



ECOWAS RESOLUTION MECHANISM FOR MILITARY INTERVENTION IN CONFLICT PRONE WEST AFRICAN COUNTRIES

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Abstract

ECOWAS has a mechanism for resolving cases of military intervention within the West African region. This study examines a number of issues that seek to explain the ECOWAS framework for resolving conflicts. The sub-region of West Africa and the role ECOWAS has been playing in preserving the situation to reestablish order. The study adopts the secondary mode of data gathering. The study found that ECOWAS has a mechanism for resolving disputes regarding coups and civil wars that affect member states. The management of political crises within the sub-region by ECOWAS was also uncovered, as was its assistance in keeping conflict situations to a minimum, particularly through mediating and assisting in bringing opposing parties to the negotiating table where compromises were made on a number of fronts. The study makes the suggestion that in order to ensure the realization of democracy's benefits; democratic regimes should uphold the law and operate within the bounds of their Constitutions. The operation of ECOWAS as a regional organisation within the region should strictly follow its provisions and be less susceptible to the political influence of some powerful state and non-state actors.

Key words: ECOWAS, mechanism, military intervention, conflict Prone, West Africa Sub-region, Framework

Introduction

In the majority of West African states, the shift to democracy was merely a change in clothing, not in formal structures. The people who juggled and fought for control of the spheres of power were still elite groups, different political actors within the military regimes, and their civilian allies. This was demonstrated by the precarious political system they left in place, which allowed them and their allies to retake power under a democratic government (Wamaby, 2017). This left democracy vulnerable to being put to the test by those with a lust for wealth, power, and status. The quest for democracy in West Africa has resembled the development of a child who is paralyzed and is constantly promised the chance to walk, but who may not actually be able to walk unless something is done to bring about the desired change. Political gladiators used the democratic process to advance regional and ethnic development, sowing the seeds of mistrust and conflict between various groups and social

actors on a political level (Bellamy & Dunne, 2016). This paved the way for political actors with vested interests in the seat of power and the state's resources, including the military to sponsor various groups, as evidenced by the resurgence of coups in some West African region.

The long-desired move to enshrine democracy has been jeopardized by recent military coups in West African nations like Burkina Faso and Mali. Recall that less than ten years after gaining independence, military coups had occurred in nearly all of the nations of West Africa, leading in most cases to military rule (Ajayi & Dolapo, 2019). The majority of West African nations switched to democratic rule as a result of the global wave of democratization. This was the situation until recently, when the status quo is once again being challenged by resurgent military political adventurism akin to the experience of the 1960s/70s (Eyimah, 2014). Regional and International Organizations like

the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS), the Africa Union (AU), the United Nations Organization (UNO), etc. intervened during the transition to democracy. These bodies signed and ratified a number of charters and conventions in an effort to promote peace and stability in the West African sub-region; just as they also rally round member nations in times of global emergencies such as the outbreak of the dreaded diseases called Corona Virus otherwise known as Covid-19, (Efebeh, 2020).

The restoration and return to democracy in West African states was largely facilitated by ECOWAS and the AU. Several scholars (Zounmenou & Loua, 2011; Gbeho, 2011; Erunke, 2012; Bah & Kwesi, 2012) have made an effort to redefine the expanding roles of the Economic Community of West Africa (ECOWAS), which has recently crossed the boundaries of regional economic growth and stability, regional cooperation, and trade linkage between and among member states within the West Africa sub-region to a more or less political and security concern. This ideological persuasion by the intelligentsia is motivated by the need to broaden the socioeconomic horizon of the sub regional group to include a variety of interests, foster and deepen democratic space, instill good corporate governance, and ultimately guarantee continuity in the internationally recognized governance pattern in Africa, as set forth by the constitution.

As a result, the emerging trends of military interregnum and mindless gun intervention (which, of course, is considered to be a culpable aberration) no longer find a pride of place in the minds and hearts of all well-meaning democratic and patriot alike. As a result, there is an urgent need for an unwavering pursuit of a system of governmental operations that is constitutionally valid in all of its components and characteristics. In order to address military intervention in democracies in the West African sub-region, this paper examines the ECOWAS mechanism for intervening in military prone states in West Africa sub-region.

Objectives of the Study

The study's main goal is to investigate the ECOWAS mechanism for dealing with military intervention in West African countries that are prone to military conflict. Two distinct goals were established, and they are:

- i. Examine ECOWAS's history with regard to military action in the West African sub-region.

- ii. Determine ECOWAS's response to the unconstitutional change of the West African sub-region's government.

Literature Review

The ECOWAS Conflict Prevention Framework (ECPF) aims to harmonize ECOWAS standards and procedures throughout the West African region for governance and peace and security. This document focuses on the methods for promoting the adoption of governance standards in West Africa and offers instructions on how member states can actually implement the standards and norms elaborated in the protocols on security and governance. The ECPF, which outlines 14 conflict prevention strategies that the neighbourhood should prioritize, was formally accepted by the ECOWAS Mediation and Security Council in 2008. These cover clauses pertaining to political government, human rights, democracy, and the rule of law. In line with other ECOWAS protocols, the ECPF aims to improve governance standards in an effort to develop procedures for preventing conflicts and raise regional security. It includes benchmarks for each of the 14 substantive components, and in the section on "Enabling Mechanisms," it is stated that advocacy, communication, resource mobilization, cooperation, and monitoring and evaluation can all be employed to carry out framework-related activities. Governments are also urged to lower the cost of justice and enhance accountability and transparency.

In order to address the region's need for stability throughout the past 18 years and prevent the agenda from bloating, the ECOWAS approach to governance has evolved rather than expanded. As a result, changes to institutional architecture were frequently accompanied by a recognized need (e.g. the relatively recent establishment of the mediation directorate to support the work of mediation teams). As this section demonstrates, the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) has amassed a sizable body of protocols that, on paper, bind governments to encourage and strengthen democratic governments and democratic institutions as well as to defend basic human rights and freedoms and the principles of international humanitarian law. There appears to be support for regional Heads of State to make a commitment in writing, but actual execution presents various difficulties. ECOWAS has made several steps to address challenges of governance and insecurity in the West Africa sub region that have an impact on the region's pursuit of democracy, some of which are listed below.

Up until recently, West Africa seemed to be moving away from its past of military takeovers and toward more peaceful transitions of power.

Unfortunately, it seems that coups and coup attempts are once again on the rise in recent years. This is especially true in Mali, Guinea, Niger, and most recently Burkina Faso. A procedure for reacting to such illegitimate transfers of administration is included in the ECOWAS Protocol on Democracy and Good Governance, which was adopted in 2001. The protocol also contains clauses related to the democratic administration of ECOWAS members, such as those relating to elections, the independence of the judiciary, and the impartiality of the security forces. However, despite the fact that all ECOWAS members have signed the convention, some of them are not abiding by its requirements.

As a result, in the event of a coup, the regional group ECOWAS in West Africa has the authority to apply sanctions on the new administration, which might include trade restrictions, travel restrictions, and expulsion from the organisation. To ensure that the military junta bows to pressure and reinstates the government that had been in power, it may occasionally use utilize international pressure by claiming its non-recognition and unconstitutionality. Economic sanctions that severely restrict trade with other African nations are designed to ensure that society's members, particularly civil society organizations and other political and social organizations use their influence to put pressure on the government as its people deal with challenging economic circumstances that have an impact on their day-to-day existence. In addition, as was already discussed previously, the state can be cut off politically from the rest of ECOWAS and end up alone with no contacts or connections. A route to peace and the restoration of democracy to the society can be mapped out by ECOWAS using this platform, which it can do by sending its peace-building machinery to engage in talks with the new government and previous government members. This is accomplished by the new group occasionally coming to a deal wherein members of the military junta are included.

Response of ECOWAS to the Unconstitutional Removal of a Democratic Government in West Africa

Critical security concerns are being addressed at the sub-regional level thanks to the commitment and efforts of ECOWAS, with some discernible progress. The sub-regional bloc's crucial role as a mediator and the deployment of peacekeepers through ECOMOG helped restore security and bring an end to the deadly conflicts in Liberia, Sierra Leone, Guinea-Bissau, and Côte d'Ivoire

(Olonisakin, 2011). In addition, ECOWAS' involvement can be seen in its leadership of the process of negotiating and signing a number of peace agreements that led to the establishment of peace in a number of sub-regional countries (Aning, Birikorang, & Jaye, 2010). The Linas-Marcoussis, Accra II and III, and Pretoria Agreements on Côte d'Ivoire; the Accra, Cotonou, and Abuja Peace Agreements on Liberia; and the Lomé Peace Agreement on Sierra Leone are among them (Aning et al., 2010). In order to ensure that stability is restored, ECOWAS participated in recent crises in Côte d'Ivoire, Mali, and Guinea-Bissau through mediation. For instance, the 2012 coups d'état in Mali and Guinea-Bissau resulted in the appointment of H.E. Blaise Compoare of Bukina Faso and H.E. Goodluck Jonathan of Nigeria as mediators for their respective nations by the ECOWAS Heads of States and Governments (ECOWAS, 2012).

In order to implement its Early Warning Mechanism (ECOWARN), which aims to avoid and monitor crises in the sub-region, the ECOWAS has additionally been working with civil society organizations. For example, ECOWAS and the West Africa Network over Peace building (WANEP) have been collaborating to observe elections in Ghana, Togo, Côte d'Ivoire, Guinea Conakry, and other nations on the continent for the past eight years, since ECOWARN became operational (WANEP, 2011). This is done to make sure that the changeover from one civilian government to another would be peaceful. Additionally, among other protocols, the Protocol Relating to the Mechanism for Conflict Prevention, Management, Resolution, Peacekeeping, and Security that was adopted in December 1999 and the ECOWAS Conflict Prevention Framework (ECPF) that was adopted in 2008 have strengthened and confirmed ECOWAS' position as a major player in West Africa's conflict prevention and resolution (ECOWAS, 2008).

Particularly when it comes to preventing and responding to coups, these measures have frequently fallen short. Up until recently, West Africa seemed to be moving away from its past of military takeovers and toward more peaceful transitions of power. Unfortunately, it seems that coups and coup attempts are once again on the rise in recent years. This is especially true in Mali, Guinea, Niger, and most recently Burkina Faso. A procedure for reacting to such illegitimate transfers of administration is included in the ECOWAS Protocol on Democracy and Good Governance, which was adopted in 2001. The protocol also contains clauses related to the democratic administration of ECOWAS members, such as those relating to

elections, the independence of the judiciary, and the impartiality of the security forces. However, despite the fact that all ECOWAS members have signed the convention, some of them are not abiding by its requirements.

One significant weakness has been ECOWAS's failure to confront the trend of member-state leaders rewriting national constitutions to extend their term limits, and talks on term-limit adjustments have become very common within ECOWAS. 2015 saw the discussion of a third-term ban; however, it was eventually dropped due to resistance from political figures who had themselves maintained their positions by raising term limits. While the ECOWAS Protocol on Democracy and Good Governance demands that "any accession to power must be accomplished through free, fair, and transparent elections," it also declares that heads of state who acquiesce in illegal means of obtaining power will not be tolerated. A regime is recognized as legitimate if the ruler can show that they were chosen by popular vote. As long as an election has been held, this constrained interpretation of democracy enables leaders to avoid criticisms that they are breaking the law. This negation of the rule of law weakens the very principles of democratic practice, as democracy thrives on the principles of the rule of law, (Efebeh, 2015).

The ECOWAS organisation, including the members who are currently holding posts in national governments, especially the chairperson of ECOWAS, who must be an active head of state, is at the foundation of this issue. Even leaders who came to power through coups have been chosen for this role, successfully establishing their legitimacy. Because of this, ECOWAS frequently lacks the political will to deal with coup leaders and their allies or to hold them accountable. Faure Gnassingbé, the president of Togo and the son of Gnassingbé Eyadéma, is one example of this (who had himself presided over Togo for thirty-eight years). Since the ruling party was under strict orders to declare Gnassingbé president, his rise to power in 2005 was largely regarded as a coup. Over 1,000 people were killed by security forces as a result of the widespread protests that followed this. While this was going on, ECOWAS suspended Togo and enacted sanctions against it, including an arms embargo and travel restrictions on its leaders. A few months later, Gnassingbé won the election for president, which ECOWAS deemed to be free and fair. Therefore, despite his blatant violation of the ECOWAS Protocol on Democracy and Good Governance, Gnassingbé Eyadema is still a welcomed and active member of the group and was even chosen to serve as its chairperson in 2017. The protocol effectively loses its

effectiveness since it makes it simple for coup leaders to satisfy the criteria for being recognized as head of state if they go on to win an election.

In the past, ECOWAS has also suspended and penalized member nations, only to later readmit them and let them to take part in ECOWAS activities if they met the criteria for holding "democratic elections." For instance, Lansana Conté and Ahmed Sékou Touré, who both presided over Guinea for 25 and 24 years, respectively, are examples of long-serving leaders in the country's history. In keeping with this pattern, former president Alpha Condé, Guinea's first democratically elected leader, rewrote the constitution in 2020 to provide himself the right to two additional terms in office. Condé had at first been seen as a new beginning for Guinean democracy, but when the opposition learned of the constitutional change, there were significant demonstrations all around the nation. ECOWAS didn't punish Condé and instead just called for discussion between the two parties in response to the protests. Condé was successful in winning the 2020 elections, which were upheld by ECOWAS observers as legitimate. After Condé was overthrown a year later in a military takeover, Guinea was immediately suspended from ECOWAS and subject to sanctions.

The situation in Guinea demonstrates the incapacity of ECOWAS to prevent coups. Condé's disobedience of the law led to the coup in Guinea. Contrary to nongovernmental organizations that have the potential for violence, the Mechanism for Conflict Prevention, Management, Resolution, Peacekeeping, and Security does not automatically regard state institutions that break election laws as threats. As a result, the Mechanism failed to warn ECOWAS about the possibility of a coup. Governments must be treated as posing the same level of threat as nongovernmental organizations for the process to be effective as a preventive strategy. Either through the democratic process or through large-scale protests, those who opposed the constitutional revisions were not heard by ECOWAS. Instead of persuading Condé to uphold the constitution, ECOWAS only intervened after a coup had taken place.

Theoretical Framework

The socioeconomic development theory promoted by Finer is the theory employed in this work. The idea claims that the strongest justification for military intervention in politics and eventual military rule under the socioeconomic growth theory is the frail institutional structure of governance, which is rife with corruption, nepotism, and bureaucratic decay. According to Finer (1988), countries with

higher socioeconomic development levels are more likely to see a decline in the density of military interventions in politics (cited in Onder, 2010). Putnam (1967) went on to say that "nations with high socio-economic conditions have higher urbanization, industrialization, and literacy level, and therefore have enhanced popular participation in the socio activities" (cited in Onder, 2010, p.3). Political activism and political awareness are sparked by socioeconomic progress. To put it another way, it multiplies the pool of prospective political actors and distributes more political resources to those actors who are prepared and able to support civil institutions (Onder, 2010). It's vital to remember that industrialization lessens the likelihood of military interventions since public administration becomes difficult for the armed services to handle because of the growing socio-economic complexity.

According to Gorman (1967), military interventions typically occur in nations with lower socioeconomic level. Economic dependency theories claim that non-self-sufficient, economically dependent nations experience more coups where there is occasionally extremely violent internal conflict for extremely scarce domestic resources. Jenkins and Kposowa (1992) make a similar claim that foreign debt issues are a factor in coups. Military intervention in politics has reportedly been linked to economic crisis and growth stagnation, according to numerous observations. Needler (2010) indicated that governments were more likely to be overthrown by force when economic conditions worsened; when conditions were improving, the military was less likely to meddle in politics. His findings came from a study of military intervention in politics in Latin America. More recently, Dix has argued that military regimes often lose their main justification for existing when they are linked to severe economic decline (Dix, 1994).

According to O'Kane (1993), the majority of African coup d'états can be explained by a country's dependence on a small number of exports that are prone to significant price swings. When prices abruptly drop, a government that cannot handle the ensuing economic crisis risks losing legitimacy such that could lead to popular outcry or being overthrown by the military. The widespread use of military intervention in post-independence regimes has been attributed mostly to the state-centered development model adopted by the majority of African and several Latin American countries. The concentration of economic activity in the hands of state economic agencies, parastatals, state-owned trading corporations, and the like has huge patronage powers to whatever group or party gains control

of the government. To obtain permits, licenses, access to foreign exchanges, and other economic resources, this has forced the majority of entrepreneurs to build relationships with people in positions of governmental authority some times to the detriments of the overall interests of the people, (Efebeh, 2018). The military has emerged as one of these entrepreneurial groupings' most successful branches in several African nations. The most efficient method of directing governmental resources toward the military and those who support it has been through power seizures. The main claim is that poverty, or otherwise insufficient socioeconomic development, can be a very significant factor for military intervention and military rule in any community, which explains why less developed civilizations have had more coups than more developed ones.

ECOWAS and peace resolution mechanism in the sub region

The Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) was founded in 1975 as a group of regional economic communities whose main goal is to promote trade among its members. However, as hostilities spread throughout the region, ECOWAS also started to place a higher priority on a military agenda. Liberia and Sierra Leone provided evidence that it is impossible to merely concentrate on economic integration in the region and that economic progress is correlated with peace and security. Since the 1990s, as a result of the implementation of legal frameworks like the Mechanism for Conflict Prevention, Management, Resolution, Peacekeeping, and Security, ECOWAS has supported its member nations with military assistance, mediation, and peace building.

The ECOWAS mechanism on conflict prevention clarified the goals of the organization's intervention in West African conflicts. Cases of external aggression, conflict between two or more member states, internal strife that could result in a serious humanitarian crisis or grave violations of human rights and the rule of law, as well as attempts to overthrow a democratically elected government, are just a few of the circumstances that could justify intervention in any member state (Protocol Relating to the Mechanism, Article 25).

The Council of Elders, the Defense and Security Commission, and the Mediation and Security Council are the three main bodies that make up the ECOWAS Mechanism (Bekoe & Mengistu, 2002). All decisions pertaining to peace and security are made by the Security Council and the Mediation on behalf of the Authority of

Heads of State and Government. It is made up of nine member states who are rotated into office for two years; there is no permanent seat. The Council, which operates at a sub-regional level, is a replica of the UN Security Council. A two-thirds majority of votes is required for decisions to be made in the Council. The Council uses the Defense and Security Commission, the Council of Elders, and ECOMOG to carry out the Mechanism's provisions (ECOWAS Mechanism 1999, Article 17).

ECOMOG was incorporated into the Mechanism to ensure adequate readiness for action as a valuable tool for preserving peace in the area. Contingents from the national armed forces of member nations make up the ECOMOG force. The name ECOMOG was changed to ECOWAS Standby Force in June 2004. (ESF). To stop sub-regional crises, the ESF is intended to be capable of rapid deployment within 14 days (Kabia, 2011). The duties of the ECOWAS standby force include military and observation missions where ECOMOG will oversee and monitor elections, human rights compliance, disarmament, demobilization, ceasefires, and other tasks (Article 30-31).

The Early Warning and Response Network (ECOWARN) is another feature of the ECOWAS conflict mechanism that is included in its approach to preventing conflicts. The heart of the ECOWAS early warning system is the Observation and Monitoring Centre (OMC). The sub-region is divided into four observation and monitoring zones by ECOWAS. Senegal, Guinea-Bissau, Gambia, and Cape Verde make up Zone 1. Zone 2 is made up of Burkina Faso, Cote d'Ivoire, Mali, and Niger. Zone 3 is made up of Liberia, Sierra Leone, Guinea, and Ghana. Zone 4 is made up of Benin, Togo, and Nigeria. Capital cities for these four regions are Banjul (Gambia), Monrovia (Liberia), Ouagadougou (Burkina Faso), and Cotonu (Benin). The purpose of ECOWARN is to gather information on potential sources of disputes or conflict catalysts and report this information to the central ECOWAS Observatory at the organization's headquarters in Abuja, Nigeria.

Results from the majority of ECOWAS's activities to date reveal that its policy frameworks are merely theoretical documents with no actual implementation. The body's finances and operational activities present one particular challenge. The majority of the member states respond to ECOWAS activities very slowly, which has caused the organisation to experience numerous setbacks and limited success in its operations. For instance, ECOWATCH's responsibilities include, among other things, compiling data on the economic performance of conflict-affected states,

forecasting crises, gathering information on the region's governance and democratization efforts, and providing logistical information in the event of humanitarian emergencies. On paper, all four of ECOWAS' early warning observatories are operational, but in practice, ECOWATCH still has a staffing shortage because of budgetary constraints at the ECOWAS secretariat. The level of training of the ECOWAS staff also caused some task force members to express their concerns. Potential barriers to ECOWATCH's efficient operation included a lack of awareness of its work and a failure to closely coordinate with the efforts of the AU and IGAD early warning systems.

According to its Protocol on Democracy and Good Governance, ECOWAS has used a combination of diplomatic discussions, the imposition of sanctions, and fact-finding missions as its primary strategy for guaranteeing constitutional order, the rule of law, and respect for human rights.

Bissau, Guinea

Since attacks on democratic institutions and a decline in governance standards occurred in Guinea-Bissau between 1999 and 2003, ECOWAS failed to act swiftly to stop it. President Kumba Yala demonstrated authoritarianism and instability throughout this time. He suspended the General State Attorneys, restricted the press, and fired three prime ministers. Yala called for early parliamentary elections after dissolving the legislature in November 2002, which was contrary to the constitutionally mandated deadline. However, ECOWAS didn't respond until after the nation had gone several months without a government before General Verissimo Correia Seabra overthrew Yala in a military coup in 2003. A mission from ECOWAS comprised of ministers from Cape Verde, the Gambia, Guinea, Ghana, and Nigeria was dispatched within 48 hours to negotiate a peace deal, which was successful. ECOWAS may have avoided the coup by exerting proactive pressure on President Yala to uphold the constitution, even though the coup was illegitimate. In this case, the deal supported the establishment of a national unity transitional administration rather than calling for Yala to be restored. While the transitional administration produced smooth parliamentary elections in 2004, the 2005 election was tense and necessitated a second ECOWAS intervention and the United Nations, which proved to be considerably more effective.

Niger

Perhaps having learned from Guinea-Bissau, ECOWAS was much quicker to respond to

President Mamdou Tanja of Niger's attempts to extend his tenure in office. ECOWAS based its intervention on the provisions of the Supplementary Protocol on Democracy and Good Governance, specifically article 2.1 regarding consultations with political stakeholders prior to elections. As his second term was set to expire in December 2009, President Tandja started making constitutional amendment requests at the end of 2008 to enable him to serve a third term. Tanja called a referendum on the extension of his tenure after failing to win a two-thirds majority in parliament and dissolving the Parliament and Constitutional Court.

ECOWAS demanded that Tandja invalidate the polls in response to these occurrences, but after the referendum, the organization's heads of state suspended Niger's membership and Nigeria said it would consider the prospect of intervening. When troops overthrew Tandja in a coup in 2010, it was avoided that ECOWAS would step in since Tanja had been in charge illegally. Tanja's removal was not seen as an illegitimate transition of power.

Gambia

Most recently, ECOWAS in the Gambia adopted a firm stance in opposition to President Jammeh's unwillingness to relinquish power despite losing the elections. Political tensions were high throughout the nation in the months before the elections on December 1, 2016. Protests were organized and political reforms were requested in April 2016 by the main opposition party. 50 members of the United Democratic Party (UDP), the largest opposition party, were detained during the subsequent crackdown. Three detainees were also allegedly killed while in custody, including Solo Sandeng, the youth leader for the UDP. The African Union (AU) and the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) demanded investigations into the arrests but were ignored. Together with the AU and the UN Regional Office for West Africa and the Sahel, ECOWAS sent a fact-finding mission in May 2016. (UNOWAS). The mission was headed by the President of the ECOWAS Commission, Marcel Alain de Souza, as well as the Special Representative of the UN Secretary-General for West Africa and the Sahel and the AU Commissioner for Political Affairs. Yaya Jammeh declined to speak with them. Nevertheless, in July 2016, ECOWAS sent out a second fact-finding mission and found that the circumstances were not suitable for the holding of peaceful, free, and fair elections. ECOWAS declined to send observers to oversee the elections in December as a result. Then,

unsuccessful attempts were made to persuade Jammeh to resign from office through mediation. The ECOWAS did not recognize Jammeh as the rightful election winner in December 2016. But ECOWAS did not launch a military force into the conflict until after Jammeh's constitutional term expired in January and the legitimate president, Barrow, took office on January 19, 2017.

Togo

In ECOWAS, there is a propensity for compromises to be reached, which inevitably results in some degree of political power being granted to those engaged in unconstitutional power struggles. The African Charter on Democracy, Elections, and Governance prohibits those involved in unconstitutional power changes from holding public office, but the Protocol on Democracy and Good Governance does not, which contributes to these shortcomings. In Togo, this was true. The Togolese parliament chose Faure Gnassingbé as president on February 6, 2005, one day after his father passed away in the same position on February 5. The constitution of the nation, which mandated that the president of the senate assume office and call elections within 60 days, was directly violated by this action. Following immediate sanctions from ECOWAS against Togo, Gnassingbé resigned and ceded control to an interim leader a few weeks later. In spite of this, Gnassingbé ran for office and won; the ECOWAS eventually recognized his victory and he had the support of the military.

Burkina Faso

The same compromise that would have allowed putsches to run for office was attempted by ECOWAS in Burkina Faso. Election preparations were underway in Burkina Faso after Blaise Compaore was ousted by a popular movement in 2014 after serving for about 30 years. The presidential guard, which had been loyal to Compaore, should be disbanded in order to ensure a smooth transition, according to a report published as part of this process by the Commission on National Reconciliation and Reforms. The 1300-member presidential guard organized a coup in September 2015 that overthrew the interim administration and kidnapped the president-in-waiting. A law that forbade supporters of former President Compaore from running for office, according to reports, incensed the presidential guard. ECOWAS reacted right away, strongly denouncing the coup and requesting that the electoral processes resume. However, by suggesting an amnesty for coup leaders and the opportunity for the putschists to run for office,

the Community substantially damaged this assertion and its credibility. Thankfully, the coup was stopped by the 41 regular Burkinabe military, who also reinstated the interim administration. Even though ECOWAS failed to adequately punish unconstitutional changes of government, the fact that the regular military intervened to restore civilian rule is evidence of an improvement in governance in West Africa. Following the recent coup in Burkina Faso on January 24, 2022, ECOWAS has also been working to bring the country back to order by negotiating and speaking with the military hierarchy to ensure that things don't get out of control.

Policy Implications

By delivering accurate and thorough observation reports on democratic performance, such as elections, ECOWAS policy on conflict resolution in the West African sub-region should seek to enhance democratic regimes and foster trust in the organisation. Through the use of sanctions that would serve to dissuade and repel political upheaval like coup d'état, the ECOWAS conflict resolution policy should be applied swiftly and fairly to nations that are engaged in democratic battles.

Conclusion and Recommendations

The study has demonstrated that, despite ECOWAS's increasing commitment to democracy and its mandate, by establishing how the Organization has, overtime, been using its mechanism of conflict resolution to foster unity and peace among its members in the sub-region. This study provided a typology of the various methods through which regionalism in West Africa supports peaceful coexistence through a mechanism that have endured the passage of time and overcoming moments of great trials. However, rules created for other (more democratic) goals have been used to their advantage by less democratic leaders. Security and democracy must occasionally make difficult trade-offs, which might sometimes favour authoritarianism; leaders may, despite common sense, utilize divisive, particularly Western-derived policies or acts at the regional level to legitimize themselves. Thus, having dual memberships in two regional organizations (in this case, ECOWAS and the AU) can occasionally be advantageous for states in the scheme of things.

To ensure the realization of the benefits of democracy, democratic governments should uphold the rule of law and operate within the bounds of their Constitutions. This will assist in addressing issues like unemployment, poverty, social inequalities, lack of social infrastructure

that can lead to unrest, adequate redistribution of wealth, and ultimately, a coup d'état.

The operation of ECOWAS as a regional Organisation within the area should carefully follow its provisions and be less susceptible to the political influence of some powerful member states. Finally, efforts should be made to guarantee members' ratification of the organization's conventions and uphold them. This should be done to make sure that member nations uphold democratic ideals and the rule of law by impartially punishing infractions by other members.

By pressuring them to adhere to the principles of good governance and democratic norms, ECOWAS should swiftly respond to member states' unconstitutional actions. This will help to manage the situation before it worsens.

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