

THE IMPACT OF MILITARY COUPS D'ETAT ON WEST AFRICA'S
SOCIO-ECONOMIC AND POLITICAL DEVELOPMENT

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The opinions and conclusions expressed herein are those of the student author and do not necessarily represent the views of the U.S. Army Command and General Staff College or any other governmental agency. (References to this study should include the foregoing statement.)

ABSTRACT

THE IMPACT OF MILITARY COUPS D'ETAT ON WEST AFRICA'S SOCIO-ECONOMIC AND POLITICAL DEVELOPMENT, by MAJ. Daniel Dee Ziankahn, Jr., 90 pages.

Following the period from 1957-1960, when most countries in West Africa broke loose from colonialism and became independent, the need for an integrated and classless society was one of paramount concern to most, if not all, West Africans. Up to date, the impact of colonialism was still being felt at every stratum of the sub-region. As former colonies of European powers began to gain independence from their colonial masters, the educated class eventually dominated and controlled the political landscape of their respective countries. The educated elites representing their countries' leadership with inherent authority over the military rarely used the armed forces for the intended purpose for which they were created. As the results of the military being used by politicians as an instrument of fear against their own citizens coupled with political misrule, the military soon began to seize and control state power through military coup d'etats. There were, however, disagreements and dissatisfactions within the ranks and file of the military which led to counter-coups and more often than not civil wars. As the results of these and many more, the sub-region's social-economic and political institutions have been devastated for the past three to four decades from which they are yet to recover.

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ACRONYMS

AFL	Armed Forces of Liberia
AU	African Union
ECOWAS	Economic Community of West African States
ECOMOG	Economic Community Monitoring Group
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
GNP	Gross National Product
IMF	International Monetary Fund
SAP	Structural Adjustment Program
UK	United Kingdom
UN	United Nations
UNDP	United Nation Development Program
US	United States
USA	United States of America

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

If, then, civilized nations do not put their prisoners to death or devastate cities and countries, it is because intelligence plays a larger part in their methods of warfare and has taught them more effective ways of using force than the crude expression of instinct.

— Carl Von Clausewitz, *On War*

Overview of West Africa

West Africa consists of sixteen countries that cover a total area of about 6.5 million square kilometers; roughly the same area as the contiguous United States of American (USA) minus Texas. The total population of the sub-region is around 250 million people, giving an average density of just 38 people per square kilometer; a little higher than the USA, but way below European or Asian average.¹ Of the total population of West Africa, the Federal Republic of Nigeria makes up nearly half with a population of 120 million. Most West Africans obtain their living from subsistence farming. The region has few exports: oil is the principle revenue-earner for Nigeria; cocoa and gold are the major exporting commodities of Ghana; several countries have phosphate resources; Mali, Burkina Faso and, Benin rely on the cotton crop; and Niger has uranium.² Diamonds are one of the sensitive natural resources of West Africa. Liberia and Sierra Leone are the primary producers. The commodity is termed sensitive because the nearly

¹Richard Trillo, *The Rough Guide to West Africa* (New York, NY: Rough Guide Ltd., 2008), 5.

²Ibid.

two decades of civil unrest within the Mano River Basin was centered on “Blood Diamonds”- illegal diamonds whose proceeds fund conflicts.

The sixteen countries that make up West Africa are depicted in Table 1. A detailed description of each nation, from which this data is extracted, is contained in Appendix. A.

Table 1. Countries of West Africa

COUNTRY	CAPITAL CITY	DATE OF INDEPENDENCE	POPULATION	LAND AREA	COLONIAL MASTER	OFFICIAL LANGUAGE(S)
Benin	Porto-Novo	1 August 1960	9.2 million	42,000 sq. mi.	France	French
Burkina-Faso	Ouagadougou	5 September 1960	16 million	105,900 sq. mi.	France	French
Cape Verde	Praia	5 July 1975	567,000	1,500 sq. mi.	Portugal	Portuguese
Cote d'Ivoire	Abidjan	5 August 1960	20.6 million	124,503 sq. mi.	France	French
The Gambia	Banjul	18 February 1965	1.7 million	3,980 sq. mi.	Great Britain	English
Ghana	Accra	6 March 1957	24.2 million	92,100 sq. mi.	Great Britain	English
Guinea	Conakry	2 October 1958	10 million	94,980 sq. mi.	France	French
Guinea-Bissau	Bissau	10 October 1974	1.6 million	13,948 sq. mi.	Portugal	Portuguese
Liberia	Monrovia	26 July 1847	3.5 million	43,000 sq. mi.	None	English
Mali	Bamako	22 Sept. 1960	14.6 million	478,839 sq. mi.	France	French
Mauritania	Nouakchott	28 Nov. 1960	3.3 million	397,954 sq. mi.	France	French & Arabic
Niger	Niamey	3 August 1960	15.3 million	489,698 sq. mi.	France	French
Nigeria	Abuja	1 October 1960	152 million	356,667 sq. mi.	Great Britain	English
Senegal	Dakar	4 April 1960	13.7 million	76,000 sq. mi.	France	French
Sierra Leone	Freetown	27 April 1961	6.4 million	27,699 sq. mi.	Great Britain	English
Togo	Lome	27 April 1960	6.6 million	22,000 sq. mi.	France	French

Source: Created by author using data from: Adekaye Adebajo and Ismail O. D. Rashid, *West Africa's Security Challenges: Building Peace in a Troubled Region* (Boulder, CO: Lynne Rienner Publisher Inc., 2004), 148; Central Intelligence Agency, World Factbook, <https://www.civ.gov/library/pub> (12 November 2011), 60; Boubacor N'Diaye, *The Challenge of Institutionalizing Civilian Control* (Lanham, MD: Lexington Books, 2001); Michael Crowder, *Colonial West Africa: Collected Essays* (London, Frank Cass and Company, 1978).

With the exception of Mauritania, whose government withdrew from the organization in 2000, all of the countries mentioned above are members of the sub-regional organization called the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) which dates from the 1975 Lagos Treaty.

West Africa is oriented west of an imagined north south axis lying close to ten degrees east longitude. The Atlantic Ocean forms the western and southern borders of the region. The northern border is the Sahara Desert, with the Niger Bend generally considered the northwestern most part of the region. The eastern border is less precise, with some placing it at the Benue Trough, and others on a line running from Mount Cameroon to Lake Chad.³ Figure 1 portrays a graphic depiction of the region.

³Jean-Marie Cour, Sahel Club, and Serge Snrech, *Preparing for the Future of West Africa in the Year 2020* (Paris, France: OECD Publications, 1998), 23.



Figure 1. The Sixteen Countries of West Africa

Source: United Nations Development Report, “Political Map of West Africa,” <http://www.bing.com/images/search?q=map+of+west+Africa&view> (accessed 14 November 2011).

Colonial boundaries are reflected in the modern borders between contemporary West African nations, cutting across ethnic and cultural lines; often dividing single ethnic groups between two or more countries. The issue of an ethnic group being divided

between more than two countries is evident in countries like Liberia, Guinea and Cote d'Ivoire. For example, the Mandingoes, an ethnic group in West Africa, are citizens of the three countries who share common borders. The birth of discrete borders between countries rests with the former colonial masters of West Africa; namely, Great Britain, France, Portugal and Germany.

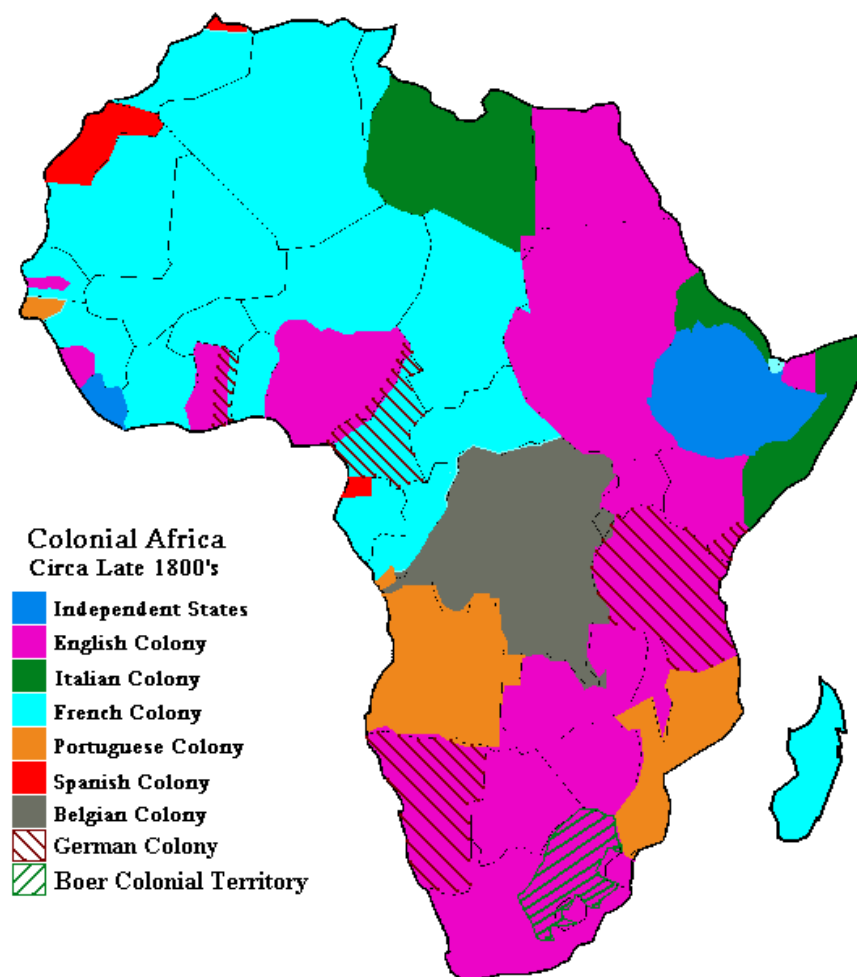


Figure 2. Colonial Map of Africa

Source: National Library, "Colonial Map of Africa," <http://www.empathosnationenterprises.com/Consulate/EN-Library/Black-Studies/afcolony.html> (accessed 4 June 2011).

Current Situation

The current situation in West Africa is the combination of various social, political and economic factors that need much, if not urgent, attention. Harsh economic and social conditions, widespread corruption, conflict and post-conflict scenarios, failing national administrations, and a growing culture of impunity feed the development of criminal practices and mark the West African region as a haven for international criminal ventures. Most countries' leadership are not willing to enact or implement legislations that will protect the economies or its integrity both at home and abroad. Still, in spite of these conditions, hope exists. For example, the United Nations' presence in the Mano River Basin has provided much needed security and has benefited the region in many ways. For example, the persistent violence in the Ivory Coast, which sprung out of the controversial November 2010 presidential and general elections, was brought to an end due to the robust and professional actions of the United Nations (UN) peacekeeping forces which were backed by French government support and assistance. Despite the many conflicts for the past two decades, the sub-region has still enjoyed some economic successes. According to the United Nations Economic Commission for Africa (UNECA), West African countries benefited from the high oil prices in 2010 and revenues from non-oil activities grew in several countries including Nigeria, Ghana, Sierra Leone, and Liberia. In spite of these successes, other countries, such as the Ivory Coast, Guinea and Niger are for the most part experiencing weak economic growth due to political disturbances and other security issues.

Over the past several decades, military coups have been a common occurrence in Africa and West Africa in particular. Studies and experience have shown that 15 of the 16

countries that make up West Africa have, in one way or another, experienced military coups d'état. Most of the coups have emanated from the military officer corps. This has not only raised more questions than answers as it relates to the competence and commitment of the military in general and the officer's corps in particular, but has also had a negative impact on the social-economic development of the sub-region. The impact of this phenomenon is quite disturbing in many ways. There have been coups and counter-coups that have fueled civil wars in countries such as Liberia and Sierra Leone. In Liberia for example, the civil war lasted for over a decade and cost the lives of over a quarter million people. The consequences of these civil wars were devastating; the two countries were on the brink of becoming failed states. Without analyzing the impact of the many military coups, one can clearly ascertain that the immediate and perhaps the most dangerous consequence left behind by these brutal civil wars was 'brain drain.' of intellectuals and professionals desperately needed to build the countries' social and economic instability. Most of the professionals who could have contributed toward building capacity and establishing viable governance in these ravaged countries sought refuge elsewhere in search of survival and perhaps better lives.

Background of the Study

Colonialism was West Africa's darkest period. Colonialism refers to a period of history from the late 15th to the 20th century when European nation-states established colonies on other continents. A colony and its master state were similar to the relationship between a master and his servant. In the case of a colony, an entire society is sometimes robbed of its historical lineage, externally manipulated and transformed

according to the needs and interests of the colonial rulers.⁴ This has been the case with West Africa and her colonial masters. From every indication, the colonial masters did not consider the well-being or prosperity of the people of its colonies. Instead, they used the resources of their colonies in order to feed their own economies by drawing raw materials, and using human labor to meet the growing demands of their large industrial complexes in their various countries.

Great Britain and France were the dominant colonial powers in West Africa. The French established the Federation of West Africa (FWA) in 1895; however, the French presence and some forms of governance, at least in certain regions, had actually existed since the seventeenth century.⁵ The Federation comprised seven territories: Senegal, Cote d'Ivoire, Niger, Benin, Mali, Guinea and Mauritania. Togo became part of the French Federation after World War II in large part because Togoland, as it was originally known, was previously a German colony.

Apart from France, the next and most influential colonial master in West Africa was Great Britain. Former British colonies included Nigeria, Ghana, formerly the Gold Coast, Sierra Leone and The Gambia. Liberia, though within the sphere of British influence, was the only country in West Africa without a colonial master.

Ongoing instability in West Africa was a direct result of colonialism. In spite of colonial variations in governance and economic development, the pervading philosophy throughout the colonial territories remained the subjugation and exploitation of West

⁴Jurgen Osterhammel, *Colonialism* (Princeton, NJ: Markus Wiener Publishers, 1997), 15.

⁵Ruth Ginio, *French Colonialism Unmasked: The Vichy Years in French West Africa* (Lincoln, NE: University of Nebraska, 2006), 4.

Africa, and to some degree, Africa in general.⁶ The French, who controlled much of West Africa at the time, employed the policies of assimilation in governing her territories in an attempt to maintain tighter controls. The British, on the other hand, opted for the least expensive form of governing their colonies through the indirect rule system. This involved delegating greater powers to local authorities in the forms of Chiefs, and tribal authorities. The Portuguese, a lesser colonial master in the region, implemented the worst form of governance in their territories; using constabulary forms of government that implemented harsh and brutal rules of law.

Statement of the Problem

In the years since most countries in West Africa broke loose from colonialism and became independent, the need for an integrated social, political and economically diverse and classless ('middle class') society was one of paramount concern to most, if not all, West Africans. Still, the colonial legacy is felt at every stratum of the sub-region. Among the many colonial legacies, the "class system" was the one that greatly crippled or slowed the progress of the sub-region. Within the class systems left behind by the colonial imperial powers, many individuals who were fortunate to have acquired some level of education during the colonial period saw themselves as if those who were educated were to be considered 'privileged'. Eventually, as colonies gained their independence from their colonial masters, the native educated class controlled the political machinery of their respective countries. The uneducated or less fortunate classes of West African society, on the other hand, were rendered inadequate for positions of authority within the new

⁶John M. Kabia, *Humanitarian Intervention and Conflict Resolution in West Africa* (London: Ashgate Publishing, 2009), 36.

governments and thus were given to compulsory military service. The educated elite, representing the countries' leadership with inherent authority over its military, rarely utilized their armed forces for the intended purposes for which they were created, such as homeland defense, law enforcement, and civil authority. Instead, they used the military as an instrument of rule over their own citizens.

The political elite used the military establishment to maintain their grip on political power. (How did they get there in the first place? Traditional political structures compared to colonial ones) There was little to no civil-military relations education or training within the rank and file of the military. Many West African politicians viewed civilian control of the military as merely a means by which to accomplish one's political objective. With this in mind, most military personnel had little or no education and regrettably, they were not given the proper care that befits military personnel. The Liberian and Sierra Leonean militaries were classic examples. As a result of the military being used to promote civil initiatives by corrupt leaders and often not given the credit it deserved, the military over time saw itself as disenfranchised and they soon began to take matters into their own hands. Some military leaders, as in Liberia and Sierra Leone, led efforts to steer the affairs of the states in which they found themselves, and sought to overthrow the politicians. Before long, the military was able to seize state power and marginalize the politicians. There were, however, disagreements and dissatisfactions within the military, which led to counter coup-attempts. These dissatisfactions usually emanated from the question of who occupied the most powerful positions within the military juntas. In many instances, these power struggles led to political instabilities or all out civil wars.

Primary Research Question

This thesis will explore the various causes and effects of the staggering number of military coups in the West African Region from 1980 to 2000. The results of this research will intend to answer the primary research question: How have these military coups d'état impacted the socio-economic and political development of West Africa?

Secondary Research Questions

In order to address the primary question, the following secondary questions must be answered:

1. What are the factors that gave rise to the military coups in the first place?
2. Were the military coups truly necessary?
3. What could have been done to prevent the military coups?
4. What do military coups mean for the lives of the ordinary citizens of the sub-region?

Definitions of Key Terms

The following terms aid the reader's understanding and will be used throughout this paper.

Civil-Military Relations: Describes the relationship between civil society as a whole and the military organization or organizations established to protect it. More narrowly, it describes the relationship between the civil authority of a given society and its military authority.⁷

⁷Ibid.

Colonialism: Normally refers to a period of history from the late 15th to the 20th century when European nation states established colonies on other continents. In other words, it is the establishment, maintenance, acquisition and expansion of colonies in one territory by people from another territory.⁸

Military coup d'état: Is the sudden, extrajudicial deposition of a government, usually by a small group of the existing state establishment, typically the military, to replace the deposed government with another body, either civil or military. A coup d'état succeeds if the usurpers establish their dominance when the incumbent government fails to prevent or successfully resist their consideration of power.⁹

Post-Colonialism: Post-colonialism is an intellectual direction (sometimes also called an “era” or the “post-colonial theory”) that exists since around the middle of the 20th century. It developed from and mainly refers to the time after colonialism. The ultimate goal of post-colonialism is accounting for and combating the residual effects of colonialism on cultures. It is not simply concerned with salvaging past worlds, but learning how the world can move beyond this period together, towards a place of mutual respect. This section surveys the thoughts of a number of post-colonialism's most prominent thinkers as to how to go about this.¹⁰

⁸Ibid.

⁹Merriam Webster, s.v., “Military coup d’ état,” <http://www.merriam.webster.com/dictionary> (accessed 20 June 2011).

¹⁰Merriam Webster, s.v., “Post-Colonialism,” <http://www.merriam.webster.com/dictionary> (accessed 20 June 2011).

Limitations

There are a number of limitations associated with this research. The first limitation is the lack of 'viable' information regarding this topic. Another limitation is the time available to complete this research paper. Because of time constraints, this research paper must be conducted over the period of only nine months and will encompass data and information pertaining only to West Africa. The second limitation is the difficulty in finding sources written by members of ex-military juntas that would provide first-hand information on the research topic.

Delimitations

In order to make this research workable within the limited timeframe, the author must set time limitations to the scope and length of the thesis paper. This study is limited only to the military coups d'état in West Africa. Moreover, the assessment for the topic will only focus on the period from 1980-2000. The year 1980 is a good base year for the project because, in that year, Liberia, the only country in the sub-region that was never colonized, experienced her first ever military coup d'état. Interestingly, Liberia is not only the first independent country in West Africa, but also in Africa.

The international community and ECOWAS, for the most part, have condemned the use of military means to acquire political power. Given this development, many would-be coup makers are weakened and former military junta members are prevented from expressing their thoughts on this issue. Many researchers have written on the subject as well, which might expand the breadth of sources for the research in such forums as journals and professional articles.

Significance of the Study

The findings of this study may set the basis for the scrupulous implementation of measures that will prevent future military coups d'état in West Africa. In addition, this thesis may identify flaws in the ways politicians governed which could have given rise to the unprecedented number of military coups d'état in the sub-region.

After colonialism ended in West Africa, many Africans strongly believed that the sub-region was heading for both economic and political prosperity. This seemed to be true during the first decade of post-colonialism, but this notion was short lived after Ghana, Nigeria and other nations began overthrowing their new governments. The researcher has found previous research and other works written on West African military coups. There is also some information from Non-Government Organizations (NGOs) and academic institutions as well. This research intends to explore how much military coups d'état have shaped the sub-region.

Summary

Chapter 1 represents the introductory section of this study. The introduction lays out the background of West Africa including its political sub-divisions and the colonial connections, as well as previewing the socio-economic and political environment of the post-colonial era. A current geo-political overview is also depicted. Additionally, limitations, delimitations, and the significance of the study are clearly defined. The next chapter will identify and review previous literature as well as related resources written about the research topic by various authors representing different schools of thoughts.

CHAPTER 2

LITERATURE REVIEW

The purpose of this research is to study the impact of military coups on the socio-economic and political development in West Africa.

A sizable quantity of literature relating to the causes and effects of military coups d'état in West Africa exists in both academia and general literature. Interest in military coups d'état rose substantially the decade after the post-independence era of West Africa. Many authors have contributed to this post-independence phenomenon sweeping across the sub-region.

The literature for this thesis is vast and diverse. Thus it is categorized into three main areas. Each of the three categories is explained in a bit more detail in this chapter in order for the reader to better understand why the literature was used to conduct the research for this thesis. The first category includes 'works' that are considered primary sources to the topic of coups in West Africa because they were written by both foreigners and indigenous persons who either lived or worked in the region at some time either before, during, or after the period being researched. These people have personally experienced (and survived) the volatile period and have been able to tell about it (in both interviews and in print). The second category is comprised of works formulated by foreign researchers and organizations who have studied the region dating back to 1980 and who have published numerous writings based on their research. Finally, the third category, and probably the most prolific, are papers, reports and journals that have been produced by various organizations (to include the media). Specific to this third category

are those periodicals or documentaries that have brought this topic to light in the international community.

Works of Indigenous West Africans

In order to determine the driving force behind the significant number of military coups d'état in West Africa following the immediate years of post-colonialism and the general impact on the development of the sub-region, the impact and influence of colonialism must be understood. In this chapter, the researcher describes the level of civil-military relations that existed between the conscripted militaries and the national government and how this might have influenced most, if not all of the military coups. Two of the notable indigenous West African contributors to this topic are Dr. Kwame Nkrumah and Adekeye Adebajo.

Neo-Colonialism was the last stage of colonialism in Africa. According to Bauer and Holowinska, neo-colonialism is a policy whereby a major power used economic and political means to perpetuate or extend its influence over underdeveloped nations or areas.¹¹ In this scenario, many West African states were independent in theory, but they suffered from the influence of neo-colonialism in many forms. Neo-Colonialism is the worst form of imperialism. It was not the beacon of hope to the long and dark path of colonialism in West Africa. According to Dr. Kwame Nkrumah, the Ghanaian political hero of independence, “for those who practice it, it means power without responsibility and for those who suffer it, it means exploitation without redress.” Neo-Colonialism is based upon the principle of breaking up former, large united colonial territories into a

¹¹Franziska Bauer and Magdalena Holowinska, *Colonialism and Neo-Colonialism* (Norderstedt, Germany: Grin Verlag, 2008), 5.

number of small non-viable states that are incapable of independent development and must rely upon the former power for defense and even internal security.¹² West Africa is clearly one of the most unstable sub-regions on the continent of Africa. During the past two decades, some of the most brutal civil conflicts in the continent's history have wrecked West Africa. Another contributor toward instability in West Africa is the continuing role of the military and the phenomenon of military regimes.¹³ Of the fifteen ECOWAS states, only Senegal has not been shaken by a military coup d'état.

One might argue that colonialism has ended and it is no longer applicable in West Africa. This argument makes a lot of sense when viewed from the fact that former West African colonies are now sovereign states. However, the circumstances of current day events do not support this claim. Even though Liberia was never colonized by any of the great powers during the colonial era of West Africa, the USA, for the most part, has had a greater influence on the political and economic affairs of Liberia before and after her independence in 1847. This is partly because freed slaves from the United States (U.S.) established Liberia. To date, Liberia receives most of its financial aid, as well as most of its military aid, from the U.S. The same holds true for Sierra Leone and its relationship with Great Britain, its former colonial master. Sierra Leone receives more aid from Great Britain than she does from any other nation. Sierra Leone received close to 50 million

¹²David J. Francis, *Uniting Africa: Building Regional Peace and Security Systems* (London: Ashgate Publishing Limited, 2006), 16.

¹³Adekeye Adebajo, *Building Peace in West Africa: Liberia, Sierra Leone, and Guinea-Bissau* (Boulder, CO: Lynne Rienner Publishers, Inc., 2002), 39.

pounds in aid from the United Kingdom (U.K.) between 2009-2010.¹⁴ Given these connections, both the American and British governments influence the politics and economies of Liberia and Sierra Leone respectively. The same holds true for some former French colonies particularly Cote d'Ivoire, Senegal and Guinea. What the author of Neo-Colonialism does not suggest is how the notion of indirect rule can ever end. The end of Neo-Colonialism is virtually impossible as West African governments and their economies are not only stimulated by foreign aid, but require it for their own survivability. They look up to their former colonial masters for political advice and economic direction.

Another drastic impact left behind by colonialism is the policy of "Divide and Rule." The colonial masters may have instituted this policy based on two important reasons. First, they wanted to have a deeper understanding of the culture and people whom they were ruling. Second, the policy of "Divide and Rule" delayed eventual colonial succession and independence. Nevertheless, according to Michael Crowder, attaining independence was inevitable in the 19th century Europe had sown the seeds of her own demise as colonial powers in West Africa by not only educating Africans but also by employing them in the highest posts in their colonies' governments, thereby showing these very same Africans that Europeans, even though they had adopted racist policies, had actually believed in their abilities.¹⁵ The consequences of "Divide and Rule" then begs the question as to why those who were educated and trained by colonial

¹⁴Department for International Development, "Sierra Leone," <http://www.dfid.gov.uk/sierraleone> (accessed 4 September 2011).

¹⁵Michael Crowder, *Colonial West Africa: Collected Essay* (London: Frank Cass and Company, 1978), 16.

masters, and who gained positions of authority following colonial independence, did not offer the best solutions to the plights of West Africa.

Foreign Literature Relating to Military Coups d'état

West Africa is the most coup-ridden sub-region in the world. According to the United Nations 2011 Report, the 16 ECOWAS states are among the poorest countries on the planet, and 13 of them are among the top 50 poorest countries of the world.¹⁶ The sub-region has a population of over 200 million and an average per capita income of less than \$500 excluding three countries; Nigeria, because of its large oil deposits, Ghana whose government has created great economic and fiscal policies, and Cote d'Ivoire, which is the world's leading producer of cocoa beans. Most ECOWAS member markets are too small and have weak governments that are unable to capitalize on their countries' potential for political growth and industrial development without harnessing their efforts to the wider sub-region.

West Africa's first three post-independence decades have been nothing short of disappointing. Grinding poverty, military coups d'état, political autocracy, widespread corruption, and foreign meddling have all turned the dreams of an economically integrated and politically united West Africa into a living nightmare for most of its citizens.¹⁷ According to Adekeye Adebajo, author of *Building Peace in West Africa: Liberia, Sierra Leone, and Guinea-Bissau*, in the hardy post-independence years of the 1960s, leaders like Kwame N'krumah, Sekou Toure, Abubakar Tafawa Balawa, Felix

¹⁶Infoplease.com, "World's Poorest Countries," www.infoplease.com/ipa/A0908763.htm (accessed 14 November 2011).

¹⁷Adebajo, *Building Peace in West Africa*, 39.

Houphouet-Boigny, Leopold Sedar Senghor, Modibo Keita, Sylvanus Olympio, and Siaka Stevens bestrode the West African landscape like titans.¹⁸ This was one of the main reasons why the spirit of autocracy and dictatorship was so endemic to Africa. Most of the politicians who fought during the independence movements in West Africa felt that they should sit on the highest point of politics. This was the case with Liberia and the freed slaves or Americo-Liberians who settled in Liberia in the early 19th century. (Prose) Americo-Liberians did not consider themselves as indigenous Liberians and therefore believed that they could not share political powers with the Liberian aborigines. Thus, Liberia was ruled by a single party from 1847 to 1980 formed along ethnic and tribal lines.

Due to the autocratic nature of most of the post-independence leaders of West Africa, the conscript militaries began to find cracks in their regimes and took advantage to seize political power through military coups d'état. Military coups, often involving assassinations, toppled potentates like Kwame N'krumah, Balawa, and Olympio, and were envisioned as West Africa's "men on horseback," the military made dramatic entries onto the political stage.¹⁹ Adekeye Adebajo further maintained that neither the military nor the politicians were able to rise to the daunting challenge of building nations out of poor states that had been ill prepared for independence by their departing colonial overlords.²⁰ Most people in West Africa were truly yearning to catch the precious breath

¹⁸Ibid., 23.

¹⁹Samuel Decalo, *Coups and Army Rule in Africa*, 2nd ed. (London: Yale University Press, 1990), 76.

²⁰Adebajo, *Building Peace in West Africa*, 42.

of independence but they were not sincerely prepared to handle the tasks that accompanied it.

Conventional scholarship on African militaries tends to focus almost exclusively on the causes of military coups, civil-military relations (or lack thereof), and the developmental roles of the military and its disassociation with politics. However, a variety of narratives, for example, attributes military coups to the low levels of professionalism and political institutionalization.²¹ Typical of this approach are studies by Samuel Huntington, Amos Perl Mutter, and Samuel Finer, which earlier extolled the virtues of militaries in politics. While it is often viewed as a statement of fact, that education drives away barbarism, these beliefs sometimes failed the litmus test. Most of the military coups d'état in West Africa emanated from the officer corps. More often than not, following colonialism in West Africa, the military officers' corps received most of its advanced education and training from its eventual allied partners, thus, the concept of professional militaries was established. What was lacking, however, was education and training in the realm of civil-military relations, where military officers were trained to understand the notion of civil control of the military. Clearly, this fundamental aspect of a professional military in a free, democratic society was lacking.

Journals and Documentaries

Chief Emeka Anyaoku, former Secretary-General of the Commonwealth, argued in the journal of "The Missing Headlines," that the cause of military coups d'état in West Africa was attributed to many factors. He divided them into two categories. In the first

²¹Jimmy David Kandeh, *Coups from Below: Armed Subalterns and State Power in West Africa* (New York, NY: Palgrave, Macmillan, 2004), 13.

was remote causes, the underlying factors that set the scene for, or enhanced the susceptibility of these states to, military coups d'état. The second category comprised the immediate, circumstantial factors that are presented for the assumption of power by the military.²² The first category mainly focuses on the many ills left behind by the former colonial powers of West Africa; namely, that those left in positions of authority were unprepared to lead the people and manage the affairs of their native states, the second category, lends to the fact that given the power vacuum in the civil sector. The only clear persons with any sort of authority or leadership potential were military officers.

Perhaps, one of the reasons for the failure of the civil sector to produce adequate leaders was the fact that the colonial masters tried to hold on to power for too long; thus, stifling initiative in the colonies. Another reason concerns education opportunities such that the colonial authorities felt that education was not a right for the indigenous population as a whole; instead, it was a privilege for the select few. A good example is found in that which the Portuguese left behind after 300 years of colonial rule: “only 14 university graduates, an illiteracy rate of 97 percent and 267 miles of paved roads in an area twice the size of New Jersey. There was only one modern plant in Guinea-Bissau in 1974. It produced beer for the Portuguese troops. As a final gesture before leaving, the Portuguese destroyed the national archives.”²³ These were some of the many conditions with which the newly independent countries of West Africa had to struggle during their first decade of independence in the latter part of the 20th century.

²²Emeka Anyaoku , *The Missing Headlines: Selected Speeches* (England: Liverpool University Press, 1999), 278.

²³George B. N. Ayittey, *Africa in Chaos* (New York, NY: St. Martin Press, 1999), 41.

Chief Anayaoku's argument also focuses on the economic and political variables as well as the living conditions of the populace in the post-independence West Africa. The root causes of these poor conditions are not to be blamed on the former colonial masters alone. Some responsibility falls on the 'so called heroes' of the independence movements. Many of the post-independence leaders used their newly found pulpits as launching platforms for corruption and absorbed power and authority unto themselves to the point of making the conditions similar to those under former colonial rule. Not only did they establish one-party states, as in the case of Guinea and Sierra Leone, but also stole millions of dollars of tax payers' money; transferring it into their own personal accounts. From this vantage point, the conditions created by these corrupt leaders, left little to no alternative but for military leaders to organize a military coups.

Summary

This chapter represents the foundation for beginning the research that will facilitate answering both the primary and secondary questions for this thesis. This research will make a significant attempt toward applying the existing knowledge as it relates to military coups d'état within West Africa. Among the many literatures which have been written in the field, none have outlined or discussed the socio-political and economic impacts which military coups d'état have had on the sub-region. Chapter 3 of the thesis will discuss the methodology by which the primary and secondary questions will be answered.

CHAPTER 3

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The purpose of this chapter is to discuss the methodology in which the primary and secondary questions are researched throughout this thesis. In order to focus on the primary and secondary questions, a technique must be developed in order maintain the focus for this thesis.

The primary question posed in this research is: How much have military coups d'état impacted the socio-political and economic development of West Africa? This question is a sensitive one which demands a lot of attention and much more focus. Will the ever increasing number of military coups d'état in West Africa end, and if not, the remaining secondary question is what will that mean for the socio-political and economic development of the sub-region? Thus, the primary and secondary questions must be answered by applying appropriate methodologies.

The model that best supports the methodologies by which to answer both the primary and secondary questions is the sampling method. This chapter will employ the sampling method to analyze and access the causes and effects of military coups d'état in a sample of the most volatile countries in West Africa. In the sampling analysis, the author will identify and determine the various factors that give rise to military coups d'état in the 'sample set' countries of Nigeria, Cote d'Ivoire, and Liberia, as well as their impacts on the socio-political and economic development of the sub-region. The study will also utilize qualitative analysis with the fundamental purposes of verifying and evaluating the processes and reasons by which most of the leaders within the sub-region

ascended to state power. This method will greatly help in developing an in-depth understanding of the research topic.

The author will also utilize the quantitative analysis to aid in the evaluation of the various military regimes that paraded the political landscape in West Africa. It will present a clearer understanding of what actually happened politically, economically, and militarily in the form of per capita income, Gross Domestic Product (GDP), education, literacy, import and export revenue, free elections, unemployment, etc. with respect to development or under development during the period under review (1980-2000). By and large, a military coup d'état is not the best option to remedy a political disorder, but it sometimes works in the interest of the populace especially when the political leaders are nothing but despots and killing machines. Against this backdrop, the research will not only focus on the negatives but also on the positive outcomes of the various military interventions.

A clearer understanding of the researcher's analysis and how it will be used in this thesis is best spelled out for each of the secondary questions.

Secondary Question 1: What are the factors that gave rise to the military coups in the first place?

Secondary Question 2: Were the military coups truly necessary?

Secondary Question 3: What could have been done to prevent the military coups?

Secondary Question 4: What do military coups mean for the lives of the ordinary citizens of the sub-region?

Summary

Chapter 3 discussed the methodologies that will be used to answer both the primary and secondary questions in the proceeding chapter. The methodologies address the sampling method which will be used to analyze and assess the causes and effects of military coups d'état in West Africa. In the sampling analysis, the author will identify and determine the various factors in a 'sample subset' that give rise to military coups d'état as well as their impacts on the socio-political and economic development of the sub-region. The author will also utilize qualitative analysis with the fundamental purpose of verifying and evaluating the process by which most of the leaders within the sub-region ascended to state power. Finally, a quantitative framework (e.g. per capita income data, distribution of wealth, literacy rates, etc.) will be used in order to evaluate the impact that military regimes that dominated the political landscape in West Africa had on the region. It will present a clearer understanding of what actually happened politically, economically, militarily, and socially with respect to development or under development during the period between 1980-2000. These methods will greatly help in developing an in-depth understanding of the research topic.

The primary and secondary research questions are critical to focusing the study and relating causes and effects. Chapter 4 will fully examine a sub-set of West Africa in an effort to present a detailed understanding of the sub-region based on the aforementioned background information, root causes of conflict, and how they relate to the flash points in the sub-region; thus, helping the reader to fully comprehend the significance of the study. This chapter will carefully examine the factors that contributed to an increased number of military coups within those sample states in West Africa and

then creatively analyze the impact and legacies that military coups have had on this sample of the sub-region.

The full analysis of chapter 4 will render a conclusion and recommendations in chapter 5. These recommendations will also include topics for future studies on the research topic.

CHAPTER 4

ANALYSIS

This chapter will analyze the impact of military coups d'état on the socio-political and economic development of West Africa. Over the last three decades, coups d'état have been a rule rather than the exception to a stable and viable political system in West Africa. Most governments have not and perhaps will not fully recover from the impact of the military coups which their countries witnessed over the past three decades. Chapter 4 will be organized by employing the sampling method to analyze and assess the causes and effects of military coups d'état in a sample of the most volatile countries in West Africa. In the use of sampling analysis, the researcher has chosen three countries, Nigeria, Cote d'Ivoire, and Liberia, in the sub-region as a 'sample set' to reflect the rest of the countries in West Africa. These three countries were chosen for specific reasons. Nigeria has had the most military coups in all of West Africa during the period being researched. Since January 15, 1966 when Nigeria experienced the first military coup d'état, there have been four successful coups d'état (July 1966, 1975, 1983, and 1985); one foiled attempt (1986) and three abortive attempts (January 1966, 1976, and 1990) respectively.²⁴ Cote d'Ivoire was the last of the 14 countries in the sub-region to have experienced military coup d'état with the exception of Senegal and Cape Verde whom have not experienced military coups. Lastly, Liberia is the only country in West Africa which was never colonized by any European or Western powers but suffered military coups d'état and is yet to recover from their impact.

²⁴E. C. Ejiogu, *The Roots of Political Instability in Nigeria: Political Evolution and Development in the Niger Basin* (England: Ashgate Publishing, 2011), 167.

Table 2. Successful Coups in West Africa, 1963-1999

COUNTRY	Number of Coups	Coups Years	Number of Years of Military Rule
Benin	6	1963,1967,1969,1970,1972, and 1990	17
Burkina-Faso	5	1966,1980,1982,1983, and 1987	31
Cape Verde	(-)	(-)	(-)
Cote d'Ivoire	1	1999	1
The Gambia	1	1994	2
Ghana	5	1966,1972,1978,1979, and 1981	20
Guinea	1	1984	10
Guinea-Bissau	2	1980,1999	14
Liberia	1	1980	5
Mali	2	1980,1999	23
Mauritania	1	1998	?
Niger	3	1974, 1996,1998	18
Nigeria	6	1966(2),1975,1983,1985,1993	29
Senegal	(-)	(-)	(-)
Sierra Leone	5	1967(2),1968,1992,1997	6
Togo	2	1963,1967	23
Total			

Source: Adekeye Adebajo and Ismail O. D. Rashid, *West Africa's Security Challenges: Building Peace in A Troubled Region* (Boulder, CO: Lynne Rienner Publisher, Inc., 2004), 148.

Military Intervention into Politics

In West Africa, there have been two categories of military coups d'état or military interventions into politics. The first of the two waves of military intervention coincided with the first two decades of independence, in the 1960s and 1970s when senior officers mostly masterminded military coups.²⁵ Military coups that are provoked by a nation's commanding officers are known as either Veto or Guardian coups d'état. On the one

²⁵Adekeye Adebajo, and Ismail O. D. Rashid, *West Africa's Security Challenges: Building Peace in A Troubled Region* (Boulder, CO: Lynne Rienner Publisher, Inc. 2004), 147.

hand, the Veto coups d'état are prompted by social changes that directly threaten the interests of the military and its allies. Guardian coups d'état, on the other hand, are coups where the military intervenes in order to rescue the state from civilian mismanagement.²⁶ The second wave of military coups d'état occurred in the 1980s and 1990s, and in contrast to the first wave, were in many cases instigated and led by junior officers or non-commissioned officers (NCOs).²⁷ This second wave of coups is mostly set into motion as the result of class polarization within the army and the broader society, resulting in class strikes particularly in the military due to poor salaries.

Unlike the Veto and Guardian coups d'état, the second wave of coups d'état was initiated by field grade officers and senior enlisted or NCOs. These coups were called breakthrough coups d'état or coups from below. The purpose of breakthrough coups was for the military to oust an outdated (authoritarian or traditional) regime, seeking to change society entirely. The coup d'état, in essence, becomes a revolutionary break from the past.²⁸ Differences with respect to social class, rationalizations for military interventions, the target of grievances, and the consequences of the coups distinguish these two waves of military interventions from the 1960s-1970s and from the 1980s-1990s.²⁹ Senior officers did not, however, always lead first-wave coups, nor were junior or noncommissioned officers the only architects of second-wave coups. Emmanuel

²⁶Alex Thompson, *An Introduction to African Politics* (Abingdon, Oxon: Routledge, 2010), 138.

²⁷Adebajo and Rashid, *West Africa's Security Challenges*, 146.

²⁸Thompson, *An Introduction to African Politics*, 138.

²⁹Adebajo and Rashid, *West Africa's Security Challenges*, 147.

Bodjolle, a master sergeant in the former French army, led the first successful coup in West Africa, which occurred in Togo, a former French colony, in 1963.³⁰

Justifications for the Military Coups

Over the years, political scientists and environmentalists have attempted to explain why military takeovers occur. Their studies have led to two schools of thought under the lamplight. The first group of scholars emphasize the state's socio-political environment.³¹ Environmentalists such as Samuel Huntington and S.E. Finer argue that coups d'état are most likely to occur in states lacking institutionalized political cultures, which also suffer economic hardship and social division.³² The second school of thought concentrates more on the organizational ability and character of the military itself. Academics such as Morris Janowitz point to the patriotism, discipline, professionalism and cohesion found at the heart of the military service. He argues that these factors eventually compel soldiers to intervene in order to rid their state of inept and corrupt civilian governments.³³

The issue of justification for the military coups d'état in West Africa by military officers has been a subject of debates and disagreements over time. While there have been several explanations and rationalizations for staging military coups, the constant theme which pervades each one is to seize state power by illegal means. Generally, the

³⁰Ibid.

³¹Thompson, *An Introduction to African Politics*, 138.

³²Ibid.

³³Ibid.

military's justifications for its coups are usually anchored on the performance failures of the government (civilian or military) that are the target of the coup.³⁴ Military officers and noncommissioned officers leading the coups usually depict themselves as responsible and altruistic patriots out to save the country and its constitution from the misrule of the ousted government.³⁵ Whatever the case or justification, they all have one unified overriding objective, which is to take state power through unconstitutional means by the use of arms.

Nigeria and Military Coup d'états 1983-1999

Nigeria is Africa's most populous country, and a giant in West Africa. Nigeria is a major exporter of oil and potentially of natural gas, but its peoples' efforts to realize their economic potential have been frustrated by internal conflicts and misrule.³⁶ The population of the Federal Republic of Nigeria of 152 million people is far more than the rest of the West African countries' populations combined. The complex and heterogeneous structure of the economy has fueled ethnic tensions during the colonial and post-colonial eras. While Nigeria's diverse groups are involved in a complex system of competition and cooperation, at the national level there are three large regional ethnic

³⁴George Klay Kieh and Pita Ogaba Agbese, *The Military and Politics in Africa: From Engagement to Democratic and Constitutional Control* (London: Ashgate Publishing, 2004), 30.

³⁵Ibid.

³⁶Peter Lewis, Pearl T. Robinson, and Barnett R. Rubin, *Stability Nigeria: Sanctions, Incentives, and Support for Civil Society* (New York, NY: The Century Foundation Press, 1998), 3.

coalitions that predominate.³⁷ These three groups, the Hausa-Fulani, Yoruba, and Igbo, are considered regionally predominant, while other groups are sometimes lumped together as “minorities.”³⁸

These Hausa-Fulani, Yoruba, and Igbos have dominated the political landscape of Nigeria since independence. The elites of Northern Nigeria, many from the Hausa-speaking group, including the former Fulani aristocracy, have been politically dominant since independence.³⁹

Between the period under review, stretching from 1983 to 1999, no fewer than four military generals ruled Nigeria: Major General Muhamadu Buhari (1983-1985), General Ibrahim Babangida (1985-1993), General Sani Abacha (1993-1998), and General Abdulsalaam Abubakar (1998-1999).⁴⁰ Adebajo Oyebade rightly observed that the first military coup on January 15, 1966, ushered in the institutionalization of Nigerian military in the political process.⁴¹ Following the period of independence, many Nigerians or West Africans thought the new nations were heading for democracy, which they considered to be the best form of government. This was not the case. Instead, autocratic military rule became the norm rather than the exception in the decades that followed

³⁷Ibid.

³⁸Ibid., 9.

³⁹Ibid.

⁴⁰Kalu Ogbaa, *The Nigerian American* (Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 2003), 127.

⁴¹Toyin Falola, *The Foundation of Nigeria: Essay in Honor of Toyin Falola* (Trenton, NJ: African World Press, Inc., 2003), 255.

independence. The military became a thorn in the flesh of the politicians' ambitions, as it would for the most part hold on to power of the political life of Nigeria.⁴²

The elections of 1979 brought Alhaji Shehu Shagari, a northerner, to power. Though he became the first post-war civilian elected to the Nigerian presidency, he was eventually toppled by Major General Muhamadu Buhari in a 1983 military coup.⁴³ Shagari's government was, up to that time, the most corrupt and inefficient in Nigeria's post-colonial history. The people had openly called for the military intervention to halt the country's descent into total economic chaos. Corruption and mismanagement under Shagari was perhaps only surpassed by General Sani Abacha's almost total destruction of the economy from 1993 until his death in June 1998.⁴⁴ The country under President Shagari faced one of the worst economic downturns following the Biafra secession, which was a brutal civil war.

While the society was yearning for a change of government as well as economic reforms, what came their way was distasteful in more ways than one. Popular demand for the ouster of a corrupt democratically elected government as happened in the case of Shagari, should not be equated with an endorsement of military dictatorship. Military intervention and the ouster of Shagari should have been immediately followed by another general election to re-establish democratic accountability.⁴⁵ The country's quest of

⁴²Ibid.

⁴³Ogbaa, *The Nigerian American*, 127.

⁴⁴Martin P. Matthews, *Nigeria: Current Issues and Historical Background* (Hauppauge, NY: Nova Science Publishers, Inc., 2002), 40.

⁴⁵Ibid.

returning to civilian rule was far from being realized given the harsh and stringent policies of the military regime. The government imposed press censorship, forbidding the criticism of the government. There was also crackdown on officials of the ousted government in which more than 500 former government officials were arrested. The military regime did not only chase after former government officials in Nigeria but also went after them as long as they could see or hear about them abroad. In July 1984 the Nigerian secret police were caught by Scotland Yard at Heathrow Airport in London, when they made a daring attempt to try and kidnap Umaru Diko, the former Minister of Transport under Shagari. While under diplomatic cover they had drugged him and put him in a sealed box bound for Nigeria aboard Nigeria Airways.⁴⁶ This act of criminal intent on the part of the Nigerian military government placed her in a position of distrust in the eyes of the international community. Relations between Nigeria and other world organizations like the World Bank and the International Monetary Funds (IMF) became strained which further crippled the national economy. Given all of these unfulfilled promises by the Buhari's administration, the government became unpopular in the eyes of the people of Nigeria and the military to say the least. Sooner rather than later, the military once again took matters into their own hands and staged another palace-coup led by another high-ranking general within the Supreme Military Council (SMC), General Ibrahim Babangida.

⁴⁶Matthews, *Nigeria: Current Issues and Historical Background*, 40.



Figure 3. Map of Nigeria

Source: Central Intelligence Agency, Factbook, “Map of Nigeria,” <https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/geos/ni.html> (accessed 12 November 2011).

The Second Military Coup after the Second Republic

On August 27, 1985, the Buhari government was overthrown and replaced by Major General Ibrahim B. Babangida, the Chief of Army Staff in the regime, in what was called a palace coup.⁴⁷ From the onset, the new military regime gave some convincing reasons for staging the coup which seemed reasonable to frustrated Nigerians. The Buhari regime, as represented by Major General Buhari and his deputy, Major General Idiagbon, was accused of having lost its way because it failed to come to grips with the political

⁴⁷Jimmy Peters, *The Nigerian Military and The State* (London: Tauris Academic Studies and Imprint of I. B. Tauris and Co., 1997), 200.

and economic regeneration of the nation, and had become very rigid and uncompromising. In addition, it did not pay enough attention to the human rights of the individual Nigerian.⁴⁸ Given these accusations from the new military regime as the reasons for the overthrow, many Nigerians and the world watched and anticipated a rapid transition to democracy. The coup brought into office a regime that was to have a profound impact on the Nigerian society. The regime made it clear from its actions that it represented a radical departure from previous military regimes.⁴⁹

Babangida, from the onset tried to persuade and convince the Nigerian populace through his charismatic speeches but quickly reverted to business as usual. Under his regime, the political and economic life of the average Nigerian took a nose-dive. The Babangida's era, a period noted for its slimy military politics, is a period of public life that most Nigerians would hate to relive.⁵⁰

The Failures and Fall of General Babangida

The Babangida era will be remembered for its many ills. But none of these was more devastating to the national psyche than the profligacy of the regime's attitude to spending public funds.⁵¹ Babingida not only dipped Nigeria's political institutions into the lowest slum, but he also mismanaged the economy and lastly drained the coffers of

⁴⁸Peters, *The Nigerian Military and The State*, 200.

⁴⁹Ibid.

⁵⁰Holger G. Ehling and Claus-Peter Holster-von Mutius, *No Condition is Permanent: Nigeria Writing and The Struggle for Democracy* (New York, NY: Rodopi B.V., 2001), 57.

⁵¹Ibid.

the nation. Contrary to what he accused General Buhari of, General Babingida overstepped the very boundaries of trust and confidence. The Buhari regime was accused of having lost its way because it failed to come to grips with the political and economic regeneration of the nation, had become very rigid and uncompromising, and did not pay enough attention to the human rights of the individual Nigerian.⁵² Among the many failed projects and programs which he instituted, none made the average Nigerians life better off than what the past regimes had to offer. As a result of the government's privatization agenda, several of the state-owned industrial and commercial ventures were sold directly to ex-military generals or to conglomerates linked to them.⁵³

The regime consciously or subconsciously institutionalized corruption nationwide. By institutionalizing favoritism and bribery as legitimate instruments of governance, the military regime headed by General Babangida succeeded in culturing a poison of anti-democratic practices produced regularly in the world view of ordinary Nigerian. The Babingda regime fostered the common belief that everyone had a piece or in the disappearance of loyalty to the state, as militarism became embedded in the psyche of the average individuals.⁵⁴

Babangida instituted the people's Bank Project for example, which was copied from certain Asian countries, and was conceived as a means of extending loan facilities

⁵²Peters, *The Nigerian Military and The State*, 200.

⁵³Kees Koonings and Dirk Kruijt, *Political Armies: The Military and Nation Building in the Age of Democracy* (London: Zed Books, 2002), 216.

⁵⁴Ibid.

to peasant farmers and low income industries.⁵⁵ This ambitious project turned out to be a failure and a jamboree of corrupt practices. Operatives in these banks became richer, thus negating the actual reasons for which the project was instituted. The chairman, for this project, the late chief Tai Solarin, a man of conscience and a social crusader, had to resign in the event of public outcry due to the dodgy nature of the prevailing outcome.⁵⁶ Babangida's regime came under immense pressures from both within and outside the country. But before he left power, he set up a transitional government to fill the void that he had created, and expected them to clean up both the economic and political messes. The transitional government was headed by Chief Ernest Shonekan, a successful businessman from the southwestern part of the country known as the "child of circumstances," as some political analysts have called it.⁵⁷ On June 12, 1993, president Babangida was forced to conduct presidential election, after so many unkept promises. The winner of that poll was undoubtedly Chief M.K.O Abiola, a successful businessman- following the elections, Babangida annulled the results and set up an interim government.⁵⁸ President Babangida left office hurriedly and shamelessly retired to his fifty-bedroom home in Manna, Niger State with little or nothing left in the treasury of the new government.⁵⁹

⁵⁵Ehling and Holster-von Mutius, *No Condition is Permanent*, 57.

⁵⁶Ibid.

⁵⁷Ibid.

⁵⁸Ibid., 58.

⁵⁹Ibid., 57.

General Sani Abacha's Reign of Terror

The political and social lives of the people of the Federal Republic of Nigeria were still uncertain due to the despotic rule of General Ibrahim Babangida. Nigerians were still licking their wounds from the political and economic hardships brought upon them by the merciless military regime for the past decade. Some felt a sigh of relief when General Babangida hurriedly turned power over to Chief Ernest Shonekan, but this feeling was to soon be short-lived.

On November 17, 1993, the Defense Minister and Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, General Sani Abacha, forced the resignation of the Babangida-installed Interim Government under Chief Enerst Shonekan, and assumed power as the head of state, and as the Commander-in-Chief of the Armed Forces of the Federal Republic of Nigeria.⁶⁰ General Abacha's move to forcefully take state power was not in any way a strange thing to the people of Nigeria, though it might be strange to the outside world for many reasons. General Abacha had been active in overthrowing governments since 1983. In fact, apart from his numerous roles in the different coups d'état, General Sani Abacha had gained contemporary prominence for leading the coup that ousted president Buhari and Tunde Idiagbon. He had endeared himself to General Babangida by leading the team that crushed the Orkar coup that came within inches of successfully ousting general Babangida himself.⁶¹ Upon taking power forcefully from the Interim Government,

⁶⁰Solomon Williams Obotetukudo, *The Inaugural Addresses and Ascension Speeches of Nigeria Elected and Non-elected Presidents and Prime Ministers, 1960-2010* (Lanham, MD: University Press of America, Inc., 2011), 115.

⁶¹Frisky Larr, *Nigeria's Journalistic Militantism: Putting The Facts in Perspectives on How the Press Failed Nigeria Setting the Wrong Agenda and Excessively*

General Abacha promised reforms of various kinds, ranging from socio-economic to political reforms. Many Nigerians who have witnessed the military takeovers of the past years thought this was just another replay of past events to eventually become true, after which General Abacha did not wait too long to spread fears and mayhem throughout the entire country. His axe of terror not only crushed political activists but also media personnel and the families of politicians as well. Indeed, the government of General Abacha was almost bent on breaking any perceived global record in the number of successive highlights it achieved through tyranny.⁶² Within the very first years of his five year reign of terror, he outlawed two prominent newspapers, the Punch and the Concord. Ironically and regrettably, the Concord belonged to Chief M.K.O Abiola, the man who undoubtedly won the 1992 election which was annulled by General Babangida.⁶³ One of General Abacha's greatest blows to good governance came in 1995 when he hung a prominent intellectual, writer and political activist of international acclaim, Ken Saro-Wiwa and nine other prominent Ogoni, despite numerous appeals from the international community including President Nelson Mandela.⁶⁴ Ken Saro-Wiwa and the Ogoni people were not only opposed to the dictatorial regime because it was the worst form of government but also sought an equitable distribution of the enormous wealth being

Attacking Ex-president Olusegun Obasanjo (Buckinghamshire, England: Authorhouse, 2011), 40

⁶²Ibid., 41.

⁶³Ibid.

⁶⁴Ibid., 43.

accrued from oil which originated in the part of the country where they found themselves, the Niger Delta.

The notorious highlights of General Abacha's regime occurred between 1995 and 1997. On October 6, 1995, a staunch member of the pro-democracy movements, Pa Alfred was assassinated at the Lagos abode. Wole Soyinka, a prominent Nigerian, who won the 1986 Nobel Prize for Literature, fled the country in 1994 prior to being charged with treason against the state by the Abacha's administration and sentenced to death while in absentia.⁶⁵ General Abacha's dream of holding on to state power until his death was realized when he died of heart attack on June 10, 1998. The period between 1985 and 1998 proved disastrous for the country and its people in many ways. Babangida and Abacha helped to deepen and entrench patterns of corruption and human rights abuses from which the country has since made little progress in escaping.⁶⁶

The Nigerian Economy under Military Rule from 1983-2009

The economy of the Federal Republic of Nigeria is considered to be the biggest in West Africa with a population of more than 120 million people to match. The successive military regimes from the early 1980s up to the late 1990s contributed largely to the economic hardship which the country faced during these two decades. Every military regime that took power during these two decades promised to reform the economy and better the lives of the ordinary Nigerians by providing better education and implementing sound economic policies. With this said, every coups maker appeared to have the vision

⁶⁵Larr, *Nigeria's Journalistic Militantism*, 46.

⁶⁶Chris Albin-Lockey and Ben Rawlence, *Nigeria-Criminal Politics, "Godfather" and Corruption in Nigeria* (New York, NY: Human Rights Watch, 2007), 13.

of development and sound economic policies, but lacked the capacity to execute such vision due to a variety of reasons: First, each lacked the political will to implement their so called rhetorical plans. Second, after a few months of ascending to the helm of state power, the greed factor crept into the heads of those in power and ultimately corrupted their sense of reasoning. Finally, internal and external rivalries diverted their focus and made them concentrate more and more on defending their government by whatever means instead of focusing on good governance.

Nigeria's dependence on petroleum accounted for 77 percent of the federal government's revenue during most of the 1980s. Because of this, declining output and prices contributed to another noteworthy aspect of the economy in the 1980s causing a significant decline in per capita income and real gross national product (GNP). This persisted until oil prices began to rise again in 1990.⁶⁷ In the midst of this economic turmoil, the life of ordinary Nigerians was degrading and worrisome in many ways. Yearly GNP per capita decreased to 4.8 percent from 1980 to 1987, causing the World Bank to classify Nigeria as a low income country for the first time since the annual World Development Report was instituted in 1978.⁶⁸ In the midst of vast economic resources it was hard to comprehend at first hand why the country was ranked among countries such as Bangladesh, Ethiopia, and Chad as declared by the World Bank in 1989.⁶⁹ Rising debt and falling average income in the 1980s had a particularly severe effect on the poor as

⁶⁷Mongabay.com, "The Nigerian Economy," http://www.mongabay.com/reference/country_studies/nigeria/ECONOMY.html (accessed 6 November 2011).

⁶⁸Ibid.

⁶⁹Ibid.

consumption per capita fell seven percent annually during that decade. Material standards of living were lower in the mid-1980s than in the 1950s, and per calorie as well as protein intake per capita were no greater in 1985 than in 1952.⁷⁰ In effect the economic crisis of the 1980s, predominantly caused by the abrupt switch from one military dictator to another, cancelled out the progress made in the previous two decades.⁷¹

The economic downturn may not have affected the upper class or government officials directly due to the fact that no matter what conditions existed at the time, they were in total control of the state coffers. Urban real wages fell rapidly between 1982 and 1989 as a result of a minimum statutory wage freeze instituted by the national government in the formal sector of the economy. This in effect, affected the real wages of the rural economy as they were not independent of the rest of the economy.⁷²

Unemployment is another key economic variable which determines the well-being of a national economy. The purchasing power of individuals within the economy depends on the real wages earned both within the public and private sectors. The national unemployment rate estimated by the Office of Statistics as 4.3 percent of the labor force in 1985 shortly after General Babangida took power, increased to 5.3 percent in 1986 and 7.0 percent in 1987, before falling to 5.1 percent in 1988 as a result of measures taken under the Standard and Poors (SAP).⁷³ Most of the unemployed were city dwellers, as indicated by the urban jobless rate of 8.7 percent in 1985, 9.1 in 1986, and 9.8 percent in

⁷⁰Mongabay.com, "The Nigerian Economy."

⁷¹Ibid.

⁷²Ibid.

⁷³Ibid.

1987; the largest proportion of the unemployed (consistently 35 to 50 percent) were secondary-school graduates.⁷⁴ This was a harsh indicator for the economy as those who fell within this category were predominantly youths aged 20 to 24 who should be contributing to the real Gross Domestic Product (GDP) of the economy. Nigeria's decline in real GDP per capita of U.S. \$290 by 1988, relegated the nation to a low-income status below that of India, Pakistan, and Ghana.⁷⁵ This meant that other indicators of the Human Development Index were affected as well including: life expectancy, infant mortality and health care for which Nigeria was ranked 155th out of the world's 177 countries; all of which were consistent with Nigeria's low ranking in income per capita.⁷⁶

Historical Overview of Ivory Coast

Ivory Coast or la Cote D'Ivoire is a former French colony in West Africa. It became independent on August 7, 1960 after being a colony of France since 1883. Ivory Coast covers 124, 502 square miles and has a population of approximately 14 million people and like many other West African countries, it is characterized by external ethnic and religious diversity.⁷⁷ The name Ivory Coast and Cote D'Ivoire are used interchangeably and have basically the same meanings depending on which language one prefers to use. La Cote D'Ivoire is the French word meaning the Ivory Coast.

⁷⁴Mongabay.com, "The Nigerian Economy."

⁷⁵Ibid.

⁷⁶Ibid.

⁷⁷Boubacar N'Diaye, *The Challenge of Institutionalizing Civilian Control: Botswana, Ivory Coast and Kenya in Comparative Perspective* (Lanham, MD: Lexington Books, 2001), 100.



Figure 4. Map of Cote D'Ivoire

Source: Central Intelligence Agency, Factbook, "Map of Cote D'Ivoire," <https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/geos/ni.html> (accessed 12 November 2011).

Since its independence in 1960, Ivory Coast has had one president and basically one party political system up to the 1990s. President Felix Houphouet-Boigny, the first president since independence, along with the party he created, Parti D'émocratique de Cote D'Ivoire or PDCI, was the principal architect of every major policy orientation, and decision in the Ivory Coast over the last half century.⁷⁸ Under his leadership, Ivory Coast pursued a pro-Western, capitalist economic strategy, and foreign policy. During the 1960s and 1970s the country experienced extraordinary rapid economic growth and it

⁷⁸N'Diaye, *The Challenge of Institutionalizing Civilian Control*, 100.

stood out in West Africa for maintaining political stability.⁷⁹ Under President Houphouet Boigny, Ivory Coast has consistently had the highest concentration of French nationals of any West African country. For years the President's Chief of Staff, the Secretary General of the government and the Finance Minister were all French citizens.⁸⁰ Ivory Coast also has the largest population as well as the largest economy of the West African Economic Monetary Union (WAEMU).⁸¹ President Boigny served as head of state for 33 years until his death in 1993 and was succeeded by Mr. Henri Konan Bedie.

The Ivorian Military Seizes State Power

Six years after the death of President Houphouet Boigny, the Bedie government was overthrown by a military coup d'état led by the former Army Chief of Staff General Robert Guei on December 24, 1999.⁸² Ivory Coast is the last of the 14 countries in West Africa to experience a military coup d'état prior to the close of the last decade of the 20th century. Before the December 24, 1999 coup d'état, Ivory Coast had enjoyed relative peace and economic stability in the sub-region. However, this does not mean that there had not been some economic hardship since its independence. The country's economy is predominantly based on agriculture, mainly cocoa and coffee. Though there had been some political tensions, President Houphouet Boigny over the years had implemented

⁷⁹Ibid.

⁸⁰Ibid., 109.

⁸¹International Business Publication Staff, *Cote D'Ivoire foreign Policy and Government Guide, Strategic Information and Development* (Washington, DC: International Business Publication, 2011), 196.

⁸²Ibid.

policies that kept the country from degenerating into both economic and political chaos. President Boigny also kept the so called first republic under check through his charismatic leadership style as well by giving their former colonial master some say in the running of the country. The Ivory Coast had primarily relied on the extended guarantor policy option to prevent military coups; unlike many other former French colonies, it had invited France to station troops on its territory to guarantee its internal and external security.⁸³ This strategy of external guarantor was not the only policy implemented by Houphouet Boigny's administration in order to keep the peace and stability which the country enjoyed for over three decades. Some of Ivory Coast's secondary strategies implemented to prevent military coups d'etat included ethnic manipulation, consistent monitoring of the military, the creation of a militia as a rival to the army, and the political and economic co-optation of many military officers.⁸⁴ The government, in order to prevent ethnic tension or favoritism, placed influential members of the various ethnic groups into positions of trust. By doing this, the president struck a balance among the tribes and thus eliminated the fear of one ethnic group being better or more important than the other. The military was also monitored through various techniques. The French military provided much more assistance beyond just their presence within the country. Intelligence sharing was one of those things that kept the military in check. A very strong militia was also created to serve as a rival group to the army which proved to be incredibly effective during the three decade period of relative calm.

⁸³N'Diaye, *The Challenge of Institutionalizing Civilian Control*, 99.

⁸⁴Ibid.

By all accounts, the strategies applied by the founding father of the Ivorian political and economic systems were to be short lived. A few years after his death. The late president Boigny's successor, Konan Bedie, could not continue the policies put in place. The coups that ousted President Bedie began with military troops protesting unpaid salaries and poor living conditions. Military personnel, as well as civilians, filled the streets of Abidjan, the commercial capital of Ivory Coast, a day before the coup d'etat looting and vandalizing buildings and other infrastructures. In a striking blow to democracy, the Ivory Coast president was ousted in a bloodless coup d'etat and sought refuge on a French military base in Abidjan before leaving aboard a French aircraft to Lome, the Togolese capital.⁸⁵ The ousted President's government was in no way popular with the military nor with the entire population for many reasons. While the country's more than 50 ethnic groups were kept under control during President Boigny's regime through a balance of representation in government; his policy was not seen in full implementation during Badie's administration.

The military junta led by General Robert Guei formed an Interim Coalition Government in early January 2000 which was then reshuffled in May, replacing all ministers from the Republican Party except one, who promptly resigned before the reshuffle.⁸⁶ General Guei promised to return the country back to civilian rule within eight months which he did according to plans.

⁸⁵*Jet Magazine* 97, no. 6 (January 2000), <http://findarticles.com/p/articles/> (accessed 14 November 2011).

⁸⁶International Business Publication Staff, *Cote D'Ivoire Foreign Policy and Government Guide*, 196.

The Ivorian Economy Before and After the Military Coup

Although Ivory Coast returned to civilian rule a few months after the military coup d'état, culminating with a presidential election in October of 2000, there were still several violent encounters which followed. The country had been experiencing a period of economic decline after years of growth, thus creating the potential for civil unrest.⁸⁷ Even though the country was under civilian control it suffered some economic downturn; however, it was not as devastating as what it faced during and after the coup.

Due to deterioration in the exchange rate, microeconomic policies, and structural inadequacies, it is estimated that Ivory Coast suffered an economic crisis between 1980 and 1993, with the GDP growth varying between 1.2 and negative 1.2 percent under President Houphouet Boigny.⁸⁸ This economic decline did not last due to the swift and sound economic measures employed by the government.

Following the shift in the exchange rate with the French franc, resulting from devaluation of the African Financial Community (CFA) franc by 50 percent in December 1993, Ivory Coast regained its competitiveness and it is estimated that its GDP grew 6.5 percent between 1995 and 1998.⁸⁹ With this growth rate, ordinary Ivorians' lives were once again on the right track. Productivity in both the private and public sectors was booming as real GDP and real income rose in the favor of wage earners. The GDP

⁸⁷David S. Katz, and Llan Caspi, *Executive Guide to Personal Security* (Hoboken, NJ: John Wiley and Sons Inc., 2003), 30.

⁸⁸Kent Nnadozie, *African Perspectives on Genetic Resources: A Handbook on Laws, Policies, and Illustrations* (Washington, DC: Environmental Law Institute, 2003), 124.

⁸⁹*Ibid.*

growth slowed by 1.6 percent in 1999 due to the December 24, 1999 coup d'etat and subsequent suspension of international assistance to the country.⁹⁰ The military coup d'etat had negative repercussions on the economy as well as on the political development of the once stable country. Ivory Coast soon became categorized among the poor countries in West Africa, and also became heavily indebted, as it fell to 34 out of the 42 African countries classified as Heavily-endebted Poor Countries(HIPC).⁹¹ Ivory Coast, once the bread basket of West Africa found itself in dire need of humanitarian assistance due to the continued armed struggles and civil unrest that have engulfed the country since the 1999 military coup d'etat. Over half of the working population of the country remains unemployed even today and the average life expectancy at birth is 47 years compared to the European average of 80.⁹² The social-political crisis in Cote d'Ivoire can thus be defined as the sum total of the events that have jeopardized the continuity of the state and social order, and broke the relatively long period of political stability in a country that has long been considered a model for all of Africa.⁹³

Liberia Before the 1980 Military Coup D'etat

Liberia is situated on West Africa's great bulge. It is in the tropical zone five degrees north of the equator; to the north it is bordered by the Republic of Guinea, to the northwest and southeast respectively, it is bordered by Sierra Leone, the Ivory Coast, and

⁹⁰Ibid., 124.

⁹¹Ibid.

⁹²Ibid.

⁹³Francis Akinde, *Military-Political Crisis in Cote d'Ivoire* (Goteborg Sweden: Elanders infologistics Vast AB, 2004), 5.

the Atlantic Ocean to the south and west respectively.⁹⁴ In the early nineteenth century, freed slaves from the USA were repatriated to Africa by the American Colonization Society (ACS) and settled on what is known today as Liberia in West Africa.⁹⁵ Liberia declared independence in 1847 and swore in her first president, Joseph Jenkins Roberts, the same year. The name Liberia came from the word liberty; however, to date, it remains a controversial topic when it comes to the issue of freed slaves because slavery did not end in the USA until after the American Civil War from 1861-1865. Liberia is the only country in West Africa which was not affected by the scramble during the partition of Africa as the result of the Berlin Conference. Part of this may have been due to the influence of the U.S. in the country during the period of Africa's colonization. Before the migration of settlers in Liberia, the aborigines had their own system of governance based on chieftancy. Every tribe or ethnic group had their chiefs who administered based on customary and traditional practices as opposed to the Western way of life practiced by the Americo-Liberians who met them there.

⁹⁴Mary H. Moran, *Liberia: the Violence of Democracy* (Philadelphia, PA: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2008), 3.

⁹⁵*Ibid.*



Figure 5. Map of Liberia

Source: Central Intelligence Agency, Factbook, “Map of Liberia,” <https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/geos/ni.html> (accessed 12 November 2011).

Events that Gave Rise to the Military Coup in 1980

The settlers were called liberated Americans of African descent and from the beginning held a superior attitude gained from their years of slavery in the U.S.A as they viewed the native Liberians as uneducated, primitive people that they alone had the right to rule.⁹⁶ There was a huge gap between the settlers or Americo-Liberians and the indigenous Liberians. This was the genesis of a kind of politics that would eventually take its toll on the environment, resting destructive forces on the backs of all Liberians

⁹⁶Syruwa L. Somah, *Historical Settlement of Liberia and Its Environmental Impact* (Baltimore, MD: University Press of America, Inc., 1995), 5.

and promoting a 148 year social void in Liberian history.⁹⁷ There were number a of frictions between the settlers and the aborigin of the country. The first mistake made by the settlers was their inability to define their cultural identity by choosing to emulate the ruthless, inhumane past of their slave masters.⁹⁸ Most, if not of all the settlers forcibly requested that some indigenous Liberians live with and work for them in a form of disguised slavery which created some form of tension over the years. For the Americo-Liberian, the knowledge of their traditional history was lost and not important which consequently made them appear as a people without any historical consciousness due to the prolonged period of slavery on the American plantations which had erased their own cultural and historical identities.⁹⁹ This invincible line which was drawn between the settlers and the indigenous due to their social and political differences was to last for more than a century and a half.

The Immediate Cause of the 1980 Military Coup

From 1847 when Liberia gained her independence until 1980, the country has been under the rule of a One-Party system. The True Whig Party ruled the country for more than one hundred and thirty-three years. During the True Whig Party rule, the indigenous Liberians had little or no place in the country's political system. The absence of historical and religious rapport complicated cultural fusion especially when transporting a drafted constitution written by Simon Greenleaf, a professor at Harvard

⁹⁷Ibid.

⁹⁸Ibid.

⁹⁹Ibid.

Law School, without examining its impacts on traditional customs, laws and religious tenets of the very people whom the constitution was going to directly affect.¹⁰⁰

Indigenous Liberians were not only disenfranchised from every type of socio-political programs but they were kept at the bottom rung of the military ladder as well. Like other Liberian institutions before 1980, the Armed Forces of Liberia (AFL) senior leadership was dominated by Americo-Liberians, creating resentment among the indigenous lower ranks who did not share in benefits enjoyed by the officer corps.¹⁰¹ The country began to reach its tipping point during the 1970s under the leadership of President Williams R. Tolbert, Jr. who became the last president of the first republic. From the mid 1970s until 1980, Liberia experienced a series of severe economic crises due to the fall in international prices for its two chief exports, iron ore and rubber. The rise made it difficult for the country to meet its food demands and by 1979, the country was importing 25 percent of its total rice needs, the country's staple food, despite being able to grow rice locally.¹⁰² Amid growing economic problems, President Tolbert was faced with unprecedented political challenges from opposition groups spanning every sector of the society as the 133-year rule of the Americo-Liberian oligarchy had created deep-seated resentment and divisions within the Liberian society.¹⁰³ In the midst of this political and economic confusion, the morning of April 12, 1980 witnessed a military coup being

¹⁰⁰Ibid.

¹⁰¹Adekeye Adebajo, *Liberia's Civil War: Nigeria, ECOMOG, and Regional Security in West Africa* (Denver, CO: Lynne Rienner Publisher, Inc., 2002), 20.

¹⁰²Ibid., 22.

¹⁰³Ibid., 20.

carried out by low-ranking soldiers against the True Whig Party.¹⁰⁴ President Tolbert was assassinated by the military and replaced by the coup leader Master-Sergeant Samuel K. Doe who became the first indigenous Liberian to rule the country. Most Liberians welcomed the military coup. First, the country was tired of a one-party political system. Second, since the indigenous Liberians make up the majority of the population they saw it as a time of liberation from the hands of the Americo-Liberians whom they saw as their oppressors. However, the spontaneous jubilation of indigenous was short-lived like reactions to many other coups d'état in the sub-region. As it is usually the case, the new military junta promised reforms ranging from economic to political inclusion of every Liberian within the system but never made good on their promises.

Liberia under President Samuel K. Doe

Many Liberians were not only surprised by the turn of events under President Doe, they were also greatly disappointed by his divisive policies. This led many to wonder whether the coup was necessary by any measure. The military government was named the People's Redemption Council (PRC) and promised to turn the country over to civilian rule within five years. During this five year period, the Doe regime began to eliminate potential rivals through assassinations or enforced exiles as well as increased human rights abuses against students, journalists, and other groups that tended to challenge President Doe's brutal rule.¹⁰⁵ In 1985, he set the stage for the first multi-party presidential elections in the history of Liberia. Sadly, the elections were shamefully

¹⁰⁴Adebajo, *Liberia's Civil War*, 20.

¹⁰⁵*Ibid.*

rigged by his National Democratic Party of Liberia (NDPL), even though the elections were undoubtedly won by the Liberian Action Party headed by Jackson F. Doe.¹⁰⁶ Upon assuming the presidency, Samuel Doe perpetuated the same divisive acts witnessed during the 133-year rule of the Americo-Liberians by filling the most important political and military positions with people of his own ethnic group and purging the Gio and Manor ethnic groups from Nimba county through the AFL, a reputation that followed the AFL throughout the Liberian Civil War.¹⁰⁷ Liberia was again thrown into a state of both economic and political crisis during those years of despotic rule by former President Samuel K. Doe from which the country has yet to fully recover. The decay of the Liberian society was also experienced in the mismanagement of the country's economy by both President Samuel K. Doe in the 1980s and later by warlord turned president, Charles G. Taylor in the 1990s. Under President Doe, the Liberian currency was devalued, corruption was at its peak, and the mismanagement of public funds was the rule rather than the exception; Doe could not take the necessary policy measures because he lacked the experience and political discipline required to govern a politically and economically divided country.¹⁰⁸

The government of the U.S. under President Reagan extended economic aids worth over \$400 million U.S. dollars to Doe's government and another \$50 million was given to the AFL, which also benefited from the U.S. Military Assistance Program as

¹⁰⁶Adebajo, *Liberia's Civil War*, 20.

¹⁰⁷Ibid.

¹⁰⁸Celestine Bassey and Oshita O. Oshita, *Governance and Border Security in Africa* (Lagos: Malthouse Press, 2010), 112.

well.¹⁰⁹ The Liberian economy was at a near collapse before the Liberian civil war began in December of 1989. The economy, however suffered its highest damage under President Charles Taylor due to the fact that the civil war overshadowed the proper monitoring of the economic variables until the late 1990s. President Taylor controlled the economy from 1990 until 2003. From 1997 when he was officially elected as president of Liberia, bilateral aid agencies provided Taylor's regime with over \$150 million in aid. In turn, the Taylor regime spent only \$12 million of its own resources on capital expenditures during this period, representing a small percentage of overall resources at its disposal if one considers unofficial diamond and timber export earnings and potential profits from other business dealings.¹¹⁰ Under President Taylor, the principles of accountability and transparency were non-existent, while the issue of human rights abuses was on the increase. Unemployment was at its all time high due to the Liberian civil war which lasted for over a decade.

The Liberian economy has begun to stand on its weak feet in recent years since the civil war ended in 2003. Since the 1980 military coup coupled with the prolonged civil war, Liberia has become a low income country heavily reliant on foreign assistance for revenue. The 14-year civil unrest and government mismanagement have destroyed much of Liberia's economy especially the infrastructures around the country ranging from a village town hall to the hydro-electric dam.

¹⁰⁹Ibid.

¹¹⁰Taisier Mohamed Ali and Robert O. Matthews, *Durable Peace: Challenges for Peacebuilding in Africa* (Canada: University of Toronto Press Inc., 2004), 135.

The country reached its Heavily Indebted Poor Countries (HIPC) initiative completion point in 2010 and nearly \$5 billion in international debt was permanently eliminated during the same period.¹¹¹ This status will enable the country to establish a sovereign credit rating and issue bonds while putting her in a position of competitiveness within the African continent. The good news to every Liberian in general and the government in particular is that, embargos on timber and diamond exports have been lifted thus opening new sources of revenue for the government that has been heavily relying on foreign assistance for the past decades.

Summary

Chapter 4 discussed the analysis of the causes and impact of military coups on the socio-economic and political development of West Africa. Since the period of post-independence, the sub-region has witnessed more military coup d'états than any other region on the African continent. Instabilities in the sub-region have caused the deaths of millions of people over the past half century since countries within the region gained independence from their European colonial masters.

For the sake of this research, the author chose three countries as a subset of the sampling method to arrive at a comprehensive analysis of common trend among all of the countries in West Africa. The three countries chosen were Nigeria, Cote d'Ivoire, and Liberia, in the sub-region as a 'sample set' used to reflect the rest of West African countries. The rationale for selecting these three countries as a 'sample set' are listed herein: Nigeria has had the most successful military coups in West Africa than any other

¹¹¹Central Intelligence Agency, World Factbook, <https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/geos/ni.html> (accessed 12 November 2011).

country. Since January 15, 1966 when Nigeria experienced the first military coup d'état, there have been four successful coups d'état (July 1966, 1975, 1983, and 1985); one foiled attempt (1986) and three abortive attempts (January 1966, 1976, and 1990) respectively.¹¹² Since the 1983 coup that ousted President Shagari, the Nigerian political and economic systems have shown down swings through the Babangida's regime and lasting through the Anacha despotic era.

Cote d'Ivoire was selected as well due to the fact that it was the last of the 14 countries in the sub-region at the close of the 21st century in 1999 to have experienced military coup d'état with the exception of Senegal and Cape Verde, which have not experienced military coups up to the period under review.¹¹³ Cote d'Ivoire had been under the leadership of one President Boigny since its independence; which lasted for 33 years. His death created a huge void that the country could not easily fill prior to the December 1999 military coup d'état. The social-political crisis in Cote d'Ivoire can thus be defined as the sum total of the events that have jeopardized the continuity of the state and social order, and broken the relatively long period of political stability in a country that has long been considered a model in West Africa.¹¹⁴

Finally, Liberia is the only country in West Africa which was never colonized by any European or Western powers but suffered military coups d'état and is yet to recover from its impact due to continuous civil and military unrests. Since the military coup in 1980 that ended the 133-year rule by the Americo-Liberian, the country has not fully

¹¹²Ejiogu, *The Roots of Political Instability in Nigeria*, 167.

¹¹³Ibid.

¹¹⁴Akinde, *Military-Political Crisis in Cote d'Ivoire*, 5.

recovered economically or politically. The incidents responsible for igniting the popular uprising that led to the Liberian Civil War was the massacre of an estimated 3,000 Gio and Manor citizens in Nimaba county by President Doe's krahn dominated AFL in 1985 following a failed coup organized by General Thomas Quiwonkpa who was also from Nimba.¹¹⁵

The military interventions into politics in West Africa have not only been devastating for the people of the sub-region but it has also been a period of embarrassment in the history of the African continent in general and West Africa in particular. If the military is to regain the broken trust of the civilian population and the international community it must come to fully recognize its place in a free, democratic society, fully knowing that its duties are not only to protect and defend its nation's people, but to serve them as well.

¹¹⁵Adebajo, *Liberia's Civil War*, 20.

CHAPTER 5

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Conclusions

The primary focus of the research is to determine the impact of military coups d'état on the sub-region as it relates to the socio-economic and political development over the past decades. West Africa has witnessed military coups at an alarming rate more than any other region on the continent. The post independence era has seen less stability due to a vicious circle of violence ranging from civil unrest to military takeover and more often than not, the degeneration into civil war like in the case of Liberia and Cote D'Ivoire. This chapter will succinctly view the findings from the previous chapter and endeavor to interpret those findings based on the primary and secondary questions presented in chapter 1 of the thesis. Recommendations for further studies and implementation will be presented and thus conclude the research.

Chapter 1 of this thesis was the introductory chapter and set the stage for the research. This chapter endeavored to communicate the primary research question as well as the secondary questions which were supposed to help clarify the importance of the primary question. The researches established were intended to answer the impact of military coups d'état on the socio-economic and political development of West Africa. Due to limits of time and realistic findings, three countries were chosen to be used as case studies; they were Nigeria, Cote D'Ivoire and Liberia.

Chapter 2 was a thematic review of available literature on the causes and impacts of military coups on the governments and people of the sub-region in relation to the legacy of colonialism in West Africa. From the available literatures which were

thoroughly reviewed from different angles, the legacy of colonialism and the continual influence of neo-colonialism were of continued significance as they affected and helped shape the socio-political institutions of West Africa in many ways which in turn shaped the impending military coups.

Chapter 3 set up the contour for the methodology; the means by which the researcher intended to analyze both the primary and secondary questions. After a careful review of the many methodologies available, including the quantitative and qualitative research methods, the latter was eventually selected in order to allow for a better analysis and understanding of the phenomena. In order to further delve into a better analysis of the problem, the sampling method was used as a preferred analytical tool of generalizing the entire region despite basing the data collection on a small population which represents the whole. The sampling methods coupled with a qualitative analysis helped the researcher answer both the primary and secondary questions.

Chapter 4 delved into a thorough analysis of the impacts of military coups d'état on the socio-economic as well as the political development of the sub-region. The aim was to examine the factors which gave rise to the military coup in the first place. Were the lives of ordinary West Africans better before or after the military takeovers; And by what means could these coups have possibly been prevented?

After a careful analysis in chapter 4, the findings gathered from these case studies presented little or no dissimilarities. The following trends were identified as the overarching causes and effects of the military coup d'état:

1. Colonialism played a greater role in the subsequent weak economic systems and political institutions of West Africa.

2. Military governments did more harm than good to West Africa's fragile economic and political systems.

3. Bad governance was widespread during both military rules.

4. Ordinary citizens suffered the most during these periods of misrule.

One of the most important revelations of this research is that the institutions left behind by the colonial masters were not only too weak to promote lasting national unity but the chosen leaders of the colonial powers were themselves not prepared to take on the controversial tasks of governance. Ivory Coast for example, under the leadership of President Felix Houphouet Boigny ruled the country for over two decades, and did not build credible political institutions. Due to President Boigny's patronage style of leadership, the country found itself in total chaos only a few years after his death.

The second realization of the study is that all the coup makers had the same purpose in mind which is to enrich themselves out of the state's resources. The pervading, but controversial notion here is that most people believe that Africa is a continent with a lot of poor countries. However, the reality here is that Africa does not have much of a problem with resources and wealth, rather the issue concerns the redistribution of these enormous wealth and resources. Nigeria for example, during the rule of Babangida, corruption was institutionalized as a tool of political control and as much as U.S. \$ 12.2 billion in oil resources simply disappeared under his watch. Ironically, these were times when the ordinary Nigerians could not meet their daily food needs. Unemployment was high and health care was practically non-existent. Upon leaving office, Babangida had acquired so much wealth that he was able to retire to his

fifty-bedroom home in Minna, Niger State. On the other hand Abacha alone is believed to have personally stolen between U.S. \$1 and \$3 billion while in office.

The third and striking revelation is that once a country falls into the hands of military rule, the possibility of returning authority to civilian rule seemed to be impossible. During the period under review from 1980 to 2000, the three countries which were used as case studies experienced a vicious circle of violence either in the form of civil unrest or civil war. From 1983 when President Shagari's government was overthrown by General Buhari, the country did not return to civilian rule until 1999 when former General Olusegun Obasanjo was elected in a democratic election. The country went from one military regime to another which destroyed the social-economic political fabrics of the country for two decades. The same held true in Liberia; since the 1980 coup that brought Master-Sergeant Samuel K. Doe to power, the country went through a devastating civil war that lasted for more than a decade until President Ellen Johnson Sirleaf was elected in a democratic election in 2006; a point in time from which the country has begun to regain her rightful place among the community of nations.

Recommendations

Recommendations for Further Studies

The research has been focused on three countries in West Africa as a sample set in order to find common trends among the rest of the countries that have experienced military coups. The research mainly covers the period from 1980 to 2000 which is a partial assessment of the sub-region dating back to the first military coup in the early 1960s and into the new millennium.

Further studies should focus on the role of ethnicity and its implications on military coups which was not fully explored during the course of the research. Indeed ethnicity plays a major part in the stability of the state. West Africa's ethnic diversity for the most part explains why civil wars are difficult to end due to the loyalty of individuals to their tribes and clans as well as influential leaders who represent them.

There is also a need to research the impact of the Cold War on military coups d'état in West Africa. During the cold war, the frequencies of military coups d'état was at its peak for one reason or the other. Perhaps the actual reason was that, even if one super power denounced the coup the other would eventually give some recognition to the military government for political or strategic reasons.

Finally, it is worth researching the role of oppositions in the organization of military coups d'état. More often than not, whenever the military successfully takes over state power, the opposition leaders usually occupy some key positions within the government. The unanswered questions are, were they part of the planning or do they actually sanction the military method of assuming power by the use of force?

Recommendations for Implementation

In order for West Africa to break away from the culture of military interventions into politics and enjoy a lasting peace, there are three main recommendations that should be considered. First, these nations must promote effective civil-military relations programs in order for both the military and its civil leaders to not only define, but to understand their vital roles in both national security and selfless service. Second, there is a great need to professionalize the militaries at every level. A professional military in a free, democratic society not only protects and defend its nation's constitution, but also

carries the values that a free democracy represents. Finally, a more active role by both regional and international organizations in denouncing military intervention into politics establishes greater awareness beyond the borders of one's national boundary; making it a cooperative effort to build cohesiveness and cooperation within all states.

Effective Civil-Military Relation Programs

Expanding the gap between the military and the civil population will only worsen the situation of mutual suspicion. An effective civil-military relation program will help to eliminate the civilian fear of the military as well as the military recognition of their statutory duties. Civilian control of the military does not in any way subject the military to a lesser treatment. If the soldiers gain the trust and confidence of the civil populace, this will have a lasting effect on the political system. Most militaries in Africa in general, and especially West Africa, have little or no civil-military instructions; making them ignorant of their constitutional duties. Recruiting and developing citizen soldiers will benefit the state in general.

Professionalization of the Military at Every Level

Building a professional military will help reduce the tensions that usually exist between the military and the civil authorities. Most of the soldiers in Africa have their best lessons in basic training and after that their education ends. The focus of training within the military is usually geared toward the officers and then the NCOs in that order. For these reasons soldiers more often do what they are told by their NCOs and officers without question even if the order is unlawful. If the soldiers have some level of formal education coupled with training that are focused on their professional development, the

chances of following unlawful orders will be slowly eradicated at some point. NCOs are themselves given less attention than the officers. Even though the generals in many instances orchestrated most of the military coups d'etat it was the NCOs and conscripts who did the bulk of the fighting even during civil conflicts.

Regional and International Condemnation of Military Coups

The role of regional and international organizations in preserving peace in West Africa cannot be overemphasized. The charter of organizations such as the U.N. (comprised of 192 member states) is to stop wars between countries and to provide a platform for dialogues. As such, it cannot turn a blind eye to a single nation's internal affairs. When this process, however large or small is undertaken in the cause of peace, organizations like the UN, and the international community it serves, can and will enrich one another.

APPENDIX A

Political and Demographic Information on West Africa

Benin- officially known as the Republic of Benin, it is bordered in the west by Togo, Nigeria to the east, and Burkina Faso and Niger to the north. Its small southern coastline on the Bight of Benin is where majority of the population resides. The capital of Benin is Porto-Novo, but the seat of government is located in the country's largest city of Cotonou. Benin covers an area of approximately 110,000 square kilometers or 42,000 square miles, and has a population of about 9 million people. The official language of Benin is French. The country gained its independence from France in 1960.¹¹⁶

Burkina-Faso- Burkina Faso or Burkina for short, is a landlocked country in West Africa. It is bordered by six countries: Niger to the east, Mali to the north, Benin to the southeast, Togo and Ghana to the south, and Cote d'Ivoire to the southwest. Burkina Faso covers an area of 274,200 square kilometers or 105,900 square miles, and has an estimated population of 15.8 million people. The country was formerly called Upper Volta, but it was renamed by the then President Thomas Sankara in 1984. The capital city of Burkina Faso is Ouagadougou. After gaining its independence from France in 1960, the country went through several changes in government until arriving at its current form; a semi-democratic republic.¹¹⁷

¹¹⁶About.com, "African History," <http://africanhistory.about.com> (accessed 20 June 2011); Central Intelligence Agency, World Factbook, <https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/geos/ni.html> (accessed 12 November 2011).

¹¹⁷Ibid.

Cape Verde- the Republic of Cape Verde is the only island state of West Africa with an archipelago of 10 islands located in the central Atlantic Ocean. It is approximately 570 kilometers off the Coast of Western Africa. The archipelago covers an area of 4,000 square kilometers or 1,500 square miles and has a population of about 567,000 people. The country's capital is Praia. Cape Verde gained its independence from Portugal on July 5, 1975. Its official language is Portuguese.¹¹⁸

Cote d'Ivoire- the Republic of Cote d'Ivoire (Ivory Coast) is bordered by five countries. They are Liberia, Guinea, Mali, Burkina Faso, and Ghana. Its southern border is situated along the Gulf of Guinea. The country covers an area of approximately 322,462 square kilometers or 124,503 square miles and has a population of about 20.6 million people. The official capital of Ivory Coast is Yamoussoukro; however, its largest and commercial capital is Abidjan. Côte d'Ivoire gained independence from France on August 5, 1960 and the country's official language is French.¹¹⁹

The Gambia- the Republic of Gambia is commonly called The Gambia, or Gambia. It is the smallest country in West Africa. It is bordered to the north, east, and south by Senegal, with its coastline situated on the Atlantic Ocean in the west. Gambia covers an area of approximately 10,380 square kilometers or 3,980 square miles, and has a population of about 1.7 million people. The capital city of the country is Banjul. Because of its unique coastal location, The Gambia shares historic ties to many other West African nations involved in the might slave trade. The Gambia gained its independence

¹¹⁸Ibid.

¹¹⁹Ibid.

from the United Kingdom on February 18, 1965 and later joined the Commonwealth. The Gambia's official language is English.¹²⁰

Ghana- the Republic of Ghana is bordered by the Ivory Coast to the west, Burkina Faso to the north, Togo to the east, and the Gulf of Guinea to the south. Ghana covers an area of approximately 238,535 square kilometers or 92,100 square miles and has a population of about 24.2 million people. The capital of Ghana is Accra. Ghana gained its independence from the United Kingdom on March 6, 1957 making it the first country in West Africa to gain independence from its colonial master. Ghana remains today a member of the Commonwealth. Ghana is the second largest producer of cocoa in the world and home to Lake Volta, the largest artificial lake in the world.¹²¹

Guinea- the Republic of Guinea, formerly known as French Guinea, is bordered by Guinea-Bissau, Senegal, and Mali in the north, and by the Republic of Liberia, Ivory Coast and Sierra Leone in the south. Guinea covers an area of approximately 246,000 square kilometers or 94,980 square miles and has a population of about 10 million people. The capital city of Guinea is Conakry. The country gained independence from France on October 2, 1958 and the official language is French.¹²²

Guinea-Bissau- the Republic of Guinea-Bissau is bordered in the north by Senegal, in the south and east by Guinea, and in the west by the Atlantic Ocean. The country covers an area of about 36,125 square kilometers or 13,948 square miles and has a population of

¹²⁰Ibid.

¹²¹Ibid.

¹²²Ibid.

approximately 1.6 million people. The capital city of Guinea-Bissau is Bissau. On October 10, 1974 Guinea-Bissau gained independence from Portugal and its official language is Portuguese.¹²³

Liberia- the Republic of Liberia is bordered in the west by Sierra Leone, in the north by the Republic of Guinea, in the east by the Ivory Coast, and in the south by the Atlantic Ocean. Liberia covers an area of about 111,369 square kilometers or 43,000 square miles and has a population of about 3.5 million people. The capital city of Liberia is Monrovia. Liberia was founded in 1822 by freed American slaves called the American Colonization Society (ACS) and declared its independence in 1847. Liberia is the only country in Africa that was never colonized. Liberia's official language is English.¹²⁴

Mali- the Republic of Mali is a landlocked country in West Africa. Mali is bordered in the north by Algeria, in the east by Niger, in the south by Burkina Faso and Cote d'Ivoire, in the southwest by the Republic of Guinea, and in the west by Mauritania and Senegal. The Republic of Mali covers an area of approximately 1,240,000 square kilometers or 478,839 square miles and has a population of about 14.6 million people. Bamako is the capital city of the Republic of Mali. On September 22, 1960, Mali gained its independence from France. Mali's official language is French.¹²⁵

Mauritania- the Islamic Republic of Mauritania is a country in the Maghreb of West Africa. Mauritania is bordered in the north by Western Sahara, in the west by the Atlantic

¹²³About.com; Central Intelligence Agency.

¹²⁴Ibid.

¹²⁵Ibid.

Ocean, Algeria in the northeast, in the east and southeast by the Republic of Mali, and in the southwest by Senegal. Mauritania covers an area of approximately 1,030,700 square kilometers or 397,954 square miles and has a population of about 3.3 million people. Nouakchott is the capital city of Mauritania. The country gained its independence from France on November 28, 1960. Mauritania has two official languages, French and Arabic.¹²⁶

Niger- the Republic of Niger is a landlocked country in West Africa and is named after the River Niger. The country borders Algeria and Libya in the north, Chad in the east, Nigeria and the Republic of Benin in the south, and Burkina Faso and Mali in the west. Niger covers an area of approximately 1,270,000 square kilometers or 489,678 square miles and has a population of about 15.3 million people. Niger is the largest country in West Africa; however, the Sahara Desert consumes over 80 percent of its land mass. The capital city of Niger is Niamey. The country gained independence on August 3, 1960 from France. Its official language is French.¹²⁷

Nigeria- the Federal Republic of Nigeria is a federal constitutional republic comprised of 36 states. Nigeria is bordered in the west by the Republic of Benin, in the east by Cameroon and Chad, in the east by Niger, and by the Atlantic Ocean in the south. Nigeria covers an area of about 923,768 square kilometers or 356,667 square miles and has a population of approximately 152,217,340 people making it the most populated country in the sub-region. Nigeria gained its independence from the United Kingdom on October 1,

¹²⁶Ibid.

¹²⁷Ibid.

1960 and is a member of the Commonwealth. Abuja is the capital city of Nigeria; however, its largest and most commercial city is Lagos. The official language spoken in Nigeria is English.¹²⁸

Senegal- the Republic of Senegal is bordered in the west by the Atlantic Ocean, in the north by Mauritania, in the east by the Republic of Mali, and in the south by the Republic of Guinea and Guinea-Bissau. The country covers an area of about 197,000 square kilometers or 76,000 square miles and has a population of approximately 13.7 million people. Dakar is the capital city of Senegal. Senegal gained its independence on April 4, 1960 from France and its official language is French.¹²⁹

Sierra Leone- the Republic of Sierra Leone is bordered in the north and east by the Republic of Guinea, in the southeast by the Republic of Liberia, and by the Atlantic Ocean in the west and southwest. Sierra Leone covers an area of about 71,740 square kilometers or 27,699 square miles, and has a population of approximately 6.4 million people. Freetown is the country's capital city. Sierra Leone gained its independence from the United Kingdom on April 27, 1961 and its official language is English.¹³⁰

Togo- the Togolese Republic is bordered in the east by Benin, in the west by Ghana, and in the north by Burkina Faso. It extends south to the Gulf of Guinea. Togo covers an area of about 57,000 square kilometers or 22,000 square miles, and has a population of about

¹²⁸Ibid.

¹²⁹Ibid.

¹³⁰Ibid.

6.6 million people. Togo gained its independence from France on April 27, 1960. Lome is Togo's capital city and the official language of the Republic of Togo is French.¹³¹

¹³¹about.com.

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