The Resurgence of Coups in Africa and Leadership-crisis --The Nexus.

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Abstract.

This paper examines the interconnection or nexus between the twin variables of coup resurgence in Africa and leadership-crisis. To achieve its main objective, qualitative descriptive method of analysis and quantitative method were adopted. The qualitative method entailed content analysis of information gathered from secondary sources like the journals, books, the newspapers, and the internet. While the quantitative method entailed a statistical tabulation and percentage interpretation of global coup incidences per world regions (1950s to 2022). Besides, researcher's observations of political trends in Africa was equally adopted as the primary source of data collection. It reviewed relevant literatures; and by means of interpolation, three significant epistemic notions, namely: notions of 'social contract', 'hegemony', and 'legitimation-crisis', were introduced into the equation to demonstrate the point of interconnection or nexus between the twin variables. Some findings were uncovered. These include: 1). There is a causal positive correlation

between the twin variables of leadership-crisis and coup resurgence; 2). The more leadership-crisis rises with its manifest contradictions of corruption, nepotism, worsening socio-economic conditions, etc, the more the rise in coup resurgence in Africa; 3). Every moment of domination by a dominant class, usually attracts moments of resistance by the subaltern class in forms of coups or revolutions; 4). Whenever the citizenry develops 'crisis of confidence' in the leadership structures, reactions in form of coups d'etat are potentially inevitable. The paper therefore recommends: 1) that African leaders should be committed to the burgeoning democratic project and its ethos in Africa; 2) African political leaders should endeavour to deliver on their political promises, focusing on improving the quality of life of the people; inter alia.

Keywords: Coups; Leadership-crisis; Nexus; Resurgence.

Introduction

1.1 A Background.

To be sure, the Global Goals number 16 (SDGs No. 16) in its specific objectives, indeed, proposed for "peace, justice, and strong institutions" (United Nations, 2017). In concrete terms, the focus of these specific objectives are actually centered on promoting peaceful and inclusive societies for sustainable development, providing access to justice for all and build effective, accountable and inclusive institutions at all levels (United Nations, 2017). As part of its outcome targets, the key performance indicators (KPI's) of this specific goal would be considered as achieved where there are evidences of accountability and transparency among global leaders across countries, as well as evidences of strong institutions in the developing nations like in the African region; and where social justice is upheld, including all forms of violence and terrorism (bloody coup d'etat, Jihadist movements, etc) being reduced or eliminated. As an ancillary to that, prior to the advent of the Global Goals proposals, and with regard to the need for strong institutions and reduction of violence, the former USA President Barack Obama in his historic speech at the Ghanian parliament plenary session in 2009 equally affirmed that, "what Africa needs is not strong men but strong institutions (Global Integrity, 2024). For clarity purposes, it is worthy of note herein that, by "strong men", Obama meant men who would like to challenge and hijack the state's governing structures by sheer brute force and violence -- in the likes of terrorists,

Coup-makers and other non-state actors whose activities are anti-state. And by "strong institutions", Obama meant state or societal institutions strengthened to disallow corrupt practices, to be responsive to people's needs, and all-inclusive at all levels of its governing structures. Certainly, African leaders as stakeholders of global peace, were signatories to the SDGs proposals, and equally endorsed Obama's admonitory directives for Africa. As praxis, what we see in practice is quite antithetical to popular (people's) expectations of African political leaders, which indeed, question their sincere commitment to these global goals: In African countries, spanning the Francophone to the Anglo-phone African nations, the bane of their governing structures manifest immanent contradictions of true leadership expectations, ranging from corruption at monumental proportions, incompetence, non-delivery of promises, mismanagement of public resources, pursuit of extractive vested class interest (instead of the interest of the generalty of the people), and lip service to the rule of law, et cetera. These contradictory manifestations in governance are tantamount to "**leadership-crisis**"! And due to this 'untamed' leadership-crisis in the African political landscape, it has unarguably, given rise to coup resurgence in Africa.

By "coup resurgence", we mean the re-emergence, re-appearance or renaissance of coup d'etat in Africa. On the other hand, leadership-crisis suggests, a rupture, distortion, or immanent contradiction in the popular (people's) expectations of true leadership obligations. Globally speaking, there is no country (advanced or developing) that has not, in a limited or greater extent, experienced any form of insurrections or rebellious movements/agitations either in forms of coup d'etat, violent protest, or even terrorism in their political history. In the advanced nations like the USA, for instance, multiple rebellions and other closely related anti-state revolts, right from her colonial era under Britain to the contemporary times, have been preponderant in the USA: like, the Bundy Standoff of April 5th - 14th, 2014; in which there was armed confrontation between Cliven Bundy's militia allies and the USA Bureau of Land Management (Knapp & Rozyla, May 24th 2015); the USA 'Capitol Hill Occupied Protest' of June 8th - July 1, 2020 (McBride, June 12 2020), in which protesters took over the Seattle Police Department's East Precinct region, declaring it an autonomous zone ; as well as the 2021 USA Capitol attack (Washington Post, January 7th, 2021), in which armed dissidents stormed the Capitol building, broke through the barriers, assaulted the Capitol Police, smashed

and burgled state properties, etc. Similarly, in developing countries like the African region of the Global South, there have been instances of military insurrections, starting from the early periods of post-independent Africa till hitherto. The cases are legion. In Nigeria, for example, there was the bloody coup d'etat of January 15th, and July 29th 1966 (6 years after her emergent political independence); the August 27th, 1985 coup; the Gideon Orkar-led coup of April 22, 1990; the Abacha led coup of 1993. Besides, in Ghana; there was the overthrow of President Nkrumah (who was accused of dictatorship) by Coup plotters on February 24th 1966 (McLaughlin & Owusu-Ansah, 1995); as well as the 1972 and 1979 Ghanian coup d'etat. More so, in Togo; there was the coup d'etat that overthrew and assassinated President Olympio in 1963 (Howe, 2000); the Lieutenant Colonel Eyadema's led coup of January 13th, 1967; the armed dissidents attack on President Eyadema's government on September 23, 1986, etc. And presently, there is a resurgence of coup d'etat in Africa after its hiatus (towards the dawn of the 21st century) when African nations embarked on embracing democratic permissiveness in the African polity. Its re-emergence, beginning with the 2019 military insurrection in Sudan; to its recent occurrences in Mali, Guinea, Burkina Faso, Niger, and Gabon (2020, 2021, 2022, and 2023, respectively). Indeed, it is ironical that this resurgence of coups in Africa is happening at the heels of African Union's "AU Agenda 2063" to 'silence guns in Africa by 2020' (Mushoriwa, 2023).

As a CAVEAT: it is noteworthy to state here that, in as much as there is universal occurrences of insurrections and anti-state revolutions in both the advanced, and developing societies like Africa; however, comparatively, the degree of its prevalence is higher in developing nations of Africa than in the advanced nations. The reason is not farfetched: there is relatively higher indicators of social justice and democratic culture in the advanced societies than in the developing nations (Ninalowo, 2004; p. 135). That is to say, the governing structures in developing nations of Africa are more prone to leadership-crisis and its antinomies than in the advanced nations. And this 'crisis of leadership' existent in the governing structures of Africa has a significant correlation with coups resurgence in Africa, in contemporary times. In the light of the foregoing utterances therefore; properly conceived, the raison d'etre of this paper is to identify the nexus or the underlying interconnection(s) between the twin variables of leadership-crisis and coup

resurgence in Africa; and to chart a way forward. It is hoped that the paper shall deliver on its promise.

1.2. Objective of the Study.

The main objective of the paper is to identify the interconnection(s) between the resurgence of coups in Africa in contemporary times and leadership-crisis, and chart a way forward.

1.3. **Methodology**.

The paper adopted both quantitative, and qualitative descriptive methods of analysis. The qualitative descriptive method involved content analysis of information gathered from secondary sources like the journals, books, the internet and newspapers. Besides, researcher's observations of political trends in Africa was equally adopted as the primary source of data collection. While the quantitative method entailed a statistical tabulation and percentage interpretation of global coup incidences per world regions (1950s to 2022).

1.4 Conceptual Clarifications.

In the articulation of this paper, certain terminologies or keywords are significantly preponderant. Therefore to grasp a proper understanding of the discourse in the context of its reason for being, it behoves us to demystify them. These include, 'Coup', 'Leadership-crisis', 'Nexus', and 'Resurgence'. We shall address them in sequence:

Coup.

The term "coup" refers to a sudden, violent, and unlawful seizure of power from the government. It is unlawful because; constitutionally, the plotters of coup are not permitted by the laws of the land to seize power from the existing government. And when they do seize power, their regimes or administrations are usually considered to be ***de facto*** (existing in fact, but not according to law), but not having ***de jure*** (legalistic or in line with the law) mandate. In its conventional expression, the term "coup" is usually accompanied with a French suffix, "etat" (ie, 'a strike against the state'). Hence, "coup d'etat" would suggest: "a strike against the state to overthrow or seize its powers".

Leadership-crisis.

Simply, it refers to a rupture, distortion in the expectations of a true leadership. Leadership itself can be defined as, "the capacity to inspire others to action...and the end result is to empower others" (UNDP 2004: 4). To Farida (2009), effective leadership is one that pursues programs that are sustainable for the people, granting the citizenry access to basic amenities. However, when there is contradiction in the actual performance of true leadership; where a leader instead of leading in the interest of the generalty of the people, rather leads for his own vested interest, in such situation leadership-crisis exist in the structure. Thus, leadership-crisis would therefore suggest: a "Crisis of confidence" in a leader and his performance. That is, as praxis there is a dissonance or rupture between what is expected of a leader (ideal) and what is practically obtainable (reality).

Nexus

The term refers to, a connection or series of connections linking two or more things. For our present purpose here, "nexus" would therefore suggest, an interconnection, or interlinking point(s) or correlation between the two variables of coup resurgence and leadership-crisis.

Resurgence.

It simply means a revival of an activity after a period of litle or no activity. It is analogous to the following terminologies: renaissance; re-emergence; re-appearance; resurrection; rebirth; etc. Therefore, coup resurgence in Africa would suggest: the re-emergence or renaissance of coups in Africa.

2. 0. Literature Review.

Admittedly, the subject of coup resurgence in Africa has recently become topical, and gained center-stage in the focal space of several journals and the media. Accordingly, corpus of literatures (like, Peace & Security (PSC) 2023; Olubiyi & Ayodele, 2024; Collins & Mwonzora, 2024; etc) have attempted to provide epistemic insights into this exigent challenge that has currently plagued the African region. However, with regard to its nexus with leadership-crisis, scanty literatures have specifically focused on the role of leadership-crisis in shaping the resurgence of coups in Africa. Thus, it remains the raison d'etre of this paper to contribute knowledge in this regard, and fill up the missing gaps. To achieve this,

salient sub-themes that are quite constructive in achieving the reason for being of the paper were considered. In thematic outlines therefore, these include as follow: Coups in Africa -- The Early Beginnings (An Evolutionary Overview); Leadership-crisis-- An Overview; The Resurgence of Coups in Africa; The interconnection (nexus) between the resurgence of coups in Africa and leadership-crisis. In what follows, we shall attend to them, et seriatim.

Coups in Africa -- The Early Beginnings (An Evolutionary Overview).

In concrete historical terms, the overthrow of King Farouk in 1952 by the Egyptian army set a precedence in Africa that the military can actually intervene in an ailing political system to gain political power, especially where the leader is found wanting and has lost popular support. Thereafter, military insurrections have been recurrent in the African polity, with about one hundred successful coups in 35 countries of the African continent (PSC, 11 October 2023). Perhaps, for our present purpose, the best approach to the historical overview of the early beginnings of coup d'etat in Africa is to calibrate the historical account into periodical waves of their occurrences, such as: First wave (the Post-independence Coups); Second wave -- 1990 - 2001; Third wave -- Since 2020/21 - date. We shall address the timelines in sequence:

First Wave: 1960s - 70s (Post-independence Coups).

To be sure, the immediate Post-independence political context generated the first rising coups in diverse parts of Africa between 1960s and 1970s (PSC, 2023). The nature of the context that triggered the first coup in different parts of Africa was characterised by problems of ethnicity, inter and intra party rivalries, partisan politics among the African elites, issues of minorities and marginalisation, etc. In Nigeria, for instance, the ethnic politics among the three major ethnic groups, Igbo, Yoruba, and Hausa reached monumental proportions, including inter and intra party conflicts which attracted the first bloody military intervention in Nigeria led by Major Chukwuma Nzeogwu (of Igbo extraction) on January 15th 1966; it brought Major-General Aguiyi Ironsi to power (Dibie, 2018). This period saw the overthrow and death of notable African political leaders in Nigeria like Sir Abubaker Tafawa Balewa (then Nigerian Prime Minister), S. L Akintola (Premier of Western region), Ahmadu Bello (Premier of Northern region), Chief Okotie Eboh (Nigerian finance minister), etc. In Ghana, this period saw the overthrow of

President Kwameh Nkrumah by the military on February 24th, 1966. In Togo, this period witnessed the Togolese coup d'etat on January 13th 1963, led by a Togolese disgruntled soldier, Emmanuel Bodjolle (fmr. Master-Sergeant in the French army) in which the incumbent President Sylvanus Olympio was overthrown and assassinated (Harford, 4th June 2011). Apart from the ethnic issues, the inter and intra party rivalries, including problems of marginalisation that emerged as trigger factors of military interventions at this period; the political leaders were equally accused of not meeting the socio-economic needs of the citizens (PSC, 2023). However, following the failure of the African political leaders of the 1970s to deliver good governance and embrace democratic ethos, another wave of coup d'etat emerged -- that marked the second wave (1990 - 2001).

The Second wave of Coups in Africa (circa, 1990 -- 2001).

By 1990 to 2001, the military putschs that took place was as usual characterised by the deaths of notable political leaders in Africa, in some cases. Typically, this period recorded incidences of coups d'etat in various countries of the African region like, the Benin Republic coup d'etat of May 1992, and November 15th 1995 (Systemic-Peace.org, 2024); in Burundi, the coups d'etat of 25th July 1996, and in 2001(Systemic-Peace.org, 2024); in Central African Republic, the four successful coups of 15th November 1996, and 28th May, 2001; in Liberia, the repeated coups of 7th and 15th September, 1994, respectively (Systemic-Peace.org, 2024); and in Nigeria, the Gideon Orkar-led coup of April 1990, Abacha led coup of 1993, and the 1997 General Diya led coup d'etat (Systemic-Peace.org, 2024), et cetera. These posed a major threat to the tenure of many African civilian leaders, and evidently threatened the burgeoning democracy in Africa. As a spillover, it led the African Union (AU) to establish an injunction against the unconstitutional changes of government (UCG) by the military as well as banning Coup-makers from attending AU's meetings (Ikome, February 1, 2007). Indeed, this audacious fiat given by AU, in line with the commitment to the nascent democracy in Africa, significantly reduced coup incidences in Africa at this period; albeit, there were still pockets of its evidences within Africa. Thus, the zero-tolerance policy of AU against coup d'etat in Africa ended the second wave.

The Third wave of Coup in Africa (circa, 2021 - date).

Ideal-typically, the African Union's (AU's) 'Agenda 2063: The Africa We Want", in view of the scourge of conflicts and unconstitutional changes of government (UCG) that have plagued the region by incessant military coups, included the need to pursue "a peaceful and secure Africa" as part of the framework of its "Aspirations No. 4 of the Agenda 2063" (Mushoriwa, 2023). To be sure, part of that framework was to "silence the guns by 2020" in Africa as was adopted earlier on in the 2015 Peace and Security Council meetings. In contradistinction, and in utter defiance to AU's fiat, there was unconstitutional change of government by the military that erupted in Sudan in April, 2019; and several others have continued ever since the adoption of its "Agenda 2063" in 2015 on discontinuing military take-overs in Africa. The coup incidences at this period epitomise the third wave of coups in its evolution in the African region. This, therefore, suggests that the root cause(s) to the resurgence of coups in Africa are not yet tackled. Typically, with the recent military insurrections in Sudan, Mali, Guinea, Burkina Faso, Niger, and Gabon at this period, it raises a pertinent question in any discerning mind: what is the trigger factor of the renaissant coups in Africa, after its protracted hiatus since the dawn of the 21st century?; especially, since the adoption of AU's "Silencing the Guns in Africa by 2020" proposal? This question is imperative because, looking at the statistical data of global trends of coups incidences, statistics showed that, right from the 1950s to the present 21st century, Africa has had the highest events of coup d'etat, globally. Perhaps, a brief statistical snapshot to support the preceding claim will here be very constructive. This is captured in the table below.

Table 2.0. Showing Global Coups Statistics Per Region (1950s to 2022)

REGIONS	COUP ATTEMPTS	SUCCESSFUL	FAILED
Africa	**214**	**106**	**108**
Latin America	146	70	76
Asia Pacific	49	27	22
Middle East	44	21	23
Europe	17	8	9
South Asia	16	10	6
Global Total	**486**	**242**	**244**

Source: Jonathan Powell -- University of Central Florida & Clayton Thyne -- University of Kentucky (August 30th 2023).

Thus, the above table shows that, from the 1950s to 2022, out of 486 coup incidences globally, African region had the highest incidences with 214 (or 44.03%) of the global total over other regions. Similarly, out of the 242 successful coups globally, Africa had the highest successful coup attempts with 106 (or 43.80%) of the global total over other regions: hence, signifying high rates of unconstitutional changes of government (UCG) in the African region within these periods. Additionally, out of 244 incidences of failed coups attempts, African region equally had the highest failed coups globally with 108 (or 44.26%) of the global total: thus, signifying that, even though the coup attempts failed from unconstitutionally changing the governments of the concerned nations, yet during those critical periods, Africa experienced the highest rates of instabilities and fragile governing structures within its region at those periods.

According to Ikome (February 1, 2007), the complexities of what could have triggered the coups resurgence differ across countries, especially across the countries that are presently experiencing coup resurgence. In Niger, for instance, the coup-makers affirmed that they were motivated by the protracted deterioration of security situation and bad socio-economic management. Besides, in Guinea, the coup-makers accused the ousted President Alpha Conde of mismanagement, corruption, and bad governance (PSC, 2023). Additionally, in the francophone countries, there is also the speculation of anti-imperialist sentiments among the citizenry against France (the "former" colonial master); the citizens feel that the ineptitude of their political leaders is caused by France's dominant selfish influence over the francophone nations. Typically, in Mali, this anti-French sentiments resulted in the expulsion of French troops by the irate citizenry during the coup (PSC, 2023).

Admittedly, while the complexities and dynamics of what triggers coups both at the early beginnings and the contemporary periods of post-independent Africa may portray nuanced shades of reasons, a discernible trend that interlinks the various historical periods is the trigger factor of "**leadership-crisis".** At this point, an overview of the subject of "leadership-crisis" shall be very helpful. To that we now turn.

Leadership-crisis: An Overview

"Everything rises and falls on leadership"
----- (Maxwell, 1998:225).

For epistemic purposes, it is ordinarily desirable that for us to appreciate the concept of 'leadership-crisis', we should first understand the notion of 'leadership' itself. According to UNDP (2004:4), "leadership can be defined as the capacity to inspire others to action. Leadership in this sense is critical for the development of the individual, organisations and societies...this is transformational leadership, and the end result is empowering others". In the same vein, Ninalowo (2004: 184) drawing insight from Amtai Etzioni defined leadership as, "the ability, based on the personal qualities of the leader to elicit the follower's voluntary compliance in a broad range of matters". In concrete terms, the centrality of the foregoing definitions is that leadership is all about influence to bring about desired actions valued by stakeholders involved in the situation. A legitimate leadership should be able to utilise its hallmark of influence to achieve the general will of the people. Supporting this, Farida (2009) posited that effective leadership is one that pursues programs that are sustainable for the people, granting the citizenry access to basic amenities. Properly conceived, leadership position; essentially, politically elected leadership position, constitutionally presupposes a 'social contract' relationship between the state (represented by the political class) and the citizenry. This social contract suggests that there is, supposedly, a symbiotic relationship between the leaders (the political class) and the led (the citizenry) whereby mutual obligations are discharged reciprocally by both parties. Usually, wherever there is a breach or immanent contradiction in the expectations of the obligations of the political leaders towards the people, leadership-crisis is inevitably immanent! We shall return to demonstrate this later. Thus, it is this relational aspect of leadership and the ruptures in the expectations of its obligations -- especially, the shortcomings in its obligations towards ameliorating the human condition of the citizenry -- that constitute leadership-crisis.

At the risk of over simplification, it will be quite helpful to further explicate the subject of "leadership-crisis" from the standpoint of the concept of "Crisis". The concept of crisis tendency is associated with Jurgen Habermas' classics on "legitimation-crisis" in 1975. As was cited by Gutierrez (2014), Habermas defined

the concept of "Crisis" as a state of jeopardy that arises because of contradicting motivations of the sub-systems within a self-enclosed system. That is to say, in a crisis tendency, a contradiction, rupture or distortion exists between "What is" (reality) and "What ought to be" (ideal). Typically, in terms of resurgence of coups in Africa and its interlinking triggers (causal factors), "crisis" suggests that, governing structures (political leadership structures) are unable to demonstrate that their practical functions fulfill the role for which they were instituted (Scambler, 5 March 2013)-- Thus, signaling a contradiction between 'what is' (reality) and 'what ought to be' (ideal). In all intents and purposes, therefore, the notion of **leadership-crisis** suggests a contradiction or rupture between the expected ideals of leadership (what ought to be) and the real performance of leadership (what is). Put differently, leadership-crisis exists where there is a dissonance between the ideal expected functions of the political leaders and their visible actions in a praxis situation, or where the elected political class fails to demonstrate that their present visible actions fulfill the roles for which they were appointed. Ideal-typically, in some of the African countries (like Niger, Guinea, Mali, Sudan, Burkina Faso, and Gabon) presently experiencing resurgence of military interventions, the responses of the coup-makers with regard to their motivations of starting up the coups are congealed in one factor: leadership-crisis and its antinomies -- ranging from corruption, mismanagement of public resources, ineptitude, to deterioration of security architecture, and non-delivery on the promises of the political leaders, etc. In Niger Republic, for instance, the coup-makers asserted that they were motivated by the protracted deterioration of the security situation in Niger and bad socio-economic management (PSC, 2023). In what follows, we shall address the nature of this resurgence of military putschs in Africa. To that we now turn.

The Resurgence of Coups in Africa in Contemporary times.

In concrete terms, and for the records; since 2020, Africa has recorded several coups -- seven successful, and three unsuccessful coups (Accord, August 31 2023). Although, there have been official condemnations, including sanctions (suspensions) from relevant regional bodies like the AU and ECOWAS, these have in no way dampen the motivation of the coup-makers nor its prevalence as it continues from one country to another. And this raises our curiosities and calls for reflection. Typically, in Mali there was a successful coup d'etat on May 24th 2021

that led to the resignation of the interim President Bah Ndaw and Prime Minister Moctar Ouane (BBC News, 24th May 2021). He was replaced by Assimi Goita, the head of the military junta that plotted the coup. This was prior to the preceeding coup of August 2020 where President Ibrahim Boubacar Feita was removed by coup-makers (Aljazeera, 25th May 2021). The coup-makers in Mali accused the government of inability of handling rising insecurities and poor socio-economic management. Similarly, in Guinea on 5th September 2021, coup d'etat erupted in the country. The incumbent President, Alpha Conde was captured and detained by the coup plotters at the capital, Conakry. During President Alpha Conde's administration, Guinea's economy was highly disarticulated: her national income improved but there was no reflection of the income growth on its human development indicators (HDI). Conde was accused of changing the constitution to allow him secure a third term which attracted the 2019 - 2020 Guinean protests. He used his power of incumbency to repress the protests, and cracked down on the opposition candidates (some died in prison) amidst the rising cost of living in the land. He was replaced by Mamady Doumbouya who spearheaded the coup (Jeune Afrique, October 1 2021).

By the same token, while the African Union was finding ways to restore normalcy in the preceding coups in Mali and Guinea, another coup d'etat erupted in Burkina Faso on September 30th 2022; whereby the interim President Paul-Henri Sanduogo Damiba was removed from office over his inability to deal with insecurities in the country, especially the Islamist insurgency (Jeune Afrique, 30th September 2022). Prior to this time, there was a coup in January 2022 spearheaded by Damiba's 'Patriotic Movement For Safeguard and Restoration', to overthrow the incumbent President Roch Kabore, over his government failure to handle insecurities in the land (Ruth, 30th September 2022). By September 2022, Damiba himself was also ousted by another coup plotters. He was accused of pursuing his private interest instead of the interests of the generalty of the people (Thiam & Anne, 30th September 2022). Thus, Damiba was replaced by Captain Trore who spearheaded the September 2022 coup. Again, in Niger Republic, on the 26th of July 2023, a coup d'etat took place in Niger when the country's presidential guards detained President Mohamed Bazoum, and the leader of the coup-makers, General Abdourahaman Tchiani, was proclaimed head of a transitional government. Although, condemned by international and regional organisations (EU, USA, AU,

and ECOWAS), the coup gained supports from Mali, Guinea, and Burkina Faso (where the insurrections first started), including support from Russia (BBC 26th July, 2023). The administration of Bazoum was accused of rising cost of living and incompetence (Aljazeera, 26th July 2023). Under his rule, Niger has regularly ranked low in her human development index (HDI), and suffered insecurities from the Islamist insurgencies, along with anti-French sentiments from the dissidents (BBC, July 26th 2023). Additionally, in what seemed like a serial trend, by August 30th 2023, coup d'etat erupted in another African country, Gabon, shortly after the proclamation of the incumbent President Ali Bongo as the winner of the August general election. General Brice Nguema succeeded Bongo (James, August 30th 2023). The insurrection was dubbed as a "Palace coup", as Nguema who spearheaded the coup is a relative of the ousted Bongo. Since Gabon's norminal independence from France in 1960, the country has been ruled by Bongo's family. There have been accusations of corruption, nepotism, fraudulent elections, incessant alterations of the constitution to favour the ruling party, et cetera. Despite that Gabon is one of the major oil producing nations of Africa with highest GDP per capita in the region, its socio-economic condition is worsening--a 3rd of its population lives below the current poverty line of $5.50 USD per day (Agence France Presse, August 30th 2023); youth unemployment was rated at 40% in 2020 (Africa News, August 30th 2023). Gabon equally ranked 136th out of 180 countries reviewed by Transparency International in 2022 (Africa News, 30th September 2023).

Indeed, from the foregoing historical account of coup resurgence in contemporary Africa, with inferences from the above mentioned African countries, it is quite conceivable that a discernible trend across these countries, in terms of the trigger factor of these coup d'etat is centered on, "crisis of leadership". Therefore, in what follows we shall like to demonstrate the nexus or interconnection of coup resurgence in Africa and leadership-crisis. To that we now turn.

The Nexus Between Coup Resurgence in Africa and Leadership-crisis.

Perhaps, a useful starting point in the understanding of the interpenetrations of resurgence of coups in Africa and leadership-crisis can be better captured via the mediating agencies of three significant notions, namely: the notions of 'Social

Contract', 'Hegemony', and 'Legitimation-crisis'. We shall dwell on these, et seriatim:

On the Mediating Import of the Notion of Social Contract.

In concrete allusion to the philosophies of Hobbes, John Locke and Rosseau (the forebearers of the notion of social contract) (Appadorai, 2003), the doctrine of 'Social Contract' suggests that there is, supposedly, a symbiotic relationship between the state (hereinafter, represented by the political leaders) *versus* the citizenry; whereby mutual obligations are discharged reciprocally by both parties. Social expectations are attached to this contractual relationship: whereas the state ***qua*** state (the political class) is expected to enhance the quality of life of the generalty of the people with the provisions of human centered development facilities, such as access to education, health facilities, electricity, good roads, and employment opportunities, etc; on the other side of the contract, the citizenry are expected to give their mandate to the elected political leaders and be law-abiding (both in obeying rules and payment of their taxes). But where there is a breach of this contract or a rupture between what is generally expected of the political leaders and their actual performance, it is tantamount to 'leadership-crisis' --That is to say, dissonance in leadership expectations of what is popularly approved. And such leadership-crisis with its immanent contradictions of reactions and counter-reactions from the irate citizenry usually precipitate a situation of "anomie" (normlessness or rulelessness) by way of anti-state agitations: revolutions, coups, violent protest, and strike actions, etc. Thus, this gives insight into the reasons for the current resurgence of coups in Africa. It is not farfetched: African political leaders with their vested class interest have broken the 'Social Contract' between the state and the citizenry!

On the Mediating Import of Hegemony.

"Political problems come from the fact that
we are all subjects and yet we look upon others
and treat them as objects".
---- Merleau-Ponty (In, Ninalowo 2004:126).

Etymologically, the term 'hegemony' derives from the Greek word, "*hegemonia*" ('dominance over'). However, it was the Italian Marxist philosopher, Antonio

Gramsci in his attempt to clearly understand the capitalist state, that popularised the notion of 'hegemony'. Gramsci, in his '*Prison Writings'* (Juan, May 26 2015) writing under a difficult circumstance as a prisoner of the fascist government of Benito Mussolini of Italy (1926 - 1937) defined hegemony as, "cultural, moral, and ideological leadership of a group over allied and subaltern groups". To Gramsci, it simply means domination, authority, or preponderant influence over others. These include, the social, cultural, ideological or economic influence exerted by the dominant group. The "hegemon" (the dominant group or class) usually sell a 'false consciousness' to the subjugated class to accept the situation of dominance as normal. Properly conceived, the notion of 'Hegemony' is better understood in assymetric relational situation comprising groups with dialectical or divergent class interests. This is usually between the dominant class (hereinafter, the political class with their vested class interest) and the dominated class (the subaltern group: the poor masses, civil society). The dominant class in the bid to pursue their vested class interest usually superimpose their personal interest upon the interests of the generalty of the people. Thus, Ninalowo (2004) speaking from a Marxist persuasion affirmed that, all situations where domination [or hegemony] exists, where power is exercised over a subjugated group, are potentially and immanently conflictual. This is because, hegemony can never be singular: it usually attracts to itself a "counter-hegemonic' responses from the subaltern class (the subordinate class), which usually arises to challenge the existing dominant status quo. An inference here from Gabon will not be out of place: in Gabon presently beleaguered with military take-over, the family of Bongo, the ousted president, has ever since Gabon's 'norminal independence' (1960) from France, dominated and ruled Gabon with vested class interest, till the 2023 military putsch. Such protracted hegemony over the people will naturally attract anti-state resistance by way of revolutions and coups d'etat. This is, because in every moment of domination, there is usually a moment of counter-domination by means of resistance tendencies from the subaltern group. Additionally; France, ever since she putatively granted "norminal" political independence to her francophone former colonies (Gabon, Niger, Burkina Faso, Mali, etc), has to a limited or large extent, covertly or overtly, maintained her hegemony over these francophone countries to the disapproval of the citizens-- in what can be termed as a, "political romance' savoured by the political class of the francophone nations who serve as the local lackeys of the French imperialist to the detriment of the poor

masses of these nations. Thus, to demonstrate their deep seated grievances and dissatisfaction over this protracted domination, the first thing the coup-makers in each of the "coup-infested' francophone countries did, was to dismantle French military presence in these nations. This signifies that there has been an anti-French feelings among the citizens over the protracted domination by their former colonial master. Thus, this corroborates the fact that, resistance tendencies are inevitable wherever there is moment of domination or hegemony. This gives credence to the resurgence of coups in Africa.

On the Mediating Import of the Notion of Legitimation-crisis.

First, the subject of legitimation approximates that which is generally approved by the generalty of the people or upheld by the value consensus of the people whose mandate the political leaders wield on their behalf; especially with regard to the amelioration of the human condition of the citizenry. Therefore, legitimation-crisis would suggest the obverse of the former. In order to clarify further, to understand the notion of "legitimation-crisis", we need to also understand the concept of "Crisis". The concept of crisis tendencies is associated with Jurgen Habermas' classics on "legitimation-crisis" in 1975. According to him, crisis refers to a state of jeopardy that arises because of contradicting motivations of the sub-systems within a self-enclosed system (Gutierrez, 2014). That is to say, in a crisis tendency, a contradiction, rupture or distortion exists between "What is" (reality) and "What ought to be" (ideal). Typically, in terms of the resurgence of coups in Africa and the role of legitimation-crisis (as a mediating agent in the discourse), crisis suggests that, governing structures (herein, political leadership structures) are unable to demonstrate that their practical functions fulfill the role for which they were instituted (Scambler, 5 March 2013). Supporting this, Ninalowo (2004, p.134) pontificated that, the ultimate dynamics of legitimation goes beyond sheer legalisation of elitist national goals, values or norms; the ultimate test of legitimation resides in people's fulfilment of their needs, aspirations, values and interests. Therefore, where the actual performance of political leaders fall short of these, it is tantamount to legitimation-crisis: a crisis of confidence in the political class. And at such moments, where there is visible rupture between "What is" (reality) and "What ought to be" (ideal leadership expectations), the subaltern class (subjugated masses, civil society, etc) consequently, either engage in ideology critique and/or political action in a bid to ameliorate the anomalous social

conditions (Ninalowo, 2004). Such moments will constitute instances of resistance from the suffering masses via the instrumentalities of revolutionary movements, coup d'etat, and violent protests of nuanced groups of the civil society. For in every moment of domination, there is usually a moment of resistance by the subaltern class to counter and change the status quo. Again, this explains the rising coups in the African region in contemporary times. There is "Crisis of confidence" (legitimation-crisis) in the leadership of African nations. Almost in all the African countries presently beleaguered by military insurrections, there is a discernible trend with regard to the causal triggers: there are allegations of leadership ineptitude, corruption at monumental proportions, pursuit of personal vested interest of the political class, worsening socio-economic conditions of the people, lack of accountability, infringement on the fundamental rights of the people, et cetera -- All congealed in one causal factor, **leadership-crisis!**

Thus, from the backdrop of the foregoing utterances, the bit about the mediating roles of the tripartite notions of 'Social Contract', 'Hegemony', and 'Legitimation-crisis', in the epistemic understanding of the nexus between the resurgence of coups in Africa and leadership-crisis is that, whenever there is a breach in the social contract at the instance of the state (herein, at the instance of the ruling class), it foreshadows a hint of hegemony of the dominant political class attempting to superimpose their vested class interest over the interest of the people: when that happens, it raises a situation of "Crisis of confidence" in the legitimate authority of the ruler over the ruled (legitimation-crisis). As a spillover, its immanent contradictions manifest themselves in forms of revolutions, coups and other anti-state agitations. Ipso facto, the military junta, at the moment of their power takeover, usually nickname themselves, as "corrective regimes" -- albeit, their supposedly "corrective-regimes" are questionable from the standpoint of democratic ethos! All these manifestations to a large extent are pivoted on leadership-crisis: a rupture in the actual expectations of true leadership, as praxis. Properly conceived, therefore, a discernible reality in the interconnection between the two variables of 'Coup resurgence in Africa' versus 'Leadership-crisis' is that of a "**positive causal relationship**" -- the more there are evidences of leadership-crisis in the leadership structures of African nations, the more there is rise in the resurgence of coups in Africa: that is the nexus!

Findings.

In view of the main objective of the paper, the following findings were made:

1. There is a causal positive correlation between the coup resurgence variable and the leadership-crisis variable.
2. As there is rise in leadership-crisis (with evidences of the political leaders breaching the 'social contract' between the state and the citizenry; with its manifest antinomies of corruption, nepotism, fraudulent elections, mismanagement of public resources, pursuit of personal vested interest, lip service to the rule of law, etc) within the governing structures of African nations, the more coup resurgence rises in Africa to challenge it.
3. It also reveals that, every moment of domination by a dominant class, usually attracts moments of resistance by the subaltern class; if not sooner, then certainly later.
4. Whenever there is "Crisis of Confidence" in the leadership structure by the citizenry, reactions in forms of revolutionary coups d'etat, are potentially inevitable.

Summary and Conclusion

From the onset, we were informed that the Global Goals (SDGs) number 16 proposed for all nations to promote peace, social justice and strong institutions. That was equally reinforced by the admonitory speech of former USA president Barack Obama at Ghanaian parliamentary plenary session in 2009 that what Africa needs is strong institutions, and not strong men (ie, men who hijack state power via brutish force or terrorism, like Coup-makers or terrorist groups). As an ancillary to it, the African Union's "AU's Agenda 2063", as at 2015 embarked on "Silencing the Guns in Africa by 2020". However, inspite of these injunctions which African political leaders were signatories to it, African institutions, especially its governing structures have rather weakened than getting stronger, with manifest contradictions of its leadership structures (corruption, mismanagement, nepotism, worsening socio-economic conditions, etc) across nations of Africa; and hence, coup d'etat has re-emerged in the political landscape of Africa in places like, Sudan, Mali, Guinea, Burkina Faso, Niger and Gabon in recent times. The paper proceeded to demonstrate the interconnection or nexus between leadership-crisis and coup resurgence via the mediating agencies of three significant notions, viz: notions of social contract; hegemony; and legitimation-crisis. In its findings, a

causal positive correlation was identified between the variables of leadership-crisis and coup resurgence in Africa. That is, the more leadership-crisis continues to exist in the governing structures of African nations, the more the tendencies of coup resurgence in the African region. In conclusion therefore, there is a causal positive nexus between leadership-crisis and resurgence of coups in Africa: whereby leadership-crisis is inevitably the trigger factor of all hitherto existing coup d'etat in Africa, and this calls for an urgent solution.

Recommendations.

In the light of the findings, the paper therefore recommends as follow:

First, African political leaders should be committed to the burgeoning democratic project and its ethos in Africa;

Additionally, African political leaders should endeavour to deliver on their political promises, focusing on improving the quality of life of the people. Where there is a satisfied citizenry, they hardly would embark on any anti-state activities like plotting coups to hijack state power;

Ultimately, the military junta, who usually seize power as "corrective regimes", should upon seizure of state power from an erring government, relinquish power to a democratically elected leader, and then focus on their defence role for the nation.

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