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Resurgence of Military Coups in West Africa: Political and Socio-Economic Implications for Nigeria.

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Abstract— The resurgence of military coups in West Africa presents significant challenges for both affected nations and regional powerhouses like Nigeria. The study uses Regime Theory to examine the political and socio-economic ramifications of these coups, focusing on institutional fragility, governance deficiencies, and social unrest. The study engaged qualitative techniques of data collection and analysis with Seven (7) key informants relevant to the study interviewed. Discourse Analysis was used to analyze obtained qualitative data. The research reveals that weak governmental institutions, public sector corruption, and manipulation of democratic processes are key drivers of these coups, eroding public trust and making democratic governance vulnerable. The study found also that the political instability induced by coups undermines regional stability, affecting Nigeria's foreign policy and security strategies, disrupts trade, investment, and development prospects in Nigeria and increases Nigeria's vulnerabilities as well as posing a threat to Nigeria's efforts to combat terrorism.

Keywords— Resurgence, Military Coups, Military Rule, Nigeria, West Africa.

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I. INTRODUCTION

Africa has seen more coups or military interventions in its governance than any other continent in the world both in the 20th and 21st centuries (Falola, 2023). Historically, coups in Africa began most, immediately after independence in the 1960s and as at 2022, the continent has experienced over 200 coups either as successful ones or failed ones (Mbara & Graham). According to Akinwotu (2022), Africa has become a "continent of frequent coups with at least 41 states in the continent experiencing one" thus far. Given the obvious instances of poor governance indices in the continent, public corruption, the absence of legitimate, free and fair elections, and the worsening insecurity, there is an increasing failure of democracy spreading across the continent. This failure of democracy in Africa has therefore been connected to the increasing cases of coups in the continent (Yusuf, 2023).

In view of the foregoing, scholars have in recent times sought to understand the factors behind the West African region recording more cases of military coups than other regions in the continent. According to Suleiman & Onapajo (2022), between 2010 and 2022, coups had been on the increase in Africa, especially in West Africa. Transnational efforts to address the resurgence of military coups have been led by regional organizations such as the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS). The response to coups in the region has involved a combination of economic and diplomatic pressure, with military force considered as a last resort. This trend has however continued despite various techniques adopted by the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) such as the imposition of economic sanctions, suspension of military rulers and such States from the organization, etc (Luckham, 1994). However, these initiatives have not in any way stemmed the tide but rather has been hurting innocent citizens of the affected countries rather than the governments (Enos, 2023).

The resurgence of military coups in West Africa is a multifaceted issue with significant implications for the region's stability. Several factors contribute to this resurgence, one of which has been the non-entrenchment of democracy in some West African countries which has ultimately created a fertile ground for military incursions into coups (Reinalda, 2016). Weak democratic institutions, electoral irregularities, and contested political transitions have also eroded public trust in the democratic process, providing an opening for the military to intervene in governance (Adeyeye & Adeyeye 2024; Abdulyakeen, 2023). The subversion of democratic processes by incumbents is another critical factor. When political leaders seek to perpetuate their rule through unconstitutional means or manipulate democratic institutions for personal gain, it can trigger public discontent and create an environment conducive to military takeovers (Akinkugbe, 2024).

Furthermore, the lack of socio-economic development and governance challenges have fuelled grievances among the population, leading to frustration and, in some cases, support for military intervention as a means of addressing the perceived failures of civilian leadership (Katzenstein, Keohane & Krasner, 1998). Destructive civil-military relations, characterized by a lack of civilian oversight, politicization of the military, and internal divisions within the armed forces, have also played a role in the resurgence of military coups in West Africa. These factors have weakened the institutional barriers to military intervention and increased the propensity for coups to occur. The implications of the resurgence of military coups in West Africa are far-reaching, affecting not only the countries directly experiencing coups but also the broader Sahel region and Coastal West Africa. The instability resulting from coups has the potential to exacerbate existing challenges, including economic fragility, security threats, and democratic backsliding (Young, 1986). The military, militarization and democratization in Africa: A survey of literature and issues.

The timeline of the series of coups in West Africa over the past few years indicates a turbulent political landscape in the region as seen in "Table 1".

TABLE 1: MILITARY COUPS IN WEST AFRICA BETWEEN 2015 - 2023

S/N	Timeline	West African State	Description of Military incursion
1.	2015, September 17th	Burkina Faso	Burkina Faso experienced a coup d'état, leading to the removal of the interim President and Prime minister.
2.	2015, December 29th	The Gambia	The Gambia witnessed a coup attempt, which was ultimately unsuccessful.
3.	2020, August 18th	Mali	August 18, 2020: Mali experienced a coup d'état, leading to the resignation and dissolution of the government of President Ibrahim Boubacar Keita.
4.	2021, May 24th	Mali	Another coup d'état took place in Mali led by Colonel Assimi Goïta, resulting in the seizure of the President, Prime Minister, and defense minister by the military.
5.	2021, September 5th	Guinea	A coup d'état occurred in Guinea, leading to the capture of the president and the dissolution of the government and constitution as President Alpha Condé was removed by the military under the leadership of Special Forces commander Mamady Doumbouya.
6.	2022, January 23rd	Burkina Faso	The country experienced a coup d'état, resulting in the removal of the President from office
7.	2022, September 30th	Burkina Faso	Another coup d'état took place in Burkina Faso, leading to the removal of the interim President from power.
8.	2023, July 26th	Niger	Niger's President Mohamed Bazoum was overthrown by the military in a coup d'état by the former Guard Commander, General Abdourahmane Tchiani.

Source: Compiled by the Author

II. RESEARCH OBJECTIVE

With the resurgence of military coups within the West African sub-region, this study therefore aims to investigate the political, socio-economic implications of this development for Nigeria as a major player in West Africa.

III. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

This study adopts Regime theory, a theory which posits that power in the international system is distributed among states and non-state actors like multinational corporations and NGOs, establishing norms and rules that facilitate cooperation despite an anarchic state system (Young, 1986). Emerging in the 1970s, this theory gained traction as scholars sought to understand governance frameworks and decision-making in political systems, with Stephen D. Krasner and Robert Keohane being key contributors (Akinwotu, 2022). According to Young, Regime theory suggests that common norms, laws, and institutions enable nations to cooperate, maximizing their interests through the establishment of international institutions (Young 1986; Haggard & Simmons 1987; Henning & Pratt). It emphasizes that such cooperation is iterative, adapting over time as states learn from their interactions within regimes, thereby fostering stability and reducing uncertainty in international relations. Despite its strengths in providing a systematic analytical framework and emphasizing the role of institutions, regime theory faces criticisms for potentially oversimplifying complex political realities and assuming political system stability, which may not align with rapidly changing political landscapes.

Regime theory gives a lens through which to view the vulnerabilities of democratic regimes in Africa. It does this by looking at the ways in which the institutional flaws, poor governance, and social unrest may be linked to the increase in military coups. It evaluates the ways in which prospects for military intervention are created by political instability, weak institutions, and lack of democratic consolidation. Regime theory can draw attention to the weakness of political systems and the incapacity of democratic institutions to thwart military takeovers in Africa, a region where democratisation processes have encountered difficulties. Regime theory sheds light on the circumstances that support military coups in Africa by emphasising institutional flaws and the failure of democratic consolidation.

Regime theory provides insights, but it may ignore the historical and cultural conditions unique to African nations, which limits its ability to adequately explain the complex dynamic driving military coups in the region.

IV. METHODOLOGY

A. ***Research Design***

This qualitative research was conducted using discourse analysis to interpret data obtained from oral key informant interviews. This focused approach was chosen to ensure a deep and comprehensive understanding of the political and socio-economic implications of the resurgence of military coups in West Africa for Nigeria. By engaging with experts and individuals with first-hand experience or knowledge in fields related to West African politics, military dynamics, and economic conditions, the study aims to uncover nuanced insights into how these coups affect Nigeria's stability and development.

B. ***Data Collection***

Data was collected through semi-structured oral interviews with key informants. Informants were selected based on their expertise, experience, or involvement in political, military, or economic affairs in Nigeria and the broader West African region. Informants include:

- RN_1- Representative from regional and international organizations monitoring political and security developments in West Africa, e.g. ECOWAS.
- RN_2- Professor of Politics and International Relations with specialization in West African politics.
- RN_3– A Retired Military General in the Nigerian Army with insights into the dynamics of military coups.
- RN_4– Senior Lecturer in Development Economics with expertise in the socio-economic impacts of political instability.
- RN_5– Military and Security Analyst with experience in regional security issues.
- RN_6 – Senior Political Analyst, Arise News Network.
- RN_7 – Senior Personnel, Nigerian Foreign Affairs Ministry.

Each interview followed a guide containing open-ended questions designed to elicit detailed responses, allowing informants to express their views, knowledge, and experiences freely.

C. ***Sampling Strategy***

A purposive sampling strategy was employed to select informants who can provide the most relevant and comprehensive insights into the research topic. The aim is to achieve a diverse range

of perspectives, ensuring a multifaceted understanding of the political and socio-economic implications of military coups in West Africa for Nigeria.

D. ***Data Analysis***

Interviews were transcribed verbatim and analyzed using discourse analysis techniques. The analysis focused on identifying recurring themes, metaphors, and discursive strategies used by informants to discuss the impact of military coups. Coding was conducted iteratively, with initial codes refined and grouped into broader themes as the analysis progresses. This process was facilitated by qualitative data analysis software, enhancing the organization and synthesis of data..

E. ***Ethical Consideration***

Given the sensitive nature of discussing military coups, ethical considerations are paramount. Informed consent was obtained from all informants, ensuring they are aware of the study's purpose, the use of their data, and their right to withdraw at any time. Confidentiality and anonymity was maintained, with any potentially identifying information removed from transcripts and publications.

V. RESULTS

The study has as its main objective, ascertaining the political and socio-economic implications of this development for Nigeria as a major player in West Africa. To achieve this objective, several questions were posed to the respondents during the oral interviews.

A. ***Internal factors rendering some West African states more vulnerable to military coups***

The first question was in understanding the underlying internal factors that render some West African states more vulnerable to military coups than others. Varying responses were obtained which puts factors such as weak institutions, public corruption, etc as responsible for this vulnerability.

> "Well, I think there's a mix of internal and external factors at play. Internally, weak institutions like dysfunctional judiciaries, corrupt systems, and ethnic tensions create a power vacuum ripe for exploitation. Look at Mali, where frustrations with rigged elections fuelled the coup. Additionally, attempts to cling to power by presidents, like in Guinea, can trigger military intervention. So, there are so many factors that could lead to this."
>
> *[RN_5 – Military & Security Analyst, Male, Abuja-Nigeria]*

Asides corruption and misappropriation of funds, manipulation by the political class was also figured as a factor as opined by this respondent;

> "….when citizens lose faith in their government's ability to govern equitably, the military may be seen as a corrective force. Constitutional manipulation, which seeks to extend term limits, often retrospectively, diminishes the peaceful transfer of power. A good example was the removal of President Alpha Condé of Guinea in September 2021 by the military who was accused of attempting to amend the constitution to run for a third term. This creates a dangerous precedent where leaders seek to perpetuate their rule, stifling political competition and reducing the opportunities for fresh ideas and leadership.

[RN_2 - Professor of Politics and International Relations; Baze University; Male, Abuja-Nigeria]

For this respondent, the historical connection that the military establishment of most West Africa States have with politics is a major factor triggering resurgence of military coups when he asserted thus;

> "For me, it has to be the age-long link that military has had with political affairs especially across the continent of Africa. This historical involvement of militaries in politics has led to an insatiable appetite by the military ruling class for political and economic power achievable only by them taking over power. This I believe is a major factor leading to the vulnerability and risk of coups in the West African sub-region"

[RN_4 - Senior Lecturer, Political Economy; University of Lagos; Female, Lagos-Nigeria]

B. External factors make some West African states more susceptible to military takeovers

Asides from the obvious internal political and economic issues rendering some West African States susceptible to military coups, the study also probed into the external factors that could predispose any West African State towards military coup. According to a respondent (RN_3), the perceived inadequacy of Western liberal democratic models in the sub-region can be an external factor indicating the vulnerability of some West African nations to military coups:

> "….the recognition that the complete acceptance of Western democratic systems often fails to consider the distinct socio-political, cultural, and historical context of West African cultures. Consequently, these models may fail to adequately address the requirements of that local governance requires, resulting in discontent and political instability which ends up causing the military to step in. I know for a sure that most times, the civilian population celebrate when military takes over power in such a situation of obvious failure of the democratic process"

[RN_3 - Retired Military General in the Nigerian Army with insights into the dynamics of military coups; Male, Abuja-Nigeria]

Also, another respondent attributed instability in neighboring countries, conflicts, and insurgencies which ultimately strains national resources make states more susceptible to coups as well as proliferation of weapons. He opined thus;

> "Instability in neighbouring countries can have a spill-over effect, undermining state security and economic stability. Conflicts, refugee flows, and cross-border insurgencies can strain national resources and security apparatus, making a state more susceptible to coups. This I believe is a factor that makes the West African sub-region susceptible to military coups. Also, the proliferation of small arms and light weapons in West Africa significantly contributes to the vulnerability of some

> states to military coups. This phenomenon is largely facilitated by external actors or through the leakage of arms across porous borders, creating a landscape where military factions, rebel groups, and even civilian populations have increased access to firearms. The availability of these weapons not only escalates the potential for armed conflict but also emboldens military factions by providing them with the means to challenge state authority effectively."
>
> *[RN_1 - Senior Personnel at an international organizations monitoring political and security developments in West Africa, e.g. ECOWAS]*

In addition, another respondent (RN_5) blamed foreign powers such as France and Russia as as catalysts for geopolitical or economic instability in the region, with Russia supporting military operations in the Sahel and Mali when he said this:

> "...undoubtedly, external factors do often serve as catalysts. When we talk about foreign influences, we often refer to external or regional forces pursuing geopolitical or economic gains. France and Russia have been very complicit in this regard. Russia's recent role in supporting the military in the Sahel, especially in the Mali and Niger Republic has been acknowledged even by the coup leaders themselves. Some of the military actors who led the coup in both States reportedly received training in Russia. Also, Coup plotters may feel more confident knowing that the world community would accept their acts if they get a calm response and reaction to the coup. There's also an additional phenomenon we call the "contagion effect" In security parlance. If a coup succeeds in one nation, it may spur uprisings in other nations. It creates a dangerous precedent by normalising the military's engagement in politics."
>
> *[RN_5 – Military and Security Analyst with experience in regional security issues, Male, Abuja-Nigeria]*

C. *The future of democracy in the West African sub-region in view of the recent resurgence of military coups*

Respondents were also asked to comment on the future of democracy in West Africa in view of the resurgence of military incursion into governance in the region.

While the responses were varied, (RN_7) opined that the West African sub-region's democracy is at risk due to military coups, disillusionment, and public trust erosion;

> "The future of democracy in the West African sub-region is at a critical juncture due to the recent resurgence of military coups. The democratic disillusionment and the erosion of public trust in democratic institutions, coupled with the significant implications for decision-makers on the continent, underscore

> the need for people-centered democratic renewal at the core of all approaches."
>
> *[RN_7–Senior Personnel, Nigerian Foreign Affairs Ministry]*.

In his view, (RN_2) asserted that the region faces a pessimistic future due to political leaders' disregard for constitutional limits, governance failure, and lack of accountability. He further commented thus;

> "…it must be stated that the West African sub-region is facing a pessimistic future due to conduct of its political leaders and their disregard for constitutional term limits and governance failure which erodes democratic fabric and fosters political instability. The lack of effective internal mechanisms to hold leaders accountable and deter undemocratic practices further exacerbates the situation. The undemocratic maneuvers often divert attention from pressing socio-economic issues, such as high unemployment, poverty, and inequality, which contribute to political instability. This creates a sense of despair and urgency for change, which could incentivize military interventions."
>
> *[RN_2 - Professor of Politics and International Relations; Baze University; Male, Abuja-Nigeria]*

A respondent (RN_4), in answering this question however warned political leaders in Nigeria to be cautious in ensuring peaceful and regular transition of democratic power, constitutional integrity, and fostering inclusivity, transparency, and accountability to safeguard democracy and its future. He further elaborated thus;

> "Well…I think most countries, including Nigeria have to be very careful going forward in terms of how we don't unnecessarily heat up the polity by the carelessness and greediness of our political leaders. We must also ensure to safeguard our fragile democracy and ensure peaceful transitions of power, safeguard term limits and constitutional integrity, as well as foster a political environment that encourages inclusivity, transparency, and accountability. Without all these, democracy is at risk and the future will be bleak."
>
> *[RN_4 - Senior Lecturer, Political Economy; University of Lagos; Female, Lagos-Nigeria]*

D. ***Security challenges posed by the resurgence of military coups in West Africa for Nigeria***

As a major part of this study, the respondents were asked questions as regards the security challenges posed by the resurgence of coups in West Africa for Nigeria. Respondent (RN_5) and (RN_3) said:

> "Several challenges arise. Disgruntled soldiers from neighboring countries might seek refuge or employment in Nigeria, straining resources. Weakened regional security cooperation emboldens criminal groups and terrorist organizations. Ultimately,

prolonged instability in the region creates opportunities for internal unrest and even coup attempts within Nigeria."

[RN_5 – Military and Security Analyst with experience in regional security issues, Male, Abuja-Nigeria]

"The resurgence of military coups in West Africa poses security challenges for Nigeria, including the potential for increased cross-border security threats, arms proliferation, and the destabilization of the region. Nigeria's security apparatus must be vigilant and proactive in addressing these challenges to safeguard the country's stability".

[RN_3 - Retired Military General in the Nigerian Army with insights into the dynamics of military coups; Male, Abuja-Nigeria]

Similarly, (RN_1) opined indicated that the resurgence of military coups could disrupt Nigeria's security and regional power dynamics, especially within the sub-region when he said:

"The resurgence of military coups in West Africa could disrupt Nigeria's security and regional power dynamics, potentially realigning power dynamics and altering diplomatic relationships. Nigeria's historical role in mediating conflicts and supporting democratic governance could be limited by military-led governments, complicating foreign policy objectives. The coups could also embolden separatist movements within Nigeria, leading to increased agitation in regions with longstanding grievances against the federal government. Economic instability in the region could disrupt trade routes, impact Nigeria's economy, and increase smuggling and piracy in the Gulf of Guinea.

[RN_1 - Senior Personnel at an international organizations monitoring political and security developments in West Africa, e.g. ECOWAS]

Also, (RN_2) opines that this development can become a destabilizing factor and potential trigger insurgency movements when he said thus:

"The resurgence of military coups in West Africa poses security challenges for Nigeria, causing destabilization and potential insurgency movements. These coups can lead to the collapse of security cooperation agreements, making it difficult for Nigeria to combat transnational threats like terrorism, organized crime, and illicit trafficking. This chaos can also exacerbate Nigeria's issues with groups like Boko Haram and ISWAP. Political instability can trigger mass displacement, straining resources and infrastructure, and heightening the risk of cross-border infiltration by armed groups. The coups can also undermine regional efforts to promote democracy and good governance,

leading to internal unrest and weakening the state's capacity to maintain security"

[RN_2–Professor of Politics and International Relations; Baze University; Male, Abuja-Nigeria]

E. *Nigeria's political stability and Military coups in other West African countries*

The study also sought to ascertain the implications of the military coups in the sub-region on Nigeria's political stability. Respondent (RN_1) and (RN_7) commented thus:

"The resurgence of military coups in West Africa could alter Nigeria's security landscape by realigning regional power dynamics and altering diplomatic relationships. This could isolate Nigeria diplomatically, limit its influence in regional politics, and complicate its foreign policy objectives. The coups could also embolden separatist movements within Nigeria, extending its security apparatus. Economic instability could disrupt trade routes, increase smuggling, and fuel social tensions, further complicating Nigeria's security."

[RN_1 - Senior Personnel at an international organizations monitoring political and security developments in West Africa, e.g. ECOWAS]

"The instability and democratic failures brought about by coups in other West African countries could directly or indirectly threaten Nigeria's political stability. The spillover effects of coups, such as refugee inflows, increased transnational crime, and regional instability, can have profound implications for Nigeria's political stability and socio-economic well-being. Furthermore, the renewed visibility of military coups across West Africa has the potential to erode public trust in democratic institutions and governance within Nigeria. The recurrence of coups in the region, coupled with the aftermath of coups, such as prolonged political chaos and insecurity, can undermine public confidence in the effectiveness and legitimacy of democratic governance. This erosion of public trust can have implications for Nigeria's domestic political dynamics and governance."

[RN_7 –Senior Personnel, Nigerian Foreign Affairs Ministry].

Coups could also have potential a catalytic effect in a scenario where Nigerians sense failure of service delivery from its democratic practice as described by (RN_5) and (RN_6):

"…..news of coups can be corrosive. People might question the effectiveness of democracy in Nigeria if it seems unable to address their pressing needs and challenges."

[RN_5 – Military and Security Analyst with experience in regional security issues, Male, Abuja-Nigeria]

> "Nigeria's political stability could be directly or indirectly threatened by the instability and democratic failures brought about by coups in other West African countries. The potential spillover effects of coups, such as increased regional insecurity and economic instability, could have implications for Nigeria's political stability and governance."
>
> *[RN_6 –Senior Political Analyst, Arise News Network]*

F. *Impact of military coups on Nigeria's diplomatic relations with countries experiencing such coups.*

The study further sought to ascertain the implications of the coups in West Africa on Nigeria's diplomatic relations with countries presently under military government arising from recent military coups. Nigeria's response to each of these coups, especially on the issue of the legality of the new military regimes might have diplomatic consequences according to (RN_4) and (RN_7)

> "The recent spate of military coups in West Africa has the capacity to affect Nigeria's diplomatic ties with nations undergoing such coups. The reaction of Nigeria and other regional players to the coups in West Africa, especially their position on the legality of the new military regimes, might impact diplomatic ties. Moreover, the need to confront the consequences of coups on regional stability and cooperation may necessitate diplomatic involvement and coordination, potentially influencing Nigeria's relationships with the nations impacted".
>
> *[RN4 - Senior Lecturer, Political Economy; University of Lagos; Female, Lagos-Nigeria]*

> "As we know that diplomacy always seeks to promote the economic, commercial and cultural links of a nation with other nations, Nigeria has always sought to maintain good diplomatic relations with other West African States. The resurgence of military coups in West Africa has the potential to negatively impact Nigeria's diplomatic relations with countries experiencing such coups. I think it's actually quite delicate navigating Nigeria's diplomatic engagements with the affected countries carefully, balancing its commitment to democratic principles with the need to maintain constructive relations in the region".
>
> *[RN_7 –Senior Personnel, Nigerian Foreign Affairs Ministry].*

According to (RN_5), Nigeria needs a robust "balancing act" in order to effectively navigate through the tension surrounding denouncing military coups in neighbouring States while (RN_6) Suggests that Nigeria would require diplomatic engagement and coordination in this area;

> "Nigeria treads a delicate path in managing its diplomatic ties with nations undergoing coup d'état. While denouncing coups may create tension in diplomatic ties, remaining silent would

convey an incorrect or misleading impression. It is essential to maintain a delicate balance between expressing disapproval and engaging in diplomatic efforts in order to facilitate a peaceful conclusion. The intricate manoeuvre is crucial for maintaining peace within the area".

[RN_2 - Professor of Politics and International Relations; Baze University; Male, Abuja-Nigeria]

"The resurgence of military coups in West Africa has the potential to impact Nigeria's diplomatic relations with countries experiencing such coups. The response of Nigeria and other regional actors to the coups in West Africa, including their stance on the legitimacy of the new governments, can influence diplomatic relations. Additionally, the need to address the implications of coups on regional stability and cooperation may require diplomatic engagement and coordination, which could impact Nigeria's relations with affected countries".

[RN6 –Senior Political Analyst, Arise News Network]

Respondent (RN_5) however thinks Nigeria will definitely have diplomatic challenges as either way it reacts, diplomatic relations will be impacted:

"Nigeria walks a tightrope. Condemning coups might strain relations, but silence sends the wrong message. Balancing condemnation with diplomatic engagement is crucial to promote a peaceful resolution. It's a delicate dance, but essential for regional stability"

[RN_5 – Military and Security Analyst with experience in regional security issues, Male, Abuja-Nigeria]

G. ***Impact of military coups in West Africa on Nigeria's economic and business relations with the affected countries***.

The study thereafter sought to understand the implications of these military coups on Nigeria's economic and business relations with the affected States. While Respondent (RN_7) suggested that Nigeria adapts its economic strategies and partnerships accordingly in order to mitigate the effect of this on its economy, (RN_4) opines that such scenarios create uncertainty for businesses operating in either of the States, and (RN_2) warns of disproportionate impact on civilians in both States, while causing them significant harm.

"The resurgence of military coups in West Africa has the potential to impact Nigeria's economic and business relations with affected countries. Political instability and economic uncertainty in the region can affect trade, investment, and economic cooperation, requiring Nigeria to adapt its economic strategies and partnerships accordingly"

[RN_7 –Senior Personnel, Nigerian Foreign Affairs Ministry].

> "Military coups in a country can disrupt trade and investment flows, as well as create uncertainty for businesses operating either in the country where the coup took place or in the region. In the case of Nigeria, this can have implications for Nigeria's economic and business relations with affected countries, including potential disruptions to supply chains and market access".
>
> *[RN4 - Senior Lecturer, Political Economy; University of Lagos; Female, Lagos-Nigeria]*

> "Nigeria's business and economic ties with the West African states that have experienced military coups have been affected significantly. For example, following the coup in Niger in July 2023, member nations of ECOWAS decided to sever diplomatic ties with Niger and implemented the closure of their land and air borders with the country. Niger responded by severing commercial connections with Nigeria and Togo. The sanctions imposed on Niger by ECOWAS in the aftermath of the coup are also disproportionately impacting civilians, causing them significant harm."
>
> *[RN_2 - Professor of Politics and International Relations; Baze University; Male, Abuja-Nigeria]*

Buttressing the above, (RN_3) cited the example of the recent coup in Niger Republic where land borders between Nigeria and the landlocked State was closed down thereby inhibiting the flow of goods, services and individuals across both States.

> The resurgence of military coups in West Africa has the potential to impact Nigeria's economic and business relations with the affected countries. For example, with Niger Republic being a landlocked country, trade relations with Nigeria is very significant and as such a military intervention in the country and the reaction of the Nigerian government
>
> *[RN3 - Retired Military General in the Nigerian Army with insights into the dynamics of military coups; Male, Abuja-Nigeria]*

H. ***Impact of military coups in West Africa on Nigeria's socio-cultural relations with the affected countries.***

Lastly, the study sought to assess the implications of the resurgence of military coups in West Africa on the socio-cultural relations between Nigeria and the affected States. Respondent (RN_1) considers Nigeria's cooperation with Niger Republic already strained due to the military coups and the consequent reaction of the Nigerian Government:

> The resurgence of military coups in West Africa could impact Nigeria's socio-cultural relations with the affected countries. Military coups in West Africa, notably the latest one in Niger Republic has serious ramifications inter-state cooperation and collaboration for Nigeria's strategic and security interests. The coup in Niger has damaged the partnership and might harm Nigeria's counter-terrorism operations around Lake Chad area.
>
> *[RN_1 - Senior Personnel at an international organization monitoring political and security developments in West Africa]*

Furthermore, (RN_5) opined that the situation has created tensions and uncertainties that has affected people-to-people interactions and cultural exchanges between Nigeria and the States with military coups, (RN_5) sees a complex interplay between international relations and sociocultural factors that most times, places socio-cultural ties at the losing end when states with close affinity conflicts politically;

> "…I strongly hold the view that the resurgence of military coups in West Africa has the potential to impact Nigeria's socio-cultural relations with the affected countries. The political and social upheaval resulting from coups can create tensions and uncertainties that may affect people-to-people interactions and cultural exchanges. This is even more consequential judging from the fact that most West African states share cultural and ethnic affinity amongst communities across their borders."
>
> *[RN_5 – Military and Security Analyst with experience in regional security issues, Male, Abuja-Nigeria]*

> "The socio-cultural angle to the relationship between Nigeria and some of the West African states presently experiencing military rule is quite a topical issue. This perspective highlights the importance of understanding the cultural and historical ties between Nigeria and these states, especially Niger Republic. There has always been a complex interplay between international relations and sociocultural factors and most times, socio-cultural ties suffer when states with close affinity conflicts politically".
>
> *[RN_2 - Professor of Politics and International Relations; Baze University; Male, Abuja-Nigeria]*

Both (RN_7) and (RN_4) allude to the disruption of deep-rooted historical and cultural connections where a State undergoes military coup and such a State is negatively viewed or sanctioned by others;

> "..the socio-cultural dynamics and people-to-people interactions may be influenced by political developments, necessitating a

nuanced approach to maintaining positive socio-cultural relations."

[RN_7 –Senior Personnel, Nigerian Foreign Affairs Ministry].

"The socio-cultural implications of military coups in West Africa for Nigeria are complex and varied. Within the sub-region, nations are bound by deep-rooted historical and cultural connections, which risk being disrupted in instances where a country is ostracized due to a military coup. Such a scenario can sever the established cultural ties and hinder the maintenance of friendly relations with neighbouring states."

[RN_4 - Senior Lecturer, Political Economy; University of Lagos; Female, Lagos-Nigeria]

VI. CONCLUSION

The resurgence of military coups in West Africa presents considerable challenges, not only for the nations directly impacted but also for regional powerhouses like Nigeria. This study has comprehensively examined the political and socio-economic consequences of military coups on Nigeria. In doing so, the study actively involved key informants who provided invaluable perspectives on the intricate dynamics involved. Through the application of Regime Theory as an analytical framework, this study has emphasised the inherent weaknesses of democratic regimes in the area, particularly regarding governance shortcomings, institutional fragility, and the potential for social unrest.

The multifaceted nature of the causes underlying the recent surge in military takeovers is illuminated by our findings. From an internal perspective, significant factors include the expansion of weak governmental institutions, widespread corruption in the public sector, and the manipulation of democratic procedures. These challenges not only undermine the confidence of the general public in elected representatives but also disrupt the fundamental principles that underpin democratic rule, rendering these regimes vulnerable to military interventions.

From an external perspective, the insufficiency of regional organisations such as the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) to deter the recurring pattern of military coups is exposed in this study. Notwithstanding the implementation of numerous protocols and initiatives designed to improve governance and democracy, the recurrence of coups signifies the necessity to re-evaluate existing strategies and mechanisms.

The implications of these findings are significant and profound. To begin with, coups induced political instability that substantially erodes regional stability, thereby setting off a chain reaction capable of destabilising adjacent nations. Nigeria, being a leader in the region, is confronted with a direct influence on its stability and security landscape. This compels the country to reassess its foreign policy and security approaches in order to effectively confront these emergent challenges.

Coups engender economic instability within a region by obstructing trade, investment, and development initiatives. This situation presents Nigeria with the dual challenge of heightened economic vulnerabilities and a potential decline in economic development, owing to its extensive economic interdependence with neighbouring West African countries.

Furthermore, the security environment in the area is negatively impacted, as the proliferation of military coups may instill confidence in insurgent factions and contribute to an increase in threats to security across borders. This presents a clear and immediate obstacle to the continuous endeavours of Nigeria to counter terrorism and uphold domestic security.

In conclusion, the resurgence of military coups in West Africa signifies a substantial setback in the region's effort to consolidate democracy and could potentially have significant political and socio-cultural implications for Nigeria.

VII. POLICY IMPLICATIONS

This study has several ramifications. This study emphases the critical nature of adopting a comprehensive strategy to tackle the underlying factors that contribute to military coups in West Africa. In addition to strengthening its domestic institutions and governance practices, Nigeria must assume a more proactive stance in regional endeavours aimed at advancing democracy and stability.

By developing a comprehensive comprehension of the socio-political environment and actively addressing the intricacies of military interventions, Nigeria and other West African nations can establish a trajectory towards sustainable democracy, stability, and peace.

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