Review of Relevant Literature Examining the Causes of Military Intervention in West Africa: The Case Study of Ghana 1969-1985

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ABSTRACT

Since Independence, West African countries including Ghana experienced military interventions in several forms. The international community, including regional bodies, tried severally to stem the occurrence of military intervention but to no avail. It is for this reason that "Examining the Causes of Military Intervention in West Africa: The Case Study of Ghana 1969-1985" sought to find out the causes and factors responsible for coups and suggest solutions to reduce the coups in the sub-region. The objective of the paper is to find out the impact of coups in Ghana, ascertain the factors responsible for the coups, and suggest mitigation measures. The paper suggests that greed, corruption, and bad leadership are some of the causes of coups in West Africa. In writing this review the authors made use of existing literature.

Keywords: Civil–military, Coups, Diffusion, Impact, Intervention, Policies.

INTRODUCTION

This paper is a literature review on research into the causes of military intervention in West Africa. The literature review is categorised into the following sub-themes namely; the theoretical framework and the conceptual issues underpinning the study. Therefore, the paper focuses on the empirical issues and conceptual framework and ends with a summary. The purpose of the paper is to provide a guide and background for the analysis of the study.

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

This theoretical framework first discusses the various theories that provide a precise doctrinal basis for this work. Theories that engage the researchers' attention include diffusion theory, military centrality theory and political development theory.

Diffusion Theory

In the works of Rogers (1995), diffusion as a theory of innovation normally occurs in a social system. As pointed out by Frederickson et al. (2012), "ideas and changes in societies" get adopted over a period of time. The spread of knowledge, inventions, and ideas happens in a certain form. The first adopters of the ideas may be considered to have been involved in processes of experimentation. The diffusion of ideas after some time become well known enough in the society after assurance from the first adopters. The final groups then accept the changes. Some writers refer to the last groups of actioners as the laggards. Frederickson et al. (2012) are of the view that diffusion involves the "spread of issues relating to many aspects of human life, including technology and large aspects of culture." The diffusion theory is relevant to this study in view of

the fact that it is believed that the knowledge and skills for undertaking coups may have been acquired through the spread of ideas, skills, and abilities from society to society in some cases military colleagues and friends who met on courses abroad. The armed forces could be regarded as a subset of any society and may have acquired this knowledge. The theory could explain in the early coups in Ghana and Nigeria as the coup in Togo did provide knowledge to other armed forces that it was possible (Harvey, 1966) (Japhet, 1978). The diffusion theory however does to provide background to the understanding of currents pointers to coups such as youth unemployment and the new wave of economic challenges being faced by people across the West African Sub-region.

Military Centrality Theory

Military theory is the analysis of normative behaviour and trends in military affairs and military history, beyond simply describing events in war (Edeh, & Ugwueze, 2014). According to Edeh & Ugwueze (2014) the armed forces have some capabilities that enables it to have the upper hand in almost all political processes. They perceived that the military is that arm of government that has authority over the use of violence. This authority gives the armed forces the opportunity to take over governance any time state institutions become "weak". In their view, the power of the armed forces is great because it is well resourced, it can promote democracy and at the same time it can use that power against the state.

According to Kolenda (2001), soldiers' duty to the state involves death that is occasioned in severe circumstances but not activities such as "fire-fighting or law enforcement". He also indicates that all armies have what is "legitimate" under certain conditions. What actions the army carries out do not necessarily depend on what promises a government gives them or their paycheck. Where administration collapses, the soldier would try to second guess his contract with the government.

Finer (1962) writing on similar issue states that the military has great advantage over any civilian institution for its "marked organisation" and authority over use of force. The military is also "cohesive and hierarchical". Again, it has a continuous chain of "central command", which is not questioned but always obeyed; the military is a highly disciplined organisation. No civilian organization can equal it even in countries where it is poorly trained. The military centrality theory is important to the study because common knowledge has provided ample evidence that societies look up to the military for change in times of difficulties. The occurrences during the Arab Spring provide enough evidence that the civilian population courted the support of the military to dislodge their governments. History has enough proof that governments and politicians use the armed forces for the achievement of their political aims and in some cases for their personal purposes (Plakoudas, 2017). The military centrality theory is good for the explanation of coups and the ability of the armed forces of Nigeria to dominate society (Nyangoro, 1993). The theory can also be used to explain the 1979 coup by Flight Lieutenant J.J. Rawlings and his cohorts as the events that took place could be classified as social explosion which the dominant nature of the armed forces enabled to take advantage of the situation (Colton,2020). Sadly, it cannot account for the coup in Liberia, as the coup by Samuel Doe and later actions by Charles Taylor had tribal explanations (Dennis, 2006) but it accounts for direct political and economic causes of coups and many other factors.

Political Development Theory

Political Development Theory portends that the political development of a country may lead to decrease or likelihood of military intervention (Riggs, 1963). Political development may be considered as "the process of politicisation: increasing participation or involvement of the citizen in state activities, in power calculations and consequences". "Strong civil institutions, strong political institutions and strong democratic values" are the hallmarks of political development. If these indicators are absent in any society, then the government may face legitimacy crisis. The absence of any of these values could lead to military intervention in politics. The peculiar situation of Pakistan's continuous military intervention was caused by

lack of attention to the political development of the country. Political organisation of the citizenry, representation and participation was either absent or not promoted (Riggs, 1963).

The economic strength of a country is also essential for the development of its military prowess. It is therefore no secret that a sound economy is a necessity for the survival of a country and its armed forces. Once more, the organizational and administrative ability of leaders are also invaluable (Blankson et al, 2023). The Political Development theory is a sound theory for the analysis of the root causes of violence and upheavals in society. Disparity in sharing of the national cake, and shortage and unavailability of resources cannot be discounted when discussing violence in society. The political development theory is good for the explanation of recent coups in Mali, Burkina Faso and Guinea as they toppled governments clearly suffered from legitimacy (Baltoi, 2023). It can also be used to account for factors such as youth unemployment and manipulation of constitutional provisions as the factors are present in countries with poor governance and economic challenges.

Conceptual Issues

The Concept of Military

The military is basically referred to as the armed forces all over the world. The basic components of any armed forces are the army, the navy and the air force. There are other special elements in some countries depending on the economic capability and the security needs of the country. In almost all countries the basic duty of the armed forces is to defend the territorial integrity of the country (Idongesit, 2022). At Chapter 17, Article 210 of the Republic of Ghana, 1992 as amended states that "there shall be an armed forces of Ghana and all other services which provision is made by Parliament". Subsection 3 of the same article says" the armed forces shall be equipped and maintained to perform their role of defence of Ghana as well as such other functions for the development of Ghana as the President may determine" (Republic of Ghana, 1992).

Conditions and provisions for making regulations for the administration and proper employment of the armed forces are explicitly stated by article 214 of the constitution of the Republic of Ghana, 1992. As Finer (1962) postulates, the military is an instrument that has a special purpose. It is created to achieve its objectives. It is created to win wars and therefore runs on special qualities such as "centralised command, hierarchy, discipline, intercommunication, esprit de corps and a corresponding isolation and self-sufficiency". For the armed forces to function well, Herodotus pointed out that members of the military should be well selected to enable them to acquire the qualities that are required of them. Soldiers must be held in high esteem to achieve the needed effect in society. The armed forces is the only well-organised community guaranteed by a state to have lethality and use it. However, these qualities are not available to the military to induce fear and panic in the general public but to provide protection for the citizenry at all times. The "professionalism", and the "discipline" that the soldier acquires from training are excellent enough to keep him out of politics (Finer, 1962)

Military, Politics and Development

The armed forces over some time have carved a niche for itself in politics. The intervention of the armed forces into politics has caused increase in "authoritarian governments" especially in some parts of the world, particularly West Africa. The action of the military has prevented guarantee for growth of democratic governments, which promotes the participation of society in politics (Ojo, 2014). The impact has been nothing more than damaging for the military since its officers have become public administrators rather than concentrating on their core business, which is providing protection for the citizenry. This kind of leadership has pushed and relegated the civilian technocrats and administrators into subordinate positions. Politics sometimes become attractive to soldiers when politicians fail the people; occasions when they are unable to carry along the population, and offer good leadership. As a result of the consistent failure from the civilian

leadership, the strong leadership of the military appeals to the populace any time there is a takeover (Clapham & Philip, 2015).

Birchier (2012) pointed out that in most cases civilians mistake periods of military political inactivity as "civil control" of the armed forces. Meanwhile, there is no doubt that the military has several ways of constraining the civilian establishment or authorities to do their bidding. In some instances, the military uses its weight in policy to acquire what is due them. It also appears that the absence of military coups in some cases is equated with civil control of the military. It must be understood that the military may generate several options other than coups, including policy decisions to acquire resources. In situations that the military find it simple to get whatever it wants in terms of resources that could hurt economic development as the cost of funding the armed forces in general is high.

Civil – Military Relations

According to the Geneva Centre for Democratic Control of the Armed Forces (DCAF, 2015), the work of all armed forces forms the bedrock of human security. The achievements of the objectives of human security programmes lie "within a framework of democratic, civilian control, rule of law and respect for human rights". The work of the armed forces can hence not be underrated in the achievements of any national security objectives. The armed forces is therefore one of the prime organisations in the achievement of human rights and rule of law in any country. The reason is that the achievement of other security objectives is done in the scheme of work of the military. This however should not underrate the work of the police and other national security apparatus in the constitution.

Currently, national law enforcement authorities are working in conformity with international rules and regulations to improve on civil-military relations. Most governments have increased and broadened the roles of the armed forces in national and economic development. The increased roles have made it possible for civilians and members of the armed forces to work together. These duties are classified as the "secondary" responsibilities of the armed forces and are normally christened as support to the civil authority. Support to the civil authority comprise miscellany of tasks (DCAF, 2015). The responsibilities range from disaster support, internal security and assistance in terms of economic development such as the provision of social goods. The challenge of handling numerous and varied tasks sometimes challenges the armed forces due to their peculiar organization and training. However, in most cases, the armed forces with the application of ingenuity and initiative, and the increased opportunities for training are better suited in the provision of services in times of difficulties than most government agencies and organizations that have the primary responsibility for the provision of those services (DCAF, 2015).

The concept of civil-military relations is novel as it has been coined to facilitate cooperation and coordination of military and civilian activities towards set and common goals. The goals of civil-military relations enable the achievement of goals that are hardly military in nature by the armed forces in conduct of operations. The application of good knowledge in civil-military operations creates the congenial environment for the conduct of operations where challenges are likely to arise when working with civilians (Grigorov, 2017).

Some gray areas in civil-military relations pertain to the high cost of keeping large armies and provision of equipment which may negatively result in development and economic challenges for many countries. It cannot be denied that reducing military budgets and scrapping of benefits to the armed forces are some of the causes of coups in some countries.

Most governments have put in place measures to ensure civil control and oversight of the armed forces. Nonetheless, in West Africa, Asia and Latin America, the civil authorities are highly dependent on the armed forces, especially during elections. It is prudent that in terms of military professionalism, officers

would limit their actions to policy advice when required rather than trying to usurp the status quo to change government (Forman & Claude, 1998).

Factors Accounting for Healthy Civil –Military Relations

The concept of security includes the application of policy making processes both nationally and internationally which take into consideration the roles of the civilian establishments and the military in defence and security matters. It is essential that in the exercise of the right of control and oversight of the armed forces, political leadership must consider the importance of "accountability" and transparency. The shared responsibility of the two sides needs to be respected by both parties; the armed forces and civilian leadership (Drent & Aldis, 2008).

Guidelines for civil -military relationship are important for civil organizations and the military working on conflict issues. The armed forces must make it a point to provide room for the civilians for their voices to count when it comes to making military policy. A common ground for "consultation and dialogue" would be useful for both actors; the civilians and the members of the armed forces. Adhering to the guidelines must be paramount in the implementation of civil- military issues. There is the need for high level of "trust, sharing perspective s, comprehensive understanding, respecting other entities' principles and commitment and reliability" (Burge, 2014).

Challenges of Civil-Military Relations

According to Levine (2016), in most societies much is not known about the armed forces. Even when discussions are ongoing about the power of the state and how that power should be used, hardly do many consider or think about the personnel of the armed forces. In discussing civil – military relations much is left out regarding the role of the armed forces and the controls available for application of military force. In the last decade, the relevance of the Armed Forces has waned due to non-existence of inter-territorial conflicts. The impact of international peacekeeping operations by the armed forces does not have a direct impact on the citizens (Friis, 2005). One of the essential issues which must not be overlooked is how the roles of the armed forces do not conflict with democratic needs of a country. Some good examples of democracies in West Africa have had checkered history of coups and counter-coups. The reason for the coups in their history was the simple failure and inability to tie the needs of both the armed forces and the civilian environment as one. It is incumbent upon governments to ensure that their policies and activities do not erode the confidence of the general public. It is equally important to carry out policies that do not make the armed forces partisan. This is because even where there are no coups, the partisan nature of the armed forces might derail security objectives (Houngnikpo, 2016).

One of the foremost challenges of civil-military relations is the difficulty of civilian governments to find appropriate and relevant means to achieve excellent civilian control of the armed forces. While the conditions of the political environment is transitioning, West African governments are largely challenged by conditioning their militaries for the new democratic environment. Some West African democracies continue to envision the armed forces as a roadblock to the democratic process.

It must be emphasised that the condition of the armed forces to participate and ensure the effectiveness and ensure the success of any democratic process also depends heavily on the role of civil society. It is important that the consciousness and the vision of society to hold the state accountable are all processes of enhancing civil-military relations (Houngnikpo, 2016). There is also need to accentuate the fact that to a very large extent in Ghana, Nigeria, Liberia, Sierra Leone, Mali and Burkina Faso the armed forces in political history dominated the political scene. The condition caused coups and counter-coups. The military activity within the period created instability and in some cases portions of member of the public saw the armed forces as their enemy. It is not surprising that some elements of society who witnessed the military actions could still

harbour antiparty for the armed forces (Khisa & Day, 2002).

African militaries have gone a long way to show their faith with the civil population and in democratic governance. In some instances, the trouble has been with civilian despots who hide behind the military. In most African countries, especially in Ghana, the military has contributed enormously to national development. They provide health assistance in poor communities, undertake major construction activities in remote communities and provide a conducive environment for business and livelihood by conducting internal peacekeeping operations. These efforts provide the needed environment for good governance and opportunities for the poor. It is however unfortunate that in those conditions some parliaments and members of other arms of government who have the responsibility in supporting the military to succeed do not understand their fundamental duties and responsibilities. Thus, leaving the military in the lurch to suffer disgrace from the populace from no fault of theirs. It is highly essential that civil governments see the military as partners in development and take the necessary steps to develop their potential to enhance the role of the military rather than a tool for achievement of their parochial interests (Houngnikpo, 2016).

Contrarily, the armed forces have shown inability to deal with the issues of terrorism in the sub-region. In Mali and Burkina Faso, the armed forces have been defeated by the insurgents. The situation caused morale problems in the armed forces which led to the overthrow of the ruling governments. The insurgent issues however are doused with many other problems of instability in the sub-region. There is no need hiding the truth that the situation would continue for some time as it is untenable in the shortest possible time. The civilian populace has therefore lost confidence in the armed forces (Akanji, 2009). Similarly, one important civil – military intractable problem though not of African origin, which is a good example and close to some situations in Africa is the inability of the Lebanese government to deal with the relationship between the Hizbollah and the Lebanese Armed Forces, and the Syrian control of the Lebanese military space. The situation got to a head and the Lebanese people demonstrated against the government demanding for the removal and complete withdrawal of the Syrian Armed Forces in April, 2005 (Knudsen & Gade, 2017).

Causes of Military Intervention in West Africa

Numerous factors account for military intervention in West Africa. One of them could be the challenge of the ethnically diverse nature of the sub-region. It must be underscored that ethnic diversity does not directly cause coups in any part of the world. However, tension and unhealthy rivalry among ethnic groups could contribute immensely to the occurrences of coups. Ethnic affinity can make some members of the armed forces to join coup plotters. In situations, where some ethnic groups are denied economic benefits, they may be tempted to group with other ethnic groups. The cause of this may be the simple reason that they might be suffering from some form of neglect, therefore their association may be occasioned by their challenge (Bodea & Houle, 2017). Ethnicity "refers to shared cultural identity, involving similar practices, initiation, beliefs and linguistic features passed over from one generation to another" (Gaub, 2016). For example, in Nigeria there are about 300 tribes. In other parts of the Africa the ethnic situation is not different. In Kenya and Tanzania, there are more than 40 and 60 ethnic groups respectively. It is highly possible to blame ethnicity as one of the causes of friction among West Africans and in some cases leading to military coups (Gaub, 2016). Ghana's coup in 1972 has been ostensibly whipped to have tribal undertones (Boafo-Arthur, 2008). The 1980 coup in Liberia could also be attributed to nepotism (Dennis, 2006).

The social and cultural environment in which people live and the organisation of societies and groups determine how divisions occur. In societies and groups marked by "clientelism and strong social cleavages are highly associated with lines of division" (Köllner & Basedau, 2005). "In some countries the ideals and ideologies of political parties' cause groups to form factions. With particular reference to West Africa, political parties are formed by members of different tribal or regional groupings. The possibility of factionalism, break-ups and misunderstanding among members sometimes leading to serious conflict is high" (Köllner & Basedau, 2005). Danos-Wiredu & Brako (2021) had concluded that all political activities

in Ghana have ethnic and tribal sentiments. The sharing of the national cake as far as to the distribution of jobs are all based on tribe and regional distribution.

The military does not venture into politics because it sees it as duty. Some military interventions are occasioned by lack of attention to the needs of the military by politicians. However, in other circumstances the military is described as acting in the interest of the nation, especially where there are despots or marginalisation and corruption becomes the order of the day. It might be wrong for the military to cloak their bidding in national interests (Gaub, 2016). All coup makers in Ghana did mention corruption as the cause of the coup in their initial speeches to the people of Ghana (Amoateng, 2022). In 1966, in Nigeria specifically, the armed forces stated emphatically that it carried out the coup because of "political profiteers, the swindlers, the men in high and low places that seek bribes and demand 10%; those that seek to keep the country divided permanently so that they can remain in office as ministers or VIPs at least, the "tribalists" and the "nepotists" (Gaub, 2016). In some cases, military coups occur because of misunderstanding over policy and military strategy, expenditure and meddling in day- to-day administration of the armed forces leading to dismissals and making wrong appointments (Gaub, 2016).

Further, the main cause of most coups is the "motivation; the military dissatisfaction" with the government and the opportunity; the ability to succeed. Enough study has shown that during counter-insurgency operations government disaffection from the armed forces may lead to coups. Similarly, when the insurgents close up on the armed forces and fighting close to the seat of government the military may take advantage of the situation to take over, especially when they foresee that the armed forces of losing the battle. Some of these scenarios occur especially when governments do not provide adequate resources for the operations which provides opportunity for the rebels to have the upper hand (McLauchlin, 2023). One of the overwhelming factors most writers have indicated for cause of the 1966 coup was the motivation and the dissatisfaction with the government of Kwame Nkrumah. The immediate actions following the coups play accurate testament of the motivation and dissatisfaction with his government (Harvey, 1966).

The politicisation of the armed forces in most countries started right after independence and also from participating in independence struggles. Right after independence most governments have relied on the armed forces in the resolution of most national emergencies. The situation gave the officers the confidence and the awareness that they were responsible for the success of the politicians and therefore capable to lead as well. For example, the armed forces of Nigeria was called upon by the national government in 1962 to perform "national duties". They also participated in the peace efforts in the Congolese and Tanzanian political debacles in 1960 and 1964. The 1966 coup in Nigeria was enormously attributed to the politicisation of the armed forces. The coups further caused other officers to get the motivation to remove their own colleagues from power. A situation some may term as coup syndrome (Toyin, 2015).

 In Sub – Saharan Africa annual growth rate was low especially from 1980 to 2000. The average growth rate within the period was about 2.2 % for a year and "per capita income" was also low. Most African countries saw the need for industrialization just after independence following the end of the Second World War"DFID, 2001). The industrialization drive did not survive. Most of the factories collapsed. The agricultural sector equally did not do well as a result of bad economic policies implemented by governments. In the 1990s, most countries laid off their workers. Ghana and Nigeria were some of the countries that took part in the exercise. The purpose was to reduce the burden on government purse for payment of salaries to workers. All industries were privatised to make markets competitive. Same policies were carried out in Asia and South America. In some countries there was some amount of success but most of the countries failed like the African situation. DFID, 2001).

Governance failures are common in many countries across the West African sub-region. In government establishments, lateness and absenteeism is the norm. Subsequently, productivity in countries in the sub-region is low. There is also lack of opportunity for employment in African countries. There is so much

waste of public funds as accountability is almost non-existent (Devarajan, 2015). Wages are also low and unemployment is low and to get a job, one has to go through rigorous processes to put in place by bureaucrats. Theft and all forms of corrupt practices are commonplace in all government agencies including the judiciary. All these may point to one single problem of lack of supervision by higher authorities as in some cases superiors do not want to be blamed by their subordinates (Hart, 1973).

More so, it is difficult for authorities to consider the public interest in making policy and carrying out various political activities. It is sad that in some cases common goods or services are delivered based on tribal, political, religious and other considerations. These issues do not occur only in Africa but also in Asia and Latin American countries. It is difficult for the right-minded people to win elections because of vote buying, religious and ethnic based politics which enables most corrupt politicians to continue to live in office. Most African countries classified as democratic are not but only exist in name and are either autocracies or otherwise (WB, 2013).

We must understand the fact that most African countries' democratic leaders habitually become despots or autocrats. The case of Mali was not different from the rest of her peers. In about ten-year period, the democratic credentials of Mali diminished. It was at the "lowest ebb in 2019" and the pillars of democracy could be hardly seen in the country. The country was marred by "violence", "poor elections" and "the rule of law" was almost absent. It was observed to be at the "lowest" ebb in 2019. Thus, the military took over in that country. Similarly, in Burkina Faso the scenario was not different (Schultes, 2022).

Post- election disagreements could cause coups. As pointed out, enough research and examples have demonstrated that it is in the interest of political parties to resolve their differences over issues on election malpractices and acceptance of results. Enough evidence has shown that when political parties continue to duel on unnecessary bickering thereby creating power vacuum; opportunities are created for the armed forces to take over. This could occur with the support of the electorate through demonstrations or strength of the military to take advantage of the opportunity created by the unstable political environment. One of the overt cause of coups is the availability of opportunity which ensures success. It must also be pointed out that coups are risky and members of the armed forces would not like to undertake such tasks without ensuring the opportunity to succeed exists. (Pérez-Liñán & Polga-Hecimovich, 2016). It is not possible to delineate the 1966 coup in Ghana, the early political troubles of Nigeria and the current political and military conflicts, and social disturbances that continue to take place in West Africa from political blinkering and misunderstanding in the past (McGowan, 2006).

Military take-over has become common especially in West Africa in recent times. The situation could be also be attributed to "unconstitutional power grabs" by some politicians on the continent. Most of the earlier coups from the post-independence period to the 1980s were attributed to poor economic conditions, bad governance and thievery. In the immediate past, with the gains made in democratic governance it was thought that military intervention in politics belonged to the past. With the recent coups recorded in "Guinea, Sudan, Mali, Chad, Burkina Faso, and Guinea-Bissau" and several unsuccessful ones is cause for worry. It is thought that the uncontrolled use of small arms and other factors such as insurgent activities are the causes. However, the recent coups in Burkina Faso and Mali have pointed to the inability of governments to provide the necessary resources for their armed forces especially in the face of the terrorist threats being faced by the countries. It is therefore important that the recent coups are studied thoroughly to focus the efforts of other governments and armed forces facing similar threats in the sub-region (Center for Strategic and International Studies, 2021).

The Impact of Coups in West Africa

The Coup Syndrome

Military intervention has more negative tags and hardly any positive impacts in political historical analysis

and politics. Even in Liberia, where Doe was praised for removing the elites from politics, there was more horror than joy in later events. There was frequent complains among troops and also constant news of coup plotting during his time. Soldiers' salaries were in arrears and sometimes it was levied to support government projects. Working conditions remained poor and resources for troops providing security to him was almost non-existent. The regime used retirements and transfers to control some sections of the armed forces (CIA Declassified Report, Africa Review, 1985). In Ghana, following the first coup, there was brief period of democratic rule and since there have been coups and counter-coups until 1983. From 1981 to 1983, for example the largest number of coups occurred during this period (Ahwoi, 2020).

Economic Mismanagement

As the members of the armed forces themselves have shown over the period that they are good economic managers of countries. It is because of this singular reason anytime military governments fall into difficulty they quickly look for opportunity to handover to their civilian counterparts (Owusu,2008). After the 1966 overthrow of Nkrumah, it did not take long for the coup makers to hand over to a civilian government. In the same vein, as the Acheampong government was suffering from poor economic management in the 1970s it was quickly looking for an opportunity to handover, which sadly did not materialise as he was taken out in a palace coup (Tsamenyi,1983). Similar, stories of poor economic management were played by the Abacha government in Nigeria. It was however carried on from the later period of General Babangida's rule (Lewis, 1996).

Human Rights Abuses

Military rules have been associated with human rights violations. One typical example is period of the rule of Flight Lieutenant J. J. Rawlings' government in Ghana has been cited as some as the most gruesome in the political history of the country. As such, cases of human rights abuses were committed during periods of other military regimes in the country. It is interesting that human rights abuses occurred under some civilian governments in Ghana (Alidu, 2014).

Since the overthrow of Alhaji Tafewa Balewa and his killing leading to the civil war in Nigeria, the country continued to experience coups and counter-coups in the 1990s. The country over the period recorded numerous human rights abuses including killings and disappearances. Attempts by the civil populace to return the country to democratic rule was fiercely contested by the military. The military brutality was severe from 1985 to 1998. Some of the abuses include "brutality against the civil populace, extra-judicial killings" several other uncountable cases of abuse by the military. Several politically attuned personalities were detained and jailed. To cap it, at the height of the demonstration which included the demand by the Ogoni people for their homeland on 10th November, 1995, Ken Saro – Wisa, a renowned international figure was killed by the military government. The military was also associated with theft and embezzlement of government funds, which were lodged in off-shore accounts (Nwachukwu et al, 2014).

Right after the last coup in Gambia, senior police and military officers were arrested and detained. Though some were later released, others remained in jail for at least 2 years. In 1994, former president Yahyah Jammeh who was afraid of any likely coup attempt launched operations to clear any group of people who could hatch his overthrow.

The operations led to attack on some military barracks in the country and not lessthan 20 suspected soldiers died in the action. Further, later coups attempts were reported but were unsuccessful. There was also serious crackdown on the press in the country. The era was marked byreported cases of human rights abuses and extra-judicial killings (Wiseman, 1996).

Corruption

In some countries where military coups have been recorded, it is common knowledge that "misuse of power

for private gain" and corruption took over society. Corruption is a dangerous canker in almost all third world countries and it is the main cause of "inequality, poverty and infant mortality". In Africa, there are scores of mafia groups, drug lords and corrupt business officials who are in league with politicians. These groups form cliques to conduct shady deals and continue to erode the political, social and economic gains of countries (Alemika, 2013). All military governments in Ghana did not miss the corruption tag, including the civil government of J.J. Rawlings as high government officials were even cited in international complicity in corruption related cases (Agbele,2011).

Measures to Prevent Coups in West Africa

Sub-regional and Continental Protocols

One of the means of restoring order in poor countries in particular is the intervention by regional blocks. The "ECOWAS Protocol on Democracy and Good Governance" has enough recommendations for dealing with issues of coups and instability in the West African sub-region, especially under Chapters I and II (ECOWAS, 2020). The "AU Charter on Democracy, Elections and Governance has similar recommendations for ensuring good governance and leadership, and preventing coups on the continent. The challenge has been poor implementation and the inability of members to observe the recommendations. The last sanctions against Guinea and Mali did not have any traction (Mills, 2022). The African Union and ECOWAS have also undertaken numerous diplomatic efforts at preventing coups and ensuring stability in the region (Ogbonna et al, 2013). It is also important that strategies are mapped to carry out preventive measures before problems and misunderstandings occur.

Democratic Control of the Armed Forces

To strengthen the activities of democratic control there is the need for the authorities to provide the necessary skills and expertise that civilians are able to have oversight of the armed forces. Military commanders at the same time must have the understanding and patience to relinquish control to work with their civilian counterparts. For example, the US National Defense Institute for International Affairs worked in Angola, Benin, Guinea and Mali to deepen "civil-military relations and oversight of affairs (National Democratic Institute for International Studies, 1997).

Efforts to control the armed forces by the civilian establishment may likely be offensive to some elements of the military. This may happen when methods adopted have been ineffectual. Many models of military control have been advanced by several authors. Such models may be suitable for autocratic and undemocratic environments. The suggestion by the authors calls for recruitment of personnel from party ranks or for the purposes of filtering information for the government. Such methods are undemocratic and may work to the disadvantage of the government when such persons also find out that they could take the opportunity to oust the government (Wiking, 1983).

There is also the need for politicians to avoid politicisation and division among troops. It is also the duty of the authorities that the training of troops inculcates in them the best values for service into the armed forces. It is therefore important that democratic control of the armed forces is based on constitutional and democratic structures.

Infiltration of persons into the armed forces to work for the stability of the governments may be counter-productive as many undisciplined and individuals unsuitable may find themselves in the ranks of the armed forces which may be divisive and work against the government in the long run (Wiking, 1983).

International Efforts

It is also feasible for security guarantees to be provided by EU and the West. The EU has unilaterally carried out post- reconstruction and restoration efforts in some countries to prevent recurrence of conflicts or coups.

One of such examples was the deployment of EUFOR in the Democratic Republic of Congo. The European Union has been instrumental in ensuring human rights, human development and reconstruction, and the development of democratic values across the globe. It has been recommended that military expenditure of poor countries with high volatility to conflict or coups be reduced so that regional and continental forces are provided the mandate to assist in the event of any security breaches (Bagayoko-Penone & Leonard, 2008).

Promotion of democratic credentials across the globe in the face of communist threat was one of the important agenda points for the US since the 1950s. It was to also spread democracy and better governance. The UN carried out "pro-democracy campaigns, created the Electoral Assistance Division and the Agenda for Democratization. This "process culminated in the establishment of the UN Democracy Fund" (Wright & Escriba – Folch, 2015). In the 1990s, the US carried out several democratic campaigns in Africa, Central America and Eastern Europe. Further, work in the world included the Creation of the European Instrument for Human Rights and the International Criminal Court. There were also peaceful measures carried out by NGOs and reduction of foreign assistance to coerce military governments to accept democracy (Wright & Escriba – Folch, 2015).

CONCLUSION

The purpose of this paper is to explain the theoretical and conceptual underpinning of the research on the causes of military coups in West Africa. It discussed various theories which included diffusion, military centrality and the development theory as they provide good background for understanding of the research and focuses the perspectives of the various issues discussed in the paper. The diffusion theory centres on innovation, inventions and spread of knowledge. This is because coups take place in a social context. The military centrality theory explains the conduct of the military, its capabilities and influence in society. It also explains the conduct of the military vis a vis government action. The political development theory focuses on the impact of political institutions on society and political developments.

The armed forces of any country is a product of its constitution. The Ghana Armed Forces therefore is a prescription of the 1992 Constitution of the Republic of Ghana. The special character of the armed forces is determined by the roles of the armed forces. All armed forces, therefore possess a cohesive element to enable it achieve its purpose. Though politics is an essential element of every human organisation, it is important that the armed forces is insulated from intervention in politics. This is immensely achieved through institutional arrangements and cooperation between the armed forces and the government. Ensuring good civil –military relations is one of the requirements for ensuring a peaceful and cohesive society capable of working together to achieve national objectives. Good political control of the armed forces, trust, sharing ideas and perspectives are essential to achieving excellent civil-military relations. Efforts are also needed to sustain good civil relations in the sub-region by undertaking sound activities that provide conditions for it.

Cultural diversity and ethnicity, the peculiarities of cultural and social environments, corruption, motivation, politicizations of the armed forces are some the causes of coups in the West African sub-region. The impact of coups in Ghana and the sub-region have been dire in most cases. This is because coups occasion several forms of military activities that are described as abusive and non-democratic. Coups in some cases occasiona chain of violence in communities, leaving in its tracks scars of abuse on the population which may take years to heal. It is however relevant to stem coups and its associated violence. Many regional, continental and international interventions have been used to contain the situation to some extent.

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