of government through coup d'état in Africa, as contended by concerned scholars some decades ago have waned considerably (cf. Wells, 1974; Tardoff, 1993). However, even though, Barka and Ncube (2012), Fombad, Fiseha, and Steytler, (2023) listed a few internal elements as the reasons for military coups in Africa, such discussions have not been convincingly presented. Furthermore, a few of the previously mentioned internal causes are mostly considered as though they are exclusive to Africa and do not exist elsewhere (cf.). The study examined how poor governance and election management are negotiated in the increasing cases of military take-over of government in Africa. As the findings of this study suggests, the frustrations associated with electoral outcomes and governance in African democratic nations are framing the increasing coup d'état in the continents.

Materials and Methods

This exploratory study analyzed the recent upsurge in the cases of military takeovers in sub-Saharan Africa using an ex-post factor research method. An ex post facto design in the context of studying military coups would entail examining past information, occurrences, and results in order to pinpoint the causes of coups and comprehend how they affect long-term democratic systems. After the events have transpired in selected African nations, the relationships between the variables under observation are investigated. This is done in accordance with the design to observe the behavioural trends and patterns following the introduction of the independent variable. First, we identified the variables – those aspects of the research that vary depending on the situation –. The current election management system and the trajectory of economic history in Africa referred to as the "x variables" in this design, are the variables under investigation to demonstrate their impact on the dependent variable. Put differently, the dependent variables (the military resurgences), would reveal any consequence arising from the relationship. The Y variable is another name for this.

This study's data is drawn from secondary sources. This method offers details on the research area that would have been difficult to obtain because of its size and expense, which also reduced the appeal of the self-report method. As will be specifically stated below, however, data collected from different secondary sources is combined during analysis to follow our research plan. This kind of data collecting combined with qualitative analysis techniques made it easier to see and comprehend the complex reality of a given situation as well as any potential consequences of the quantitative data. Both qualitative and quantitative methods of data analysis were employed in this exploratory study to uncover patterns, concepts, meanings, and themes as they are without any alteration. In several countries, incident reports are inconsistent and somewhat reliable specifically, there is a dearth of precise data regarding death tolls from electoral violence. Political manipulation of the media is a possibility for that (Wojtasik, 2019). However, despite these limitations, every effort was taken to collect data for this research from several sources. As mentioned above, we employed a mixed-method approach to data analysis in order to minimize validity issues. For example, the International Monetary Fund (IMF), Microtrend, the Nigeria Bureau of Statistics (NBS), the World Bank, and other relevant sources provided statistical data and visual proof on election management, the state of the economy, and the military insurgency

as depicted below. The information was meticulously gathered, arranged into tables and graphs, and then subjected to descriptive analysis, (content analysis).

Theoretical Framework

The frustration-aggression theory, proposed by Dollard, Doob, Miller, Mowrer, and Sears in 1939, was employed in explaining the underlying contradictions responsible for the recent coups in West Africa. The theory suggests that frustration, resulting from the blocking of an individual's goals or desires, can lead to aggression (Dollard et al, 1939; Breuer & Elson, 2017). The theory's central claim depicts an unwavering correlation between aggression and frustration – that is when people or groups use aggressive or violent means to express their dissatisfaction especially when they are unable to achieve their desired outcomes through legal means (Berkowitz, 1983; Breuer & Elson, 2017). The proponents assume that frustration is the root cause of hostility in any culture. They explain the theory of frustration-aggression as a retaliatory action against the perceived source of frustration (Zillmann & Cantor, 1976). Through the application of the frustration-aggression theory to the sub-Saharan African context, we may investigate the ways in which diverse causes contribute to the frustration that distinct social groups experience. Though our focus here is on political and economic conditions, other elements that might cause significant anger among citizens include political exclusion, ethnic tensions, and corruption. This study makes a case that frustration-aggression theory fits the impetus for the increasing cases of coup d'états in Sub-saharan Africa

In other words, the theory holds that the current political and economic grievances of the African people provide the most adequate empirical explanation for the widespread revival of military coups in Sub-Saharan Africa. Although these resentments take many different forms, it is impossible to ignore the extent of political violence in Africa as the continent's political elite routinely violates both human and political rights when holding elections (Abe, 2023; Yusuf, 2023). In addition, there are increasing reports of arbitrary detentions, kidnappings, and threats against political opponents throughout Africa (Takadji, 2022). Thus, the electorates have grown increasingly disenchanted with periodic elections as a means of ensuring that their votes are fairly represented during transition exercises due to the undemocratic activities of the privileged political class in Africa (M'Cormack-Hale & Dome, 2022). As a result, the majority of Africans have grown to despise elections internally and refrain from participating in them altogether. They even welcome the military's interference whenever it occurs. In Mali, Guinea, Burkina Faso, and certain other African countries like Chad and Sudan, for example, citizens express their frustration by calling for military intervention (Odigbo, Ezekwelu, & Okeke, 2023), and some openly applaud military incursions into political democracy in Africa (Mimault & Ndiaga, 2022; Melpy, 2023).

We can better understand the reasons behind the acts and motivations of the leaders of military coups in Sub-Saharan Africa as well as the larger African populace in terms of the effect of frustration in these contexts. It sheds light on the underlying frustrations in Africa as well as the perceived power disparities that push people to take extreme measures in an attempt to bring about political change.

Election Management Style and military resurgence in Sub-Sahara Africa

African post-colonial politics, except for a few nations, have remained zero-sum and violent. Although, evidence of military avarice had been reported (see Coke, 2018; Acho & Tachamm, 2023), the implicit motivation of military takeover of government is connected to political crises and corrupt administrations. African political actors used all available measures to gain and hold onto power (see Ake, 2003; Clapham, 2011). The majority of the countries in the continent eventually descend into a near-anarchic situation that seeks the military to restore order as a result of this power-mongering, especially during election seasons. This is because, often working against the opposition parties, conventional domestic security agents seemed to be caught in the middle of the crisis (see Figure 1). During election seasons, the majority of African security officers typically serve as tools for political elites or the ruling party to manipulate elections (Mbah & Obi, 2014; Inokaba & Okoro, 2020). This is manifested in the fierce and chaotic political rivalry amid an ideological vacuum and a growing wave of disillusionment stemming from the African population's dashed hopes for a better life.

Figure 1: Democratic Republic of Congo Police chase supporters of opposition Martin Fayulu during a demonstration in Kinshasa,



Source: Reuters (2023)

The pervasive ideological vacuum in African politics was manifested in the politicians' frequent party deflation, or what some academics referred to as "cross-carpeting" (Aleyomi, 2013; Edet, 2017; Okorie, 2021). This is on top of the reality that the major political elites, who became completely estranged from the populace, are depending more and more on violence and manipulation to win elections. To do so, they are in a state of perpetual conflict with both non-party members and certain factions within their own ranks. Occasionally, this requires some political elites to migrate to another party in order to defuse the situation or avert a federal investigation (Ake, 2003; Norris, 2005; Debrah & Gyimah-Boadi, 2005; Debrah, 2014). These writers draw attention to the fact that a large number of African political parties lack internal democracy. Because of the ongoing friction created by their disregard for the fundamental principles of political democracy, which are outlined in both their party's bylaws and the constitutions of their respective countries, they are occasionally uncomfortable. Furthermore, because the majority of African political parties are run by individuals who reject popular democracy, party financiers may control their agendas due to a lack of public funding (Debrah, 2014).

Figure 2: Armed thugs of the ruling party scattering election materials in the opposition's stronghold in Nigeria



Source Abe, (2023)

Consequently, if these political parties do not conduct their internal business and their public image democratically, they will not be able to carry out their democratic duties. In such a socio-political climate, political legitimacy has grown to be a major problem that undercuts the need for national integration, which is essential for socio-political progress. To address the wave of public unhappiness that results from their incompetent leadership and low expectations, the emerging leaders and their political parties enforce political conformity by compulsion and intimidation, particularly during election seasons (see Figure 2). African political leaders typically utilize coercion to stifle the public's political vocalizations and that of the opposition parties, which are now discouraged by the current government's lack of success. Therefore, while they work toward political positions to right the wrongs, they feel obligated to advocate for good governance and the elimination of corruption in their respective states (Campbell, 2016; Takadji, 2022; Yusuf, 2023). In addition, the Human Rights Watch HRW, as cited in Yusuf (2023), also, claimed that there is an increase in political violence in Africa along with an increase in the number of arbitrary arrests, kidnappings, and threats against political opponents. In addition to that are gross human rights violations, most notably the right to peaceful protest during election season (Burke, 2020). According to Yusuf (2023), Tomas Fessy further contended that the political opposition parties in Africa, along with their adherents, have experienced significant limitations on their freedoms of speech, association, peaceful assembly, and mobility. While some well-known political party leaders and officials of the opposition parties have been arrested and detained (see figures 3, 4, and 5), sometimes by the intelligence services, their rights to due process are completely ignored as peaceful protests have either been violently put down by the security forces, banned, or prevented from taking place.

Figure 3: Police crackdown on post-election protesters in Conakry Guinea, several killed and many injured.



Source: Anadolu (2020)

It is impossible to overlook the widespread discontent and corruption among African leaders as a contributing element to military resurgences in the area, particularly when considering the significance of political democracy and good governance for long-term development. The African political class's propensity to usurp public funds and accumulate private fortune through state authority served to exacerbate political tensions in the region and feed popular unrest. These inclinations intensify the already intense political rivalry in the area. Already, there have been instances of notable African politicians having their hands in the cookie jar.

Figure 4: Burkina Faso riot police brutalize protesters against president's plan to extend his rule after 27 years in Ouagadougou.



Source: The Japan Times (2014).

For example, prominent politicians and leaders in South Africa have been detained for corruption in a governmental probe (Pinto, 2020). She insisted that the "Lumumba Papers" of the Democratic Republic of the Congo showed that their national election commission received large donations in 2016 to rig election results. In addition, the former chief of staff of the president was found guilty of embezzling more than \$48 million. Before leaving the country, Yahya Jammeh, the former president of Gambia, is also accused of stealing about \$1 billion (Pegg, 2019). The heinous deed appears to affect every position of authority on the continent, not just African presidents.

Figure 5; Supporters of Ugandan opposition presidential candidate Bobi Wine take cover as he is arrested in Luuka with tear gas

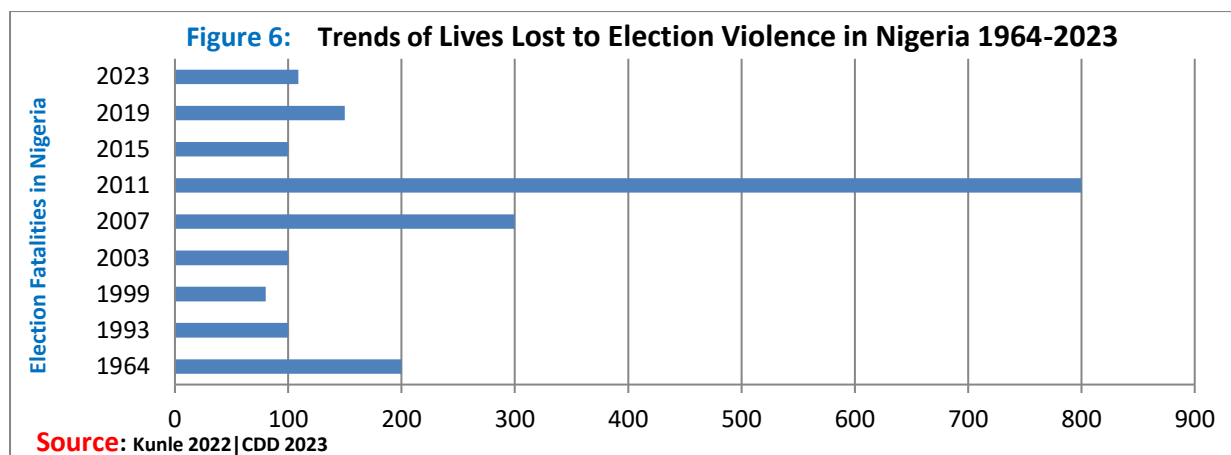


Source: Jacinto 2020

A former minister of transportation in Angola received a 14-year prison sentence for embezzling public funds and engaging in corruption. When working as a banker Thomson Mpinganjira was detained in Malawi on suspicion of trying to buy off judges (Pinto, 2020). HEDA Resource Center Abuja hosted an international conference where it was disclosed that local and foreign collaborators steal approximately \$100 billion, or roughly 25% of Africa's GDP, annually from the continent (Olorok, 2023). According to the reports, the pilfered money would be sufficient to turn Africa, which is currently beset by famine, poverty, and starvation, into one of the most beautiful continents in a year, complete with social security, decent roads, and access to healthcare and education for its hordes of inhabitants. Furthermore, according to reports from the Brookings Institute cited in Pinto (2020), between 1980 and 2018, official development assistance and foreign direct investment to sub-Saharan Africa totalled \$2 trillion. In contrast, illicit financial outflows from the region totalled \$1.2 trillion, with South Africa, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Nigeria, and Ethiopia being the top sources of outflows. The majority of African politicians, who have been economically disenfranchised by the discriminatory economic policies of the emerging opposition and ethnic African leaders, have been linked to this propensity along with greed and a weak material base. However, other opposition/ethnic groups and the political class, who are excluded from the benefits of the misappropriations, do not always embrace them. It merely serves to heighten the political rivalry for public office and, on some occasions, the number of election-related deaths.

African communities are run by complex social structures that centre on the family, the clan, the tribe, and, in the end, a confederation of groups sharing linguistic, cultural, and ethnic traits. The African political elites typically take advantage of these special characteristics during elections to gain power by politicizing national, ethnic, and communal formations (Ake, 2003). Once in power, they then manipulate these loyalties through arbitrary political appointments and promises of appointments. This is an effort to minimize the possible class divide inside the political society that could isolate and destroy these cronies and their supporters. The fact that ethnic identification affects not only politics but also an organization's ability to develop itself sustainably from within makes it a particularly pressing issue for the continent. In any case, it had a significant impact on the disarticulation of the democratic ideal and the deterioration of internal unity in African political life. By appealing to regional, ethnic, and religious allegiances in an attempt to forge a common cause via mutual identification, they undermined the support of the populace that would have held

their actions accountable. However, they also do it at tremendous personal expense to themselves, for they not only sow discord within their own party but also strong antiparty sentiment and high exclusivity in party affairs (Ake, 2003; Manning 2005). Restricted politics give rise to cynicism, which raises the price of political power and the level of political competition that has continued to increase the death toll in every African election season (Anadolu 2020; CDD, 2023). In Nigeria alone, election violence claimed 1,939 lives between 1960 and 2023; the 2011 general election saw the greatest number of casualties (see Figure 6). These inclinations according to this study only serve to encourage the soldiers, who are accustomed to chaotic and violent environments, to get involved in the region's politics.



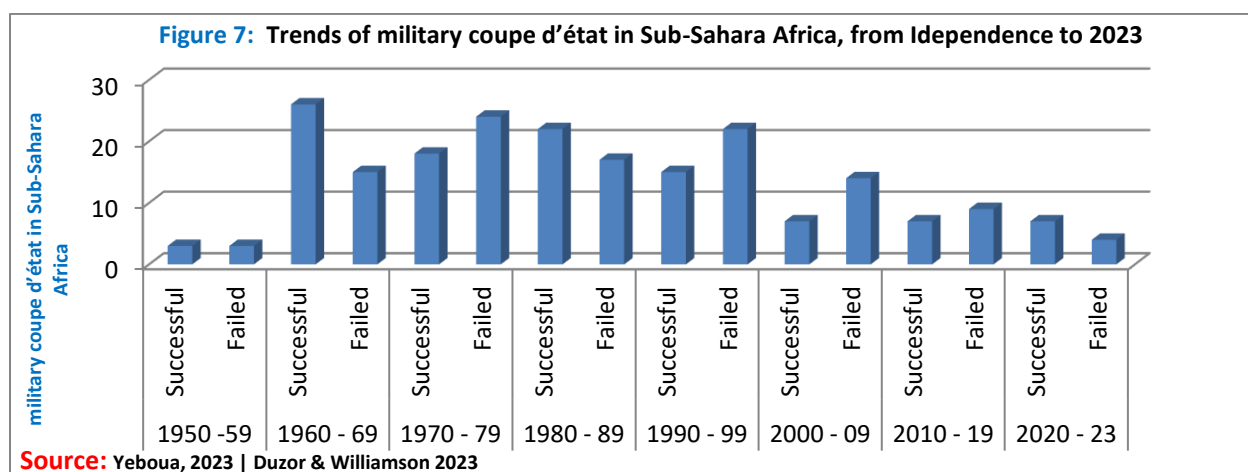
Manning (2005) highlights this tendency further, characterizing African political parties as overly ethnically focused and without an organic connection to the populace. Because of this, without considering the long-term effects have frequently turned to organizing individuals along different lines, such as ethnic, regional, and religious ties. He claimed that most African political parties lacked institutional ability and had weak organizational strength. Similar to the colonial era, their decision-making procedures are unstructured and power is frequently individualized. Nevertheless, this time they are individualized in the form of the party leadership and a handful of their ethnic allies, who typically have enough cash amassed from the abuse of public funds to finance the party's whole campaign (NIMD 2004; Wanjohi, 2003).

In order to redefine the socio-economic and political relationship if gained, political power becomes more valuable and the level of political competition rises as a result of the opposition parties' difficulty in tolerating these dispositions. As a result, political competition now bears a resemblance to warfare as all parties want to seize control of the state power through any means necessary, including the use of violence as seen in the figures above. By doing this, they unavoidably cleared the path for the military, who are experts in using violence, to take the lead and climb into politics. Put differently, contrary to what some have said, the military coups that have occurred in African political democracies, according to studies, are not always the result of the military leaders' avarice (Barka & Ncube, 2012). It is evident from the available data that the African political elites have been firmly establishing a political reality through their aggressive and bellicose quest for state power, which is essentially formalized by the military intrusion into African political democracy. In other words, the military's engagement in the political democracy of the continent was neither motivated by cultural pluralism nor military avarice. Instead, the military was implicitly invited into the African political environment due to the statist nature of African nations, the fierce competitive character of African elections, and the winner-take-all nature of African politics, which increased the intensity of stakeholder struggles for state power.

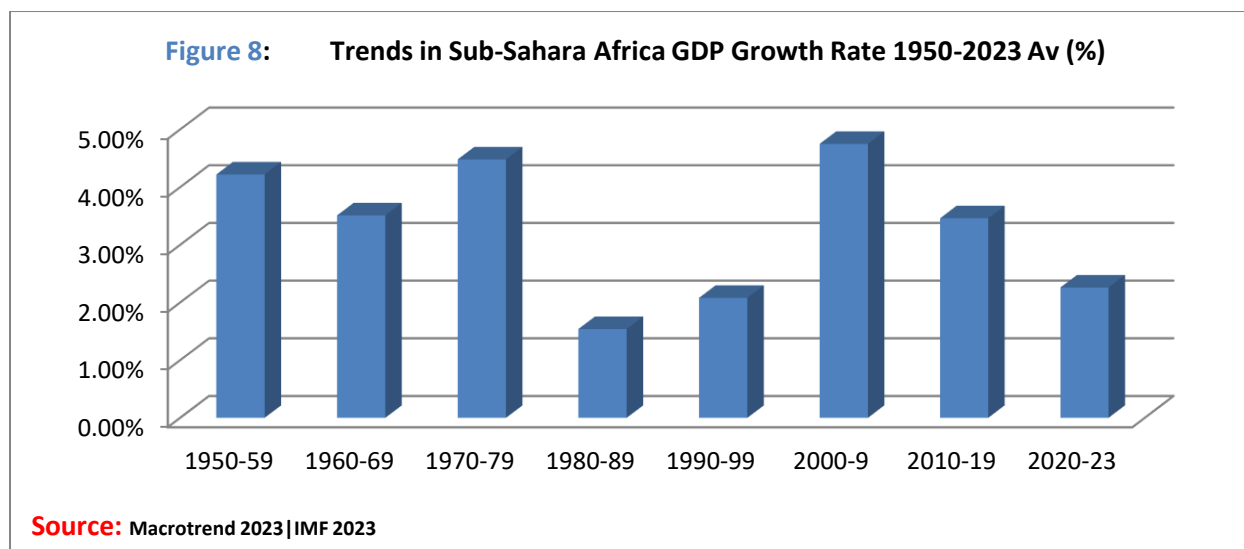
Sub-Sahara African Economy and the Military Intervention

The military was forced to take control in order to keep the region afloat since civilian administrations in Africa were unable to lead their countries in a way that would guarantee economic growth. This, at the very least, gave the military legitimacy to intervene in politics. It should come as no surprise that these same elements have historically led the African people to embrace military juntas as their political favourites whenever they struck (Mimault & Ndiaga, 2022; Melly, 2023). The above-explained electoral system in many African countries leads to major inefficiencies in government, particularly in the area of nation-building.

More significantly, as election victories take precedence over national development, it was unable to mobilise the potential of African nations for sustainable economic development (Ake, 2023; Burke, 2020; Yusuf, 2023). The government of emerging leaders is typically more concerned with strategies to secure success for their political parties in the upcoming election than with promoting macroeconomic stability, given the fierce and violent political struggle in the African electoral process as described above.



Alternatively, work toward laws that will guarantee property preservation and a prosperous economic development strategy for future generations. For both good and bad reasons, Sub-Saharan Africa's economic performance in the 1980s was comparatively slow (see Figure 8), owing to poor governance when compared to other developing nations. This led to increased scepticism towards the African governments' development strategies, hence, the number of successful coup d'états in the region increased to 22 from 39 attempts, a notable increase from the 18 successful attempts from 42 attempts recorded in the previous decade (see figure 7). Regarding the cumulative nature of coup d'état in the region, as shown in the data above, the time dimension in Sub-Saharan Africa from the days of independence to the present is relevant. There is a clear pattern in the emergence of military regimes in Africa between 1960 and 1980, concerning economic trajectory with 65 of the region's 112 coup attempts successful (see Figure 7).



Between 1960 and 1969, there were 25 successful coup d'états in Sub-Saharan Africa out of 41 attempts, which was the highest success rate. This was caused by the slow GDP growth, which plummeted from 4.22% in the previous decade to 3.51% on average between 1960 and 1969, keeping the per capita GDP at US\$1638.00 during that time, or US\$163,08 annually (see figures 7, 8, and 9). The data also confirm that, while the GDP appears to be rebounding in the decade that followed, averaging 4.48% between 1970 and 1979, the successful rate of coup d'état declined and the number of unsuccessful attempts grew correspondingly (see figures 7 & 8). The period experienced 18 successful attempts and 24 unsuccessful attempts as per capita GDP increased to USD\$3,828.02 from US\$1,638.00 in the previous decade, which was USD\$382.08 on average per annum (see figures 7, 8, 9 & table 1). In other words, there is a positive correlation between the economic condition in Sub-Sahara Africa at each particular historical time and their propensity towards regime change through coupe d'état. Without a doubt, the economic underpinnings of development are crucial for any government hoping to further social progress and a more just and balanced society.

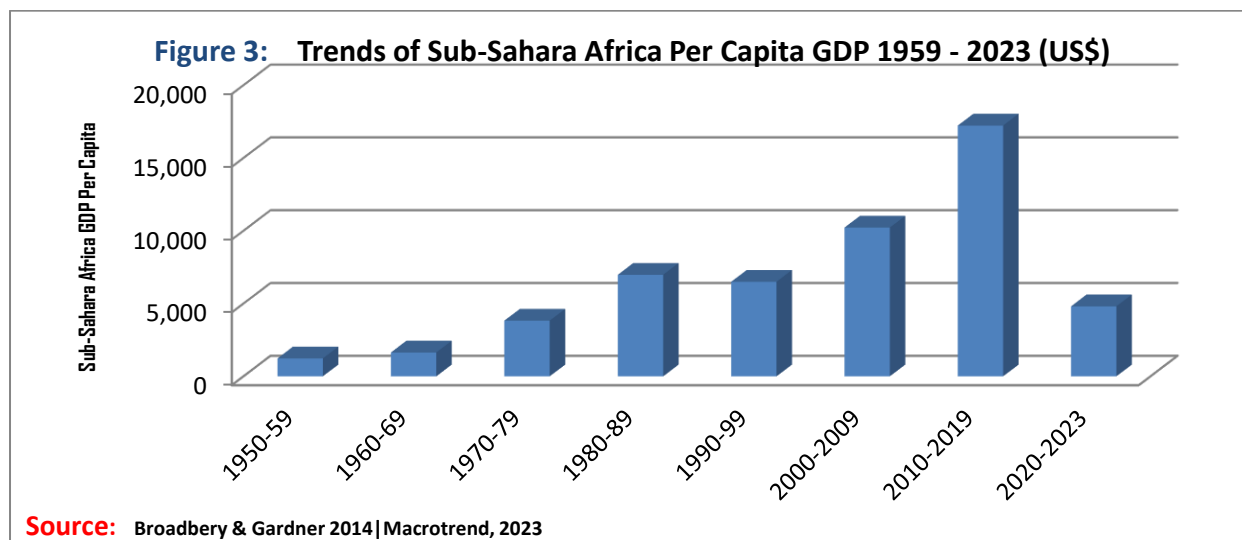
Table 1: Trends of coup attempts in Africa and the Success Rate 1950 - 2023

Decade	Total coup attempts	Successful	Success rate
1950-1959	6	3	50%
1960-1969	41	25	61%
1970-1979	42	18	42.9%
1980-1989	39	22	56.4%
1990-1999	39	16	41%
2000-2009	22	8	36.4%
2010-2019	17	8	47.1%
2020-2023	14	9	64.3%

**Source: Duzor & Williamson 2023
| Yeboua, 2023**

In terms of economics, the fundamental concern for Sub-Saharan Africa is not how to implement the policy of distribution or how to more fairly transfer the advantages of economic growth. The underlying issue in most situations is how the current administration

limits opportunities to improve economic output and performance. What additional options do African governments have to mobilize people and material resources for the advancement of their societies? In certain circumstances in Sub-Saharan Africa, the military must step in to help resolve this fundamental issue because both the populace and the military are steadily losing faith in the civilian government, which perpetuates its position of power by manipulating the constitution and rigging elections (Jibrin 2022; Melly, 2023).



35.45% of all military takeovers in Sub-Saharan Africa between the 1950s and 2023 occurred in the 1980s and 1990s, with success rates of 56.4% and 41.01%, respectively. This is a response to the weak average GDP growth rate of 1.34% and 1.89% in the 1980s and 1990s (see Figure 8 & table 1). Over the course of these 20 years, the Sub-Saharan African economy suffered five economic downturns or recessions as a result of severe economic shock (Macrotrend, 2023). Between 1960 and 1969, there were forty-one domestic military interventions in all. A total of six military interventions took place during the first phase, which ran from 1958 to 1960. This represents 2.72% of all military interventions in African politics to date, at which point the GDP growth rate was relatively good at 4.08% (see Figure 8). Military regimes were imposed in Sudan (1958), Zaire (1960), Congo P.R. (1963), Dahomey (1963), Gabon (1964), and Togo (1963) during the first phase. The second phase, from 1960 to 1969, is the most significant period with regard to the decrease in economic growth and the increased frequency of military interventions (see Table 1 & Figure 8). Burundi (1965), the Central African Republic (1966), Uganda (1966), Upper Volta (1966), Sierra Leone (1967), Ghana (1966), Nigeria (1966), Mali (1968), and Somalia (1969) were among the newcomers under military administration. In this sense, the state's involvement in the economic development of African states is connected to military intervention. The management of governmental operations as a tool for economic growth and as a means of utilizing economic potentiality undoubtedly creates the conditions for military interventions when the incumbents show any sign of weakness to that effect which is usually expressed with general economic hardship.

Coupe d'état and Sustainable Democracy in sub-Sahara Africa

Even while democratic governance in African nations has advanced significantly over time, military interventions can pose problems that have far-reaching effects on the continent's development. Undoubtedly, the ongoing socio-economic and political dissatisfaction on the continent has led to the celebration of coup plotters among the African

populace (Melly, 2023; Mimault & Ndiaga, 2022). Should this tendency remain, the continent will face more difficulties with each coup attempt. The joys that come with a coup are usually fleeting, and they frequently give way to midterm and long-term consequences that are far from ideal. In a time when the world is dealing with a global migration crisis, coupe can exacerbate the already existing burden. History has shown that coupe breed instability that can take years to resolve, affecting not only the coupe-stricken nation but also the neighbouring countries that are forced to bear the brunt of possible migration (Onuorah, 2023). In summary, the continent of Africa will not ultimately profit from the ongoing escalation in military intervention. They frequently lead to the imposition of military control, the disintegration of democratic institutions, and the suspension of constitutional order. Due to the abrupt shift in leadership, this will upset the democratic process and perhaps undo the progress already secured in creating stable democratic systems. The power vacuum that results could lead to protests, armed resistance, or possibly social upheaval. These disputes have the potential to worsen regional tensions, obstruct development initiatives, and damage societal cohesiveness.

Because they frequently seize control of these institutions or replace them with military-backed entities, coup d'états erode democratic institutions including the legislature, judiciary, and independent media, compromising checks and balances and undermining their autonomy. Since human rights violations and repression frequently accompany these erosions, they may make it more difficult for viable democratic institutions to operate throughout the continent (Tunguru, 1988). The civil freedoms of African citizens, such as the right to assemble, free speech, and association, are typically restricted under military intervention. In other words, given that coup d'états frequently lead to the suspension of constitutional rights, restrictions on civil liberties, and increased human rights abuses, as well as the escalation of intercommunal conflicts and ethnic and religious tensions that heighten the risk of violence, political opponents, activists, and journalists, may be subject to arrests, harassment, or violence under military regimes (Badmus, 2023). The region's ability to perpetuate democracy is seriously jeopardized by the frequent coups in Sub-Saharan Africa, which disturb the established democratic order, destroy public confidence in political institutions, and threaten the rule of law. Furthermore, non-state actors like terrorists and rebel groups might take advantage of the power vacuum created by the frequent changes in power through non-electoral means to undermine regional security. Additionally, it fosters a climate of ambiguity that impedes social identity, foreign direct investment (FDI), and sustained socioeconomic development.

Military coups can have negative economic repercussions, particularly on the economies of African nations. As a result of the regional economic sanctions on countries under military regimes and political instability, as well as a loss of investor confidence, there may be a reduction in economic activity, capital flight, and foreign direct investment. This could impede meaningful progress on the negotiations on protocols relating to trade and investments in the region. For instance, the ECOWAS imposed travel and economic restrictions on Niger following the coup in that country in 2023, which resulted in a large trade deficit and an economic crisis in the area. The integration and liberalization of African markets would remain a pipe dream, given that political support for the African Continental Free Trade Zone (AfCFTZ) is likely to decline. This is because the sanctions that followed isolated African nations in the Sahel from intra-African trade. Because this region is one of Africa's largest aquifers and has enormous renewable energy potential, including a surplus of solar energy it would be difficult for every African nation (Ogunrantim 2023). As a whole, the recent coups might worsen trade relations in Africa more than they were before the AfCFTZ. African nations may continue to look for markets outside of Africa as a result of the economic sanctions and political squabbling throughout the continent, leaving them open to

economic manipulation from nations in the Global North. Thus, the unpredictability brought about by coups impedes economic development, intensifies poverty, and threatens attempts to establish a sustainable democracy.

Furthermore, history has shown that military coups can spread to neighbouring states, particularly when there are similarities in the social, economic, and political contexts. This is because successful coups in one nation can inspire other like-minded people in neighbouring countries (Winsor, 2023) to attempt their own coup. In addition, they may trigger a wave of refugees, transnational hostilities, or regional instability that impedes attempts at economic integration, strains diplomatic ties, and obstructs coordinated efforts to establish a viable democracy. Stated differently, it frequently leads to diplomatic isolation and international censure. International and regional organizations, like the UN and the African Union, usually condemn coups and may apply sanctions that worsen the nation's economic problems and obstruct its progress toward enduring democracy.

Conclusion and Recommendation

The analysis has demonstrated two key points: firstly, how low economic growth was historically linked to the dominant coup d'état in the region; and secondly, the significance of governance and election management in the military resurgences in Sub-Saharan Africa. It was discovered that when governments and/or the African political class defy formal institutional arrangements such as constitutions and other legal frameworks that uphold political leadership, they typically foster the conditions necessary for military takeovers. Everybody must abide by the law, including political elites and African leaders, according to the rule of law. Establishing democratic institutions that uphold Africans' right to choose their leaders is essential to fostering the rule of law throughout the continent. Cooperation and collaboration among African nations would be improved by a common normative understanding of the rule of law. African nations can more easily pursue shared interests in areas of political and economic integration when they have this understanding. Consequently, this essay suggests that regional associations like the AU and ECOWAS ought to grasp the relationship between commerce and the rule of law. By eliminating corrupt activities that might weaken democratic institutions and provide an environment that is conducive to military coupe d'état, it must proactively address bad governance and undemocratic behaviours of the African political class that could lead to military involvement in African countries. Put in place strong anti-corruption measures, such as independent anti-corruption commissions, accountability frameworks, and transparent financial systems.

African regional organizations need to figure out how to encourage African nations' shared commitment to the rule of law. This is so because achieving greater unity, cohesiveness, and solidarity among African countries and nations is the primary goal of the ECOWAS and AU. In addition, Article 24 of the African Charter on Democracy, Elections, and Governance states that "the PSC [Peace and Security Council] shall exercise its responsibilities to maintain the constitutional order in accordance with relevant provisions of the Protocol Relating to the Establishment of the Peace and Security Council [when a situation arises in a State Party that may affect its democratic political institutional arrangements or the legitimate exercise of power]." This clause grants the AU the pre-emptive authority to step in when elected officials refuse to step down from their positions or when there is an executive coup, which is becoming more and more common in Africa.

When putting the AfCFTZ into practice, the AU needs to return to the drawing board to figure out how to accomplish this aim. To do this, the AU must use a carrot-and-stick strategy to convince nations with military governments to abide by the fundamental precepts

of the rule of law, which calls for robust democratic institutions and practices. To effectively address the effects of military coups on the sustainability of democracy in Africa, a multifaceted strategy that supports socioeconomic development, human rights advocacy, institutional strengthening, and regional organization collaboration is needed. Discouragement of military insurgency and the promotion of sustainable democracy in the region depend on initiatives to prevent and resolve conflicts, advance good governance, encourage economic growth, and create inclusive political participation. On the other hand, the political elite needs to be careful not to engage in reckless behaviour, such as massive embezzlement of public funds or executive coupe d'états, since these foster an environment that is favourable to specialists to violence (military) to takeovers.

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