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Re-correction or Sabotage? Investigating the Circumstances and the Political-Economic Implications of Military Coups in Africa: the Case of Ghana

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Abstract:

This article tackles the issue of military coups in Africa. The study depends on the historical method along with views of deeply concerned authors in addition to data analysis to reach its objectives. It attempts to investigate the different factors that led the military officers to intervene in the political life in African states taking Ghana as an example. It also tries to determine the impact of these interventions at both the political and economic level, and in Africa in general and Ghana in particular. The study concludes that military interventions were often more of a deviation from track than any course correction. The article contributes to studies that are concerned with civil-military regimes and their impact on the economic and political development in Africa.

Keywords: Military coups; Ghana; African Economic development; African politics

Introduction

Africa, the Dark Continent, the cursed soil, the land of breathtaking cultural diversity and of huge wealth and resources, has been and still in economic and political agony. One may wonder why the second largest continent has remained overshadowed despite its cultural multiplicity and vast wealth. The usual answer that may instantly come to mind is colonialism. No one can deny the considerable impact of colonialism on Africa socially, economically and politically, but it is worth mentioning that it doesn't constitute the bulk of the continent's dilemma. Corruption, mismanagement and disunity have mingled the African countries with the dirt of instability and blood. Even after independence, African countries didn't prosper or at least enjoy the earlier stages of prosperity. The first issue among all is the political instability. The definition of power in Africa had another dimension. It resembled a blood diamond to which the strongest shall grasp and hold at any cost. Mostly, African politicians never had consensus on a good set of deeds of a legitimate government. This may seem the case, but in lower intensity, in every single corner of the world. In Africa, however, not only the politicians had troubled themselves with politics and government but the military leaders as well. Military coups are generally justified as to correct the course of decisions and re-set the track on which a certain country should go. Its credibility, however, is severely questioned especially when we observe its effect on ground. In Africa, even military coups were superseded by other military coups.

Having arrived at this point, this paper aims at understanding the circumstances that sparkle military interventions in Africa taking Ghana as case to study. The article also attempts to identify the different political and economic implications of these military coups in Africa in general and Ghana in particular. The research will depend on the historical approach to reach the stated objectives.

1- Investigating the Circumstances: The Political and Military Explanations of Military Interventions.

“In underdeveloped societies the military are concerned not only with pay and promotion, although they are concerned with that, but also with the distribution of power and status throughout the political system” (Huntington, 1968, p. 194). Totally convinced of the idea that the political explanation describes military coups rather than military explanation, Samuel P. Huntington highlights three main motivations for any military coup that fall under the umbrella of ideology. The first is the radical motive to push the oligarchy out of the way (Huntington, 1968, p. 223). An instance of this can be traced in the 1952 Free Officers coup in Egypt; a group of middle class, young hard workers and war

heroes led by Gamal Abdel Nasser. They dedicated their lives in facing both corruption they saw diffused among the very few government members holding all political power and the tolerance towards imperialism. (Gelvin, 2008, pp. 246-247)

The second is the military's reaction to the conflict that occurs in the social sphere resulting in a political instability. Third is an action that comes as deterrence against any government that goes with radical policies or any entity that the military opposes ceases power (Huntington, 1968, p. 224). This seems the case with the Ghanaian coup that happened in 1966 and overthrew Kwame Nkrumah from government. It was basically presented as a response to the increasing radical policies Nkrumah was following since the early 1960s.

Huntington was one of those authors who believed in the political nature of any attempt to overthrow government by a coup. Other authors, however, insisted on the military explanation of such upheavals. One of them is S. E. Finer who highlighted two non-political motives for any military intervention. One was an intervention for the purpose of the maintenance of the military corporate interests (Finer, 1962, p. 47). The military intervention out of military corporate interests could be exemplified in Algeria where the coup of 1965 overthrew the first president of independent Algeria Ben Bella. It was performed as a reaction to the regime's interference with Military issues (Ottaway & Ottaway, 1970, pp. 199-200). This incident totally opposes Huntington's linkage of the ideologically based military involvements and what he refers to as 'political decay'. The other motive would be the attempt to sustain personal interests (Finer, 1962, pp. 40-43). That motive may result from either officers' lack of wealth or rank or officers' endeavor to gain more of each. Broadly speaking, we can differentiate two types of self-interest interventions: the ones that occur as an attempt to restore the lost status and income, and the ones that are carried out by military leaders who feel threatened by actions of the civilian government. That threat, certainly, has to do with the officers' careers. (Bunnett, 1973, p. 661)

We can also approach the problem of explanation in another way. The theories that are used to do so will help us understand the reasons and circumstances that would provoke military coups. In this regard many authors refer to what is called the Military Centrality Theory. It sheds light on the different resources and military assets of the army and the nature of its link with the civilian government. The theory stresses that the military has powerful and coherent institutions that are way better structured than its civilian counterpart. (Jenkins & Kposowa, 1990, p. 861)

The military institutions demonstrate patriotic sentiments and acquire an advanced training for the purpose of, firstly, maintain security and secondly interfere in issues that are way behind the capability of the governmental institutions. They are accustomed to do so after being exposed to vigorous training during the colonial era making them an elite group (Jenkins & Kposowa, 1990, p. 862). That being said, they often consider the civilian government along with political parties as non-productive and sometimes corrupt. And due to their strong nationalistic sentiments they feel responsibility to maintain and preserve whatever serves the country especially economy, and disrupt and often remove any aspect they think blocks economic progress. Therefore, coup d'état is more likely to occur whenever the civilian government demonstrates, sometimes, the slightest sign of weakness or lack in resources. (Jenkins & Kposowa, Political Origins of African Military Coups, 1992, pp. 271-272)

The theory of Military Centrality also hints at the fact that when a given country has a military institution owning much state resources, the civil institutions ultimately becomes weaker. Such incidents are found in most developing countries. The military regards itself as an uncontested powerful institution that have the right to political intervention, as no other institution is capable to prevent it. This is contrary to the west where the military has no place in the local political affairs. African states have no control over its internal politics as much of the space there is reserved for the military that, in a way, dominates the decision making process. (Jenkins & Kposowa, Political Origins of African Military Coups, 1992, p. 274)

If we were to discuss the issue of Ghana, we may be troubled as to know what type of motive led military officers to perform the coup. In the light of what has been previously mentioned, we may think of two types of motives in the Ghanaian case. One is the political or ideological motive and the other is the non-ideological or self interest motive. We may also differentiate between the Ghanaian military coups with reference to these types.

As mentioned earlier, 1966 coup that was led by the National Liberation Council (NLC) can be seen, on the basis of Huntington's ideological explanation, as a non-corporate, political or ideological motive. NLC grew dissatisfied with the issue of radicalism in politics during Nkrumah rule; an issue that was to push Ghana to an unnecessary bloody war. After 3 years NLC handed over the power to the Progress party that was led by Kofi Busia. It is worth mentioning that NLC disengagement from politics at that time was seen as "the most complete ever undertaken by a ruling military force is evidenced by the retirement of all the

military members of the NLC once power was firmly in the hands of the Busia government” (Bunnett, 1973, p. 662). The National Redemption Council (NRC) that led the coup of 1972, however, didn't demonstrate the same aspirations. It is argued that the 1972 coup was a result of the refusal of the Ghanaian government under Busia to supply the financial demands of the military especially when Ghana was experiencing an economic disaster that resulted from the fall of the world price of cocoa. The average price fell from \$790 a ton in 1970 to \$360 a ton in 1972. The Ghanaian budget suffered this fall leading to severe austerities in the new budget. This would certainly reinforce the idea of 1972 coup being a self-interest intervention especially that the Busia government did not face any incidents of insurgency or riots. At both the political and ethnic level, there was no known conflict among the Ghanaian figures. (Bunnett, 1973, p. 666)

In terms of ethnicity, one may question whether these actions were ever sparked by the ethnic motives. As was the case with the first one in 1966, the second coup of 1972 seemed to be out of any ethnic or class motive. The leader of the coup Lieutenant Colonel Ignatius Kutu Acheampong was Akwapim while the officers whom he trusted with his planning for the coup were different in terms of ethnicity including the Brong; Ewe; Dagart; and the Northerners (Bunnett, 1973, p. 671). The most prominent cause, however, was the constant economic distress which had definitely affected the military budget as well as the military officers themselves. Their personal income faced considerable challenges from the cut of spending policies implemented by the Busia government. In this vein Bennett states: “the corporate indignities of the new budget did not hurt the officers as much as the personal losses they experienced due to deprivation of income and perquisites.” (Bunnett, 1973, p. 668)

It is clear, thus, that the ideological reasons are absent in the Ghanaian case. It is only the military or corporate explanation that seems valid. This was apparent in the Acheampong's words when he declared to the nation the justification of the coup. He said:

“The first people which Busia put his eyes on were the armed forces and police. Some army and police officers were dismissed under the pretext of retirement. Some officers were put in certain positions to suit the whims of Busia and his colleagues. Then he started taking from us the few amenities and facilities which we in the armed forces and the police enjoyed . . .

officers could not exert any meaningful influence over their men, so that by this strategy coming together to overthrow his government was to him impossible, he turned his eyes on the civilians” (Biswal, 1992, p. 133)

Acheampong’s words suggest the double faced movement of military coups in Ghana and Africa in general. The apparent justifications have seldom reflected the true motive of these operations. It is only in such occasion that Acheampong has hinted to it. He had, as it is usual, set the expected justification of corruption and economic mismanagement, and that was also used to justify the coup against Nkrumah government. But later and as quoted above, he dismantled any claim of a political nature of any military coup in Ghana.

The conclusions that this study attempt to draw are very significant for the existing literature on the circumstances surrounding military interventions in Africa. It does, however, have more emphasis on its implications. This paper doesn’t vigorously oppose the other group of scholars who state that the military intervention reacts to political decay. One reason for this can be seen in the multiplicity of the real examples that have been manifested in different places in Africa and elsewhere. The Ghanaian case, however, resembles nothing but a mere economic precondition based solely on a military motivation for the coup d’état to be performed. It is also worth mentioning that the good or legitimate government, if had existed in Africa, would have profoundly changed the scene and probably prevented the muddy preconditions from happening in the first place.

2- Military Coups in Ghana and Africa (1960s-1980s)

Although they still continue to occur till the present day, the number of successful as well failed coups in Africa reached its highest levels starting from 1960s; the time of independence of many African nations, to the 1990s. Within the time period 1960-1980 there were more than 89 military coups in Africa. On a larger scale; compared to the world, Africa had seen 214 out of 486 coups worldwide constituting around 45% of the global percentage (Duzor & Williamson, 2022). 45 out of 54 African nations had experienced at least one coup attempt starting from 1950. If we were to refer to the nations with the most attempted coups, Sudan would be on top followed by Ghana, Sierra Leon, Burkina Faso, Nigeria and other nations. Ghana itself had witnessed ten attempted military coups, five of which were successful starting with the first one that overthrown Nkrumah in 1966 (Duzor & Williamson, 2022). The Ghanaian case is among the very few African cases that saw two or more coups within a very short period of

time. An example of this would be the attempted coups of 1979 that followed the successful coup of 1978, then, the coup of June 4; 1979 that occurred only 19 days after the coup of May 15, 1979. Later coups; that of 1981, 1982, 1983 and 1984 had only few months in between despite the fact that most of them had failed. (Duzor & Williamson, 2022)

This suggests the severe instability of the political life in Ghana after being, for many years before 1966 coup, the good African model for all African nations to follow in their quest for independence. Ghana did not only play as a political and ideological lighthouse for other African countries but also as a center for training in thought; a place where good management is thought and transmitted to every corner in Africa. Although Ghana experienced some turbulence in its economic development during the Nkrumah years, the later civilian and military governments following military coups did nothing to improve the situation. In fact, even if scholars, in any way, prove that these military coups had not led to any deviation, they would not be able to refute the fact that these interventions have tremendously delayed any attempt of revival and demolished any portion of hope of a developed Africa.

3- Implications: General Overview

On March 6, 2022 Ghanaians celebrated their 65th anniversary of independence. 65 years since independence and Ghanaian still reluctant to reflect on it positively or negatively. The early decades following independence witnessed a very complex development especially when it comes to economy. The political instability was predominant as governments were constantly overthrown by military coups. This paper focuses attention on the early post independence decades in order to examine the different factors that led to these events and subsequently reflect on their economic and political impact. The consequences of military intervention in Ghana are recorded by history and Ghanaian scholars had a consensus on the fact that the addressed period; the second half of the 20th century, saw nothing but failure in development and degradation in the living conditions of the Ghanaian people. Akilagpa Sawyerr, a Ghanaian academic, vice chancellor of the University of Ghana and a professor of law, described the development in Ghana in one word: “disastrous.” (Sawyerr, 1994, p. 24)

The development of industry and economy in general in Ghana was not prosperous. Even at the time of the CPP government under Kwame Nkrumah before any military interventions, the sector was fragile. Serious problems popped up in the sector despite the fact that it contributed with around 15% of the total GDP in the late 1960s. The different measures implemented by government as well as firms were inefficient (Ninsin, 1991, pp. 10-11, 30-31). The regimes that

followed the CPP government after the military coup of 1966 brought nothing new that would improve the collapsed rates (ISSER, 1997). The overall reason for all of these economic and political problems is stated and shared by most authors including Ayee. He saw corruption and patronage in the state as well as the private sectors as the main obstacles that inhibited development in the post independence era. (Ayee, 2000, pp. 183-189)

The question that rises whenever we discuss the issue of military coups in Africa is: in what way these military interventions have affected growth in Africa? Can we establish the solid link that connects these events with what Ghana and Africa went through during the past decades? Since corruption and mismanagement were already there before intervention, military interventions would logically seem ineffective regardless of the positivity or negativity of this effect. This may seem the case unless we consider these military interventions as the stages that secured the continuity of the political decay or as the means by which external influence is maintained.

The continuity of political and economic degradation through constant military intervention is indisputable. Military coups were supposed, on paper, to correct the false track that the government had moved on and put an end to any political or economic deviation. Since the motive behind these interventions was personal especially in the Ghanaian case, the political decadence, economic mismanagement and subsequently social degradation were allowed to continue under the false conception of them being removed. In this way any real attempt to present valid policies and introduce effective political and economic reforms was sabotaged or at least significantly delayed. Examining the Ghanaian case doesn't exclude the whole African scene. On the contrary, it projects the overall shape of the political, social and economic situation in the continent. Actually, the number of military coups is even higher in other African countries than in Ghana. During the 1960s and 1970s there was a coup or a coup attempt every 55 days in average. It occurred in more than 90% of the African states. (Suleiman & Onapajo, 2022)

The other issue; that of a coup planned and performed under external influence, is considerably valid. Military coups are basically taking down regimes. Every state in Africa and the world has certain affiliations. They tend to implement policies that fall under a certain ideology. Political rivalry or any clash of interest would certainly result in a conflict whether apparent or hidden. If any rising regime manifests an opposing ideology or demonstrates any allegiance to an opposing party, it would be perceived as a threat in the same way as that of an

actual direct assault. Reaction, however, won't be that of an actual war or any obvious hostility. It would simply be an indirect attempt of sabotage; such as the interference in local affairs. The latter is best invested when it takes the shape of a military coup that would bring down that dubitable regime and replace it with one that adheres to the same interest. Ghana had been heavily involved with other competing African nations in the 1950s and 1960s. Nkrumah wanted to maintain influence on all countries for his biggest project of Pan-Africansim. Opposition, however, was sparkled in other countries that had different projects such as Nigeria. As a result, serious rebellions, insurgencies, secessions and even military coups were encouraged by a state against its competitor.

3.1- The Political Implications of Coups in Ghana and Africa

Military coups, as discussed earlier, may be the result of some personal endeavors. As it may take such a shape, it would also be drawn with some ethnic lines. It seems true that the authors trying to link ethnicity to coups find a real difficulty assembling a good deal of evidence (Harkness, 2016). Nevertheless, coups are not perceived as malign by all the population. We should remind ourselves that these newborn African nations are still in the nation building process. And nationalists are still mobilizing all necessary means to construct the idea of a nation in the minds of Africans. Weak allegiance to the state, low popularity and deficient legitimacy of both coups and governments add nothing but more tears to the already torn up unity and national consciousness. Although Ghana succeeded in establishing a national non-regional party after independence, some Ghanaians, as well as other African people in other African nations, still perceived themselves as being an essential part of their ethnic groups before being part of the any nation (Adjibolosoo, 2003, p. 108). It is, thus, the job of the state to invert and correct the twisted allegiance of Africans. Yet, political instability resulting from continues military interventions, hangs the process.

After the military government that lasted from 1966 to 1969, power was handed to the civilian Busia government. The transformation in Ghana's foreign policy was significant. In a matter of years, Ghana moved away from continental and universal scene and shrunk its vision to be solely concerned with national matters. Ghana was an effective player on the continental ground since independence. Although it seems overstated when a newborn nation mobilizes all of its resources for matters beyond national borders, it remains a landmark in the history of politics and nationalism. After the coup of 1966, NLC and latter Busia government completely withdrew from the Pan-African scene and shifted focus on only what was national although some authors view the new administration to

be less than national, but it is highly agreed that Ghana embraced a kind of isolationist policy. (Hettne, 1980 , p. 178)

When it came to power after the NLC and the Busia government, the NRC initiated a process of militarization. It simply appointed officers in top of major departments and bodies. Even the Ghanaian society and the political system were subject to the militarization attempt. The aim was to put an end to political parties. The third involvement of, the Armed Force Revolutionary Council (AFRC) was characterized by a retaliation policy. This was certainly the case as they ripped out power from a military regime and gave it a civilian government in the most, if one may say, unprecedented act from a military regime. (Hettne, 1980 , p. 183)

In general terms, the only way these interventions seem valid is in their facilitation of transfer of power between a regime to another. Yet, power transformation did not mean stable processing of politics in the country. What made it worse is that none of these regimes considered the other as being suitable to rule. On international grounds, and during the rule of these military-civilian regimes, Ghana's international role was gradually becoming less significant. Generally, however, there was major relief on the part of western powers because the communist hands involved in the country and subsequently Africa were imputed. Similarly other Africa states that were not in favor of pan African project demonstrated signs of support. As the case with internal affairs, Fluctuations in Ghana foreign policy were also apparent. After the NLC and the subsequent Busia government, Ghana began to favor establishing relations with the socialist block. It also showed signs of Nkrumah's Pan Africanism despite being too marginal. (Hettne, 1980 , pp. 187-188)

There was no clear path to follow in Ghana for the purpose of improvement of both economy and status in the world because conflicts at many levels were fierce and acted all together (conflicts between the military and the civilian bodies, conflict within the military itself and conflicts within the society in general) in complicating the Ghanaian development at all scales. With the three main military regimes taking power, no valid alternatives were introduced. A careful and studied economic philosophy was absent despite receiving, at times, foreign aid and guidance. At the social level, it would be irrational to think that these coups would ever establish or even preserve social peace since instability is prevalent.

The overall status that is inevitable whenever an intervention from the military takes place is totally obscure. It is more of a chaotic nature as it revolves in a closed circle with no fixed long term benefits. No matter what would the true

intentions of the military by its intervention be, they will always end up either being authoritarian or having their achieved objectives totally reversed or sabotaged. Finer states:

“Those armed forces that have tried to disengage from politics have had to hasten back as soon as their quondam political enemies came within sight of regaining power, while those that have elected to remain and rule have been ejected only by popular revolt, or by further military revolts of their own malcontents. In most cases the military that have intervened in politics are in a dilemma: whether their rule, be indirect or whether it be direct, they cannot withdraw from rulership nor can they fully legitimize it. They can neither stay nor go.” (Finer, 1962, p. 143)

Due to the fact that duties are systematically distributed to allow each body to have full control of its own sphere of influence, active duty military officers are unauthorized to practice any form of political activity in almost, if not all countries in the world. Even if these unauthorized actions are meant to change the civilian with civilian, it is still widely believed that politics is not for soldiers.

3.2- The economic implications of coups in Ghana and Africa

The Ghanaian economy suffered from fractures that were so intense that it seemed to never recover. This stagnation lasted for many years from the period of colonialism until recent times. Since 1969, there have been different military interventions in the Ghanaian political life. Over the period of 16 years, Ghana was under successive military and political regimes. It was until 1985 that Ghana was kept under constant political rule. Those military interventions had propagated a common reason; liberate the economy from external influences and liberate it from unfair and ineffective policies conducted by the overthrown Ghanaian government. Thus, they were determined to take power through gun and to revive the economy through different economic policies.

Actually, the study doesn't only reflect on the coup as a mere historically separated event when it discusses its implications. It also examines the policies enacted by those military regimes and verifies their overall impact on the national scale. Generally speaking, evaluating the extent to which a military intervention is good or bad is mostly based on what these new regimes offer as a replacement. It is imperative, thus, to first reflect on these regimes taking Ghana as an example. The first thing that one may discover when examining their policies and attempted reforms is that their mentality is characterized by two fundamental aspects:

tendency to enact short term policies and hostility to any foreign economic involvement.

The Ghanaian economy, in short, did considerably bad under the military rule, precisely during the time period 1972-1983, until it reached some stability in the late 1980s and early 1990s. The military regimes that administrated the Ghanaian economy during the former period can be presented as follows: (Gyening, 2008, pp. 36-38)

- The national redemption council (NRC) that was later changed to the Supreme Military Council (SMC). It ceased power in 1972 as a reaction; as claimed, to mismanagement, lack of sovereignty and corruption.
- Supreme Military Council II (SMC II) that overthrown its predecessor in 1978 under the claim of mismanagement.
- The Armed Forces Revolutionary Council (AFRC) that ceased power in 1979 as a reaction; as claimed, to economic failure and corruption.
- AFRC worked to transfer power to a civilian democratically elected government (Limann government) that ruled for 27 months.
- AFRC came back again and ceased power overthrowing the regime it handed power to. It changed its name to Provisional National Defense Council (PNDC) in 1981.

All these military regimes had, in a way, operated in a similar manner. As mentioned earlier, they implemented short term polices that gave good indications during the very first months in power. Later, however, these indicators turned upside down and had a very negative impact on both economic and social spheres. Under NRC and SMC, cacao prices increased leading to a 40% boost to exports, and finances were better secured under unilateral endeavor by these regimes to cancel debt payments. Economy, however, did not survive for much time (Libby, 1976, p. 87). Under AFRC, the conducted policies were severe and aimed at protecting the poor and eliminating any sign of tax evasion. It followed the same pattern of the previous governments but with more emphasis on the policy of wealth re-distribution. Although revenue saw some improvements, it ended up pretty much like NRC/SMC polices and never lasted for long. (Ahiakpor, 1985, pp. 544-545)

These regimes were not open to any foreign aid. Most of the enacted polices were based on the government's manipulation of the market. One of the incident that made it worse is the increase in cacao prices in 1974 and that was not reflected on the Ghanaian local market. This resulted in two major subsequent drawbacks: one is the very low revenue due to low cacao exports. The second was the rise in the number of smugglers that wished to sell the crops in neighboring countries about 4 times its price in Ghana (Ernest, Harrigan, & Nissanke, 2000,

pp. 36-37). The policies enacted by these regimes had also antagonized foreign firms resulting in their reduction of production, and pushed foreign companies to leave the country especially under the circumstances of insecurity, instability and the collapse of the market (Ninsin & Hansen, 1992)

Corruption was also among the major factors that damaged the economy. Corruption has always been associated with most of the military leaders and general Acheampong was always referred to as a corrupt officer who lived a very lavish corrupt lifestyle. And in an attempt to cover up for their failure in economy, the military leaders such as Acheampong printed more money. It was propagated as an attempt to overcome the deficit, yet, and as it was expected, inflation heavily struck the country (Hettne, 1980 , p. 183). Taking these discussions into account, one won't be really surprised at the way the African economy was. Owusu stated: "No wonder the decline of the economy was so disastrous that revival meant a lot of sacrifice by governments that followed" (Gyening, 2008, p. 54)

It was not until 1980s when PNDC began to be more and more open to western institutions. The aim was to seek assistance and advice in an attempt to bring the economy back to life. It is highly believed that through this first step Ghanaian economy was finally lifted up from the muddy ground to reach some modest levels. (Boafo, 1999 , p. 89)

Conclusion

Ghana had suffered economic and political disarray due to different factors including corruption and mismanagement. Military coups, that were supposed to offer a new course for Africans to lift themselves up from the mud, did nothing but to keep the African political and economic life in the rock bottom. Although some interventions were conducted under the leadership of nationalist and patriotic officers, they seldom succeeded in bringing a new spirit to their nations. Ironically, the ones who succeeded were often overthrown by other coups signaling a return to policies enacted many years ago.

This paper offered an overall study of some of the military coups that were seen as important stages in the Ghanaian political life. It has exposed different aspects that were decisive in giving rise to these events, and presented different economic and political implications that were directly or indirectly linked to them. Towards this end, the study relied on the historical approach as well as the different views of those heavily involved with the critical perspectives in African politics and economy. The article contributes to the talk concerned with civil-military relations in Africa. It enriches the long "good coup-bad coup" debate. It also adds to the literature on military coups and their consequences.

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