

Military Coups d'état and their Impact on the West African Sub-region: A Case Study of Burkina Faso

Eric Sefa Boye*

Dr Napoleon Kurantin*

Abstract

The African continent has experienced several coups d'état, particularly within the West Africa sub-region. This study investigated the consequences of coups d'état on the political and economic landscapes of Burkina Faso. It also identified intervention measures that could prevent or mitigate the impact of future coups in Burkina Faso and the West African sub-region. The study employed a qualitative research approach and a case study design. Data were collected via semi-structured interviews. Thematic analysis of interview responses were conducted to draw conclusions. The findings revealed that recent coups in Burkina Faso have had adverse effects on the political system and economic growth of the country, with possible spillover effects in the West African sub-region. The study recommended that Burkina Faso and other West African nations should deepen their integration into ECOWAS and AU agendas in order to take advantage of investment partnerships, diplomatic assistance and conflict resolution. It further recommended that West African countries should strengthen their early-warning systems and mediation platforms to detect signs of political unrest and prevent escalations.

Keywords: Coup d'état, democratic governance, economic landscape, Burkina Faso, West Africa

* boyesefa@yahoo.com

* [nkurantn@gafscsmil.edu.gh](mailto:nkurantin@gafscsmil.edu.gh)

1.0 Introduction

Coups d'état have been a recurrent phenomenon with significant repercussions, unsettling the established order and affecting a nation's stability, governance, and international relations. Many West African countries after gaining independence in the 1960s, embraced democracy and political liberalization. However, the same period saw a wave of military coups driven by public discontent and the military's pursuit of dominance (Khisa & Day, 2022). Since then, coups have become an external factor influencing local politics in many nations.

The occurrence of a coup in one West African country often spurred similar actions in neighboring countries, creating a domino effect. For example, the 1966 coups in Nigeria, Burkina Faso, and Ghana significantly influenced the region's political landscape (Boakye, 2023). According to Khisa and Day (2022), coups d'état have repeatedly occurred, resulting in far-reaching consequences that disrupt the established order and affect a nation's stability, governance, and international relations. The Mo Ibrahim Foundation (2023) defines a coup as a sudden, often violent or illegal, seizure of political power or government control by a group of individuals, typically from the military or other influential factions within a country. According to a publication made by Duzor and Williamson (2023), via Voice of America, the African continent since the 1950s has recorded 220 coups d'état, out of which, 109 were successful.

The pattern has been recurring creating significant challenges for political stability, democratic governance, and socio-economic development. Recently, West Africa has seen several notable coups, including in Burkina Faso on 23 January 2022 and 30 September 2022; Mali on 18 August 2020, and 24 May 2021; Guinea on 5 September 2021; and Niger on 26 July 2023 (ABC News, 2023). Research indicates that 15 out of the 16 countries in the West African sub-region have encountered military coups (Duzor & Williamson, 2023). Military officers, sparking concerns regarding the competence and dedication of the military, especially the officer corps, have predominantly orchestrated these coups.

Burkina Faso, located at the heart of West Africa, serves as a notable case study, with numerous coup attempts over the years profoundly influencing its political, economic, and social environments (Horn, 2022). According to Hardadou (2023), the repeated military coups have led to deep-rooted political instability, hindering sustainable national progress. These disruptions have profoundly affected the development of critical infrastructure in Burkina Faso, from healthcare to education systems, impeding the nation's socio-economic progress. Furthermore, it is crucial to recognize that the political instability resulting from coups d'état in Burkina Faso raises concerns regarding its impact on the country's political, economic, and social landscape, as well as the stability of the broader West African sub-region. It is against this background that the study seeks to examine the impact of military coups d'état on the West Africa sub-region with Burkina Faso in perspective.

The purpose of this study is to investigate the consequences of coups d'état on the political and economic landscapes of Burkina Faso. This paper draws on relevant literature grounded in a theoretical framework that supports its analysis. The review is followed by a description of the materials and methods used in the study, along with the presentation of the results. The paper then discusses the findings in relation to the literature reviewed, after which it offers recommendations to inform policies and practices.

2.0 Research Objectives

To achieve the overarching purpose, the study seeks to:

- Assess the impact of coups d'état on the political and economic landscapes of Burkina Faso.
- To proffer measures that can prevent or mitigate the impact of future coups d'état in Burkina Faso and the West African sub-region

2.1 Research Questions

The following research questions are framed to guide the conduct of the study:

- How have coups d'état affected the political and economic landscapes of Burkina Faso?
- What measures can be implemented to prevent or mitigate the impact of future coups d'état in Burkina Faso and the West African sub-region?

3.0 Literature Review

3.1 Overview of Coups d'état in Africa

Coups d'état have played a significant role in the sociopolitical landscape of Africa for many years. Ghana, for example, has witnessed five successful coups: in 1966, 1972, 1978, 1979, and 1981. Coup d'état, mutiny, putsch, sedition, uprising, or revolution could lead to a mixture of both intended and unintended consequences (Pryce & Time, 2023). Similarly, Falola (2022) and data presented by Duzor and Williamson (2023) indicated that Africa has witnessed more coups or military interventions in governance than any other continent. Coups in Africa have been a historical occurrence since the 1960s, soon after gaining independence. Within Africa, West Africa has emerged as a significant hotspot for military coups. The region accounts for 51.3% of coups during the early postcolonial period from 1960 to 1969, 49.5% from 1970 to 1989, and a staggering 53.7% from 1990 to 2010. West Africa has experienced a higher number of coups compared to other regions in African regions (Barka & Ncube, 2012; Duzor & Williamson, 2023).

In the broader African context, Singh (2014) observed that in the latter half of the twentieth century, 80% of sub-Saharan African countries and 76% of North African and Middle Eastern countries experienced at least one attempted coup. Since 2020, military officers have successfully staged coups in five African nations: Mali, Chad, Guinea, Sudan, and Burkina Faso, with unsuccessful attempts in Niger and Guinea-Bissau. The United Nations Secretary-General Antonio Guterres has characterized this trend as an "epidemic of coups" (Congressional Research Service, 2022).

Moreover, recent coups in Africa have been linked to various factors such as the absence of democratic practices, leadership failures, economic crises, military officers' ambitions, and discontent among youth and citizens, among others (Isilow, 2022). The rationale behind the coup in Mali, for instance, was linked to election irregularities, worsening security conditions, and widespread corruption. Meanwhile, the coup in Guinea was justified by allegations of election irregularities and former President Condé's authoritarian approach towards the opposition (Congressional Research Service, 2022).

Military takeovers and the motives behind seizing power may range from self-serving interests to punishing adversaries within or outside the government and military (Baudais & Chauzal, 2011). To gain legitimacy, successful coup leaders often resort to immediate propaganda efforts to justify their actions as necessary and appropriate. However, once in power, any initial goodwill they may have presented as justification for the coup is often overshadowed by their personal agendas, self-interest, and lack of political astuteness (Pryce & Time, 2023). Additionally, Pryce and Time noted that military coups have a long and troubled history within Africa's political landscape. Across almost all newly independent nations on the continent, coups and military interventions swiftly replaced civilian governance. Concerning successful coups from the 1950s to 2023, Africa recorded 109 out of the world's total of 245, making up approximately 44.5 % of coups worldwide (Powell & Thyne, 2023).

In certain countries, military coups have replaced the democratic process of leadership selection, with military officers staging coups to remove a leader who has overstayed in power. Moreover, according to Chigozie and Oyinmiebi (2022), coups in Africa are both a cause and a consequence of governmental failures to maintain democratic principles and ensure their consolidation within the political system. As democracy falters, the resurgence of coups in Africa, particularly in West Africa, can be attributed to the shortcomings of civilian administrations throughout the continent and the region (referred to as democratic nations) in upholding their

commitment to preventing authoritarianism in governance, which had initially spurred the fourth wave of democracy from the 1990s onwards. Table 1 presents statistics on both failed and successful military coups in Africa.

Table 1. Statistics of military coups in Africa from 1950 to 2023.

| Decades/Periods | Total Coup Attempts | Successful | Success Rate |
|-----------------|---------------------|------------|--------------|
| 1950 – 1959 | 6 | 3 | 50.0 % |
| 1960 – 1969 | 41 | 25 | 61.0 % |
| 1970 – 1979 | 42 | 18 | 42.9 % |
| 1980 – 1989 | 39 | 22 | 56.4 % |
| 1990 – 1999 | 39 | 16 | 41.0 % |
| 2000 – 2009 | 22 | 8 | 36.4 % |
| 2010 – 2019 | 17 | 8 | 47.1 % |
| 2000 – 2023 | 14 | 9 | 64.3 % |

Source: Data from Powell and Thyne cited by Duzor and Williamson, (2023).

Akubueze (2024) study scrutinized dissatisfaction with democracy and the resurgence of coups in West Africa to discern its consequences for the African continent. The study established that the recent surges in coup activities have garnered public backing due to citizens' dissatisfaction with the effectiveness of democracy and democratic governance.

Anani (2023) article examined recent military coups in French-speaking African nations such as Mali, Burkina Faso, and Niger, analyzing their origins, consequences, and global reactions. It concluded that corruption, political instability, economic issues, and security problems mainly caused recent military coups in Mali, Burkina Faso, and Niger. These coups resulted in regional and international sanctions and forced a rethinking of the countries' relationships with France and other global powers.

Odigbo, Ezekwelu, and Okeke (2023) research investigated the dissatisfaction with democracy and the resurgence of military coups in

Africa. The researchers argue that decades of poor democratic experiences have fueled discontents and rebellious confrontations, exemplified by recent coups in countries like Sudan, Ethiopia, and Mali.

Idris, Kitabu, and Garba (2023) paper investigated the impact of military coups on the economic progress of nations formerly colonized by France, posing significant concerns for Africa, ECOWAS, and the global community. The study concluded that military coups have a detrimental impact on the economic development of French-colonized countries. The frequent coups disrupt governance and policy continuity, leading to a loss of international confidence and hindering economic progress.

Mbara and Graham (2023) study explored the underlying reasons behind the resurgence of coups in Africa. The study concluded that the resurgence of coups in Africa is driven by widespread dissatisfaction with democracy and governance. The study highlights that international and regional organizations have struggled to curb this trend despite imposing sanctions and suspensions.

Mushoriwa (2023) article explored the role of the African Union (AU) and its regional economic communities (RECs) in addressing armed conflict on the continent, using the AU and Southern African Development Community (SADC) response to the Cabo Delgado conflict in northern Mozambique as a case study. The article concluded that AU efforts to achieve a peaceful and secure Africa, as outlined in Agenda 2063, have faced significant challenges. The study highlighted that despite the AU's comprehensive legal and policy framework, conflicts and unconstitutional changes of government continue to hamper socio-economic development on the continent.

Mannjong & Follah (2023) aimed to understand the reasons behind military coups in West Africa since 1990. By synthesizing information from other reviews, we found that West Africa is one of the most affected regions in Africa regarding military coups. It was also revealed that, while

not unique to West Africa, poor governance, political instability, and neocolonialism significantly contribute to promoting military coups. Chitondo and Chanda (2023) research investigated the occurrence of military coups in former French African colonies, analyzing the factors that contribute to political instability in these areas. The results indicated that political instability and military coups have been persistent issues in several former French African colonies, driven by a complex interplay of historical, economic, and political factors.

Adeyeye and Adeyeye (2024) explored the resurgence of military coups in Africa and evaluates whether this trend represents a regression or progression in democratic governance across the continent. The study's results indicated that certain citizens within these countries are not reaping the benefits of democracy, and additionally, the military has not fully embraced civilian governance principles on the continent.

Mohammed (2022) research investigated the resurgence of military coups in Africa and the involvement of the African Union (AU). The research discovered that the African Union's reactions are a blend of firmness, inactivity, and seemingly apathetic indifference.

Chigozie and Oyinmiebi (2022) examined the consequences of these coups on the effectiveness of the sub-regional institution in fostering peace and upholding democracy. The paper contended that the current strategy of using sanctions as a deterrent to coups lacks effectiveness, primarily because it impacts civilians more than the military.

Marawako (2022) study sought to present an overview of the impacts of the 2013 coup in the Central African Republic, focusing particularly on its effects on human security with an emphasis on economic security. The study noted that the 2013 coup led to the withdrawal of donors and investors, resulting in reduced foreign direct investment. This political upheaval also made the country vulnerable to external economic shocks, negatively impacting the economy. Additionally, the incursion of rebel

groups caused significant economic harm through the destruction of infrastructure and rampant looting and pillaging.

Jawo (2022) study aimed to examine the factors that influenced the African Union's decision not to suspend Chad following the unconstitutional change of government. The study determined that the African Union prioritized security considerations over good governance and the rule of law when deciding how to respond to the unconstitutional change of government in Chad.

Osariyekemwen & Osariyekemwen (2021) explores the resurgence of military coups d'état in Africa and their implications for the consolidation of democracy. The paper argues that the recent coups d'état in 2019 and 2020 signify a resurgence of military involvement in African politics, as the typical reasons cited by the military for such interventions or disruptions still persist.

Blum and Gründler (2020) study aimed to provide evidence that political instability negatively impacts economic growth. The study discovered that periods of instability lead to a reduction in growth by 2-3 percentage points, an increase in unemployment, and a decline in health and life satisfaction.

Izobo (2020) examined Botswana and Somalia as case studies to gain insights into why desired outcomes from significant foreign aid inflows for development have either materialized or failed to materialize. The study indicated that the beneficial effects of foreign aid are frequently hindered by poor governance, inadequate rule of law, extensive corruption, the absence of robust democratic institutions, and a lack of accountability and transparency among government officials.

Hussein (2015) study aimed to investigate how African strategies contribute to maintaining peace, security, and stability at different levels, including national, sub-regional, and regional levels. It was found that the African Union's strategy for fostering peace and security across the

continent aligns with a constructivist-influenced cooperative security framework. Additionally, it will be shown that sub-regional bodies play a crucial role as enforcers of security within the broader African security framework.

Sollenberg (2012) study aimed to assess whether there is a broad association between aid and conflict. The study found that foreign aid could increase the likelihood of armed conflict, especially in states with weak executive constraints and at high levels of aid. Additionally, sudden reductions in aid can exacerbate the risk of conflict due to intensified competition over scarce resources.

The authors of this paper argue that the causes of coups d'état in Africa stem from multiple factors, including political, social, and economic issues, as well as a perceived failure on the part of the government. The act seems inevitable due to individuals' self-centered interests and the pursuit of power, particularly among the elite in society. These factors are particularly prevalent in West Africa and could potentially hinder the growth and development of the entire African continent if not comprehensively addressed.

3.2 Historical Background of Burkina Faso

Burkina Faso, sited in West Africa, is a landlocked nation. It shares its borders with Ivory Coast, Ghana, Togo, and Benin to the south, Mali to the north, and Niger to the east (Oxford University Press, 2024). Burkina Faso is a Sahelian nation with a low-income status and few natural resources. Its economy relies primarily on agriculture, though there has been a growing trend in gold exports. Over 40% of its population live below the poverty line (The World Bank, 2023). The United Nations Development Programme ranked Burkina Faso 184th out of 191 countries in the 2021-2022 Human Development Index report (The World Bank, 2023).

Burkina Faso has been impacted by coups d'état throughout its post-independence history. The country has witnessed periods of civilian governance, military interventions, and revolutionary movements (Gayer

& Kuehn, 2020). Prior to French colonization in the 19th century, the region was governed by various Mossi states. From 1898, it was under French protection, initially as part of French Sudan (now Mali), and later as Haute Volta (Upper Volta). It gained autonomy within the French Community in 1958 and achieved independence in 1960 (Oxford University Press, 2024). According to Gayer and Kuehn (2020), the recurring occurrence of coups d'état in Burkina Faso highlights the fragility of its political landscape and its vulnerability to sudden and disruptive political shifts.

Coups d'état in Burkina Faso

Every coup is unique and influenced by the specific domestic circumstances of each country. However, recent analysis indicates that governance shortcomings and ongoing insecurity are significant contributing factors (Brooke-Holland, 2023). Burkina Faso's tumultuous history has been characterized by violent shifts between military rule and resistance from civil society (Horn, 2022). Similar to other West African nations, Burkina Faso has experienced a significant number of coups d'état, with the first occurring in 1966. Unlike countries like Nigeria and Ghana, Burkina Faso did not witness a successful transfer of power through democratic elections from 1960 to 2015 (Sawo, 2017). Following independence in 1960, the country's inaugural president was elected in 1965 (Rupley et al., 2013). In 1966, Lieutenant Colonel Sangoule Lamizana seized power by overthrowing the democratically elected president. That same year, Ghana and Nigeria also experienced their initial coups d'état.

Throughout history, Burkina Faso has faced military mutinies, coups, and social unrest, even though it was perceived as relatively stable under the former authoritarian ruler Blaise Compaoré, who seized power in a coup in 1987. Compaoré, a prominent and contentious figure in West African politics, was ousted during a popular uprising in 2014 as he attempted to circumvent constitutional term limits. Officers linked to Compaoré elected Roch Marc Christian Kaboré, a civilian politician, in 2015 following a

failed coup attempt against the transitional civilian government. Kaboré became Burkina Faso's first post-independence leader to assume office through elections (Congressional Research Service, 2023). During his initial term, President Kaboré confronted mounting public pressure to address security concerns amidst escalating insurgent threats. Kaboré also prioritized job creation, enacted governance reforms, and ensured accountability for abuses that occurred under the previous administration of Compaoré. Notably, Kaboré oversaw the expansion of state-sponsored militias and "volunteer" fighters, a move criticized by human rights organizations for alleged abuses (Congressional Research Service, 2023). Similarly, President Roch Kaboré's government faced accusations of tolerating violence, particularly against the Fulani minority, and was criticized for its failure to effectively combat violence perpetrated by Islamist militants (Savell, 2022; Lamarche & Bentley, 2022).

In 2020, President Kaboré secured re-election in a vote that local civil society monitors deemed acceptable, despite initial claims of fraud and security challenges by opposition figures, who alleged that voting was obstructed in multiple regions. However, Kaboré was removed from power in a coup orchestrated by Lieutenant-Colonel Paul-Henri Sandaogo Damiba in January 2022 (Congressional Research Service, 2023). Captain Ibrahim Traoré is the interim leader of Burkina Faso since the September 2022 coup that ousted interim president Paul-Henri Sandaogo Damiba. It is worth noting that while coups d'état are not considered an optimal means of governance, Horn (2022) observed that many individuals in Burkina Faso supported the military coup. However, it is important to highlight that regional governing bodies, such as ECOWAS and the African Union, unequivocally condemned the coup.

3.3 Effects of Coups d'état on Political Landscape

Coups create a power vacuum that often leads to periods of political instability, insecurity, and uncertainty. Since the attempted coup in 2015, Burkina Faso has faced numerous crises, including an increase in terrorist attacks and insecurity. These issues have hindered the country's efforts to establish democratic governance and achieve sustainable development

(Gençoğlu, 2023). The Peace and Security Council Report (2022) highlights that political instability resulting from power changes through coups undermines the democratic aspirations of many African countries, and Burkina Faso is no exception.

Mannjong and Follah (2023) argued that beyond the immediate impacts, military coups have long-term implications for democracy in West Africa. Coups can foster a culture of political instability and uncertainty, which hinder the development of democratic institutions. They also undermine public trust in democratic systems and processes, complicating the establishment of a sustainable democratic system. The consequences of military takeovers on African democracies are complex and varied. Although coups are sometimes justified as responses to political unrest or democratic deficiencies, they often have detrimental long-term effects. Therefore, collaboration between African nations and international actors is essential to prevent coups and promote democratic processes across the continent (Mannjong & Follah, 2023). Enonchong (2021) also highlighted that the surge in coups and military takeovers in Africa, especially in West Africa, could lead to democratic stagnation across the continent and the region.

Kemence (2013) indicated that the abrupt and premature withdrawal of colonial military powers is a key factor contributing to governmental instability and military coups in West Africa. This sudden exit leaves a void in security and hinders the professional development of emerging West African militaries, particularly in terms of civil-military relations. It is noteworthy that, similar to previous coups across Africa, portions of these nations' populations have welcomed the coups, even though they are fundamentally opposed to them. According to Time (2023), coups are worse than elections marred by accusations of misconduct because, despite their flaws, elections at least attempt to allow citizens to choose their leaders.

The authors argue that the consequences of coups could be dire and affect the political stability of a country by posing threats to its democracy, and have potentially volatile outcomes. There is, therefore, the need for the military to submit to civilian control and uphold the tenets of democracy to ensure political stability in Burkina Faso and the sub-region.

3.4 Effect of Coups d'état on Economic Development

African history has been marked by frequent coups d'état, which affect economic development and exacerbate the economic difficulties already present in the affected countries. Anani (2023) highlighted that the closure of neighboring countries' borders due to coups can severely disrupt regional trade and the economy. For instance, a merchant dealing in products like cloth and other goods would struggle to conduct business when borders are closed, leading to major economic issues such as reduced revenues, higher costs for alternative transportation, and potential job losses. A study conducted by Blum and Gründler (2022), revealed that political instability hampers economic growth. This conclusion was derived from the results of panel difference-in-differences strategies and dynamic panel data models using a substantial sample of 180 countries, a unique geocoded dataset for 2,660 regions, and microdata for approximately 250,000 households. The researchers used coups d'état as a source of exogenous variation in political instability because they are difficult to predict and reflect, thus minimizing measurement error. The study employed spatial variations and synthetic control methods for identification, revealing that periods of political instability decrease growth by 2-3 percentage points, increase unemployment, and negatively affect health and life satisfaction.

The repeated coups in Burkina Faso have adversely impacted the country's relations with international partners, thereby harming its economy. Bøås (2019) noted that sanctions imposed by some countries exacerbated Burkina Faso's economic challenges. Anani (2023) mentioned that sanctions from ECOWAS, the European Union, and France were imposed in response to these coups. This affected Francophone African nations like Mali, Burkina Faso, and Niger economically. Furthermore, the revocation

of African students' enrollment in French institutions and the suspension of official relations indicate a toughening of the French stance toward events in the region. Pryce and Time (2023) argued that coups d'état disrupt a nation's progress toward socioeconomic self-sufficiency because most Western nations and regional organizations tend to cut off crucial financial support to governments that come to power by force. Thus, in this sense, coups are retrogressive.

Similarly, coups consistently lead to a decline in investor confidence and a reduction in economic activity. Hagberg et al. (2018) highlighted that Burkina Faso has faced significant economic challenges, particularly in improving the population's standard of living. Major demands have arisen regarding youth employment, access to food, and basic social services. Furthermore, Ihonvbere (2006) observed that in West Africa, military takeovers hinder economic growth, deter foreign investment, and weaken the rule of law and human rights.

The authors argue that coups are retrogressive with terrible outcomes for West African countries, which affect their economic development. Thus, coups d'état negatively affect cross-border trading activities, creating a high level of unemployment, loss of investor confidence, and possible sanctions from international bodies and organizations. It is imperative that drivers of coups especially in Burkina Faso are identified and addressed to prevent coups since their economic consequences can be devastating.

3.5 Interventions to Mitigate Future Coups d'état in West Africa

Various scholars, security experts, policymakers, individual nations, and international organizations have proposed solutions to mitigate the frequent occurrences of coup d'états in West Africa and across the African continent. For instance, Thyne and Powell (2013) highlighted that policymakers at both the international and national levels have taken measures consistent with the belief that coups undermine democracy and can lead to unstable outcomes. As a result, some countries have adopted policies mandating the suspension of aid, while certain international

organizations stipulate the suspension of membership in response to a coup, aiming to deter further coups.

According to the PSC Report (2022), ECOWAS convened an emergency meeting in Ghana to address the recurring issue of coups d'état, particularly in Burkina Faso and the broader West African region. The meeting aimed to devise lasting solutions to this threat. One suggestion put forth was the updating and refinement of existing instruments, along with the establishment of state structures and institutions better equipped to address the contemporary challenges facing African societies. This approach is seen as a means to address deficits in good governance across the African continent. Additionally, addressing the persistent issue of sovereignty is crucial, as it has the potential to impede efforts by the African Union and regional organizations to enhance governance within member states.

Similarly, Mannjong and Follah (2023) suggested that in West Africa, socioeconomic challenges often serve as significant drivers behind numerous military coups. They proposed that promoting stability could involve addressing issues such as unemployment, inequality, and poverty, which might reduce the likelihood of military intervention. They emphasized the importance of international aid and regional collaboration in addressing the repercussions of military coups in West Africa.

The United Nations Development Program (2020) argued that promoting economic growth and job prospects could help address socio-economic grievances, which often contribute to military takeovers. They proposed investing in entrepreneurship, infrastructure, and education while fostering an environment conducive to business expansion. Similarly, Asante (2002) recommended enhancing youth empowerment and involvement in West Africa to prevent their susceptibility to extremist groups. This could involve providing opportunities for youth participation in decision-making and implementing educational and vocational training initiatives.

Furthermore, The United Nations Development Program (2020) suggested that preventing military takeovers entails promoting the rule of law and ensuring equitable treatment of all citizens under the law. This could be

achieved through legal reforms, training of judicial personnel, and ensuring equal access to justice. Enhancing respect for individual freedoms and human rights can further contribute to fostering a more democratic and stable society.

In addition, Sawo (2017) recommended that to prevent future military coups in Burkina Faso, it is crucial to bolster civil society, political parties, the legislative and judicial branches, and other state institutions. Similarly, Murray (2011) proposed that investing in conflict resolution and peace promotion efforts could mitigate tensions and reduce the likelihood of military intervention. This can involve fostering a culture of peace and tolerance, as well as employing mediation, dialogue, and reconciliation mechanisms.

Finally, Chigozie and Oyinmiebi (2022) conducted a study examining the impact of coups on the efficacy of ECOWAS in fostering peace and upholding democracy. Their research, primarily qualitative, utilized the regulative capability analytical framework rooted in Almond's General Systems theory. The study contended that existing sanctions aimed at deterring coup plotters lack sufficient stringency and effectiveness, often adversely affecting citizens rather than the military. Consequently, the paper proposed that ECOWAS should enhance its efforts to strengthen sub-regional democracy, promote good governance, and tackle leadership challenges in West Africa. This approach could significantly address the recurring coups d'état issues faced by nations in the region. Following this, the sanctions imposed by ECOWAS on Burkina Faso, Niger, and Mali were proclaimed as "inhuman, illegal, and illegitimate" by the three countries, leading to their withdrawal from ECOWAS.

4.0 Theoretical Framework

4.1 Democratic Consolidation Theory

Democratic Consolidation Theory explores how fledgling democracies transition and stabilize into fully functioning democratic systems. One of the primary proponents of this theory is Juan Linz, a renowned political

scientist known for his extensive work on authoritarian regimes and democratic transitions (Linz, 1996; Stepan & Linz, 1996). The theory assumes and implies that for a democracy to consolidate, it needs to achieve a set of conditions including behavioral, attitudinal, and constitutional. No significant political actors aim to overthrow the democratic regime; there is a strong public commitment to democratic norms and procedures; and all conflicts are resolved through democratic processes and institutions. Democracies are more likely to endure and become stable over time when these conditions are met. However, the failure to meet these conditions can lead to political instability and make a nation more susceptible to coups.

In the aftermath of a coup d'état, the prospects for democratic consolidation are often severely compromised. Politically, the disruption caused by a coup can weaken public trust in democratic institutions, erode the rule of law, and create an environment of political uncertainty (Mbaku, 2020). This instability can hinder the effective functioning of government, obstruct the formulation and implementation of policies, and lead to frequent changes in leadership. Political instability often results in decreased investor confidence, leading to reduced foreign direct investment and economic aid. It can also disrupt economic activities, reduce productivity, and cause a decline in economic growth. The lack of political stability and predictable governance can lead to higher transaction costs and discourage long-term economic planning and development. In Burkina Faso, for example, repeated coups have impeded both political and economic progress. The country has struggled with frequent leadership changes, weakened institutions, and sporadic violence (Powell & Thyne, 2014). These factors have not only obstructed democratic consolidation but also contributed to economic challenges such as poverty, unemployment, and a lack of infrastructure development (Powell & Thyne, 2014)

5.0 Materials and Methods

5.1 Research Approach

The study employed the qualitative research approach, which focused on exploring and understanding the meaning individuals or groups give to a

social or human problem (Creswell, 2014). This study focused on collecting credible and trustworthy data from security professionals, and political scientists regarding their experiences and opinions with coups in Burkina Faso. This approach provided valuable insight into coups in Burkina Faso.

5.2 Research Design

For this study, the researcher employed an explanatory case study design. This research design is well-suited for conducting an in-depth analysis and comprehension of a specific case within its authentic context (Yin, 2014). In this study, Burkina Faso was used as a case study because of its historical background in relation to military coups. According to the African Centre for Strategic Studies (2022), the country has recorded nine coups d'état with two occurring in 2022 – one in January and another in September. This calls for an in-depth study to understand the consequences on the political and economic landscapes of the country.

5.3 Study Area and Population

The study was carried out at the Ghana Armed Forces Command and Staff College (GAFCSC), Teshie within the Greater Region of Ghana. The choice of this site was timely, considering its relevance to the study's topic and objectives. Accessibility to interviewees included military officers from Burkina Faso and sister African countries who had assembled at the college for a course. Furthermore, opting for this site enabled data collection directly pertinent to the research questions and objectives, facilitating a concentrated and thorough investigation of the subject matter. The study's population included government officials, political leaders, civil society members and activists, military personnel, scholars and researchers including individuals associated with previous coups d'état.

5.4 Sampling Technique and Sample Size

The study employed a purposive sampling technique to select 15 senior military officers, including two from Burkina Faso, as interviewees based on their specific characteristics and relevance to the research objectives.

The suitability of the chosen interviewees was determined by factors such as their expertise, knowledge, or experience in areas related to coups d'état, political dynamics, or the specific context of Burkina Faso. Additionally, their willingness to provide information and share diverse perspectives was considered essential.

The selection process targeted officers holding key roles or ranks that provided them with the necessary insight for the study. To facilitate the swift identification and selection of 20 readily available peer-reviewed academic journals, convenience sampling was employed. This technique was crucial for conducting a comprehensive literature review. The study prioritized journals directly relevant to the research topic of coup d'état in Burkina Faso and the broader West African sub-region. The selected sample size of 15 officers and 20 journals was deemed sufficient to ensure diverse perspectives and comprehensive coverage of the research area.

5.5 Data Collection Instrument

In this study, a semi-structured interview schedule was used to gather responses from the selected participants, allowing for an in-depth exploration of their viewpoints, experiences, and insights on the research topic. The interview guide was divided into several sections: an introduction and informed consent section that explained the study's purpose, ensured confidentiality, and obtained consent; a participant background section that collected demographic and relevant background information; a section dedicated to exploring the research topic; and a final section capturing participants' personal perspectives and opinions. Additionally, scholarly peer-review journal articles were used as secondary source of data, providing a comprehensive foundation for the literature review.

5.6 Data Collection Procedure

The authors-initiated contact with selected participants via telephone and followed up with an email, presenting them with a semi-structured interview schedule and formally requesting their participation. Prior to the interviews, informed consent was obtained from each participant, outlining the interview's purpose, confidentiality assurances, and voluntary nature.

Subsequently, responses to the semi-structured interview questions transmitted electronically were meticulously analyzed. For the historical analysis, a systematic search of academic databases was conducted to locate and select pertinent peer-reviewed journal articles based on predefined criteria including publication date, subject matter, and research methodology. Additionally, past events based on literature were critically examined and interpreted to understand how and why they occurred.

5.7 Data Analysis

Semi-structured interviews were conducted with participants selected based on predefined inclusion criteria. With participants' consent, these interviews were recorded and subsequently transcribed verbatim, with each interview assigned a unique identifier to uphold confidentiality. A comprehensive thematic analysis was employed to analyze the interview data, identifying patterns and themes within the responses. The authors synthesized findings from the thematic analysis of the interviews to deduce patterns and draw conclusions.

5.8 Ethical Consideration

The study meticulously adhered to all ethical guidelines governing research practices. Formal permission was sought from GAFCSC to facilitate the smooth execution of the research. Interview participants were provided with assurances of anonymity, and stringent measures were implemented to safeguard their identities and personal data. Additionally, robust protocols were established for the secure storage and utilization of data, strictly for research purposes. This study did not obtain explicit authorization or consent from authors of published journal articles prior to utilizing their data. Nonetheless, all sources of information utilized in the research have been duly acknowledged, referenced or credited.

6.0 Results

The results of the study are presented based on the thematic analysis from responses to questions obtained from the semi-structured interview. These are presented in the ensuing paragraphs.

6.1 Interviews and Responses

Que 1. From your perspective, how have coups d'état influenced the political landscape of Burkina Faso?

The participants unanimously underscored the profound influence of coups d'état on Burkina Faso's political scene, highlighting numerous repercussions such as heightened instability, greater military intervention in politics, erosion of democratic values, governance and accountability hurdles, increased terrorism, and developmental setbacks. Five of the participants indicated that these effects have weakened political parties, reducing their influence over citizens. They further stated that the former ruling party, for instance, experienced a decline in credibility and public support. Furthermore, most participants stated that the absence of defined election timelines and a noticeable dearth of political engagement among parties were noted.

Que 2. Are there noticeable patterns in how political power has been exercised following such events?

Eighty per cent of the respondents acknowledged the recurring patterns in Burkina Faso's history of coups d'état, impacting its political landscape and power dynamics. These patterns include military dominance, limited civilian participation, opposition repression, delayed elections, and international isolation. Two of the respondents stated that security in the country is no longer a matter for the defence and security forces. Notably, civilians have formed self-defence groups, backed by the military regime, known as Volunteers for the Defence of the Homeland. This collective engagement in governance has fostered a sense of civic duty and involvement among ordinary citizens.

Que 3. Do you think the coups have influenced the economic policies, regulations, and reforms of the government?

The Interviewees unanimously agreed that coups in Burkina Faso significantly influence economic policies, regulations, and reforms. They further argued that the frequent political instability following coups creates uncertainty in the business environment, discouraging investment and hindering economic growth. New regimes may prioritize different

economic agendas, leading to disruptions in existing policies and reforms. This inconsistency affects investor confidence and business operations, making it a challenge for businesses to plan. Coups can result in changes in government spending priorities, trade policies, and investment regulations, affecting businesses and the overall economy. Overall, the instability caused by coups necessitates measures to stabilize the economy and restore investor confidence.

Que 4. Do you think the coups d'état have affected some economic activities of Burkina Faso?

Unanimously, all interviewees claimed the two recent coups d'état in Burkina Faso had adversely affected some economic activities within the country because of its political instability. For instance, some mentioned that the coups have resulted in an increase in attacks, which has made it impossible for farmers to grow crops in an era of insecurity thereby affecting their livelihoods and hence the economic activities of the country as a whole. Also, the main corridors for goods importations (Ouaga – Cotonou and Ouga – Lomé axis) and several gold mines are, for instance, affected by insecurity affecting the economy of the country. Similarly, some of them, for example, cited that Burkina Faso had faced border closures due to sanctions from both WAEMU and ECOWAS, resulting in restricted access to regional financial markets and hindering export opportunities. This forced reliance on domestic markets to put a strain on farmers who struggled to preserve perishable goods. Ongoing instability also led Western states to place the country on a travel red list, further affecting economic growth and development negatively.

Que 5. What interventions do you think can be implemented or considered to prevent future coups d'état in Burkina Faso and the West African sub-region?

All interviewees unanimously recommended key strategies to promote good governance and strengthen democracy. These strategies include prioritizing the interests of the people, enhancing the capacity of civil society, upholding the rule of law, managing elections efficiently, and

fostering conflict prevention and resolution mechanisms. Additionally, they emphasized promoting regional cooperation and political inclusivity, supporting military reform, and ensuring transparency in public affairs. The interviewees also highlighted the importance of distributing power equally among the three branches of government to maintain a balanced political system. They called for regional bodies, such as the African Union to establish and enforce democratic benchmarks across member states.

7.0 Discussion

The results of the study are discussed according to each research question and in line with the literature reviewed.

RQ 1. How have coups d'état affected the political and economic landscapes of Burkina Faso?

The thematic analysis findings alongside the literature review revealed a complex interplay of institutional, socioeconomic, and geopolitical factors contributing to the impact of coups d'état on Burkina Faso's political landscape. Several of the sampled peer-reviewed scholarly articles emphasized that coups d'état have led to political instability and uncertainty in Burkina Faso.

The scholarly articles further indicated that the coups d'état undermined democratic principles and institutions, leading to a regression in democratic governance. Correspondingly, research suggests that coups d'état result in shifts in power dynamics within the political landscape of countries (Akubueze 2024; Anyoko-Shaba, 2022; Blum & Gründler, 2020; Chitondo & Chanda, 2023; Mbara & Graham, 2023; Odigbo, Ezekwelu, & Okele, 2023; Osariyekemwen & Osariyekemwen, 2021). New regimes formed after coups often consolidate power in the hands of military leaders or other authoritarian figures, altering the balance of power within the country. It must be noted that this political instability creates challenges for governance, hinders democratic processes, and undermines the rule of law. Interviews with experts and stakeholders corroborated these findings. They emphasized the far-reaching impact of coups d'état on Burkina Faso's political landscape, citing various consequences such as increased instability, heightened military involvement in politics, erosion of

democratic principles, governance challenges, and setbacks in development efforts. Interviewees unanimously agreed that coups d'état have strained the country's regional and international relations. They highlighted tensions between Burkina Faso and its ECOWAS neighbors, except Guinea, Mali, and Niger, which are under military rule.

The detrimental effects of coups d'état on Burkina Faso's economic development were revealed through the thematic analysis of the interview responses, which were corroborated by literature. For example, the interviews showed that coups frequently resulted in short-term economic downturns that had long-term effects on important economic indices. These include GDP growth, employment rates, and inflows of capital. The articles also emphasized the economic interruptions brought about by political unrest, such as a decline in foreign direct investment, a halt to development initiatives, and an overall state of economic uncertainty.

Likewise, it was discovered that coups d'état had a role in Burkina Faso's reduction in social and human capital. Literature review undertaken, for example, revealed that political instability impeded progress in healthcare and education, aggravating poverty and restricting the development of human capital (Anani, 2023; Idris, Kitabu, & Garba, 2023; Chitondo & Chanda, 2023; Marawako, 2022; Blum & Gründler, 2020). Furthermore, the articles continuously stated that Burkina Faso's political unrest restricted the country's capacity to draw in outside assistance and collaboration, which in turn restricted funding for programs aimed at promoting economic development (Idris, Kitabu, & Garba, 2023; Izobo, 2020; Sollenberg, 2012).

In the same way, interviews with experts and stakeholders echoed these findings, highlighting the disruptive impact of coups d'état on Burkina Faso's trade and investment environment. They emphasized how political instability following coups breeds uncertainty, deterring investment and impeding economic growth. Changes in government priorities and policies further compound the issue and undermine investor confidence, and

disrupt business operations. Additionally, border closures due to sanctions from WAEMU and ECOWAS have restricted access to regional financial markets, hampering export opportunities and forcing reliance on domestic markets. This has strained farmers, particularly in preserving perishable goods.

Burkina Faso's experience and challenges have somewhat undermined its democratic processes and eroded public trust. This has resulted in political and economic disagreements impeding institutional dialogue with consequences on democratic continuity. This development is contrary to the Democratic Consolidation Theory pioneered by Juan Linz.

RQ 2. What measures can be implemented to prevent or mitigate the impact of future coups d'état in Burkina Faso and the West African sub-region?

The findings revealed a set of policy interventions to prevent or mitigate the impact of future coups d'état in Burkina Faso and the broader West African sub-region. Strengthening democratic institutions, implementing economic reforms, fostering regional cooperation, and enhancing conflict prevention mechanisms emerged as key strategies. These findings offer valuable insights for policymakers, regional organizations, and international partners. They emphasize the need for comprehensive and collaborative approaches such as robust electoral systems, transparent governance, and the protection of democratic values as fundamental elements to prevent and mitigate the occurrence of coups d'état and promote political stability in the region. Additionally, the historical analysis indicated that promoting civic education, ensuring free and fair elections, and fostering a culture of political inclusivity were identified as effective measures to strengthen democratic institutions and reduce the likelihood of coup attempts (Chitondo & Chanda; Hussein, 2015; Idris, Kitabu & Garba, 2023; Mannjong & Follah, 2023; Mohammed, 2022; Mushoriwa, 2023). Scholars underscored the significance of implementing economic reforms, addressing income inequality, and promoting inclusive development policies as crucial strategies in preventing and mitigating coups d'état. Hence, economic empowerment programs, poverty

alleviation initiatives, and sustainable development projects play a pivotal role in reducing the socioeconomic grievances that often contribute to political instability (Anani, 2023; Blum & Gründler, 2020).

Furthermore, the study emphasized the importance of regional cooperation and diplomatic efforts for preventing and mitigating coups d'état in Burkina Faso and the wider West African sub-region. Collaborative mechanisms among neighboring countries, regional organizations, and international partners were deemed essential. Some scholars also recommended diplomatic interventions, peacekeeping missions, and conflict resolution initiatives as effective strategies to address political instability at a regional level (Adeyeye & Adeyeye, 2024; Chigozie & Oyinmiebi, 2022; Hussein, 2015; Jawo, 2022; Mbara & Graham, 2023).

In addition, the qualitative data gathered from the sampled interviewees underscored the significance of conflict prevention strategies, emphasizing the necessity of proactive measures to address underlying tensions and grievances. Participants recommended a multifaceted approach, including good governance prioritizing people's interests, enhancing civil society capacity, upholding the rule of law, and ensuring efficient election management. Additionally, they stressed the importance of fostering conflict prevention and resolution mechanisms, promoting regional cooperation and political inclusivity, supporting military reform, and ensuring transparency in public affairs, particularly concerning finance and justice. Furthermore, they advocated for the equitable distribution of power among the three branches of government and called for regional bodies to establish and enforce democratic benchmarks across member states.

7.1 Limitation of the Study

The study on coup d'état incidents in Burkina Faso and West Africa faced several limitations. These include reliance on potentially biased historical data to support the discussion of the findings, which may affect accuracy and comprehensiveness. Additionally, a predominant reliance on military perspectives risks marginalizing civilians and regional viewpoints, which

are crucial for a broader understanding of coups. Furthermore, the findings may not be fully applicable to the entire West African sub-region due to differing political and economic contexts. To mitigate these limitations, the authors defined the study's scope and employed rigorous research methodologies and careful analysis to ensure that no single viewpoint dominated the findings. They also acknowledged potential biases, considered alternative data sources, and ensured data triangulation and a comprehensive literature review to enhance the study's credibility and generalizability.

8.0 Conclusion

The extensive effects of coups d'état on Burkina Faso's political and economic environments have been thoroughly examined in this paper. In terms of political events, the study found that Burkina Faso's two most recent coups have exposed the persistent issues that continue to influence the nation's course. It is clear from a review of historical patterns, empirical evidence, and academic viewpoints that political instability has increased because of frequent military takeovers. Notably, a decline in democratic governance, a rise in terrorism, and losses in progress. Ineffective policymaking has impeded the participation of people in democratic processes and political parties have weakened. In addition, democratic values have been undermined by military action in government.

The study also revealed the negative economic effects of frequent coups, specifically the interruption of trade routes, important businesses like gold mines and agricultural production, especially farming. While border closures and sanctions from WAEMU and ECOWAS have limited access to financial markets, hampered exports, and discouraged foreign direct investment, farmers face insecurity that makes food production difficult. As a result, the country's development challenges are made worse by economic unproductivity and waning investor confidence.

The study emphasizes the significance of strengthening governance systems, putting citizens' interests first, building civil society capacity, and

upholding the rule of law in order to lessen the likelihood of military revolutions occurring again. To ensure democratic resilience, effective electoral management, regional collaboration, and political inclusivity are essential. Additionally, military reforms and openness in public life can promote political stability and reduce military meddling in governance. To stop future coups and protect constitutional governance, regional organizations like the African Union need to be more active in setting and enforcing democratic standards among its member nations.

In order to create a more stable and prosperous Burkina Faso, institutional reforms, leadership accountability, and regional cooperation are crucial. While coups have somewhat altered the political and economic advancements of Burkina Faso, a concentrated effort toward inclusive political discussion, sustainable development programs, and enhanced democratic institutions presents a pathway to durable stability.

9.0 Recommendations

The following recommendations are made to inform policy and practice for stability and development:

- Burkina Faso and other West African nations should deepen their integration into ECOWAS and AU agendas in order to take advantage of investment partnerships, diplomatic assistance and conflict resolution.
- Burkina Faso and West African countries should reduce reliance on external markets by investing in local production, enhancing security for farmers, and diversifying economic activities beyond extractive industries.
- Burkina Faso should provide incentives for investors, secure trade routes, and improve agricultural assistance activities to strengthen food security and safeguard against economic disruptions and instability.
- West African countries should strengthen their early-warning systems and mediation platforms to detect signs of political unrest and prevent escalations.

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