Militarization of Democracy and the Resurgence of Military Coups in Africa

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Abstract

Although the wave of democratization has swept through Africa from 1990s thus reinforcing the acceptability of democratic principles of governance, the post-colonial states in Africa have historically been confronted with incessant military interventions. The recent resurgence of military incursion in Africa has led to the remonstrance of scholars and policy makers involved in seeking nuanced understanding in this democratization process questioning the efficacy and resultfulness of democracy and the military interventions in the continent. This research methodologically explores relevant secondary sources of data within qualitative research method to examine the various undemocratic practices enacted by African political leaders as attributed features of a militarized democracy creating an enabling environment for the advent of military resurgence in the continent. This article avers that, the version of democracy embraced by political leaders in Africa is a militarized democracy whereby authoritarian and autocratic principles are characterized proprium of civilian governments leading to various challenges militating against the continental development, which also created an enabling environment for the military interventions.

Keywords: *Africa; Militarization; Militarism; Militarized Democracy; Resurgence of Military Coup*

Introduction

The history of democracy in Africa has been contorted with incessant military interventions with over 200 military coups both successful and unsuccessful ones collectively (Mbara & Graham, 2023), which has consequently and fundamentally led to the accouchement of African militarized democracy. There are four momentous political epochs observable in African history which are: the traditional African society; the era of colonization; the decolonization era and lastly, the contemporary African state system (Odigbo, Ezekwelu & Okeke, 2023). The traditional precolonial African societies practiced African version of democratic political system attributed with a system of checks and balances, transparency, accountability and separation of power. African society was organized based on family system, clans, emirates, kingships and kingdoms whereby the people were ruled by consensus. The era colonialism introduced the use of armed forces to compel obedience from the people, which has been described fundamental to undemocratic practices (militarized democracy) averred by African political leaders at the aftermath of independence (Adewunmi, 2022). The ignominious consequences of World War II in Europe between 1939 to 1945 followed by the period of Cold War urged the colonialists to

subscribe to the idea of decolonization that led to the advent of independence of many African states between the periods of 1950s and 1960s ushering in the last phase described as the contemporary African state (Odigbo, Ezekwelu & Okeke, 2023).

Militarization has its origin in militarism and it is directly related with the influence of the military in the practices of civilian government (Adewunmi, 2022). Militarism connotes the institutionalization of organized military force and military means. It can be defined as the domination of national politics by the armed forces but not limited to the overt political activities of institutional armed forces or to the presence of regimes dominated or constituted by the military. Militarism encompasses diverse of ideological representations, organizational and institutional forms, national and regional permutations and peculiarities. It possesses historical character that has substantially changed overtimes whereby the old type that took place between 1960 to 1990 in Africa demonstrated the forceful domination of political space by the military armed forces (Hutchful & Aning, 2021) while the new version that emerged at the aftermath of democratic wave that started in 1990s reflected the military means and undemocratic practices of civilian governments, which has been described fundamental to the present resurgence of military intervention in Africa. Militarization is an embodiment of different factors such as; the growth of armed forces, rearmament, and an increasing role of the military in domestic conflicts, prioritization of military oriented approaches and the inculcation of militaristic values in democratic institutions (Fayemi, 1998). It entails the general enabling conditions for the historical military interventions in African politics as well as the recent military resurgence in the continent. Militarized democracy has resulted to poor governance and pitiable democratic performance, socio-economic and political obstacles, growing poverty, inadequate infrastructure, low life expectancy, insecurity and rebellious tendencies against the state, which are defining triggers of military interventions in African politics (Odigbo, Ezekwelu & Okeke, 2023).

The recent resurgence of military coups in the continent might have eventuated differently in each country but the enabling conditions for this occurrence have remained similar such as; the use of the military, police, and paramilitary forces as instruments of oppression by the state opting for authoritarian government against disgruntled citizens. This is illustrative of militarized democracy that redounded to high level of corruption, systemic failure, insecurity, poor governance, banditry, economic mismanagement, plunder of resources, decomposition of the security apparatus of the state and fragmentation of the military in countries such as; Chad, Somalia and Liberia (Adewunmi, 2022). Undoubtedly, Africa has become the capital of military coups in the world or the cradle of military interventions inherent with the highest number of coups d'état from its immediate postcolonial period to the present history, which has whipped up a debate questioning the ability of African states to sustain a consolidated democracy. According to Isilow (2022), the eruption of recent coups in the continent is generally attributed to several issues such as; the absence of democratic practice, poverty, insecurity, leadership failure, economic crisis, corruption, lack of free, fair and credible elections, the greed of military officers, dissatisfaction of youth and citizens. These issues are regarded as basic tenets of a militarized democracy and its consequential outcomes in this article. Contrary to the substratum of many research works carried out by different scholars describing democracy as antithetical to the traditional composition of states in Africa or the failure of democracy in the continent (Barka & Ncube, 2012, Falola, 2022, Suleiman, 2021, Suleiman & Onapajo, 2022), this research argues that, African political leaders have embraced a version of democracy chronicled as a militarized democracy for decades since the attainment of their political independence that has consequently produced counterproductive outcomes fundamental to its experiences of incessant military interventions thereby, the adequacy and resultfulness of a well-entrenched consolidated democracy to facilitate peace, stability and development in the continent could not be denigrated base on this version of democracy. It aims to delve into these undemocratic practices as substratum of the militarization of democracy fundamental to the resurgence of military coups in the continent, which is an exculpation to the practicability and resultfulness of a consolidated democracy in Africa.

Theoretical Framework

There are different theoretical underpinnings rationalizing military interventions or coups in politics of the contemporary society. The limited scope of analysis demonstrated by different scholars in their theoretical simplifications demands an exploration of many theories of military incursions in politics. Colonial Legacy is one of the theories developed by the classical works of Coleman, Brice and Luckham, which attributed the incessant military interventions in Africa to the colonial legacy. They argued that, the discordant and decrepit political systems left behind by ex-colonial powers for African states along with their militarized method of colonial administration symbolized high propensity for military intervention at the aftermath of African states' political independence (Okeke, 2018). Socio-Economic Development Theory argues that, the propensity for military intervention would drastically decrease if the socio-economic development status of a society is untainted (Finer, 1988; Onder, 2010). Political Development Theory emphasizes on the fact that, fragile political system characterized with the absence of strong civil institutions, weak democratic values and legitimacy crisis is vulnerable to military interventions (Kennedy, 1974). The Centrality of Military Theory argues that, the organized nature and structure of the military institution along with the availability of resources at its disposal are motivation and advantageous urges for military to intervene in politics in order to take total control over national resources (Finer, 1988). This structural model explains that, the internal structure of the military as an institution such as; the social background of the officers, their skill structure and career lines as well as their internal cohesion, cleavages, professional and political ideology put the military in an advantageous position to hijack politics (Finer, 1967; Horowitz, 1980). The Conflict Theory argues that, the pervasion of cultural diversity, ethnic cleavages, competition for economic resources and religious differences are enabling environment for military intervention (Kposowa & Jenkins, 1992). Custodian Theory argues that, whenever the civilian government loses control over the affairs of state, it becomes an opened opportunity for military takeover (Dibie, 2003). Frustration Aggression Theory argues that, there is a link between frustration and aggression whereby aggression is a consequential outcome of frustration (Breuer & Elson, 2017). This theory has been used to justify the reason why citizens of some African countries have embraced and celebrated the recent military coups in Africa due to their frustrations with the deteriorated socio-economic, political, cultural and leadership structure. According to Odigbo, Ezekwelu, & Okeke, (2023, p.643), *"the rising number of people in abject poverty, increasing unemployment, corruption, human rights abuse, crass impunity, wars, rebellious activities have compounded the state of insecurity in Africa."* Contagion Effect Theory argues that, there is a tendency for military coups to spread within neighboring countries, an idea that military officers in different countries imitate one another to overthrow civilian government and this has become a notable fashion in African countries (Okeke, 2018).

The desideratum of this research finds it worthwhile to examine these different theoretical stands concerning military incursions in politics and while each theory has presented limited arguments and specific scope, insufficient to singlehandedly cover all aforementioned factors behind military interventions, this research argues that, all these theoretical postulations are classifiable within the framework of a militarized democracy and its consequential outcomes. The practicability of authoritarian or autocratic fashion of democracy, attributed with elements of militarism is considered as basic tenet of a militarized democracy, which on the other hand, has resulted to various factors considered within the postulations of each theory as theoretical justifications for military intervention. The militarization of democracy or other forms of political system has been widely examined theoretically from the realist/neorealist theory of international relations. The prioritization of military security, military armed forces, military armed conflicts and statism by the democratic or other forms of governments are explanatory arguments within this theory. The successful contributions of this theory regarding military oriented approaches of states have gained the attention of this research in considering it as its theoretical framework. Classical realists such as Hans Morgenthau (1948) and Reinhold Niebuhr (1932) believe that, states are like human beings embedded with innate desire to dominate others, which lead them to fight wars (Dierauer, 2013, p. 28). Neorealism emerged on the eve of World War II focusing on the behavior of

states, in particular states within international system ((Waltz, 1998). It is almost impossible to understand the basic tenets of neorealism without mentioning Kenneth Waltz and his 1979 book *'Theory of International Politics.'* International system is defined anarchical because unlike domestic politics, international politics takes place in an arena that has no overarching global authority (Baylis, Smith & Owens, 2014). The appealing argument of realist/neorealist theory that has been found considerably suitable for the objective of this research is defined by Saleh (2010) cited by Oluyemi (2020, p.3), on the significance of military power in the realist construct of national security, *"the military armed forces become the instruments of states to demonstrate their strengths, to maintain territorial integrity, to ensure domestic or internal security, to acquire international recognition, to fight against every threat, to carry out diplomatic negotiations, to gain economic advantages, to secure geopolitical boundaries and for political propaganda."* Stephen Walt (1991) defines national security of state in the realist theory as *"the studies of the military threat, use, and control of military force."* The national interest of African states to militarize their society and their policies through various undemocratic practices along with the use of state armed forces to suppress their citizens are complementary to the basic tenets of the realist national security, which made realism/neorealism theoretically suitable to study the prevailing militarism embedded in African politics leading to its experiences of incessant military interventions. This theory is also applicable to provide theoretical analysis towards the ongoing protracted armed conflicts in the world such as; Israeli military occupation in Gaza, Russia military invasion of Ukraine, the US-UK military attacks on Houthi rebels in Yemen, the US military global war on terrorism and the resurgence of military coups in Africa.

History of Military Epidemics in African Politics

It is might be incomplete to trace the genesis of military intervention in African politics without mentioning colonialism. This European incursion in Africa that was motivated by imperialism in 19th and 20th centuries predicated upon on the Berlin Conference of 1884-1885 where African territories were partitioned and allocated among imperial powers, established national military institutions that consequently became uncontrollable weapon fashioned against the civilian governance at the aftermath of the political independence (Ndaliman & Abada, 2023). Africa can be described as the epicentre of military takeovers in the world whereby out of the total number of 476 global military coup attempts since 1950, Africa has shared approximately 206 with 105 successful and 101 unsuccessful (Eshiet, 2021). Egypt was the first African country to experience military coup in 1952 when members of the Free Officers Association forcefully overthrew King Farouk I leading to the Mohamed Naguib Yousesef's ascension to the Head of State and in 1954, the head of the coup plotters, Gamal Abdel-Nasser Hussein became the Head of State (Ndaliman & Abada, 2023). The Egyptian coup was not against democratically elected governments however, it inspired several other coups against democratically elected governments in Africa. It was immediately followed by Sudan in 1958, then Ethiopia in 1960, Zaire (Kinshasa) in 1960, Togo in 1963, Congo (Brazzaville) in 1963, Benin (Dahomey) in 1963, Gabon in 1964, Algeria in 1965, Burundi in 1965, Central African Republic in 1966, Burkina Faso (Upper Volta) in 1966, Ghana in 1966, Nigeria in 1966, Sierra Leone in 1967, Mali in 1968, Libya in 1969, Somalia in 1969 etc. (Eshiet, 2021).

According to Guttridge (1975), the period between 1960s and 1970s was named to be a decade of coups in the continent whereby 14 significant cases of military coups were recorded between January 1963 and the end of February 1966 and by early 1968, there were 19 successful coups in the continent. By the end of 1970, which was within the period of 8 years, the continent has recorded almost 30 incidents of coup. By 1999, there were more than 70 successful coups coupled with significant number of coup attempts (Amadife, 1999). As put forward by Duzor and Williamson (2022), the total number of 486 coup related activities have been recorded around the world and Africa has over 214. Out of 242 successful coups in the world, Africa shared a total of 106 and out of 54 countries situated in the continent, 45 countries have shared from this military experience whereby 13 countries have had constant and regular experience of military interventions. Starting from the periods of 1990s, the third wave of democratization

emerged as a result of the reintroduction of a multi-party system as a substitution for the orthodox one-party states coupled with the shift in the global paradigm of support for the promotion of democracy and civil rights, which consequently resulted to the declination of military regimes and military interventions. This period in question might have witnessed relatively a smaller number of military takeovers with only 12 coups recorded between the periods of 2000 to 2012. However, the era of military epidemics has resurfaced with the recent resurgence of military interventions in the continent (Mohammed, 2022).

The re-emergence of military interventions from the year 2012 in the continent suggests that from the past five years, civilian governments have been forcefully overthrown by military leaders, started from Zimbabwe (November, 2017), to Mali (August, 2020), Chad (April, 2021), Guinea (September, 2021), Guinea-Bissau (February, 2022), Sudan (October, 2021), Burkina Faso (January 2022) and Niger (July 26 2023). This prompted the statement of the United Nations Secretary-General, Antonio Guterres to have described these military interventions as an "epidemic of coups" in Africa (Nichols, 2021). The undemocratic practices of civilian governments leading to poor governance and conditions of insecurity fueled the dissatisfaction of citizens whereby military interventions in some of these countries such as; Mali, Guinea, Burkina-Faso, Chad and Sudan were publicly celebrated and welcomed by the citizens (Osariyekemwen & Osariyekemwen, 2021). Statistically, Sudan occupies the first position in terms of African countries with the most coups, attempted and unsuccessful with a total number of 17 and 6 successful coups. Burkina Faso takes the lead with the highest number of 8 successful coups staged in 1966, 1974, 1980, 1982, 1983, 1987, 2014 and 2022 followed by Nigeria with 8 coup attempts and six were successful in July 1966, July 1975, 1983, 1985, 1993 and 1998. Other countries that are also leading include Chad, 7; Sudan, 7; Burundi, 6; Comoros, 6; Ghana, 6; Mauritania, 6; Ethiopia, 5; Libya, 5; Sierra Leone, 5; Central African Republic, 5 and Benin, 5. Mali, Guinea and Guinea Bissau ranging from 4 to 5 times (Duzor & Williamson, 2022). Based on this reality, the only few African countries without the experience of military interventions are Botswana, South Africa, South Sudan, Cape Verde, Malawi, Namibia, Eritrea, Senegal, Sao Tome and Principe, Seychelles and Mauritius. Some countries have only had one experience (Morocco and Mozambique) or two (Angola, Kenya, Cameroon and Djibouti) (Mohammed, 2022: 89-90).

Reasons for the Resurgence of Military Coups in Africa

The factors that created an enabling environment for various military interventions in the history of the continent have been either similar or cumulative to those that led to the recent reemergence of military epidemics. The governance crisis of political leaders who are undemocratic in practice and dictators created the condition for military intervention in postcolonial African states, an illustrative attribute of militarization of democracy. This is the conclusion of Levan (2015) that, the socio-economic malaise of African states are traceable to their endemic political problems. The post-colonial African political leaders in an attempt to dominate their societies, centralized the political power with little or no space for consociation arrangement. In spite of the fact that, many African states were able to establish a multi-party system and other forms of government such as; African socialism and other ideologies, their political leaders have embraced militarized politics with authoritarian tendencies exhibiting the politics of exclusion and neo-patrimonial rule (Guttridge, 1975; Decalo, 1985; Levan, 2015). These conditions enabled the military arrogated itself as a corrective regime with necessary professionalism to become alternatives to the unenviable leadership deficit confronting the continent thereby brought about unfortunate military coups with dire consequences in many states in Africa (Levan, 2015). There seem to be a general consensus among scholars on enabling factors for military interventions, which are mainly termed as "triggers" of coup and basically attributed to as "a syndrome of developmental strains and stresses in African political systems (Decalo, 1973; Powel, 2012). Decalo, (1973: 108-109) stated these triggers of coup to include; authoritarian or autocratic political leaders, high level of executive corruption, daunting economic challenges, governmental inefficiency, inept public officers, low level of political institutionalization, military praetorianism, crisis of legitimacy arising from leadership elections, threat to the army's professional interest and integrity, inter-elite rivalry and discrepancy between the

governmental policies and military perception of national interest together with the cutting of military budget or delinquency of its welfare by civilian governments. These factors are generally defined as undemocratic practices substratum to a militarized democracy and its consequential outcomes in this research.

The resurgence of military interventions in the continent is considered to have erupted as a result of similar historical triggers of coup in the continent. According to Odigbo, Ezekwelu & Okeke (2023), the abysmal performance of constitutional government and leadership gaps in nations like; Mali, Sudan, Burkina Faso and other states in Africa leading to corruption, the disconnect between the rulers and citizens, injustice, lack of freedom, the failure of the state to judiciously perform her constitutional responsibilities, unmet expectations of the people coupled with unbearable insecurity that have metamorphosed into the emergence of rebels and terrorist groups in nations like Mali and Burkina-Faso, Somalia, Nigeria and DR Congo are general triggers for the recent emergence of military coups in the continent. These are the defining attributes of a militarized democracy encapsulating the various authoritarian or undemocratic practices of African civilian governments that are considered fundamental to the resurgence of military coups. The political system of African states is embedded with insular political leaders who engaged in changing the constitutions of their countries, suppressed opposition and used elections to legitimize their indefinite stay in power. African political leaders found guilty of these democratic malpractices are Presidents Gnassingbé Eyadema of Togo, Paul Kagame of Rwanda, Pierre Nkurunziza of Burundi, Yoweri Museveni of Uganda, Paul Biya of Cameroon, Blaise Compaore of Burkina Faso, Zine El-Abidine Ben Ali of Tunisia, Tandja Mamadou of Niger, Idriss Deby of Chad, Omar Bongo of Gabon, and Abdel Fattah el-sisi of Egypt, Robert Mugabe of Zimbabwe (Mbaku, 2020). African political leaders have embraced this habit of changing their constitutions for their selfish interests whereby in 2020, out of four presidents that were supposed to complete their constitutional assigned periods in office, only Pierre Nkurunziza in Burundi and Mahammadou Issoufou in Niger had agreed to step down (Cassani, 2020). African countries that have embraced the basic tenets of democracy in spite of their internal challenges have never experienced violence on a larger scale leading to a complete breakdown of law and order. They have conducted elections periodically with the peaceful transfer of political power such as; South Africa and Botswana. The Africa Report (2019) described Botswana as the *"Africa's foster child for democracy, good governance, and transparency."*

One of the positions of this research argues that, contrary to scholarly arguments portraying democracy as a complete failure in Africa, the African militarized version of democracy cannot be used to denigrate the developmental advantage of a consolidated democracy. The general success story of African countries without military takeovers has been examined by the annual Ibrahim Index of African Governance, which is also known as the Mo Ibrahim Index that conducted analysis based on the effective practice of democracy and their cumulative points across all indexes. The ratings reflected, Mauritius with (79.5 points), Seychelles with (73.2), Cote d' ivoire with (71.1), Namibia with (68.6) and Botswana with (68.5). Kenya and Morocco were the only two countries that achieved the biggest strides between the periods of 2008 to 2017. The 2020 Index listed Mauritius with (77.2), Cape Verde with (73.1), Seychelles with (72.3) Tunisia with (70.4) and Botswana with (66.9) as the top five countries. They were followed by South Africa with (65.8), Namibia with (65.1), Ghana with (64.3), Senegal with (63.2) and Morocco with (61.0), respectively (Ibrahim Index of African Governance, 2020). Countries such as; Tunisia and Ghana with the experience of military interventions were able to make the list among top ten due to their democratic stability and development. Countries such as; Mali, Chad, Niger, Guinea, Guinea Bissau, Sudan, Burkina Faso and Nigeria with the incessant experience of military interventions or militarized democracy were unable to make the list. Nigeria for example is presently not under direct military takeover but the militarized version of democracy embraced by the civilian government is incredibly uncontestable (Oluyemi, 2020). Omilusi (2015) argued that, there is a complete overhaul of politics rooted in military symbols, values, and ethos replicating in the large sections of the present Nigerian civil society. This has reflected in the security policy adopted by the civilian governments whereby military

armed forces and various state security forces are state instruments of suppression, to confront peaceful protests such as ENDSARS protest, Yoruba Nation self-determination movements, Niger Delta crisis, Boko Haram terrorist crisis and every form of internal uprising against the administrative malpractices of the government. The state security forces are instruments of government to forcefully enforce and sustain the political maladministration, executive corruption and economic hardships over the people (Oluyemi, 2023).

The Resurgence of Military Coup in Mali

The presidential elections of 2013 resulted in the favour of Ibrahim Boubacar Keita's ascension to the president of the country. According to some experts, Keita's administration is considered to be one of the worst experiences in the 60year history of the country at the aftermath of independence (Morgan, 2020). Keita's rule was marked by various undemocratic practices; high level of corruption and nepotism; threatening insecurity to the extent that, the zone of jihadist activity expanded from the northern regions of Mali to the center of the republic and by 2020, the government was only controlling one-third of the whole country along with the diversification of economy, which depended on exports of raw materials by more than 80% (Wroblewska, 2015). The political maladministration resulted to the literal collapse of areas such as; education, health care and justice (Morgan, 2020). The COVID19 pandemic and restrictive measures adopted by the government aggravated the already deplorable economic situation. President Keita against all odds still participated and won the 2018 elections leading to the rapid growth of anti-government demonstrations and Keita's government responded with the use of armed forces to suppress the protests, which resulted to countless of human right violations (Ifex, 2018). According to Schultes (2022), there has been severe declination in the integrity of elections and political pluralism in Mali with political pluralism and freedom of assembly functioning at the lowest level from the past ten years. The country is among the most declined countries in terms of security and rule of law more particularly, in the executive's compliance with the rule of law. The outcome of legislative flawed elections in 2020, which saw the result of 31 legislative seats overturned in favour of the President Keita leading to popular protests against the President are considered to be triggers of the military coup in 2020. Prior to the Mali's 2020 coup, the last military coup in the country was in 2012 led by Captain Amadou Sanogo, the military intervention that was described to be brief and short gave way to a democratically-elected government of Keita in 2013. Furthermore, as a result of the massive non-violent protests in the capital and public dissatisfaction with Keita's government, by August 2020, the military, led by Colonel Assimi Goïta, ousted President Keita's government by highlighting high level of insecurity, corruption, increased and uncontrolled insurgency, and the decay of governance as necessitating factors for the military intervention with the promise of restoring democracy after a transition period (Adetuyi, 2022). The military intervention that was publicly celebrated by many Malian citizens immediately dissolved the Keita's government and instituted an interim government of President Ndaw. In May 2021, approximately nine months after the August 2020 coup, Mali's military arrested the interim government with the claim that, the civilian leader violated the terms of Mali's transition charter and installed himself as the president of Mali (Akinola & Makombe, 2024). According to the research released by Afrobarometer (2021), 75% of Malians preferably desire the return of democracy. The masses might be willing to grant a chance to the military government due to their historical record of incorruptibility however, the lack of clarity concerning the military plan for democratic transition has raised disturbing concern for civil society, regional and international community. This has illustrated how undemocratic practices of the civilian government of Ibrahim Boubacar Keita (militarized democracy) provided justifiable excuses for the military intervention in the country.

The Resurgence of Military Coup in Guinea

Similar to the situation of other African countries confronted with the recent resurgence of military coups, the political pluralism and civil society space in Guinea have been described as highly restricted including declination of all related rights such as Digital Rights and Media Freedom. The state

armed forces became instrument of violence instrumentalized by the government against civilian population coupled with the deterioration of rule of law and justice. The deteriorated rule of law was further exacerbated when President Condé amended the constitution in 2020 to afford himself the privilege of running for two more terms in office leading to the grievances behind the flawed 2020 presidential elections, which is described as defining triggers of the coup (Schultes, 2022). Guinean military ruled Guinea from 1984 to 2010 and handed power over to a democratically elected government of Alpha Condé in 2010 (Adetuyi, 2022). On September 5 2021, President Alpha Condé's government was ousted through military coup under the leadership of Special Forces commander Mamady Doumbouya, the coup that was described by Colonel Doumbouya as the people's mission and a just intervention. President Condé was accused of developing an autocratic, authoritarian government by amending the constitution to run for third term, mismanagement of economy, political corruption, poor service delivery that resulted to bad roads and dilapidated hospitals. As noted by Adetuyi, (2022, p.19), "the military takeover of Guinea has cited the socio-political and economic situation of the country, the dysfunction of republican institutions, the instrumentalization of justice, the infringement on citizens' rights and financial mismanagement as excusable reasons for the coup." Due to the abysmal performance of civilian government and the historical credibility of the military forces that was described as the promoter of democracy and protector of helpless masses, the 2021 military coup was celebrated and embraced by the people contrary to its official condemnation by the regional community (ECOWAS) and international community at large (Akinola & Makombe, 2024). This case has explained how undemocratic practices inherent in the President Condé civilian administration resulted to the resurgence of military coup in the country.

The Resurgence of Military Coup in Burkina Faso

According to Schultes (2022), the integrity of elections and civil society space have been severely deteriorated in Burkina Faso whereby all related Rights indicators scored lower since 2019 than 2010. There is restriction to freedom of expression and digital rights and different strata of the society are largely unable to enjoy equality of civil liberties coupled with the worsened security condition as a result of the prevalence of armed conflicts and violence against civilians by non-state actors in the country. The deteriorated situation of security and the inability of government to contain armed extremist groups are described as triggers for the coup in 2022. Burkina Faso is a former French colony that gained political independence in 1960 embedded with a long history of military rule and coups. Blaise Compaore was the former president who took over the political power in 1983 and was ousted in 2014 through popular uprising when he attempted to amend the constitution for the extension of his rule. This was followed by elections held in 2015 and 2020 that saw President Roch Marc Christian Kabore elected and re-elected respectively in polls that was described to be fair but deadly challenged by the ongoing insecurity (Conley, 2021). The country witnessed two successful coups between January 2022 and September 2022. On January 24, 2022 Kabore's government was ousted by the military coup under the leadership of Lieutenant-Colonel Paul-Henri Sandaogo Damiba who became military-led Patriotic Movement for Safeguard and Restoration MPSR that replaced the government (Akubueze, 2024). Kabore's government was blamed to have failed to contain the situation of insurgency by jihadist groups in the north. This military coup was described not to have fallen short of expectation considering the dissatisfaction of security forces, a growing lack of support for the government due to the report of the absence of food for weeks at a military base in Inata before they were attacked by an armed group in 2021 leading to the death of 49 military officers and four civilians (Olukayode, 2022). Burkina Faso has replaced Mali as the epicenter of Islamist violence in the Sahel with incessant devastating attacks against civilians whereby over 130 people were killed by armed militants in the northern town of Solhan in June 2021 and 16,000 people abandoned their homes as a result of an attack on Seytenga in June 2022. The displacement crisis in the country was described as one of the world's fastest growing with an estimated 1.9 million people internally displaced according to UNHCR, 17 June 2022. This case has demonstrated an

interrelation between undemocratic practices of the government, insecurity and the resurgence of military coup.

The Resurgence of Military Coup in Niger

On July 26 2023, Niger's President Mohamed Bazoum was incarcerated in his office in the morning by the presidential guard and it was disclosed by the presidential office on social media initially as "anti-republican mood" by the elite military unit, which ended up becoming a military coup by the end of the day when a ten-member group of high-ranking military officers appeared on the national television and declared they had deposed the government as a result of the deteriorated situation of security and inadequate economic and social governance embedded in Bazoum's government (Zambakari, 2023). Niger since its political independence in 1960 from France, the military has played a major role in shaping the political history of the country and domestic political crises have been historical triggers for military interventions. In 2010, President Mamadou Tandja's government was overthrown by the military after he attempted to unlawfully extend his term in office for the third time and the coup was instrumental toward the beginning of democracy in the country. Even in 2011, the threat of military coups lingered following the election of Mahamadou Issoufou as well as the first democratic change of government in 2021, which saw Issoufou's long-time party colleague Mohamed Bazoum assumed the presidency. Similar to the outcome of the resurgence of military coup in Mali and Burkina Faso, countless of Nigeriens took to the streets of Niamey and some regional centres after the military seized power to support the military takeover by attacking the French embassy and the headquarters of the ruling PNDS-Tarayya party. A political scientist in the country Abdourahmane Idrissa, described the coup to not only mark the violent end of democracy but also reflected the failure of democracy in the country (Tschörner, 2023). The 2021 election of Bazoum was internationally hailed to be the first democratic transfer of power in the history of the country in spite of allegations of several irregularities and massive protests. The government issued a decree in 2022 that made it almost impossible for nongovernmental organizations (NGOs) to operate with the imposition of bureaucratic hurdles and requirement to ensure their programmes are in alignment with the governmental priorities. In addition, differences between the military and Bazoum's policy toward insecurity from the growing threat posed by jihadist violence could be another motive behind the military coup (Yabi, 2023). Bazoum advocated for the use of dialogue approach for political conflict resolution by negotiating with jihadist groups, demobilize and reintegrate Nigerien combatants and reduce intercommunal tensions with the help of local mediation initiatives. This approach totally contradicted the position of military leadership in the country and some oppositions criticized the dialogue initiatives as a sign of the government's weakness and inability to guarantee the security of its citizens. The release of terrorist prisoners and the plan of government for reintegration whereby the President described them "stronger and more battle-hardened" than the army was perceived as condescending by the army and citizens. Bazoum's dismissive attitude toward the military governments in Mali and Burkina Faso was also considered as a strategic mistake by the military leadership. Brigadier General Abdourahamane Tiani was accused to have initiated the military coup by many Nigeriens and international observers due to the report that he was going to be dismissed as the head of presidential guard in the following day as well as the disputes between Bazoum and Tiani over the budget of the presidential guard (Tschörner, 2023). This case has demonstrated the state' infringement on fundamental human rights of the people, insecurity and embracement of various undemocratic practices as triggers of the resurgence of military intervention in the country.

The Resurgence of Military Coup in Sudan

Sudan has been reportedly described to have experienced the highest number of coups and attempted coups in Africa with a total number of 17 coups and 6 successful (Mwai, 2022). The military coup that took place on October 2021 was a culmination of many events that happened in 2019 during the last military coup in the country when the government of Omar al-Bashir was ousted by the military as a result of violent protests that took place for many months (Ali, etal., 2022). The governance has

demonstrated a total disagreement between the military and civilians since 2019 in terms of power sharing agreement thereby, the discontentment with the post-2019 power arrangement and the desire of the military to gain total control of the country's political affairs led to the military coup of October 2021 under the military leadership of Abdel Fattah al-Burhan (Adetuyi, 2022). The democratic transition of the country was halted when the commander-in-chief of the Sudanese Armed Forces (SAF) and chair of Sudan's Sovereignty Council, Lt. General Abdul-Fattah al-Burhan decided to take what he described to as 'corrective action' by appearing on the national television to declare a state of emergency and dissolve the transitional government, cancelled crucial articles of the Constitutional Declaration, which was followed by the house arrest of the Prime Minister Abdulla Hamdok and the detain of four figureheads of the civilian component of the government. Contrary to some African countries where military coups were welcomed and celebrated by the citizens, millions of Sudanese people took to the streets five days after the coup, on 30 October, for a peaceful protest against the military coup, demanded the reversal of the coup and establishment of a full civilian transitional government in which they were confronted with the use of excessive violence by heavily armed security forces. The two main factors described as the reasons behind the coup are; the approaching civilian takeover of the chair of the Sovereignty Council is considered threatening to the large and uncontrolled business empires of al-Burhan and Hemedti and secondly, the growing civilian oversight is also considered threatening to put an end to the generals' de facto impunity (Hoffmann, 2021). This case has demonstrated the various elements of militarism embedded in the politics of a state as enabling conditions for military interventions.

Discussion and Conclusion

The fact that democracy has been differently practiced at different countries in the world has not redefined its basic tenets thereby, the hallmark of a true consolidated democracy remains the same. In a proper democratic government, citizens are governed through voting process and elections must be free and fair; rights of minority are protected under the government of majority rule; equality and fairness are ensured among all citizens through cooperation and compromise; ethnic differences are not politicized; human rights of the citizens are well protected without baseless infringement by the government; check and balances is well entrenched to enforce the will of the people and prevent dictatorship; there must be independence of judiciary; the supremacy of civilian institution over the defense, state security forces and the military is significant for a functioning democracy. Democracy is a system of government that allows the people to make law and decide how the law will be enforced. The constitution is supreme and it contains the democratic process of electing political leaders, functions and power of three arms of government and it also contains the procedure for its amendment. Militarization of democracy has to do with the military influence over democratic governments, the authoritarian culture of politics, and the military oriented policies and undemocratic practices within a political system (Adewumi, 2022). This research examines the militarization of democracy as the fundamental cause of unconstitutional change of government through the recent military resurgence in African states coupled with human rights violations, corruption, bad governance, civil unrest, insecurity, economic and socio-political challenges embedded in these states. Militarized democracy is attributed with the dismantling or short-circuiting/undermining of political institutions, which mostly depend on rules, trust, reliability, predictability and general consensus about its functions. It includes, the investiture of authoritarian, commandist and arbitrary approaches to politics and management, the putrefaction of the security apparatus of the state as well as the debilitation of a sense of accountability, which is impunity and lack of due process as hallmarks of governance (Hutchful & Aning, 2001).

It is enthralling that some African states that are untouched by military coups are attributed with the sophisticated practice of democracy even in spite of their shortcomings and challenges portraying the grim picture of the risks in their democratization process. This reinforces the position of this research that military coups in African states are consequential outcomes of the inability of African political leaders to effectively uphold democratic principles and ensure its consolidation in the polity. The examination of the

historical advent of military coups and its recent resurgence in the continent demonstrated both similar and cumulative factors as triggers of coups in African countries, which could be collectively described as the disseverment between an ideal democratic administration inherent with the conduct of free and fair elections, efficiency of rule of law, respect for fundamental human rights, separation of power and the practice of a multiparty system and the militarized democratic administration upholding authoritarianism in governance. Civilian African political leaders turned into dictators and their unwillingness to leave offices upon the completion of their constitutional assigned terms, selfishly adjusted the constitution to afford themselves with the privilege of staying longer in the office leading to the conduct of ritualistic elections to legitimize their undemocratic practices. They have also embraced militarism with the use of state military forces to suppress opposition groups, violation of human rights of the people, high level of corruption, unable to contain the deteriorated situation of insecurity, failing economic, politicization of state security forces, absence of accountability, transparency and rule of law in governance. Odigbo, Ezekwelu, & Okeke (2023) explained that, the attributes of democracy such as accountability, equity, justice, rule of law and fundamental human rights along with its principles for an inclusive, progressive, and stable society are justifiable reasons behind its universal acceptability and support. This research argues that, the dissatisfaction of the citizens with the abysmal performance of democratic governments failing to adhere to the core democratic attributes and principles, embraced militarism and undemocratic practices is a depiction of the realist construct of African politics for a long period of time, which resulted to citizens' celebration and embracement of military takeovers and this has not illustrated the failure of democracy in the continent. Undoubtedly, there is no alternative to a well-entrenched consolidated democracy in Africa considering the distinctive heterogeneity of its society and the bifurcation of the core democratic principles to the practice of militarized democracy is what has resulted to the incessant military interventions as well as various challenges militating against the continental development.

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