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MILITARY RESURGENCE AND LIBERAL DEMOCRACY IN AFRICA

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Abstract
The emergence of democracy in Africa was assumed to be a way out of the problems of governance in the continent because liberal democracy is argued to be more promising, secured, transparent, fair and people friendly. Yet, the recent military resurgence in Sudan, Chad, Mali, Burkina Faso, Guinea, Niger and Gabon appears to be pointing at liberal democracy as a failing political system in Africa. Therefore, this study examined the resurgence of military in Africa and its effects on liberal democracy. This paper adopted descriptive research method, extracted information from secondary sources of data and used classical theory of civil-military relations as theoretical framework. The paper revealed that factors such as external factors, ethnic dominance, economic and sit-tight syndrome of Africa elected leaders have triggered recent resurgence of military in Africa. The study revealed that military resurgence have perilous effect on African democracies as it often led to suspension of constitutional order, inhibited political freedoms and violates human rights, caused media censorship and civil liberties' suppression. The thus concluded that military resurgence violated values such as respect for human rights and constitutionalism, which are all essential pillars of democracy in Africa. The paper thus recommended among others, that African countries should strengthen democratic institutions, including electoral commissions, judiciary, and parliaments, to ensure transparent, credible, and fair elections. African countries should strengthen regional and international cooperation to prevent military resurgence in politics by supporting democratic transitions in other countries.

Keywords: Africa, coup d'état, democracy, liberal democracy, military resurgence.

Introduction

Democracy as a system or form of rule is assuming a 'universal value' in itself and is widely considered a default government due largely to its intrinsic, instrumental and constructive values. While democratic form of government is increasingly being considered with global acceptance as a value, it has been popularised as a preferred form of rule due to what it means for citizens and what benefits it creates (Barash & Webel, 2018). Democracy,

on the other hand, constructively ensures citizen participation through discussions and debates that mold society norms. Democracy offers the means to foster the development of values and the comprehension of needs, rights, and obligations. Consolidating democracy in Africa requires an understanding of the fundamental significance of political freedom and participation, the instrumental importance of maintaining an accountable and responsive government, and the positive role that democracy plays in the creation of values (Carothers, 2020; Schmitter, 2007).

Unfortunately, a number of issues have made it difficult for democratic norms to survive in Africa, including poverty, political unpredictability, corruption, and - most recently and worrisomely - the military's resurgence into politics, which threatens the integrity of the continent's true democracy. Many African nations have witnessed military resurgences with mixed results; among them are the countries of Mali, Niger, Burkina Faso, and Gabon, which are still ruled by juntas (Coulibaly & Konate, 2023). Due to political unrest that has followed the military resurgence in politics, which has severely damaged several African nations, the continent's democratic institutions are in jeopardy. Thus, as the military has attempted to consolidate its authority and influence in the nations in Africa, the growing military resurgence in politics has raised concerns about the deterioration of democratic institutions and the weakening of civilian supervision over the military (Ndiaye, Diallo & Gueye, 2023). Against this backdrop, this study examines the issues surround military resurgence in Africa with a view to highlighting its impact on the continent’s fledgling democracies.

Conceptual Clarification

The essential ideas of this intellectual project are topical and indisputable. Therefore, military revival and democracy were conceptualised in order to clear up any confusion regarding their significance and use.

Military Resurgence

The term military resurgence has been used by scholars to refer to the renewed emphasis on military power in Africa, particularly in the context of the resurgence of conflict and instability on the continent (Nyovani, 2021). Military resurgence of is an expression of the audacious re-emergence of military incursions and the preposterous dismantling of democratically elected civilian government (Odigbo, Ezekwelu & Okeke, 2023). It is has been viewed as militarisation of political order (Hedges, 2021). It is argued that the resurgence of military power is being driven by a combination of internal and external factors, including domestic power struggles, competition for resources, and the legacy of colonialism and imperialism (Mohammed & Adamu, 2022).

The term “military resurgence” refers to the military’s abrupt, violent, and unlawful removal of an established government from office. Regardless of the form of regime, it is either directed against the military or a government led by the civil society (Anyoko-Shaba, 2022). Military resurgence is a coercive military organisation that enforces rigid regulations intended to force the populace’s docility and obedience through the issuance of harsh laws, decrees, edicts, martial laws, and pronouncements (Chinweuba & Ezeugwu, 2023).

A military resurgence is the abrupt, frequently violent, and unlawful takeover of governmental authority or political power by a group of people, usually from the military or other powerful groups in a nation. This is usually characterised by a coordinated, centralised operation, frequently including the armed forces, aimed at overthrowing the government and taking control. It may lead to the suspension of the constitution and the installation of a new government, frequently headed by the coup plotters themselves (MO Ibrahim Foundation, 2023). For the sake of this paper, military resurgence is defined as a renewed incursion by military into the politics of African nations as a means of achieving political, economic, and security objectives in the face of ongoing conflict, instability and external interference.

Democracy

The idea of democracy has been interpreted differently depending on the viewpoint. Democracy has been defined as a form of governance in which the people themselves, or representatives they periodically elect, exercise their right to govern (Appadorai, 2004). Virtuous ideals essential to a stable, progressive, and inclusive society are embodied in democracy. It establishes connections between democratic practices and development in every society by virtue of its built-in institutional processes and development principles. With these innate or intrinsic qualities, it aims to bring the greatest amount of enjoyment to the largest number of members of the community (Odigbo *et al.*, 2023).

Democracy is a form of government where all citizens have equal rights and opportunities and have the authority to select their leaders and hold them responsible through free and fair elections (Dahl, 2021). Democracy is a type of governance that guarantees the rule of law, equality of political opportunity, and free speech in order to give the people authority over public policy (Carnoy, 2022). Democracy highlights the value of civil freedoms and democratic participation, pointing out that democracy includes both the right to vote and the right to engage in political decision-making (Lijphart, 2022).

Additionally, democracy places a high value on the people's right to free and fair elections as well as the rulers' accountability to the public (Rhodes, 2021). This implies that democracy involves more than just choosing leaders; it also entails making sure those leaders are receptive to the wishes of the people. But for the sake of this study, democracy is defined as a form of governance in which all citizens have equal access to opportunities and are able to exercise their right to vote freely.

Theoretical Framework

The theoretical foundation of this essay is Samuel P.'s 1957 traditional theory of civil-military interactions. Eliot Cohen, a strategic studies professor at Johns Hopkins University in the United States, is one of the theory's other proponents. Following World War II, deliberate attempts were made in the 1950s and 1960s to establish civil-military relations as an area of study in academia. It dealt primarily with the relationships between the military, social elites, and common citizens during its first few decades as a largely American-centered academic field, placing particular emphasis on how powerful politicians and military officials shaped US foreign and defense policy. Research on civil-military interactions has always been multidisciplinary, incorporating perspectives from economists, sociologists, psychologists, anthropologists, and political analysts. Samuel Huntington's ideas have dominated civil-military discourse in the West for the past fifty years. Huntington's 1957 book The Soldier and the State is still regarded as one of the foundational texts on democratic control today. It serves as a guidebook for officers at US military academies. Since the US is a major world power, Huntington's theories have influenced civil-military conceptions not only in the US but also in many other Western nations.

According to Huntington, there is a particular way of thinking known as the "military mind" that is defined by conservative realism, or the conviction that all states should prioritise having a potent military force and a robust defense capability. The attainment of true civil rule involves bolstering military convictions rather than introducing civilian perspectives. According to Huntington, the ultimate goal of "objective" or ideal civic control is to achieve the greatest level of military professionalism. Making a distinct division between military and civilian operations can help achieve this. Leaders in the armed forces should create military plans, and civilians should make political preparations. Politicians should steer clear of tactical matters and instead outline strategic objectives for the country's defense. When it comes to undertaking military operations, military leaders ought to be impartial toward politicians.

Huntington's thesis is thought to be poor because of this blatant division between military and civilian duties (Burk, 2002). Huntington's strategy made sense in a bipolar environment in 1957. But modern international battles are far more complex and asymmetrical than those during the Cold War, which were characterised by clarity and symmetry. The distinction between military and civilian duties is no longer clear. Every theater of operations typically includes foreign military forces (such as those from NATO, the EU, or the UN), mercenaries, security personnel, journalists, private companies, and observers in addition to national military units. It is now difficult to distinguish between military and civilian duties as clearly as Huntington did for this reason.

Professional Soldier by Morris Janowitz, published in 1960, provides the most compelling counterargument to Huntington's theory. Similar to Huntington, Janowitz enjoys widespread scholarly support from scholars who study civil-military relations. The question of whether rigorous separation or complete integration of civilian and military decision-making processes results in more effective civil control over the military is at the center of the argument between (the schools of) Huntington and Janowitz. Huntington argues that because the military is special and does not belong in the civilian sector, it should remain that way. Nonetheless, Janowitz contends that society and the military constitute an organic totality that shouldn't be split apart (Schiff, 1995). Treating the military as an institution that exists outside of society or alienating the military from it is extremely risky, according to Janowitz (Janowitz, 1960). The military ought to evolve at the same rate as the general population and stay abreast of political shifts. In order to establish civil rule, rivalry for resources and attention is encouraged.

According to Janowitz, it is impossible to distinguish clearly between military and civilian duties. His analysis of the social background, origin, motivations, lifestyle, position, and other comparable traits of military members is included in his empirical research of the US military in the 20th century. According to Janowitz, the nature of military operations and society at large have changed as a result of the Allied victory in the Second World War and advancements in military technology, which have changed the focus on the gendarmerie role of the military. Janowitz refers to these new units as "constabulary forces. The idea that military institutions in Africa have frequently served as political power tools rather than impartial state protectors has drawn criticism. Foreign interventions, like the Cold War, which resulted in the proliferation of weapons and military training, have contributed to the militarisation of African politics (Berman & Laitin, 2018).

The idea that there is a delicate balance between civilian and military power in a functioning democracy and that this balance can be upset by factors like political instability, economic crises, or external threats is what makes the theory of the civil-military relationship relevant to the current resurgence of military power in Africa. The argument might hold true in the African context, given the surge in military coups and prolonged military rule in nations like Mali, Niger, and Guinea. The theory emphasises that in order to preserve a healthy civil-military balance, robust civilian institutions and political norms are essential. Weak or corrupt civilian institutions have allowed the military to expand its power and influence in many African nations. Furthermore, the theory contends that objective civilian crises like economic hardship or political instability - both of which are present in many African nations, including Mali and Guinea - can serve as catalysts for military coups. Thus, political unrest and economic hardships have upset the civil-military balance in numerous African nations.

History of Military Resurgence in Africa

Because of the frequency of coups across the continent throughout the 1960s, the decade was dubbed the military decade in Africa (Zoiberg, 1973). Between 1960 and 1970 alone, successful coups were witnessed in Togo, Benin, Burkina Faso, Nigeria, Ghana, Sierra Leone, and Mali, among other West African countries (McGowan, 2006). Three-quarters of

African leaders were either overthrown by coups d'état or assassinated in the 1960s and 1970s. Only five African countries regularly held competitive elections prior to the fall of the Berlin Wall in 1989 (Greenblatt, 2012). After the third wave democratic wind toppled most of these regimes and brought in regimes that could assert their claim to power through multiparty electoral procedures, the dynamics were altered. International relations were impacted by the political shifts observed at the national level. In addition to development partners' demands that democratisation be achieved in order for African nations to receive funding, regional organisations like the African Union (AU) and the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) have explicitly stated in their charters and protocols that only elected officials from respective countries are permitted to interact with them (Suleiman & Onapajo, 2022).

These elements work together to propel nearly every nation on the continent in the direction of democracy and openness. However, the basis of these democracies is unstable and always in danger of crumbling or failing due to the character of these cultures, especially those of the west African sub-region and the political economy. While some of these nations, including Mali, Niger, Guinea-Bissau, and Sao Tome and Principe, were unable to survive the huge elastic force, some of these nations were able to. Since the military establishment has been identified as the issue for the majority of these countries, the military's participation can no longer be justified in these cases as corrective. However, the result of these circumstances is uncertainty and volatility, which is harmful to these nations' economic stability. Why does the military institution forsake its customary position in society and enter into direct involvement and control of the state apparatus is the question we should try to answer here. Numerous reasons have been proposed as the cause of this evolution (Ganesh, 2022).

The complicated relationship between the military and civil authority - the issue of civil-military relations - is the first point to be made here. Scholars like Wintrobe (1988), Wintrobe (1990), McGuire and Olson (1996), and Besley and Robinson (2010) have examined the contrast between military dictatorship and civil administration, whether democratic or not. According to Acemoglu *et al.* (2010), there are three sorts of dictatorial regimes: military dictatorship, democratic civil government, and non-democratic civil government. According to the report, the army is a tool used by the wealthy and powerful elite to ensure their own survival by repressing the common people. The disparity in wealth among these communities and the army's significance only grows, particularly when polarised factions engage in political rivalry over resources and authority. These groups' roots branch out along several axes, including ownership of the production factors, religion, ethnic or regional origins, and so forth. These divided and polarised groups battle violently to take control of the State, and their conflict selects victors and losers. Civil war and coup d'état are more likely to occur in a society where various factions are vying for dominance (Adefisoye & Braimah, 2023).

British and French colonial policy in Africa varied in several aspects, including military revival. For instance, France employed military force to impose French authority and control over local communities as part of its direct rule policy (Duggan & Williams, 2021). In contrast, the British employed an indirect rule policy that provided autonomy and support in exchange for local rulers cooperating with British authorities (Chaudhuri, 2022). The Mau Mau insurrection in Kenya was one of many local uprisings and resistance groups that the French military was frequently deployed to put down (Davis, 2022).

The first and second Anglo-Sudanese wars, as well as the Boer War in South Africa, were among the engagements in which the British military took part (Rogan, 2021). To retain its power in the area, the British military, on the other hand, tended to be more circumspect in its use of force, choosing instead to rely on economic incentives and diplomacy (Carroll, 2022). A highly centralised military system was established in the colonies as a result of the

strong centralisation of power in Paris that defined the French colonial empire in Africa (Jolly & Arnaud, 2021). In contrast, the African colonies of the British Empire were typically more decentralised, with considerable autonomy and power enjoyed by local leaders and monarchs (Anderson, 2022). The French colonial army was also notorious for its cruel methods, which contrasted with the British military's focus on professionalism and discipline and included the widespread use of torture and summary executions (MacMaster, 2021).

Overview of Recent Military Resurgence in African Democracy

The first indication was early on March 22, 2012, when reports of a military resurgence in Mali surfaced. The main justification given by the coup leaders for their action was a lack of sufficient tools and resources to combat Tuareg insurgents in the country's north. Amadou Toumani Toure's presidency of Mali is essentially over with the coup leaders' declaration made on public television. Less than three weeks later, on April 12, 2012, the military in Guinea-Bissau overthrew the government amid reports that the former was planning to reduce the number of the armed forces. It's interesting to note that just a few weeks before the planned presidential elections, both coups took place. Following the elections on April 29, 2012, outgoing President Toure of Mali had stated his intention to transfer power to a democratically elected successor (Ogude, 2012).

A rerun of the presidential election was planned for April 29, 2012 in Guinea-Bissau, despite the fact that the front-runner of the opposition chose to abstain from the polls due to allegations of fraud in the previous round. The two recent coups d'état in West Africa have highlighted persistent flaws in the continent's contested electoral democracies and their impact on the recurrence of coups, especially in the West African sub-region, despite the fact that elections have become the standard for gaining power in Africa (Lecocq & Raffestin, 2021). Table 1 lists current military resurgence attempts made in Africa between 2017 and 2023 in order to highlight how common it is on the continent.

Table 1: Recent Military Resurgence Attempts in Africa (2017-2023)

S/N	Nation	Date	Outcome	Ousted Leader	Emerged Leader	Justifications
1	Zimbabwe	November, 2017	Successful	President Robert Mugabe	Emmerson Mnangagwa	Social and economic suffering
2	Ethiopia	June 22, 2019	Failed	President Ambachew Mekonnen.		Not Clear
3	Chad	April, 2021	Successful	President Idriss Deby	Mahamat Idriss Déby Itno	Tenure elongation and insecurity
4	Mali	May 24, 2021	Successful	President Bah N'Daw	Assimi Goïta	Corruption, insecurity and economic hardship
5	Equatorial Guinea	September 5, 2021	Successful	President Alpha Condé	Colonel Mamady Doumbouya	Poverty, Corruption, mismanagement and tenure elongation
6	Sudan	October 25, 2021	Successful	President Omar al-Bashir	General Abdel Fattah al-Burhan	Inability of the putschist to form government
7	Guinea Bissau	February 1, 2022	Failed	President Umaro Sissoco Embaló		Not Clear

8	Burkina Faso	September 30, 2022	Successful	President Roch Marc Christian Kabore	Captain Ibrahim Traore	Deteriorating security situation
9	Gambia	December 21, 2022	Failed	President Adama Barrow		Not Clear
10	Niger	July 26, 2023	Successful	President Mohamed Bazoum	General Abdourahamane Tchiani	Tensions over the security crisis and the government's lack of legitimacy
11	Gabon	August 2023	Successful	President Ali Bongo of Gabon	Brigadier general Brice Oligui,	Sit-tight syndrome and corruption

Source: Adapted from Odigbo *et al.*(2023) and updated by authors

Niger

President Mamadou Tandja's civilian rule in Niger has led to the success of coups, causing resentment among the populace. ECOWAS urged coup leaders to restore civilian rule, despite cynicism towards civilian governments and elections. Africans are dissatisfied with corrupt governments, leading to a trend of military resurgence in the sub-region. This discredits democratic processes and encourages change (Taruvinga, 2023). Tandja used democracy to wage war against media, civil society, and political parties, drafting a constitution without input from civil society or the public. He extended his term without election and allowed unlimited presidential terms. Democracy requires civil society, media, opposition parties, and a strong state. Civilian governments without democratic substance cause despair and instability (Davis, 2022).

In 2021, Niger experienced violent protests and political instability, leading to President Mahamadou Issoufou's removal and the establishment of a transitional military government. The military has faced criticism for its heavy-handed response to protests and opposition groups. Delays in holding elections and transitioning to civilian rule have strained military resources, threatening stability (Beaumont, 2023). In January 2023, Colonel Assimi Goïta extended the transitional government's mandate, causing international condemnation and fears of prolonged military rule in Niger. This has deepened political divisions, sparked by opposition groups calling for civilian rule and elections, and concerns about the impact on the country's economy and development (Chin & Kirkpatrick, 2023; Al Jazeera, 2023).

Mali

Mali, once seen as a successful democratic transition in West Africa, experienced a significant setback in 2012 when its president, Amadou Toumani Touré, was overthrown by a military junta, marking a significant resurgence of the military in a country that had made significant progress in democracy for over a decade (Suleiman & Onapajo, 2022; Ndonga, 2008). The Tuareg minority conflict in Mali has been challenging for government forces to suppress, leading to a cabal of soldiers seizing the Presidential palace and State TV station, indicating a lack of decisive action (Nossiter, 2012; Lecocq & Raffestin, 2021). The seizure of the Palace is part of protests over the Malian government's handling of the Tuareg rebellion. The Movement for the Liberation of Azawad (MNLA) is fighting for a separate state, and the army feels underprepared. The mutiny-turned-coup began when Defence Minister General Sadio Gassama visited a military base in Kati. Protestors seized control of television stations and the Palace. The coup occurred close to the April 29th elections, when Touré was due to step down (Mohammed, 2022).

The military's seizure of power in Mali is attributed to a belief that politicians cannot resolve the rebellion in the North. The coup disrupted Mali's democracy and threatened West

Africa's democracy. The Touré divides and exploits internal relationships within Tuareg society, prolonging violence. Peace and reconciliation programs have failed, and Tuareg rebels have launched incursions into Mali, seizing towns and bases previously held by government forces (Anyoko-Shaba, 2022). The MNLA has gained strength due to the Arab Spring and the fall of Ghadafi, leading to the capture of strategic towns in northern Mali. This has led to the rebels declaring an Islamic republic of Azwad, ending the rebellion and gaining control of the capital (Dioura & Diarra, 2012; Acho & Tacham, 2023). The Economic Community of West African States and International community pressured the Mali coup, despite President Traore's absence. A compromise led to an interim government, but the MNLA and northern Mali issue pose challenges, prompting UN and African Union intervention (Taruvinga, 2023).

Mali has experienced multiple military coups and attempted coups, including the overthrow of President Ibrahim Boubacar Keïta in 2020, driven by dissatisfaction with the government's handling of security threats from militant groups. Colonel Assimi Goïta was appointed as interim president in Mali after the resignation of Bah N'Daw and Prime Minister Moctar Ouane, amid a slow transition to civilian rule (Suleiman & Onapajo, 2022). Mali's military resurgence has significantly impacted politics and security, with repeated coups and delays in civilian rule damaging the democratic process and the transitional government's credibility. Addressing these challenges requires sustained cooperation from stakeholders and the international community (Human Rights Watch, 2022; BBC News, 2022).

Guinea Bissau

Before April 12, 2012, Guinea Bissau experienced instability due to previous attempts to topple the government, including military unrest in 2010 and a failed 2011 coup. The death of Malam Bacai Sanha in 2012 led to preparations for a new election, but fears of violence or a coup d'état arose if the army's ethnically unbalanced approval was not met (Odigbo *et al.*, 2023). Angola withdrawn its forces from the MISSANG mission to modernise the Guinea Bissau military, leading to a coup. The coup occurred following the visit of Guinea-Bissau Defense Minister Jorge Tolentino Araujo to Angola, where he was expected to visit the Higher Warfare School and Higher Technical Military Institute. Unpopularity with Carlos Gomes Junior for his attempts to reform the institution was a significant explanation for the coup (Sayid, 2022). The Guinea-Bissau coup d'etat occurred two weeks before the presidential election, with armed forces arresting candidates and the president. The military council ruled until an interim National Transitional Council was established. International sanctions led to Manuel Serifo Nhamadjo becoming interim president. A military junta seized power and established a transitional government (Adetiloye, & Duruji, 2013; Toulmin, 2021).

Equatorial Guinea

Guinea's history since gaining independence from France in 1958 has been marked by military takeovers and periods of political instability. The Guinean administration has been under scrutiny for corruption and poor management in recent years, which has added to public unrest and discontent (ECOWAS, 2021). President Alpha Condé was overthrown in a military coup in September 2021 after proposing a contentious constitutional amendment in 2020 that would have let him to seek a third term in office. The proposal also sparked widespread demonstrations. The international community, which placed sanctions on the Guinean military junta, condemned the military coup. This included the African Union and the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) (African Union (AU), 2021). Colonel Mamady Doumbouya's military dictatorship in Guinea has made promises to organise elections and move toward civilian rule, but both the international community and opposition organisations inside Guinea have expressed doubt. Additionally, Guinea has been dealing with persistent security threats from militant organisations that operate in the area, especially along the Mali border. These threats have put a strain on the

nation's military capabilities and increased instability (United Nations Security Council (UNSC), 2021).

Factors Promoting Military Resurgence in Africa

A number of reasons have been put up for the current spike in military resurgence in politics that has devastated Africa. These elements might be classified as internal or external in nature. External influences play a major role in sustaining Africa's military resurgence in politics. For instance, China, Russia, and Turkey have stepped up their military support, arms sales, and training initiatives in Africa (Onuoha, 2022). Through the creation of the U.S. Africa Command (AFRICOM) and the supply of military support to African nations, the United States has also continued to play a major role in the security landscape of Africa (Blanchard, 2021). In particular, through its Common Security and Defense Policy (CSDP), which includes military interventions in Mali, the Central African Republic, and Somalia, the European Union (EU) has been actively involved in African security challenges (Fiabema, 2022; Idowu, 2021).

In addition, outside forces have frequently been charged with taking use of Africa's natural riches and human capital in order to gain influence and military might on the continent. For example, criticism has been leveled at China's Belt and Road Initiative (BRI), which is meant to support economic growth in Africa, due to its emphasis on infrastructure projects that serve Chinese interests and have the potential to bolster China's military presence in the area (Zhang, 2021). The Russian government has supported authoritarian regimes who are prepared to work with Moscow by giving military aid, arms sales, and training programs to African nations (McHugh, 2022). Turkey has been more active in Africa as part of its attempts to expand its influence worldwide, sending troops to nations like Somalia and Libya, among other things (Kyprianou, 2021).

On the other hand, the internal causes of Africa's military resurgence in politics vary from one nation or area to the next and are intricate and multidimensional in character. For instance, the recent military resurgence in Africa's politics has been attributed to a number of issues, including poverty, insecurity, corruption, and weak democratic institutions. Leaders have occasionally tried to hold onto power longer than necessary, which has caused tensions and discontent that may spark a military resurgence in politics. In several African nations, the rise of armed organisations and insurgencies has also left a security void that military commanders might take advantage of to gain control. In addition to the aforementioned, factors such as political factionalism, debt dependency, military dominance, and ethnic variety and rivalry all indicate an African military resurgence in politics (Yusuf, 2023; Chukwuemeka, 2023).

Ethnic domination was said to be a stabilising force that fosters social unity and erodes opposition. It seems that unresolvable disputes stemming from economic dependency and ethnic rivalry establish a structural framework for military resurgence in politics and associated political instability (Mohammed, 2022). Additionally, it was argued that poverty-exacerbated specialisation in and reliance on primary goods for export is a fundamental cause of the military resurgence in African's politics. This theory leads to a testable hypothesis that is investigated by using discriminant analysis on data for three groups of African nations. The hypothesis is validated by the models. Additionally, the likelihood of a successful military resurgence through coup is inversely correlated with the absence of a prior coup and the historical or ongoing presence of foreign soldiers since independence (Akubueze, 2024).

The return of military officers to politics in various African nations was explained by weak democratic institutions combined with a leadership vacuum. For instance, in August 2020, President Ibrahim Boubacar Keita of Mali was toppled by the military due to the country's fragile democratic institutions. The military was able to exploit the political unrest to grab power during the coup, which was carried out in the midst of widespread protests against corruption, insecurity, and economic hardship (Yusuf, 2023). Additionally, military

resurgence occurs when a nation experiences a leadership crisis, that is, when its president exhibits incompetence, tries to hold onto power despite opposition from within the government, or when the populace loses faith in the ability of their leaders to rule and provide for their needs (Chukwuemeka, 2023; Singh, 2022). Therefore, military resurgence in politics is made possible by factors such as the non-entrenchment of democracy in some African nations, the attempts of incumbents to thwart democratic procedures in order to maintain their positions of power, and the socioeconomic development gaps in these nations (Lecocq & Raffestin, 2021; Ogude, 2012).

The African military had resurgence in politics due in part to economic challenges and corruption. For instance, the military deposed President Alpha Condé of Guinea in September 2021 on the grounds of corruption and the government's inability to deal with the nation's social and economic issues (Vanguard, 2023). Economic problems including widespread poverty, rising unemployment, and inflation have sparked military resurgence in politics in several nations of Africa, as groups have seized power on the pretext that they want to address the problems the people are facing economically. Therefore, the frequency of military resurgence in politics in Africa was exacerbated by leadership failure to bring about decent governance as well as growing institutional deterioration and corruption (Yukawa et al., 2019).

The military's resurgence in politics to the continent was caused by African governments' attempts at unconstitutional tenure extension. Leaders that try to stay in power longer sometimes cause dissatisfaction and tensions that could spark military resurgence in politics. For instance, in April 2021, President Idriss Deby of Chad, who had been in government for 30 years and was running for a sixth term, was slain in combat with rebels. Although elections are scheduled to take place in 18 months by the military council that assumed power after his death, the state of affairs in Chad is still unpredictable (Yusuf, 2023; Rosenje, Onyebuchi, & Adeniyi, 2022).

A security void brought about by insecurity and the growth of armed groups in some African nations encouraged a military resurgence in politics. In an environment where extremist groups were threatening the country's security and planting the seeds of instability and fear, then there was justification for military resurgence in politics since the government's attempts to resolve internal conflicts and safeguard its citizens were hindered, leaving the most vulnerable communities at the whim of violence and uncertainty (Saaida, 2023). For instance, in October 2021, a group of military officers in Sudan carried out a coup, toppling the transitional government that had been in place since the removal of former President Omar al-Bashir from office in 2019. The military justified the coup by pointing to the necessity to restore order and the state of insecurity (Anyoko-Shaba, 2022).

African military resurgence in politics is influenced by a combination of hunger for power and military frustration. Any nation's military is essential to its sovereignty because it defends its borders against outside threats, upholds law and order, and acts as a deterrent to prospective aggressors and discontent. Thus, the military may take steps to reverse these activities by seizing power as a result of growing unhappiness with pay, policies, and mounting corruption (Emina & Ikegbu, 2020). A desire for power has also led to some group of military leaders starting coups just to usurp control from another group and take advantage of the advantages that come with being in charge of a country. For example, politicians start a military resurgence in order to take control of the state machinery and increase their political power throughout the nation and the surrounding area (Yukawa *et al.*, 2019).

Implications of Military Resurgence on Liberal Democracy in Africa

Overall, the effects of a military resurgence in politics on African democracies are complex and multifaceted. Military resurgences usually have detrimental long-term impacts on African democracy, even if they are occasionally justified as a response to political upheaval or

democratic shortcomings. As a result of the removal of the democratically elected government and the suspension of constitutional order, the military resurgence immediately caused a disturbance in democratic processes. This sudden change in the course of events had a significant negative impact on human rights and political freedoms, raising questions about media control and the repression of civil liberties. The sudden suspension of constitutional order caused by the military resurgence in politics in many African countries rocked the fundamental foundations of democracy, which the nations had fiercely defended (Saaida, 2023; Ojo, 2018).

The voices of common people in this scenario, whose expectations for a representative democracy were abruptly crushed, have a distinctly personal touch. People all around the country were afraid that their political liberties would be taken away, and there was a general feeling of betrayal and disillusionment. Media outlets, which were formerly thriving arenas for unrestricted speech, were severely restricted by censorship. The freedom of journalists to publish objective information was restricted by threats and intimidation. Journalists are guardians of truth and accountability. Curfews were also implemented during the political unrest as a means of putting an end to opposition, which further limited the people's ability to gather and peacefully express their complaints. The streets, which had previously been filled with calls for democracy, were suddenly silent due to fear and uncertainty (Saaida, 2023; Odigbo *et al.*, 2023).

It was said that military resurgence in politics destroyed democratic values and took away Africans' freedom, revisiting the destruction that the movement had inflicted on the continent in the past. When comparing military to civilian regimes for the sake of advancing democracy and good governance, the experiences of Togo, Mali, Benin, Ghana, Gambia, Sierra Leone, Nigeria, Burkina Faso, Liberia, Mauritania, Niger, and Guinea show that military regimes did not fare any better. Africa was a powder keg waiting to burst, as evidenced by the record of press freedom violations, cases of political opponents and journalists being imprisoned, corruption, mishandling of foreign loans, ineffective measures to combat poverty, and the constant appeal for help. It appears that military governments violated human rights more severely and severely (Edi, 2006, as cited in Pryce & Time, 2023).

Furthermore, the influence of the military resurgence goes beyond political spheres to include worries about abuses of human rights. Reports of arbitrary detentions and abuse of people thought to be dissidents surfaced, damaging Africa's standing internationally. The accounts of those who were persecuted, had their fundamental rights infringed, and had their hopes for a free and democratic society briefly dashed provide the personal touch to these injustices (Saaida, 2023; Lecocq & Raffestin, 2021).

The inability of African nations to successfully consolidate the gains of democracy to ensure a broader political process and the development of policies that impact the well-being (economic conditions) of the citizens is evidence that the military has also failed to ensure that coups aid the process of change for the citizens, both politically and economically, even though the assumptions for the reasons for military involvement in the political process in Africa are true. The fact that military resurgence has made these countries' socioeconomic, political, and democratic crises worse than before - along with their practice of restricting the room for civil society organisations to thrive, human rights violations, extrajudicial killings, and wanton disregard for the constitution - is even more concerning (Odigbo *et al.*, 2023; Falola, 2022).

Adding to the foregoing, a country's progress toward socio-economic self-sufficiency is hampered by a military resurgence in politics since most Western countries and even regional organisations have a tendency to withhold critical financial support from African governments who seize power through force. It is not always justified to applaud the acts of rambunctious and arrogant warriors who undermine constitutional order in the name of rescuing their country from inept leadership and corruption. Indeed, military resurgences in

politics are regressive in this regard (Pryce & Time, 2023). Ordinary Africans are also affected by its effects on the economy. The divide between the wealthy few and the marginalised many may get wider as a result of possible disruptions to foreign investment and development funding. As a result, a lot of Africans find it difficult to have access to healthcare, education, and basic necessities, which emphasises the necessity for a strong and prosperous economy that benefits all people (Saaida, 2023; Bach, 2020).

Furthermore, political unrest brought about by the military resurgence in politics has repercussions that extend beyond the boundaries of the impacted nations in Africa. The continent, which is already dealing with extremist activities and security challenges, may experience additional consequences that would cause populations to live in fear of violence and instability and long for a place where collaboration and peace rule (Saaida, 2023). Overall, military resurgence in politics is against democratic standards because it gives an unjust leader who took over through a coup the ability to rule the people by decree, disregarding the will of the people, respect for human rights, and constitutionalism - all fundamental components of democracy. Thus, new discussions over African states' capacity to maintain democracy have been sparked by the threat of the military resurgence in politics on the continent (Taruvinga, 2023; Mohammed, 2022).

Conclusion and Recommendations

This study interrogated the military resurgence in the African liberal democratic process. The study disclosed that disillusionment arising from weak democratic institutions, corruption, poverty, insecurity, poor governance, tenure elongation, proliferation of armed groups and insurgencies, misplaced priorities of government, ethnic diversity and competition, military centrality, debt dependence, and political factionalism triggered the recent resurgence in military and violent crimes in Africa. The study argued that the consequences of the military resurgence on African democracies are perilous in nature, as it often led to the suspension of constitutional order, which severely impacted political freedoms and human rights, raising concerns about media censorship and civil liberties' suppression. The study thus concluded that the military resurgence violated democratic values such as respect for human rights and constitutionalism, which are all essential pillars of democracy.

Therefore, towards strengthening democratic values in Africa, the study offered the following recommendations:

i. African nations should fortify democratic institutions such as parliaments, the judiciary, and electoral commissions. They can also do this by establishing independent electoral commissions, passing legislation to stop electoral fraud, and encouraging free and independent media.
ii. African nations should combat corruption, uphold accountability, and give all citizens equal opportunities in order to advance good governance, the rule of law, and human rights.
iii. African nations should collaborate more on a regional and global level to stop a military resurgence in politics. They can do this by encouraging regional integration, exchanging best practices, and aiding other nations' democratic transitions.
iv. African nations should forgo military participation in politics and create civilian rule over the armed forces by passing legislation prohibiting military meddling in politics and defining distinct lines of power.
v. African leaders - especially those in office - should oppose the win-at-all costs, hold fast to power, and unwarranted tenure extension to prevent political instability, bloodshed, and a military resurgence in the political sphere.
vi. The AU, ECOWAS, and other regional organisations must to fortify existing measures to thwart not only political misrule but also a military comeback in Africa.

vii. African states have cause for caution when it comes to new allies like China, Russia, and Turkey. Since governments are the only entities that influence international relations, the race for the hearts and minds of African states, from the Horn of Africa to the Sahel, is primarily motivated by economic concerns in an effort to avert outside pressure that would lead to a military resurgence in politics.

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