

Military Coups in West Africa Since the 1960s: Causes and Legacies

Introduction

Military coups have been a recurring feature of West African politics since the 1960s. In the past six decades, there have been over 200 successful coups in the region, overthrowing democratically elected governments and plunging countries into chaos.

The causes of military coups in West Africa are complex and varied. Some of the most common factors include economic inequality, political instability, weak institutions, and foreign intervention. Economic inequality is a major problem in many West African countries, with a small elite controlling a large share of the wealth. This can lead to resentment and frustration

among the population, who may see military coups as a way to redistribute wealth and improve their lives.

Political instability is another major factor contributing to military coups in West Africa. Many West African countries have weak democratic institutions and a history of political violence. This can make it difficult to resolve political disputes peacefully, leading to coups as a way to seize power.

Weak institutions are also a major problem in West Africa. Many countries have weak judiciaries, parliaments, and civil services. This can make it difficult to hold governments accountable and prevent them from abusing their power. Weak institutions can also create a vacuum that military officers can exploit to seize power.

Foreign intervention has also played a role in military coups in West Africa. During the Cold War, the United States and the Soviet Union often supported military coups in countries that were aligned with their rivals.

This intervention has helped to create a culture of impunity for military officers who seize power.

The impact of military coups on West Africa has been devastating. Coups have led to economic decline, political instability, and social unrest. They have also undermined democracy and human rights. In some cases, coups have led to civil war and genocide.

Preventing military coups in West Africa is a complex challenge. There is no single solution, but there are a number of steps that can be taken to reduce the risk of coups. These include strengthening democratic institutions, promoting economic development, addressing social grievances, resolving ethnic tensions, and reducing foreign interference.

Book Description

Military Coups in West Africa Since the 1960s: Causes and Legacies provides a comprehensive overview of military coups in West Africa since the 1960s. The book examines the causes, consequences, and legacies of military coups in the region, and offers recommendations for preventing future coups.

Pasquale De Marco argues that military coups in West Africa are rooted in a complex interplay of economic, political, and social factors. Economic inequality, political instability, weak institutions, and foreign intervention have all contributed to the high incidence of coups in the region.

The book also examines the impact of military coups on West Africa. Coups have led to economic decline, political instability, and social unrest. They have also undermined democracy and human rights. In some cases, coups have led to civil war and genocide.

Pasquale De Marco offers a number of recommendations for preventing military coups in West Africa. These include strengthening democratic institutions, promoting economic development, addressing social grievances, resolving ethnic tensions, and reducing foreign interference.

Military Coups in West Africa Since the 1960s: Causes and Legacies is an essential resource for anyone interested in West African politics, security, and development. The book provides a clear and concise analysis of military coups in the region, and offers valuable insights into how to prevent future coups.

Chapter 1: The Roots of Military Coups in West Africa

Causes of military coups

Military coups are often seen as a symptom of weak or unstable governments. However, there are a number of factors that can contribute to military coups, including economic inequality, political instability, weak institutions, and foreign intervention.

Economic inequality is a major problem in many West African countries. A small elite controls a large share of the wealth, while the majority of the population lives in poverty. This inequality can lead to resentment and frustration, which can be exploited by military officers who promise to redistribute wealth and improve the lives of the poor.

Political instability is another major factor contributing to military coups in West Africa. Many West African countries have weak democratic

institutions and a history of political violence. This can make it difficult to resolve political disputes peacefully, leading to coups as a way to seize power.

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Foreign intervention has also played a role in military coups in West Africa. During the Cold War, the United States and the Soviet Union often supported military coups in countries that were aligned with their rivals. This intervention has helped to create a culture of impunity for military officers who seize power.

In addition to these factors, there are a number of other factors that can contribute to military coups, including ethnic tensions, religious extremism, and

personal ambition. Military coups are a complex phenomenon, and there is no single solution to preventing them. However, by addressing the underlying causes of military coups, it is possible to reduce the risk of coups and promote peace and stability in West Africa.

Chapter 1: The Roots of Military Coups in West Africa

Economic inequality

Economic inequality is a major problem in many West African countries, with a small elite controlling a large share of the wealth. This can lead to resentment and frustration among the population, who may see military coups as a way to redistribute wealth and improve their lives.

There are a number of factors that contribute to economic inequality in West Africa. One factor is the region's history of colonialism. Many West African countries were colonized by European powers, who often exploited the region's resources and labor. This left many West African countries with weak economies and a legacy of poverty.

Another factor contributing to economic inequality in West Africa is the region's rapid population growth.

This has put a strain on resources and led to increased competition for jobs and land. The resulting economic disparities can lead to social unrest and political instability, creating a fertile ground for military coups.

Economic inequality can also be exacerbated by corruption and mismanagement. In many West African countries, corruption is widespread, and this can lead to the diversion of public funds into the pockets of a few wealthy individuals. This can further increase economic inequality and make it more difficult for the poor to improve their lives.

The economic inequality of West Africa is a major challenge to the region's development. It is a root cause of poverty, social unrest, and political instability. Addressing economic inequality is essential for promoting peace and prosperity in West Africa.

Chapter 1: The Roots of Military Coups in West Africa

Political instability

Political instability is a major factor contributing to military coups in West Africa. Many West African countries have weak democratic institutions and a history of political violence. This can make it difficult to resolve political disputes peacefully, leading to coups as a way to seize power.

One of the most common causes of political instability in West Africa is the lack of a strong and independent judiciary. In many countries, the judiciary is weak and corrupt, and it is often unable to hold the government accountable. This can lead to a sense of impunity among government officials, who may feel that they can do whatever they want without fear of repercussion.

Another major cause of political instability in West Africa is the lack of a strong and independent legislature. In many countries, the legislature is weak and ineffective, and it is often unable to pass laws or hold the government accountable. This can lead to a sense of frustration among the population, who may feel that they have no voice in their government.

Finally, political instability in West Africa can also be caused by ethnic and religious tensions. In many countries, there are deep divisions between different ethnic and religious groups. These divisions can lead to conflict and violence, which can further destabilize the country.

Political instability is a major threat to democracy and development in West Africa. It can lead to coups, civil war, and other forms of violence. It can also discourage investment and economic growth. To promote democracy and development in West Africa, it is

important to address the root causes of political instability.

This extract presents the opening three sections of the first chapter.

Discover the complete 10 chapters and 50 sections by purchasing the book, now available in various formats.

Table of Contents

Chapter 1: The Roots of Military Coups in West Africa * Causes of military coups * Economic inequality * Political instability * Weak institutions * Foreign intervention

Chapter 2: The First Wave of Coups (1960-1979) * The Congo Crisis * The Nigerian Civil War * The Ghanaian coup of 1972 * The Ethiopian Revolution * The Ugandan coup of 1971

Chapter 3: The Second Wave of Coups (1980-1999) * The Liberian coup of 1980 * The Sierra Leonean coup of 1992 * The Ivorian coup of 1999 * The Guinean coup of 1984 * The Malian coup of 1991

Chapter 4: The Third Wave of Coups (2000-Present) * The Mauritanian coup of 2008 * The Guinean coup of 2009 * The Malian coup of 2012 * The Burkinabé coup of 2015 * The Gambian coup of 2017

Chapter 5: The Impact of Military Coups on West Africa * Economic consequences * Political consequences * Social consequences * Security consequences * Environmental consequences

Chapter 6: The Causes of Military Coups in West Africa * Economic grievances * Political grievances * Personal ambitions * Ethnic tensions * Foreign influence

Chapter 7: The Legacies of Military Coups in West Africa * The creation of new states * The collapse of states * The rise of dictatorships * The spread of corruption * The erosion of democracy

Chapter 8: Preventing Military Coups in West Africa * Strengthening democratic institutions * Promoting economic development * Addressing social grievances * Resolving ethnic tensions * Reducing foreign interference

Chapter 9: The Role of the International Community in Preventing Military Coups in West Africa *

Diplomatic pressure * Economic sanctions * Military intervention * Peacekeeping operations * Capacity building

Chapter 10: The Future of Military Coups in West Africa *

The challenges of preventing military coups * The opportunities for preventing military coups * The role of the international community * The role of civil society * The role of the military

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