

THE RE-EMERGENCE OF COUP D'ÉTATS IN AFRICA: THEORETICAL AND EMPIRICAL CONNECTIONS.

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Abstract

This paper examined the political undercurrents of the re-emergence of military intervention in African politics. The objective of this paper is to ascertain the theoretical and empirical connection of this emerging phenomenon. Situated within the context of political modernization philosophy, we posit that the military appropriated its central command structure, differentiation, and specialization as well as popular identification in diverse ways as part of their strategies to control political power. Empirically, we draw mainly on textual data collected through remote research methods such as desk research and distant observation. The analysis is informed by the emerging political analysis of recent military coup d'état epidemics across Africa - Chad, Sudan, Mali, Guinea, and Burkina Faso. The main focus of our analysis is the supposition that, Africa's emerging democracy is under threat to fluff and flounder. This paper argues that stakeholders in a democracy need to act proactively to structurally address the putative democratic deficits that are eroding the dividends of democracy and its cardinal principles in Africa.

Keywords: democracy, military, coup d'état, politics, military intervention, Africa

1. Introduction

Political power grows out of the barrel of a gun

...Moa Zedong (*Problems of War and Strategy*, 1938).

The paper examined military intervention in African politics. It seeks to unravel the unconstitutional changes of government that tend to feature prominently in recent political developments in the African continent. The study also focuses on the dynamics of politics in Africa and its implications of military involvement in mainline politics in recent times. The political role of the military in modern liberal democracy has been the subject of several detailed studies and scholarly discussions both general and regional. In a modern liberal democratic system, the state is represented by a government that has a monopoly over the use of violence. This authoritative power and function of the state is exercised partly through the armed forces which are traditionally under the control of the Executive Arm of Government with legislative oversight in some cases. In a democracy, the military is an institution with an unambiguous mission to employ the use of legitimate force based on its operational doctrine, institutional structures, force levels, and equipment types. Officers of the armed forces are conventionally obliged to be apolitical or politically neutral. The military also enjoys some privileges and prerogatives, professional autonomy, coercive and organizational power, institutional cohesion, and unity of command. This characterization predisposes the military to be inclined toward the conservative side of politics where its monopolistic interests are preserved with considerable influence over holders of civilian or legitimate power.

However, the nature of military structure generates cleavages that have a resemblance to class conflict; thus, it is impossible to assume that the military is a monolithic institution or that its role is always conservative (Luckham, 1994). Again, Luckham (2009), considers the whole military establishment as having a vested interest in what military ideologists call 'national security,' and what its opponents call state and class domination. The military is also perceived as possessing a superior level of national consciousness than other elites. Hence, they are drawn into politics with fractions of the military elite intervening on behalf of peripheral or excluded classes and groups in times of crisis (Janowitz, 1964; Luckham, 1994). As an institution responsive to centralized command, officers of the armed force undergo various levels of training to instill particular ethos and ethics, effectively handle different equipment types, align to institutional structures, and meet operational and strategic force levels (Hutchful, 2010). The nature of the military architecture and strata creates significant loyalties among the rank and file of the armed forces which transcends political affiliations and thus may serve a positive function in compelling national unity and in maintaining political boundaries (Huntington, 1957; Heywood, 2007). As representatives of the state in its war-making capacity, the armed forces do find themselves tempered to assert the prescribed claim either

to regulate the operation of the system in the interest of constitutional stability, or in extreme cases to supplant the political system. Also, the political sociology of the military is a complicated issue evinced by the fact that officers of the military have a life apart from civil society, although the trend in modern democratic society both in developing and in developed nations is towards greater penetration of the military into the political arena (Huntington, 1957).

Conversely, the military institution of any society is shaped by a functional imperative, stemming from the threats to the society's security, and a societal imperative arising from the social forces, ideologies, and institutions dominant within a democratic system (Huntington, 1957; Heywood, 2007; Braimah, 2014a). Thus, a military institution that reflects only social values may not be capable of effectively performing its military function, neither is a military institution shaped purely by functional imperatives could be contained within a democratic society. The seeming interaction of these two views explains the civil-military relations problem in democratic societies in Africa. Further, in terms of basic defense function, the term 'military' might be all-inclusive, referring to all uniformed personnel bearing arms. Considering the political function of the military, the conversation is limited to the military involvement in political administration like the cases of the Transitional Military Council (TMC) of Chad (2020); the Ruling Sovereign Council (RSC) of Sudan (2019); Transitional Military Council (TMC) of Mali (2020); National Committee of Reconciliation and Development (NCRD) of Guinea (2021); Patriotic Movement for Preservation and Restoration (MPSR) of Burkina Faso (2022) among others. The re-emergence of these military regimes in Africa in recent times, and having returned to constitutional democracy in the early 1990s could succinctly be described as the 'Third Wave of Militarization' in African politics and public administration.

Besides, military intervention in politics has received much scholarly attention in various theoretical debates underpinning the rationale for their undemocratic adventurism in political administration. Consequently, scholars have argued that the conditions leading to military interventions in public administration in Africa are generally a combination of intra-military grievances, widespread economic malaise, and political dissatisfaction with the governments in power (Afrifa 1967; Kraus, 1970; Hansen, 1982). Situations arising out of these have given the armed forces a motive, and the implied legitimacy to take over the levers of government in the public interest (Afrifa, 1967; Kraus, 1970). For instance, Afrifa, summed it up succinctly when he stated that "a coup d'état is the last resort in the range of means whereby the government may be overthrown" (Afrifa, 1967 p. 93). Also, in his analysis of the 1966 coup in Ghana, Kraus (1970), states that, "the military-police action was occasioned by the government's disregard for the professional autonomy and interests of the armed forces and police" (p. 242). In furtherance, Kraus argued that, "a fundamental problem of the future civil-military relations is how a civilian government can handle and maintain, in subordinate status, military and police which have been ruling directly and retired willingly" (p. 242). Political developments in Africa were to prove Kraus' assertion largely right as the armed forces on several other occasions in the 1960s until the Third Wave of Democratisation (Huntington, 1991), got directly embroiled in national politics, thereby establishing themselves as significant power brokers in public management and administration.

Arguably, notwithstanding the universal understanding of the conventional role of the military, officers of the armed forces have taken over the reins of government severally since post-independent Africa in the early 1960s. The phenomenon has suddenly reincarnated across Africa in recent times. Thus, the re-emergence of military intervention in political administration in the African continent has caught the attention of various scholars across various disciplines to intrinsically, anatomize and interrogate the role of the armed forces in a democratic society. Altruistically, the study of military interventions in political administration cannot be undertaken without a close microanalysis of the effect on political change. The political developments in Africa and the contemporary coup d'état epidemics in the West African sub-region are mind-boggling to advocates of democratic governance. This is where the present study draws its relevance and novelty. Thusly, the political dimension and implications of the military intervention in Africa underpin the relevance and analytical framework of the paper. Conversely, the assumption that the military has a unique political role in a democracy also leads to inconclusive scholarly debate and discussions. This paper, therefore, problematizes the re-emergence of coup d'états in Africa and interrogates the theoretical and empirical connections of military interventions in politics and public administration. We also speculate on the prospects of Africa's democracy when the military withdraws from active political involvement. The rest of the paper is organized as follows; the next section is the methodology, followed by a framework of analysis, understanding coup d'états, empirical connections of re-emergence of coups, concluding remarks, and references.



2. Materials and Methods

This paper employed a desk-based research design. Data for the analysis was sourced through a review of literature on military regimes, coup d'états, and distant obversion. Thus, the analysis began with the review of policy documents on military coup d'états in Africa from academic journals and papers, published books, policy reports, and relevant documents explaining military interventions in Africa's democracy. The aim of the review of the literature and policy documents was to identify gaps in scholarly debate and discussions on military interventions in political changes in Africa. Consequently, the information gathered from the earlier works and the relevant documents was used to establish the theoretical and empirical connections of the re-emergence of military interventions in African politics.

3. Theoretical Framework

There is a plethora of theoretical conceptions that underpin military disruptions and subsequent involvement in African politics. These theoretical connections between political development and military interventions in politics have been a subject of scholarly discussions and debate. These debates are categorized into a three-fold schema.

- 1) An increased centralization of power in the state, coupled with the weakening of traditional sources of authority;
- 2) The differentiation and specialization of political institutions; and
- 3) Increased popular participation in politics, and greater identification with the political system as a whole in a country (Welch, 1967 p.7).

First, scholars have argued that the armed forces as an organization are characterized by centralization, discipline, hierarchy, communication, and 'esprit de corps' (Finer, 1974, p7). In this connection, for a military to function effectively, it requires a clearly defined chain of command, with sufficient information and communication to ensure that orders are carried out with the means of disciplinary control. That is, effective military organization by definition, demands a high degree of centralization (Heywood, 2007). For this reason, many scholars have equated modern democratic systems with centralized and highly organized governments. For instance, Huntington (1966, p 378) argued that:

Political modernization... involves the rationalization of authority: the replacement of a large number of traditional, religious, familial, and ethnic political authorities by a single, secular, national political authority... It means national integration and the centralization or accumulation of power in recognized national law-making institutions.

Thus, the centralization of power will accord well with patterns of organization similar to the military institution. For, in organizational terms, the armed forces appear to be a paragon of a modernized political system (Huntington, 1966). However, the weakening of traditional sources of authority does not necessarily result in the centralization of government functions. To put it simply, the 'modern' organizational characteristics of the armed forces such as centralization, discipline, hierarchy, communications, and esprit de corps may readily break down under the stresses of military interventions in politics (Finer, 1974). A clear-cut plethora of evidence exists in African coup d'états where 'Junior Officers' turned against 'Senior Officers' to capture political power from their superiors. Three such coups in Africa were; the Nigerian uprising of 29 July 1966; the abortive uprising in Ghana on 17 April 1967 and the 4 June 1979 uprising in Ghana (Hansen, 1982). These examples show that centralisation of authority and command as in the case of the military must not be mistaken as an effective central, unitary authority that can be used to rule a country.

Secondly, in a traditional setting, many functions carried out within a society may be fused; but in a modern setting, the functions are characterized by differentiation or division of labour and the development of particular structures (institutions) for their accomplishment. Scholars, therefore, argued that the armed forces epitomized such differentiation of function and specialization of structure in modern society (Pye, 1961). Thus, the high degree of specialization in the military contrasts not only with the fused traditional social setting but with other modern groups. For instance, few political parties in Africa can match the centralization, discipline, hierarchy, esprit de corps, and speed of communications exhibited by armies. In this regard, Pye (1962, pp 80-83) argued that:

The good soldier is also to some degree a modernised man. Thus, it is that the armies in the newly emergent countries come to play roles in the process by which traditional ways give way to more Westernized ideas and practices.... the acculturative process in the army tends to be focused on acquiring technical skills that

are of particular value for economic development.... politically the most significant feature of the process of acculturation within the army is that it usually provides some form of citizenship training.

However, the specialties and nationalistic outlooks, though cannot readily be carried over from the armed forces to the political administration. Thus, modern skills cannot necessarily be effectively diffused from the military to the civilian realm in a political system.

Third, the extent of political participation can readily be altered by military regimes. However, the degree of popular identification with the political system is not susceptible to easy manipulation. In the creation of political systems, perhaps the most important task is of fostering popular identification where stakeholders of the system are integral to its existence. This identification may be enhanced by greater opportunities for symbolic participation. Members of the armed forces in control accordingly, may turn to referenda (particularly on new constitutions) as an innocuous means of transforming participation into identification. However, enhanced opportunities for participation may not lead to a national type of identification. Instead, it may lead to:

An obsessive concern with the relation of one's tribe, region, sect, or whatever to a center of the power that, while growing rapidly more active, is not easy either insulated from the web of primordial attachment, as was the remote colonial regime, or assimilated to them as the workaday authority system of the "little community". Thus, it is the very process of the formation of a sovereign civil state that, among other things, stimulates sentiments of parochialism, communalism, racialism, and so on, because it introduces into society a valuable new prize over which to fight and a frightening new force with which to contend (Verba, 1965 p. 29).

In short, popular identification with the political system as a whole cannot be legislated into existence. As, "some realms of life cannot be directly affected in an enduring way through the machinery of government" (Welch, 1967 p. 177). This means the overthrow of the government may bring great initial credit to the perpetrators of military intervention. However, the installation of a genuinely popular army officer as head of State may similarly result in public approbation. That is the vagaries of popular opinion in a political system and the threat of ethnically based parochialism often make widespread popular identification with the new regime an unlikely direct product of military intervention in the case of the former Liberia military regime under Master Sergeant Doe (1980-1990). For this reason, the fostering of political and administration legitimacy requires far more than just a displacement of an elected government by soldiers in a coup d'état.

4. Towards Understanding Coup D'états

Military interventions in politics drew much scholarly attention to the role of the armed forces in democratic societies. The Latin American countries experienced the first wave of military coups in 1955 and the re-emergence after the 1960s. In the Middle East, many of the Arab states went through military rule. Also, the Asian states have gone through successive military coups and abortive coups beginning in the 1950s. Though Africa as a continent has now joined the league of democracies in the world, military coups have become a phenomenon the continent has reckoned with. Moreover, Africa still has a rudimentary grasp of what is involved in the recent political developments in the continent which warrants scholars of various shades to further interrogate the phenomenon. Though research and analysis have provided some explanations, the recent surge of coup d'états in West Africa calls for a deep reflection or mull-over. Given the political instability in the continent, a military takeover can be viewed as a step in the arduous search for order and progress, but at the same time, it is a setback in the process of democratic consolidation in the continent. The intervention of the military in politics could result from the combination of many factors. In the particular case of coups in Africa and other developing countries, economic, cultural, and political reasons are inextricably intertwined. Indeed, the declining prestige of political parties and growing consciousness among the military of their power play significant roles.

The diminished likelihood of external intervention and the effects of the contagion must also be added to a sense of grievance within the military itself as part of the background. When and how coups occur differ greatly, and there seem to be no uniform circumstances under which military seizure of political control often comes. But, when the legitimacy and popularity of government declined among the politically relevant strata of the population, the military seems to illustrate an awareness of its unique duty to protect the national interest so-called. Also, when the military begins to distinguish between the policies that are pursued by a civilian government and the policies desired by its members, the disposition to intervene in political administration proceeds, and may be activated as planned. The disposition of the military to intervene in politics is thus prompted by evidence of political weakness.

Another hypothesis is that soldiers tend to be attracted to stage coups to pursue their selfish interests, given their low national consciousness which is a legacy of colonial rule (Mazrui & Rothchild, 1969). Another position is that to make civilian control of the army easier, the development of the professionalism of the army is prioritized (Huntington, 1957). This is in contrast to the position by Mazrui (1964) that the military is sometimes deliberately politicized to guarantee civilian control. In contrast, Jonowitz (1964, p. 65-66), diverges that professionalism of the military projects it to the point of “wanting to be above politics”, hence being less responsive to civilian control. In tandem with the modernization theory, the military is perceived as one of the forces for modernizing society, especially in Africa (Pye, 1960). This is because, the military is assumed to be an institution that can produce rare skills or competencies required by the middle classes it recruits, and develop national consciousness.

However, these hypotheses concerning the complexity and the dynamics of the facts or realities are pointers that no single variable can fully explain the motivations of the military to participate in politics. Consequently, Luckham (1971), attempted a typology of the civil-military relationship that motivates military participation in politics on three factors; the strength of the civil-political institutions, the strength of the military, and the character of the boundaries between the military and its socio-political environment. Luckham (1971), further attempted to demonstrate how existing theories on civil-military relations could be aggregated and synthesized to arrive at a more general framework.

The first factor or summary of variables is the strength of the civil political institutions which Finer (1962), refers to as the ‘level of political culture’. According to him, weak political institutions lacking legitimacy attract the military to intervene in politics. Luckham (1971), considers this as likely in Africa and other developing countries but not the industrialised countries. The provision of an adequate definition of strong institutions and clear-cut criteria for its determination was observed by Luckham (1971) as a challenge. Finer (1962), suggests publicly agreed procedures for the transfer of power, public office holders’ legitimacy, and the effectiveness and level of influence of private associations such as labour unions, political parties, and churches, among others as criteria. The elements in the strength of civilian institutions identified by Luckham (1971) are public support aggregated by political structures, the degree of political mobilisation, and the extent of political communication and awareness of the government.

The second factor for the involvement of the military in politics as considered by Luckham (1971) is the strength of the military institutions. The resources at the disposal of an army determine its power. The resources are of three kinds: coercive and strategic resources, organizational resources, and political resources (Luckham, 1971). The coercive and strategic resources of the military include its absolute and relative size to the population, the allocation of the national budget it receives, utilizable firepower, and organizational effectiveness. The organizational resources of the military establishment comprise its capacity to deliver both in the political arena and delivery of firepower. The number of personnel with the potential of being recruited into political roles on the assumption of political power to the extent that, normal positions in the echelons would not be compromised is a crucial consideration. The experiences, skills, and exposures gained by military elites through various professional, educational, and training courses should be adequate to resource the military in negotiations, leadership, administration, and their like in the political arena. The political resources of the military are a function of its coercive and organisational power and extent of conversion into a political resource, the extent of integration of the military with civilian power structures, and its social legitimacy which is reflected in the amount of diffuse political support it can generate.

The third factor that determines the involvement of the military in politics according to Luckham (1971), is the interaction between military power and civilian power. While political institutions specialize in creating consensus within the ranks and diffusing support, the military requires a level of social consensus around its goals and methods to gain legitimacy. A balance of power between civil and military institutions in a state is necessary for stability. However, that balance of power in new nations of Africa is that of mutual weakness where the greater efficacy of violence is such that the military can both take a wider role in political allocations and expose to greater political pressures to do so from outside political groups wishing to co-opt the means of violence to support their interests. The different sets of parameters within which the role of the military may be defined could be considered from the three summary variables just outlined above. Relating the parameters to the distinctive roles a military establishment may play in politics provides a comprehensive general view of the motivations for the involvement of the military in politics. Luckham (1971) provided a more general schema for civil-military relations while taking cognisance of some existing models. The existing models acknowledged are Huntington’s (1957) distinction between objective and subjective controls by the military; the characterization of the apparatus-state by Lonsenu; Lasswell’s (1941) garrison state; of the praetorian state and nation-in-arms typifications by Rapoport; and the constabulary

concept by Janowitz (1960). Luckham (1971) Guardian State and Post-Colonial Guardian State typologies are to provide a more realistic picture of the motivations for the involvement of the military in African politics.

5. Re-Emergence of Coup Epidemics in Africa: What is the Empirical Connection?

5.1: *The Peril of Africa Political Independence*

Africa's political independence is seemingly becoming clear that without a coordinated and concerted effort by civil society, the continent will completely relapse into autocracies and other forms of tyrannical rule. The signs for these anticlockwise behaviours are well grounded in the following - constitutional dictators, cronyism, creedalism, prebendal, corruption, fraud, and dissipation of national resources. Regrettably, political leadership sing national anthems, and recite pledges to uphold the nation's constitutions and resist oppressors' rule, yet political oppression has become entrenched in the body polity in the continent.

Africa returned to multiparty democracy in the early 1990s after many years of military rule, dictatorships, and many years plagued by civil wars and many conflicts in almost all the countries on the continent. Political independence in Africa has been achieved through the foresight and vision of nationalists like the first president of Ghana, Dr. Kwame Nkrumah, and many other African leaders in the past. Though Africa's political independence sought to open up the whole continent to bring the people together and derive dividends of democracy, this political independence is now being exploited to the advantage of ruling parties and elites in Africa. Political independence has been observed to be at the peril of political elites, and masking deep-seated tensions that have the potential to explode. These tensions are largely political in character created by a mindset in recent years which insists that only a segment of the population in various countries of the continent has the right to rule. And so, all efforts are being made to disenfranchise voters and particular ethnic groups to minimise the chances of the opposition winning elections in many of the countries in Africa in recent times. Some African Presidents, such as President Museveni of Uganda and Paul Biya of Cameroun, have extended their tenure virtually to life Presidents after amending presidential term limits in their national constitutions. Other African leaders, like the former Nigerian president Olusegun Obasanjo and President Alpha Conte of Guinea, have attempted to amend their constitutions and failed but others like President Alhassan Ouattara of La Cote d'Ivoire have succeeded. In this democratic quagmire, the military which prides itself on custodians and restorers of the constitution tends to intervene. Hence, the re-emergence of coups' de tats in Africa such as Mali in 2019 and Guinea in 2021 are cases that are contingent on this political phenomenon in Africa's emerging democratic history.

6. *Democracy in Africa Under Threat?*

Africa's democratic governance beginning in the 1990s is expected to ensure that fundamental liberties, freedoms, rule of law, inclusion, participation, competitive and periodic multi-party elections as enshrined in national constitutions are respected. Defined as 'government by discussion', democracy as a system of governance allows for the respect of dissenting views in formulating and implementing public policies. It would appear however that a narrow view of democracy prevails in Africa today, focusing thematically on ballots and elections, and not the broader sense of the concept of *democracy*. These authors and all advocates of democracy caution on the shortcomings of narrowly conceiving the idea of democracy as public balloting. The effectiveness of the ballot is contingent on what goes with balloting such as free speech; assembly; access to information, and freedom of dissent. The latter, that is freedom of dissent is fast waning, and a rare democratic imperative in contemporary Africa.

Alexis de Tocqueville (1835), succinctly outlined two major threats to democracy that have negative implications for upholding democracy as a whole. The threats are; 1) the selfish interests of individuals especially of the power holders who use their positions of state authority to amass wealth for themselves and their cronies, and; 2) the tendency to use majoritarian positions to sideline and marginalize other groups. The fear of Alexis de Tocqueville is unrepentantly playing out in the African political landscape without spurn.

The philosophical underpinning of a hypothetical social contract between the citizens and the State as espoused by Thomas Hobbes, John Locke, and Jean-Jacques Rousseau, laws of the State are supposed to be universal and applicable to all citizens. But when majority groups use that position to pass laws without any input from the minority groups, such laws are no longer universal. When minority groups obey these laws, they are no longer free citizens in that country but certified 'slaves.' When we use the majority in parliament to pass laws that deny the vote to many citizens, this is no longer democracy but tyranny. The military accused the characteristics and political nuances of the ruling class in Mali, Guinea, and Burkina Faso of undemocratic root and branch. Hence, the call for probity and political accountability through coup d'états ousted the elected governments in those countries in 2019, 2021, and 2022 respectively.

7. Rise of Democratic Tyrants in Africa

An offshoot of majoritarian rule where the minority has little or no say under a supposedly democratic rule is the tendency of rulers in those countries to assume *de facto* dictatorial postures. We should be reminded of the fact that dictators such as Adolf Hitler of Germany (1933 - 1945) and Mussolini of Italy (1922 - 1943) came into power through democratic elections. These leaders changed world history in a rather brutal way through the terror they unleashed, and the millions of lives lost during the second world war (1939 - 1945). Dictatorship is defined as a system of government controlled by an individual or a group that holds virtually absolute power. Dictators throughout history have used force or the threat of it to cling to or stay in power. In modern times, they forbid elections or manipulate the electoral systems to stay in power for life through a raft of mechanisms such as a referendum, the judicial system, and the legislator (Braithwaite & Forson, 2023b; Braithwaite, 2023c). Plato warned humanity on how democracies can degenerate into tyranny in his piece of work, *The Republic* (380BC). According to the philosopher, the key driving feature of democracy is the desire for freedom and so emerges a plurality of interests. Plato predicted that the only way anything could be achieved under a democracy is to have a strong leader who can unite the various interests, and such strong leaders may ultimately become tyrants.

Modern-day constitutional autocrats or dictators (tyrants and demagogues) derive their power from the people through pseudo-democratic elections. Once they are in power, they start a systematic process of dismantling and crippling the checks and balances that make democracies work. These are some of the characteristics of modern-day dictatorships. For instance, leaders such as Viktor Orban of Hungary, Rodrigo Duterte of the Philippines, Abdel Fatah al-Sissi of Egypt, and Jair Bolsonaro of Brazil are undoubtedly in this category. The former President Donald Trump of the USA (2017-2021), but for constitutionalism and the time-tested democracy of the USA, would have exhibited similar tendencies in his tenure. There are many democratically elected African leaders today that can be similarly described as modern-day benevolent political dictators Yoweri Museveni of Uganda, Paul Kagame of Rwanda, and Paul Biya of Cameroun.

Africa faces the threat of democratic reversal through greed, whilst marginalization, nepotism, and corruption are making it impossible for governments to apply national resources efficiently to grow the economies and create wealth and much-needed jobs for the ever-growing populations. (Braithwaite & Mbowura, 2018). Civil strife and wars, particularly coup d'états thrive in such contexts as the recent coups in Chad, Sudan, Mali, Guinea, and Burkina Faso. For instance, a survey of the terrain shows that there are currently about 50 absolute dictators in the world (planetrulers.com, 2020). Out of this number, 19 are in Sub-Saharan Africa (SSA), 12 are in the Middle East and North Africa, 8 are in the Asia Pacific region, 7 are in Eurasia, 3 are in the Americas and 1 is in Europe (planetrulers.com). The rise of modern dictatorship is a direct result of the failings of democracy. In many developing countries, democracy has yet to deliver on the promise of accountability as well as freedom and equality, which are the fundamental principles upon which democracy claims superiority over other forms of government.

8. Why do Coup D'états Succeeds and Flourish in Sub-Saharan Africa?

The enterprise of coup d'états succeeds and flourish in much of Black Africa than in Latin America and Asia. The key reasons - from the citizen's perspective - are categorized into a four-fold schema.

Firstly, the youth in Sub-Saharan Africa do not normally resist coup makers or "insane imposters" who use the barrel of a gun or any other violent means to oust democratically elected governments. The youth usually blame the high levels of unemployment and abject poverty they are facing on the constitutional governments in the saddle of governance. Thusly, they tend to support military takeovers with the hope of a better economic outlook for themselves and family. The frustrations and the fear of wallowing in perpetual poverty while state officials and their family members have access to state resources are pull factors for the youth to join forces with the military to subdue any counter-resistance of the military - the youth engage in armed conflict with the hope of a better economic reward. Secondly, the military prey on the high illiteracy rate of citizens to sway them to support the toppling of an incumbent democratically elected governments in Africa. The military blames the underdevelopment of their country on the corrupt activities of the government as the main reason for political intervention. The military portray themselves as saviours of the people who are capable of protecting them, providing employment opportunities, and general economic prosperity. Third, constitutionally elected governments in Sub-Sahara Africa are ingrained in dubious corrupt activities, intolerant of divergent views, arbitrarily arrest critics and leading opposition figures, manipulation of national constitutions to cling to power, muzzling of the press, and distancing themselves from the masses (Braithwaite & Forson, 2023). These pent-up emotions of citizens constitute a fertile ground for the military to intervene in the saddle of political power. Finally, the incompetence of national security apparatuses (e.g., the police) to control mass demonstrations in Sub-Sahara Africa is one area that causes the military to intervene in politics (Braithwaite & Bawah, 2019). The use of ammunition and live bullets to control a crowd of demonstrators is widespread in Africa. The phenomenon has led to unexplained civilian casualties (e.g., Burkina Faso, Mali, Sudan, Zimbabwe) with unabated anger from citizens. The killing of

civilians has normally given fertile excuses for the military to intervene in politics (e.g., Algeria, Chad, Egypt, Libya, Tunisia, Sudan).

However, the military tends to quench the high expectations of the citizenry. The incompetence of the military in governance is glaring root and branch (e.g., Chad, Burkina Faso, Guinea, Mali, Sudan). By their training, the military is not best suited to govern. The management of the national economy gets worse than the civilian counterparts they ousted or toppled. The corruption allegations levelled against the civilian governments become more of a stinker under the watch of the military rulers. The euphoria that greeted the takeover of the military from the 'corrupt civilian' administration so-called turn sour. The rise of citizens against the military to return to the barracks is usually met with brute force, media censure, arbitrary arrest, and torture of civilians and critics alike. In some cases, there is a counter attempt to oust the military junta by their colleagues within the military who also accuse the military rulers of being corrupt, and mismanagement of national resources for their selfish interest (e.g., Burkina Faso, Mali, Sudan, South Sudan). It is in the light of these corrupt and human rights violations within the military in politics that the authors argue that it is better to have a worse democratic elected civilian government in the saddle of governance than to have good military officers ruling. In the former, at least, the citizens will have the periodic opportunity to either maintain the 'wicked' and 'corrupt' civilian government or change if they so desire to do so. In the case of military juntas, there is nothing like periodic voting. Again, a democratically elected civilian government that manipulates the national constitution to cling to power perpetually is worse than a military regime. For, there is no mechanism in both situations for the citizens to either maintain or boot out of political power. In such a phenomenon, there is no social contract that exists between the rulers and the ruled. In such a scenario, political leaders only tend to rule the people but are not governing.

9. Conclusion

This paper is a contribution toward understanding the political undercurrents of the re-emergence of coup d'états in Africa. Africa's emerging democracy and elections are seriously under threat with the propensity to fluff and flounder. For instance, the manipulation of presidential term limits in Africa has received public outcry both in Africa and around the world. Yet, some African leaders are flouting constitutional term limits with impunity - the consistent fret on presidential term limits, arbitrary arrests of political opponents and persecutions, intolerance to dissenting views, and gagging of the rights of citizens are some of the pull factors of military intervention in the unchartered political arena.

Regrettably, civil society organizations in many African countries are cowed into submission with muted voices. Also, some civil society groups in many African countries adopt the strategy of 'pick and choose' syndrome in their criticisms as a result of political party affiliation. In many African countries (e.g., Cameroun, Uganda, Chad, Sudan,) citizens have become passive observers for fear of being arrested arbitrarily and subsequent persecution. Africa is at a crossroads with democracy and the organization of free and fair elections. When citizens feel oppressed by their governments and there are no credible and peaceful mechanisms to change political leadership through the ballot, the military always takes the opportunity to intervene with the barrel of a gun such as those in Burkina Faso, Mali, Chad, Guinea, and Sudan. Unfortunately, the coup d'états are not the *sine qua non* but merely only the symptoms of bad governance, oppression, and muzzling of political opponents. This leaves in its trail, the worse records of human rights abuses, insecurity, inequality, and poverty.

However, Rousseau developed the idea of the 'social contract' in modern political development and explained the need for people to live in freedom, liberty, and happiness within a democratic society. By 'signing' the social contract, individuals accept to alienate their natural liberty to embrace conventional liberty. Therefore, thanks to the social contract, individuals have a new kind of liberty. Civil liberty and the state become the guarantor of three main rights: life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness. Africa is currently not in a position to guarantee these fundamental rights to all citizens under the current democratic dispensation. Hence, members of the armed forces who pride themselves as custodians or restorers of constitutional governance in Africa will therefore act on the rhetoric that democratic principles will be better upheld or served by their direction in the political administration of the State as in Mali in 2019, Guinea in 2021 and Burkina Faso in 2022 in the West Africa sub-region. We therefore conclude and recommended that critical stakeholders need to act proactively, and in concert to structurally address the putative democratic deficits eroding the dividends of democracy and the socio-economic aspirations of ordinary Africans.

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