

Political Instability and Military Coups in Former French African Colonies

¹Lufeyo Chitondo, ²Thelma Chansa Chanda

Twin Palm Leadership University

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Abstract: This article explores the phenomenon of military coups in former French African colonies, examining the factors contributing to political instability in the region. It delves into historical, political, and socio-economic factors that have shaped the post-colonial landscape, often leading to periods of unrest and military interventions. This study employed a mixed-methods approach, combining historical analysis, case studies, and interviews with key stakeholders, including government officials, scholars, and civil society representatives. Data was collected from a range of primary and secondary sources to ensure a comprehensive and nuanced understanding of the subject. The sample consisted of two hundred respondents. Frequency, percentages, tables, graphs and pie-charts were used to analyze the quantitative and qualitative data obtained. Data was then analyzed manually in some cases and also, a combination of software MS Access and MS Excel. The findings revealed that political instability and military coups have been recurring challenges in several former French African colonies, reflecting a complex interplay of historical, economic, and political factors. While it is essential to avoid overgeneralization, certain common themes and trends can be identified and the study recommended that the challenges of political instability and military coups in former French African colonies are multifaceted and addressing these issues requires a comprehensive approach that considers historical legacies, economic development, governance, and international dynamics. Efforts to strengthen democratic institutions, promote inclusive governance, and address economic inequalities can contribute to more stable and resilient political environments in these nations. Additionally, fostering regional cooperation and addressing the root causes of internal conflicts are crucial for sustainable peace and development.

Keywords: Former, French African colonies, military coups, political instability.

1. INTRODUCTION

Former French African colonies, despite gaining independence, have grappled with recurring incidents of political instability and military coups. The historical ties to French colonial rule, coupled with complex socio-political factors, have created an environment prone to governance challenges. Political instability and military coups have been persistent challenges in many former French African colonies, raising concerns about the region's governance and socio-economic development (Sapolsky, 2017). This study aims to examine the root causes, patterns, and consequences of political instability and military coups in these nations. By understanding these dynamics, policymakers, scholars, and stakeholders can contribute to the formulation of effective strategies to promote stability and sustainable development in the region.

French colonialism in Africa had its roots in the late 19th century when European powers, including France, engaged in a race to establish and expand their empires. The Scramble for Africa, as it is often called, was driven by economic interests, geopolitical competition, and a sense of imperialistic superiority. France, along with other European nations, sought to exploit the vast resources and establish dominance in Africa. An overview of the historical context of French colonialism in Africa includes among others the Berlin Conference (1884-1885): where European powers convened in Berlin to negotiate and formalize their territorial claims in Africa to avoid conflicts among themselves (Aronson et al, 2015). The borders established during this conference did not take into account the existing ethnic, cultural, or linguistic divisions in

Africa, leading to artificial and often problematic boundaries. By and large and like other European powers at the time, French colonialism in Africa was largely driven by economic motives. The continent was seen as a source of valuable raw materials and a potential market for European goods. French companies sought to exploit African resources such as rubber, timber, minerals, and agricultural products. They also came up with a belief called Mission civilisatrice (Civilizing Mission) the French justified their colonial endeavors through the idea of the "civilizing mission," a belief that they were bringing civilization, culture, and progress to the supposedly backward African societies. In reality, this often led to the imposition of French culture, language, and institutions on the indigenous populations (Senholzi et al,2016).

During the European scramble for territory, France established its presence in various regions of Africa, including West Africa, Central Africa, and North Africa. Some of the major French colonies included Algeria, Tunisia, Morocco, Senegal, Mali, Ivory Coast, and others. The colonial administration varied in its approach and level of direct control, ranging from settler colonies to indirect rule. In French colonies, the French colonial administration implemented systems of forced labor, including the *corvée* labor system, which compelled Africans to work on public infrastructure projects. This exploitation, combined with harsh living conditions and discriminatory policies, led to significant resistance and uprisings by the local populations. Also, French colonial rule had a profound impact on African cultures (Krosch,2019). The imposition of the French language, legal systems, and educational structures often led to the marginalization of indigenous languages and customs. This legacy continues to influence the social and cultural dynamics in many African countries today. Due to the negative impact of French rule on Africans, in the mid-20th century, African nations began to push for independence from colonial rule. This period saw the rise of nationalist movements and leaders advocating for self-determination. In 1960, many French colonies gained their independence, marking the end of formal colonial rule in Africa. Nevertheless, the legacy of French colonialism in Africa is complex, with both positive and negative impacts on the continent's development (Jackson,2011). While some aspects of infrastructure and administration were established, the overall impact of colonial rule continues to shape socio-political and economic dynamics in many African nations.

The impact of French colonialism in Africa on political structures in the region has been profound and has left lasting legacies that continue to shape the political landscape. French colonial rule in Africa occurred from the 19th century until the mid-20th century, and its effects are evident in various aspects of political, social, and economic life. Some key impacts were administrative division. The French implemented a centralized administrative system, often referred to as "direct rule," where power was concentrated in the hands of colonial administrators (Lewis and Bates,2010). This centralized approach significantly influenced the post-colonial political structures in many African countries. They also introduced indirect rule and collaboration. In some regions, the French employed indirect rule, where local chiefs and leaders were co-opted to govern on behalf of the colonial administration. This strategy left a legacy of collaboration and dependence on traditional authorities in post-colonial governance structures. The French pursued assimilation policies, aiming to integrate the colonies into the French political and cultural framework. This had a significant impact on education, as the French imposed their language and culture, creating a class of Western-educated elites who played crucial roles in post-colonial politics. In addition, the arbitrary drawing of borders without regard for ethnic, linguistic, or cultural considerations has led to ongoing challenges related to ethnic tensions and conflicts. Post-colonial African states often inherited these artificial boundaries, which did not align with the pre-existing social and political structures (Kubotaetal,2012).

The French established a military presence in their colonies, and the legacy of military involvement has sometimes resulted in a strong military influence in post-colonial politics. Military coups and interventions have been common in some former French colonies. By and large, the French colonialism often led to the development of economies focused on supplying raw materials to France. This economic structure has persisted in many post-colonial states, contributing to economic dependency and challenges in achieving sustainable development (James,2015). The French as well introduced the legacy of authoritarianism and the centralized nature of French colonial administration and its focus on maintaining control contributed to the development of authoritarian political systems. Some post-colonial African countries have struggled with issues related to autocratic rule, lack of political pluralism, and human rights abuses. The French colonial legacy is also evident in the cultural and legal systems of many African countries. The French civil law system, as well as aspects of French culture and language, has endured in post-colonial legal and educational institutions (Milstein and Castro-Sotomayor,2020). Therefore, the French colonialism had a profound and complex impact on the political structures of African nations. The legacy includes administrative, economic, and cultural aspects that continue to influence governance

and development in the region. The challenges arising from this legacy underscore the complexity of post-colonial state-building and the ongoing efforts to overcome the historical legacies of colonialism.

Military coups in former French African colonies can be influenced by a variety of factors. It's important to note that each situation is unique, and the dynamics can vary from one country to another. However, some common factors that may contribute to military coups in these countries include colonial history and the legacy of French colonial rule has an impact the political and social structures in these countries. The manner in which colonial powers drew borders, created administrative structures, and manipulated ethnic or regional divisions can contribute to instability (James and Victoria,2012). The other factor contributing to military coups in former French African colonies are weak governance structures as in some cases, former French colonies may have inherited weak or corrupt institutions that struggle to provide essential services and maintain social order. This creates a power vacuum that the military may exploit. Economic instability, that is, economic challenges, such as high unemployment, poverty, and corruption, can create a fertile ground for military intervention. The military might see itself as a stabilizing force or may take advantage of economic grievances to gain popular support. Frequent changes in leadership or rapid changes in political leadership, often through coups or other non-democratic means, can create an environment where the military believes it is justified in intervening to restore stability (Hall and William,2010).

External actors such as foreign powers, including former colonial powers, may exert influence in the region. The geopolitical interests of external actors can contribute to political instability, and the military may see itself as a guardian of national interests against perceived external threats. Ethnic and religious tensions may be causes of military coups as some countries in Africa have diverse ethnic and religious populations (Mylonas,2012). If political power is perceived as favoring one group over another, it can lead to tension and provide a pretext for military intervention. Military's perceived role is another factor since historical military involvement and in some cases, the military may have a history of involvement in politics, and a perception may exist that the military is a legitimate actor in shaping the political landscape. Lack of Democratic Tradition or limited democratic traditions since countries with a history of limited democratic practices may be more susceptible to military coups (Shindler,2014). Weak democratic institutions and a lack of respect for democratic norms can contribute to political instability. Social unrest is another factor causing military coups due to public dissatisfaction as widespread public dissatisfaction with the government, whether due to economic challenges, corruption, or human rights abuses, can create an environment where the military sees itself as acting in the interest of the people. However, it is important to emphasize that these factors are interconnected, and the specific combination of circumstances in each country can lead to different outcomes. Additionally, not all former French African colonies experience military coups, and many have successfully transitioned to more stable democratic systems (Yin,2018).

1.1 Statement of the Problem

The former French African colonies have experienced a recurring pattern of political instability marked by frequent military coups, which has posed significant challenges to governance, socio-economic development, and democratic consolidation in the region. The historical relationship between France and its former African colonies has left a lasting impact on the political landscape and many former French colonies have struggled with governance issues, including corruption, lack of transparency, and the concentration of power. Economic challenges, such as high unemployment rates, unequal distribution of resources, and dependence on a few key industries, may contribute to social unrest and also, the extent of France's continued political and economic influence in these nations raises questions about the impact of external actors on domestic affairs. The fragility of democratic institutions in some former French African colonies has created vulnerabilities that military actors exploit such as weak civil societies, limited political participation, and a lack of robust democratic norms may contribute to an environment where coups become an alternative to democratic processes. Regional security challenges, such as ethnic tensions, terrorism, and border disputes, can further destabilize these nations, hence, the military, in such cases, may see itself as a stabilizing force, leading to interventions that exacerbate political instability. The role of media and information dissemination in shaping public opinion and influencing political narratives is crucial as understanding how information is controlled or manipulated can provide insights into the dynamics of political instability. By addressing these issues, this study aimed to contribute to a comprehensive understanding of the root causes of political instability and military coups in former French African colonies, offering insights that may inform policy recommendations for fostering stability, democracy, and sustainable development in the region.

1.2 Purpose of the study

The purpose of the study was to explore the phenomenon of military coups in former French African colonies, examining the factors contributing to political instability in the region. It also, delved into historical, political, and socio-economic factors that have shaped the post-colonial landscape, often leading to periods of unrest and military interventions. While this study aimed at providing a comprehensive analysis, it is essential to acknowledge the limitations, such as potential biases in historical records and the dynamic nature of political landscapes.

1.3. Objectives of the Study

- To identify and analyze the historical factors contributing to political instability in former French African colonies.
- To examine the role of external influences, including French interests and international actors, in shaping the political landscape of these nations.
- To investigate the socio-economic consequences of political instability and military coups on the affected countries and their populations.
- To assess the effectiveness of past and current governance mechanisms and interventions in preventing and addressing political instability.

1.4. Theoretical Framework

The study was guided by the Conflict Theory, first developed by Karl Marx in the 19th Century and the theory holds that social order is maintained by domination and power rather than by consensus and conformity and the assumptions of Conflict theory include competition, structural inequality, revolution and war. Karl Marx saw conflict in society as the primary means of change This theory emerges from philosophical perspectives developed by Niccolo Machiavelli, Thomas Hobbes and Karl Marx and emphasizes the idea that people are inherently contentious when competing for resources and power. In the same vein, Max Weber's Conflict theory posits that there are three main sources of conflict: economic, social and political and this theory, focusses on the competition between social groups, rather than individuals and attempts to explain social change and stability as a result of group conflict (Marx and Engel, 1847). Both Marx and Weber, laid the foundation for understanding the dynamics of social conflict and power struggles within society. Conflict theory can be used to look at wars, violence, revolutions and forms of injustice and discrimination by explaining that there is a natural disparity in society that causes these problems. However, modern Conflict theory was created by Wright Mills (1954) and he believed that social structures are created because of conflict between differing interests and people are then impacted by the creation of social structures and the usual result is a differential of power between the "elite" and the "others". Hence, military coups which are a sudden change of government illegally or by force are born as a result of conflict between the state and the army out officers' personal grievances, military organizational grievances, military popularity, domestic political crisis or economic decline

1.5. Significance of the Study

Understanding the dynamics of political instability and military coups in former French African colonies is crucial for policymakers, international organizations, and scholars seeking to promote stability and development in the region. By addressing these issues, this study aimed to contribute to a comprehensive understanding of the root causes of political instability and military coups in former French African colonies by all stake holders interested in peace and stability not only in French Former African colonies but the world over, offering insights that may inform policy recommendations for fostering stability, democracy, and sustainable development in the region and the entire world. The findings of this study can inform the design of targeted interventions and policies aimed at addressing the root causes of instability.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Historical Background of French Colonialism in Africa

French colonialism in Africa has a complex and multifaceted history, spanning several centuries. The colonial expansion of France in Africa can be traced back to the 17th century, with initial trading posts and forts established along the West African coast. However, the major phase of French colonialism in Africa occurred in the 19th and early 20th centuries. An

overview of the historical background of French colonialism in Africa include early exploration and trading posts (17th-18th centuries) as France's involvement in Africa began with exploratory voyages and the establishment of trading posts along the West African coast in the 17th century where the French established footholds in areas that would later become part of Senegal, Ivory Coast, and Guinea. Then came the scramble for Africa (Late 19th century) (Sparrow,2014). The late 19th century saw the "Scramble for Africa," during which European powers sought to claim and colonize African territories. The Berlin Conference of 1884-1885 formalized the rules for European colonization in Africa, and France acquired significant territories. What followed was the French West Africa and French Equatorial Africa (Late 19th-20th centuries). French West Africa was established as a federation in 1895, comprising territories such as Senegal, French Sudan (Mali), Ivory Coast, Guinea, and others. French Equatorial Africa, formed in 1910, included Chad, Gabon, Congo (Brazzaville), and the Central African Republic. These colonial entities were characterized by French assimilationist policies, where the goal was to assimilate the local populations into French culture and governance (Hufty,2011).

French colonial rule in Africa was often marked by economic exploitation, with the extraction of natural resources such as rubber, timber, and minerals and the forced labor system, known as "corvée," was implemented to meet the economic needs of the colonial power. France introduced the FrancAfrique policy where France maintained strong economic and political ties with its former colonies through the "FrancAfrique" policy, which involved close cooperation, military intervention and support for friendly regimes. The other policy was the CFA Franc in which the use of the CFA franc, a currency tied to the French franc (later the euro), has been a subject of debate, with critics arguing that it limits economic autonomy for African nations (Pierre,2020).

Due to these mistreatments, there was resistance and struggles for independence. African populations resisted French colonial rule through various means, including armed uprisings and political activism. Notable resistance movements include the Samori Ture's resistance in West Africa and the Battle of Adwa in Ethiopia (though not a French colony, it had significance in the broader context of African resistance to colonialism). World Wars and Post-War Changes had an impact on French colonial rule in Africa since the aftermath of World War II saw significant changes in the global political landscape, and the rise of anti-colonial sentiments influenced the decolonization process (Mendoza,2014). Also, the post-war period witnessed movements for independence in French colonies, and a series of negotiations and struggles eventually led to the granting of independence to many African nations. There also came independence and legacy. Many French colonies gained independence in the 1950s and 1960s. These newly independent nations faced challenges in establishing stable governments and overcoming the legacies of colonialism. The French influence persisted in the form of economic ties, cultural connections, and, in some cases, military presence through defense agreements. The legacy of French colonialism in Africa continues to influence political, social, and economic dynamics in the region to this day. The historical experiences of French colonialism have left a lasting impact on the development and identity of the African nations involved (Speer,2012).

The history of colonization and decolonization in former French African colonies is complex and spans several centuries. A general overview on Colonization also includes Scramble for Africa as in the late 19th century, European powers, including France, engaged in the "Scramble for Africa" to acquire colonies and exploit the continent's resources. The French established their presence in West Africa, North Africa, and Central Africa. As regards Colonial administration, the French employed various administrative structures in their African colonies (Meyer,2018). They implemented a system known as "assimilation," aiming to assimilate the local populations into French culture and governance. There was economic exploitation and colonies were exploited for their natural resources, and the local populations were often subjected to forced labor. Plantations and extraction industries were established, with profits flowing back to France. The French colonial period had a profound impact on the social, economic, and political structures of the colonies. On the other hand, traditional systems of governance were often disrupted, and new political and social hierarchies were introduced (Malapi-Nelson,2017).

A general view on Decolonization include Post-World War II Changes as the devastation of World War II weakened colonial powers, and a global shift towards decolonization began. After the war, the French Union was established as a political entity, attempting to maintain a connection between France and its colonies. However, tensions arose as the colonies sought greater autonomy. Hence, Nationalist movements emerged across French Africa, demanding independence and an end to colonial rule. Notable leaders such as Leopold Sedar Senghor (Senegal), Felix Houphouet-Boigny (Ivory Coast), and Ahmed Sekou Toure (Guinea) played significant roles. France began a series of negotiations with its colonies for a peaceful transfer of power (Gjefsen,2012). Nevertheless, the process of decolonization unfolded differently in each

colony. Some gained independence through negotiations, while others, like Algeria, experienced prolonged and violent struggles. The Algerian War of Independence (1954-1962) was a particularly brutal conflict that ultimately led to Algeria gaining independence from France. There was an Evolution of Francophone Africa and most French African colonies gained independence in the early 1960s, forming sovereign nations. However, there arose Post-Independence Challenges and many newly independent nations faced challenges such as establishing stable governments, economic development, and overcoming the legacies of colonialism (Carles, Miller and Rosato,2012).

More so, the legacy of French colonization in Africa is still felt today, with ongoing debates about economic dependence, cultural influences, and post-colonial relationships. France introduced the *Francafrrique* policy where France maintained strong economic and political ties with its former colonies through the “*Francafrrique*” policy, which involved close cooperation, military intervention and support for friendly regimes. The other policy was the CFA Franc in which the use of the CFA franc, a currency tied to the French franc (later the euro), has been a subject of debate, with critics arguing that it limits economic autonomy for African nations. Nevertheless, understanding the history of colonization and decolonization in former French African colonies requires a nuanced exploration of each nation's unique experiences and struggles for independence (Priestley,2018).

The political climate in former French African colonies has been shaped by a series of key events and policies. Some significant ones include Colonial Era (19th and early 20th centuries): The late 19th-century scramble for Africa among European powers led to the establishment of French colonies in Africa. France then, pursued an assimilation policy, aiming to assimilate African colonies into French culture, institutions, and legal systems (Porter,2016). World War II and Decolonization (1940s-1960s) brought in Free French Forces where some African colonies supported the Free French Forces during World War II, leading to increased demands for independence in return. The post-war period saw the rise of independence movements, with leaders like Félix Houphouët-Boigny (Ivory Coast), Léopold Sédar Senghor (Senegal), and Ahmed Sékou Touré (Guinea). The French Community and Neo-Colonialism (1958-1960s) gave birth to the French Community, that is, the French Community was established in 1958 as an alternative to full independence, allowing former colonies to maintain ties with France. Many African colonies gained independence in the early 1960s, but the relationship with France remained through economic and military agreements (Tariq,2012).

There were Post-Independence Challenges (1960s-1980s) and one of this was “One-Party Rule” as several former colonies experienced one-party rule, often led by the independence movement leaders, sometimes resulting in authoritarianism. There was Cold War Influence as Superpower rivalry during the Cold War influenced political dynamics, with both the United States and the Soviet Union seeking influence in the region. The Francophone-Anglophone Divide and Conflicts (1970s-2000s) came on board. The Francophone-Anglophone Divide, in countries like Cameroon and Chad, brought about linguistic and cultural differences between French-speaking and English-speaking regions led to political tensions while as regards conflicts, some former French colonies, like Ivory Coast and Rwanda, experienced political unrest, civil wars, and genocides (UN,2017). Structural Adjustment Programs (1980s-1990s) was a challenge as well as in response to economic challenges, many African countries, including former French colonies, implemented structural adjustment programs under the guidance of the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and the World Bank. The other challenges are the recent developments (2000s-2020s) of Democratization as some former French colonies have experienced moves toward democratization, with periodic elections and a greater emphasis on political pluralism. The other recent development is Economic Dependency as economic ties with France, particularly through the CFA franc (a currency used by some former French colonies), have been a source of debate, with calls for greater economic autonomy. However, understanding the political climate in former French African colonies requires a nuanced consideration of historical, economic, and cultural factors that have shaped their trajectories since gaining independence (Behrend,2021).

2.2 Political and Economic Factors contributing to instability in former French African Colonies

The instability in former French African colonies can be attributed to a complex interplay of political and economic factors. The colonial history of these nations, the nature of the post-independence political systems, and economic structures have all played significant roles in shaping the challenges these countries face. An examination of the key factors includes firstly Colonial Legacy which brought about Artificial Borders as the colonial powers, including France, often drew arbitrary borders without regard for ethnic, linguistic, or cultural considerations (Staffan,2017). This has led to the creation of nations with diverse populations and, at times, internal tensions. This brought about exploitative economic systems as colonial

powers exploited the resources of these regions, often leaving them economically dependent on a single commodity. This legacy has had a lasting impact on the economic structures of these countries. Secondly, there was Neocolonialism which brought about Economic Dependence as many former French colonies continue to have economic ties with France, often characterized by dependency on a few key exports. This can make these nations vulnerable to global economic fluctuations. There was Currency Arrangements and the use of the CFA franc, a currency tied to the French franc and later the euro, has been both an economic stabilizer and a source of controversy. Some argue that the fixed exchange rate and monetary controls limit the economic autonomy of these nations (Apaza,2017).

Authoritarian Rule and Political Instability as during Post-Independence Leadership, several former French colonies experienced leadership challenges after gaining independence. Some leaders became autocratic, suppressing political opposition and contributing to instability. Also, political instability in some cases resulted in military coups, further disrupting governance and creating an environment of uncertainty. There was what could be termed as "Resource Curse" which was the dependence on Natural Resources since countries relying heavily on the export of a single commodity are vulnerable to price fluctuations and this dependence can lead to economic instability when global commodity prices decline (Fukuyama,2013). Mismanagement of revenue from natural resources, often fueled by corruption, exacerbates economic challenges and contributes to social unrest. The other factor was Ethnic and Regional Tensions as colonial powers sometimes exacerbated ethnic and regional divisions for administrative convenience. This legacy can contribute to internal conflicts and political instability. Global Economic Factors such as debt burden as some former French colonies face significant debt burdens, often accrued through loans that may have been mismanaged or used for projects with limited economic returns. Global economic policies affect these countries. Policies imposed by international financial institutions also impact the economic stability of these nations, sometimes leading to protests and social unrest. Therefore, the instability in former French African colonies is a complex phenomenon rooted in historical, political, and economic factors (Crego et al,2020). Addressing these challenges requires a multifaceted approach that considers both domestic and international dimensions, including efforts to promote good governance, economic diversification, and sustainable development.

Corruption, governance challenges, and economic disparities are significant issues that can contribute to discontent in former French African colonies. It's important to note that each country has its unique context, so the impact and dynamics of these issues can vary. However, there are common themes that can be explored in understanding the potential sources of discontent which includes historical context since many former French African colonies have a history of colonial rule, and the legacies of colonization can still influence political and economic structures (Van Balleyooij,2019). The imposition of Western-style governance systems, sometimes through authoritarian regimes, has led to power imbalances and governance challenges. This historical context can contribute to feelings of disenfranchisement and foster discontent. Corruption is a pervasive issue in many African countries, and former French colonies are no exception. Corruption can undermine public trust in government institutions and divert resources away from essential services, leading to frustration among the population. In some cases, corruption is perceived as being linked to the legacy of colonialism, where economic structures were established to benefit the colonizers. On governance challenges, weak governance structures, lack of transparency, and insufficient accountability mechanisms are common challenges in many African nations. Authoritarian rule, a lack of political pluralism, and restrictions on civil liberties can lead to frustration and a desire for more inclusive and accountable governance (Donnelly,2013).

Economic disparities contribute to instability and economic inequalities are often exacerbated by historical factors, including the legacy of colonial economic structures. Former French colonies may face challenges in developing diverse and sustainable economies, leading to high unemployment rates and income disparities. The perception that certain groups or individuals benefit disproportionately from economic opportunities can fuel discontent. Dependency on Foreign Aid and Influence: is another factor fueling instability as some former French African colonies may feel that they are too dependent on foreign aid or influenced by former colonial powers (Sieder and McNeish,2013). Economic and political decisions may be perceived as being dictated by external actors, limiting the ability of these countries to determine their own development paths. The extraction and exploitation of natural resources by foreign entities, sometimes with ties to former colonial powers, can contribute to economic disparities. The local population may feel that they are not benefiting adequately from the wealth generated by their own resources. More so, social and ethnic divisions bring about instability as historical divisions created or exacerbated during colonial rule may persist, contributing to social unrest. If certain ethnic or social groups feel marginalized or excluded from political and economic processes, it leads to tensions and discontent.

Nevertheless, addressing these issues requires a multifaceted approach, including efforts to promote good governance, combat corruption, and foster inclusive economic development. International cooperation and support can play a crucial role in assisting these nations in overcoming the challenges they face (Das,2011).

2.3. French influence in former African Colonies

The lingering influence of France in its former African colonies is a complex and multifaceted topic that involves military agreements, economic ties, and diplomatic relationships. France's historical colonial presence in Africa has left a lasting impact on the political, economic, and social dynamics of many of its former colonies. Some key aspects to consider among others include military agreements where France maintains military bases in several of its former colonies, such as Senegal, Ivory Coast, and Djibouti. These bases serve as strategic outposts for French military operations in the region (Burbank and Frederick,2010). Many African countries have ongoing security cooperation agreements with France. This includes training programs for African military personnel, joint military exercises, and collaboration on counterterrorism efforts. The other on military agreements was interventions and France has intervened militarily in some of its former colonies, such as Mali and the Central African Republic, to address security challenges. These interventions often involve both diplomatic and military components.

The other French influence on former colonies are economic ties. One of this was the Currency Zone: where the CFA franc, a currency used by 14 African countries, is guaranteed by the French Treasury. While it provides stability, critics argue that it limits the economic independence of these countries. The second economic tie were economic partnerships and these economic ties between France and its former colonies persist through trade agreements, investment, and development aid. However, there are debates about the fairness of these arrangements and the extent to which they benefit the African nations (Bessel, Nicholas and Jane,2010). The third economic tie was to do with Resource extraction in which France continues to have economic interests in the natural resources of its former colonies. This can involve French companies engaging in resource extraction, often leading to discussions about economic exploitation. The other type of French influence on former African colonies was on Diplomatic relationships and France maintains political influence: in its former colonies through diplomatic channels. This influence is sometimes wielded overtly, such as in shaping political decisions, or more subtly through historical ties and shared international agendas. Also, France is involved in regional organizations like the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) and the African Union. This involvement can impact diplomatic relationships and regional stability. There also, Post-Colonial ties in which the historical ties between France and its former colonies can impact diplomatic relationships. Shared language, education systems, and cultural links continue to shape diplomatic interactions (Delmas and Nigel,2011).

On challenges and criticisms comes Neo-Colonialism critique: where critics argue that France's continued influence represents a form of neo-colonialism, limiting the sovereignty and self-determination of African nations. The CFA franc and economic policies tied to France are subjects of ongoing debate, with calls for reforms to ensure more equitable economic relationships. There are also security concerns. While France's military presence is often seen as a stabilizing force, there are concerns about the impact of military interventions on the long-term stability of the region. In recent years, there has been increased awareness and discussion about redefining the post-colonial relationship between France and its former African colonies (Vansina,2010). This includes calls for more equitable economic partnerships, revisiting military agreements, and fostering diplomatic relationships based on mutual respect and independence. The dynamics are evolving, and the future of these relationships will likely continue to be a subject of debate and negotiation.

The relationships between former French African colonies and France have been complex and multifaceted, involving military, economic, and diplomatic ties. These ties have significantly impacted the political landscape in these countries and have sometimes contributed to military interventions. Some key points to consider here include Joint Military Exercises and France conducts joint military exercises with its African allies, contributing to the training and cooperation between the French military and the armed forces of these countries. On trade and investment, France maintains economic interests in its former colonies, and economic ties often influence political relationships (Short,2012). French companies may have significant investments in key sectors like energy, mining, and telecommunications. On regional diplomacy: however, French engagement in regional diplomacy can impact the political landscape in former colonies. France often plays a role in mediating conflicts and promoting stability. On the other hand, French military interventions are often framed as responses to security threats, such as terrorism or armed rebellions. However, critics argue that these interventions can serve

French strategic interests. Also, the historical legacy of colonialism has a lasting impact on the relationships between France and its former colonies. Post-colonial ties are often influenced by historical factors and power dynamics. Therefore, it is essential to note that these relationships are complex, and there is a range of perspectives on the impact of French influence in Africa (Reinhard and Kate, 2011). While some argue that French involvement contributes to stability and development, others criticize it for perpetuating neocolonial relationships and limiting the autonomy of African nations. The dynamics are continually evolving, and the political landscape is shaped by a combination of historical, economic, and geopolitical factors.

2.4. Case Studies of military coups in selected former French African Colonies

Some historical military coups in former French African colonies includes Mali (2012): In March 2012, a military coup took place in Mali. Captain Amadou Sanogo led a group of soldiers to overthrow the government of President Amadou Toumani Touré. The coup was driven by grievances among the military regarding the government's handling of the Tuareg rebellion in the north. The international community condemned the coup, and after pressure from regional and international actors, a transitional government was established, leading to elections in 2013. The Madagascar coup (2009): While not a former French colony, Madagascar has historical ties to France. In 2009, a military-backed political crisis led to the ousting of President Marc Ravalomanana. Andry Rajoelina, the mayor of Antananarivo, took power with the support of the military. The international community widely criticized the coup, leading to economic sanctions. Madagascar has experienced political instability since then (Tonio, 2010). The Ivory Coast coup (1999): In 1999, a military coup took place in Ivory Coast. General Robert Guei seized power, overthrowing President Henri Konan Bédié. The coup was condemned by the international community, and Guei's rule was short-lived. Guei himself faced internal opposition, and following controversial presidential elections in 2000, Laurent Gbagbo assumed power. These are just a few examples, and the political landscapes in African countries are complex, with various factors contributing to coups and political instability. It's essential to check for more recent information to understand the current situation in these countries.

Some other most recent military coups in former French African colonies are the Mali coup in August 2020, there was a military coup in Mali, where President Ibrahim Boubacar Keïta was forced to resign. The military junta, known as the National Committee for the Salvation of the People (CNSP), took control, citing dissatisfaction with the government's handling of various issues, including corruption and insecurity. The 2021 Malian coup began on the night of 24 May 2021 when the Malian Army led by Vice President Colonel Assimi Goïta captured President Bah N'daw, Prime Minister Moctar Ouane and Minister of Defence Souleymane Doucoure. The cause of coup was protesters were displeased with the government's management of the ongoing insurgency, alleged government corruption, the handling of COVID19 pandemic and a floundering economy. The other military coup was in Burkina Faso: Burkina Faso experienced a military coup in 2015 when the Presidential Security Regiment (RSP) seized power, temporarily overthrowing the transitional government. However, popular protests and regional pressure led to the restoration of civilian rule. The latest coup in Burkina Faso happened on 30 September 2022 and the interim President Paul-Henri Sandaogo Damiba was deposed by the new military leader Captain Ibrahim Traore citing deteriorating security situation (Martina, 2011).

The other military coup was in Niger. Niger has faced several military coups in its history. The most recent coup occurred in 2010 when the then-President Mamadou Tandja was overthrown by the military after he attempted to extend his term limits. Nevertheless, the latest military coup in Niger happened on 26 July 2023, President Mohamed Bazoum and his family were detained at the Presidential Palace in Niamey, and Interior Minister Hamadou Souley was also arrested. The coup was led by General Abdourahmane Tchiani, whom Bazoum had planned to relieve from his position (Daniel and Dana, 2011). The coup plotters blamed rising insecurity and a lack of economic growth and had to intervene to avoid "the gradual and inevitable demise" of the country. Guinea has had a history of military coups, with the most recent one occurring in 2008. Captain Moussa Dadis Camara took power in a coup following the death of President Lansana Conté. Camara's rule was characterized by political unrest and human rights abuses. On 5 September 2021, President of Guinea Alpha Conde was captured by the country's armed forces in a coup d'état after gunfire in the capital Conakry and Colonel Mamady Doumbouya became President. While Côte d'Ivoire faced a political crisis and conflict after the 2010 presidential elections, with disputes over the election results, it did not witness a military coup. The conflict was resolved through international intervention, and Alassane Ouattara assumed the presidency. The latest military coup was in Gabon on 30 August, 2023 by General Brice Oligui Nguema who ousted President Ali Bongo Ondimba citing growing discontent in the country since Bongo's stroke in 2018, his decision to run for a third term, disregarding of the country's constitution and the conduct of the elections and brought an end to the 56-year-long rule of the Bongo family.

While real-time information may not be provided but a general analysis of historical events leading up to coups, their execution, and the aftermath in some former French African colonies can be provided. It is also important to note that specific details may vary among different countries, as each nation's history is unique. However, a broad overview using examples from selected former French colonies include decolonization and independence (1950s-1960s). Many African countries gained independence from colonial rule in the late 1950s and early 1960s. France granted autonomy to its African colonies through a process known as "decolonization." Some countries achieved independence peacefully, while others faced political and social challenges (Schwaller,2011). The other was post-independence challenges (1960s-1970s). After gaining independence, several African nations faced challenges such as political instability, economic difficulties, and ethnic tensions. Also, many of these nations inherited borders that did not align with the cultural or ethnic distribution of their populations, contributing to internal conflicts. There was French influence and Neocolonialism where France maintained significant economic and political influence in its former colonies through agreements such as the "Françafrique" policy. This informal network allowed France to maintain control over key sectors like defense, finance, and diplomacy. The presence of French military bases and the use of the CFA franc (African Financial Community) further reinforced French influence (Walter,2013).

There were coups and political instability (1970s-1990s) as many former French colonies experienced coups and changes in government during this period. Some of these coups were influenced by power struggles, economic issues, and dissatisfaction with post-colonial leadership. Examples include the 1977 coup in Mauritania, the 1987 coup in Burkina Faso, and the 1999 coup in Côte d'Ivoire and many other recent coups in former French African colonies. In addition, some countries faced prolonged civil wars and internal conflicts. These conflicts often had roots in ethnic, religious, or economic grievances ((Moore and van Nierop,2017). For instance, the civil wars in Liberia and Sierra Leone in the 1990s had complex causes, including the exploitation of natural resources and political corruption. The aftermath of coups varied in terms of governance and human rights. Some countries experienced improved stability and development, while others faced continued political repression and human rights abuses. Nevertheless, there is profound impact of military regimes on democratic institutions, rule of law, and civic freedoms.

International Involvement and Peacekeeping are involved in internal affairs as in some cases, international actors, including the United Nations and regional organizations, became involved in post-coup situations to facilitate peace and stability. Peacekeeping missions were deployed to countries like Mali and Central African Republic to address security challenges. However, UN peacekeeping missions in former French African colonies and Africa as a whole have been criticized for a wide range of problems, including mismanagement, failure to act when civilians are under threat, rights' abuses by peacekeepers and financing troubles. In Africa and former French African colonies in particular, foreign military interventions are in the spotlight for failing to end conflicts at the continent's hot spots. Both internal and external political interests are contributing factors(Ganesan,2012). Contemporary Challenges of (2000s-2020s) involves ongoing challenges in many former French colonies include economic disparities, political corruption, and the need for sustainable development. Some nations have made progress in strengthening democratic institutions, while others continue to grapple with governance issues. Also the political trajectories and post-coup developments varied widely across the former French African colonies. Moreover, the situation in these countries can evolve over time, and recent developments may not be covered in this historical overview.

2.5. Regional Perspectives of military coups in former French African Colonies

Analyzing regional patterns and trends in former French African colonies that have experienced military coups requires considering historical, political, economic, and social factors. It's important to note that each country has its unique context, and generalizations may not capture all nuances. Some common trends and patterns can be identified such as Colonial legacy as the history of colonization, including the French colonial administration's policies and practices, can influence the political landscape. Former colonies often inherited administrative structures and political systems that may have contributed to power struggles. Some former French colonies experienced prolonged periods of one-party rule or autocratic regimes after gaining independence. This usually create an environment where dissent is suppressed, leading to potential political instability and military intervention (Marsh,2013). In some cases, weak civil institutions, such as ineffective judicial systems and limited checks and balances, may contribute to an increased likelihood of military coups. Also, countries with a heavy dependence on a single or a few key resources may be more susceptible to corruption and power struggles. The control over lucrative resources can be a motive for military intervention. High levels of economic inequality lead to social unrest and discontent. Military coups may be seen as a means to address perceived economic injustices.

Countries with deep-seated ethnic or religious divisions may experience tensions that spill over into political instability. Military coups might be driven by internal conflicts exacerbated by these divisions. High levels of youth unemployment contribute to frustration and dissatisfaction among the population, providing fertile ground for political upheaval and military intervention. Former French colonies in strategically important regions may be subject to international interference, potentially contributing to political instability (Holliday,2012). External actors may support or oppose military coups based on their own interests. Further, the relationship between a former colony and its former colonial power, as well as other international actors, influence the political dynamics. Economic and military assistance may be used as leverage, affecting the likelihood of military interventions. Weak democratic institutions and flawed electoral processes contribute to political instability while military coups may be perceived by some actors as a way to rectify perceived electoral irregularities or to restore order. Political instability in one country can sometimes have a spillover effect on neighboring nations. Regional organizations, such as the African Union and Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS), may play a role in responding to and preventing military coups. Nevertheless, the occurrence of military coups in former French African colonies is a complex phenomenon influenced by a combination of historical, political, economic, and social factors. Analyzing each country individually and considering the unique circumstances is crucial for a comprehensive understanding of these events (Marsh,2013).

While it is important to approach the study of former French African colonies with sensitivity to their unique historical, cultural, and political contexts, some commonalities can be identified among those that have experienced military coups. It's crucial to note that not all former French African colonies have faced military coups, and the factors contributing to such events are complex and multifaceted. However, certain patterns and shared characteristics may be observed such as Colonial legacy as former French African colonies share a history of colonization by France, which has left a lasting impact on their political, economic, and social structures. Some former colonies experienced a legacy of authoritarian rule during the colonial period, which could contribute to political instability (William,2016). Also, many former French colonies have struggled with the establishment and maintenance of strong democratic institutions. Weak institutions may create an environment conducive to coups. Periods of political instability, characterized by corruption, power struggles, and weak governance, create conditions that make military intervention more likely. Further, economic challenges, such as high levels of poverty, unemployment, and inequality, can contribute to social unrest and dissatisfaction with the government, providing a potential justification for military intervention (UN,2016).

Dependence on a single or limited set of natural resources can contribute to economic volatility and competition for control, increasing the likelihood of political instability. The influence of external actors, including former colonial powers or other international powers, also contribute to political instability and create a context where military coups become more likely. In some cases, the military may play a prominent role in politics, either due to historical factors or the absence of civilian institutions capable of maintaining order. Pre-existing ethnic or regional tensions may be exploited by political actors to justify military interventions, framing them as necessary to maintain stability or protect a particular group (McCann,2015). More so, the presence of leaders with authoritarian tendencies or a disregard for democratic norms may contribute to an environment where the military sees itself as a guardian of stability. In some regions, a history of previous military coups may create a cycle where coups beget more coups, establishing a pattern of political instability. However, addressing political instability in former French African colonies requires a comprehensive and context-specific approach. Each country has its unique circumstances, histories, and challenges, so there is no one-size-fits-all solution. However, some general regional strategies and solutions could be explored to promote stability and development. Some ideas are to encourage regional organizations such as the African Union (AU) and the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) to play a more active role in conflict resolution and prevention. Countries should foster collaboration among neighboring countries to address cross-border issues and promote regional stability. Also, they should engage in diplomatic efforts to facilitate dialogue between the former French colonies and their neighbors, as well as with international partners as well as encourage the use of diplomatic channels to address disputes and conflicts, promoting peaceful resolutions (Tariq,2012). In addition, countries should implement regional economic development programs to address poverty and inequality, which are often root causes of instability and promote regional trade agreements to boost economic interdependence and cooperation. NGOs and other stake holders should advocate for improved governance and the rule of law within each country, as corruption and lack of accountability can contribute to instability as well as support initiatives that strengthen democratic institutions and promote political inclusivity. They should establish regional mechanisms for conflict prevention, early warning, and mediation and train local leaders, mediators, and peacekeepers to effectively manage and resolve conflicts.

NGOs and other stake holders should promote human rights and social justice initiatives to address grievances and promote a sense of justice among the population as well as support civil society organizations working on human rights, social justice, and conflict resolution. Governments should invest in education to empower the population with the skills and knowledge needed for sustainable development as well as promote free and unbiased media to ensure the public has access to accurate information (Hapkins,2016). Government, NGOs and other stakeholders should support initiatives that promote reconciliation and healing in post-conflict societies and encourage truth and reconciliation processes to address historical grievances. Collaborate with the international community, including the United Nations and other regional organizations, to garner support and resources for regional stability efforts is necessary as well as coordinate efforts with former colonial powers, like France, to ensure a unified approach to stability and development as well as address issues related to natural resource management, which often play a role in conflicts. Ensure that resource wealth benefits the local population and does not exacerbate tensions. Nevertheless, the successful implementation of these solutions requires the genuine commitment of the countries involved, as well as collaboration and support from the international community. Additionally, tailoring these strategies to the specific circumstances of each country is crucial for their effectiveness (Porter,2016).

3. METHODOLOGY

3.1 Research design

The research design was descriptive survey with both qualitative and quantitative methods of data collection in order to attain the comprehensive results (Musonda,2009). Qualitative methods was appropriate to this investigation as it produced detailed data from a small group of participants, while exploring feelings, impressions and judgments. This study employed a mixed-methods approach, combining historical analysis, case studies, and interviews with key stakeholders, including government officials, scholars, and civil society representatives. Data was collected from a range of primary and secondary sources to ensure a comprehensive and nuanced understanding of the subject. On the other hand, quantitative method made the use of questionnaires, surveys and experiment to gather data that is revised and tabulated in numbers, which allows the data to be characterized by use of statistical analysis (Kombo and Tromp,2006).

3.2 Research Sites

The study was carried out in three institutions of Government Ministries, Universities, and Non-Governmental Organizations (NGO) offices from which respondents were also sampled.

3.3 Population, Sample and Sampling procedure

The population for the study was purposefully drawn from the Lusaka province of Zambia where all the respondents are found. Purposive sampling procedure was used to select the institutions (3) while the simple random sampling procedure was used to select the University lecturers (50); five from each institution, University students (50); five from each institution, Senior Civil Servants (50); five from each Ministry and NGO executive members (50); four from each organization (Bickel, 2007). The sample size comprised of 200 respondents. Also, the primary data was complimented by the secondary data which was derived from government policy documents, ministerial reports and relevant literature on language use.

In the sampling of province and institutions, the study adopted the stratified cluster random sampling technique. Sampling of the province was done on the basis of concentration of respondents and institutions were then done zone by zone. Universities and other institutions were clustered by zones. Two zones were purposively selected based on the basis of concentration of respondents. The sampling was done at three levels: Sampling zones, universities and other institutions-level 1, Sampling University lecturers and Civil servants-level 2, Sampling NGO Executive members-level 3.

3.4 Data Analysis

In this research, data was analysed qualitatively as in-depth interviews, questionnaires and observation schedules were used as data collection instruments. Thematic approach was used, where data analysis started with the categorization of themes from the structured interviews, questionnaires (Kombo and Tromp ,2006). Charts and graphs were used to analyse data. The data gathered was analysed according to the themes of the study and per the order of the research objectives. Data generated from the interview guide was analysed manually and also, a combination of software MS Access, SPSS and MS Excel was used to analyse data. Analysis was mainly descriptive, that is, mean, median, mode, range, and standard deviation. Related statistics were applied where possible. Statistical testing took the form of Analysis of Variance (ANOVA), correlation and regression both simple and multiple, (Ahlers and Hessen,2012).

The study findings reviewed that the colonial powers, including France, often drew borders without consideration for the ethnic, linguistic, or cultural makeup of the regions. This led to the creation of artificial nations with diverse and sometimes conflicting groups within their borders. Also, the study reviewed that the colonial administration focused on extracting resources rather than building sustainable institutions. This left the newly independent nations economically and politically fragile (Bamford,2010). Colonial powers sometimes exacerbated existing ethnic and tribal divisions, creating a legacy of tension and competition for power among different groups. This manipulation often continued after independence. Colonial powers often favored certain ethnic or social groups over others, leading to imbalances in power that persisted post-independence. Neocolonialism was reviewed as a factor to instability in former French African colonies as former colonies often remained economically dependent on their former colonial masters. Economic structures were designed to benefit the colonial powers, and post-independence, these structures were difficult to dismantle. France, in particular, maintained significant political influence in its former colonies through neocolonial arrangements, such as the CFA franc currency, military agreements, and diplomatic ties. This influence sometimes interfered with the sovereignty and stability of these nations (Crumley,2010).

Further, authoritarian rule and weak institutions were reviewed by the study due to some newly independent African nations experienced a lack of effective leadership. Authoritarian regimes and weak institutions emerged, contributing to corruption, human rights abuses, and political instability (Howden,2011). Hence, the lack of stable governance structures made some countries susceptible to military coups as a means of obtaining power, resulting in a cycle of political instability. Many former French African colonies are rich in natural resources, but the mismanagement and unequal distribution of these resources have contributed to economic instability and social unrest. In addition, some countries faced heavy debt burdens inherited from the colonial era, further limiting their economic development and contributing to political instability. Disparities in access to education during the colonial period contributed to uneven development and political inequalities. The divide between urban and rural areas often reflected economic and political disparities, exacerbating social tensions (Lavallee and Vicard,2010). Nevertheless, addressing the historical factors contributing to political instability in former French African colonies requires a multifaceted approach, including political, economic, and social reforms, as well as efforts to promote good governance and inclusivity.

4.2 The role of external influences including French interests and international actors in shaping the political landscape of former French African colonies.

According to study results, the political landscape of former French African colonies has been significantly shaped by a range of external influences, including French interests and international actors. Several key factors to consider on external influence includes the historical colonial relationship between France and its African colonies laid the foundation for the political systems in these countries (Head, Mayer and Ries,2010). French colonial policies often favored centralization of power, with authority concentrated in the hands of a strong executive. Also, many former French colonies maintain economic dependencies on France. The CFA franc, a currency used by several African countries, is guaranteed by the French Treasury. This arrangement has been criticized for perpetuating economic imbalances and limiting the economic sovereignty of these nations. In addition, France maintains a military presence in some of its former colonies, either through permanent bases or bilateral defense agreements. This presence has influenced the security policies and political stability of these countries. Additionally, French military interventions in the region have had a direct impact on local politics (Anderson,2010).

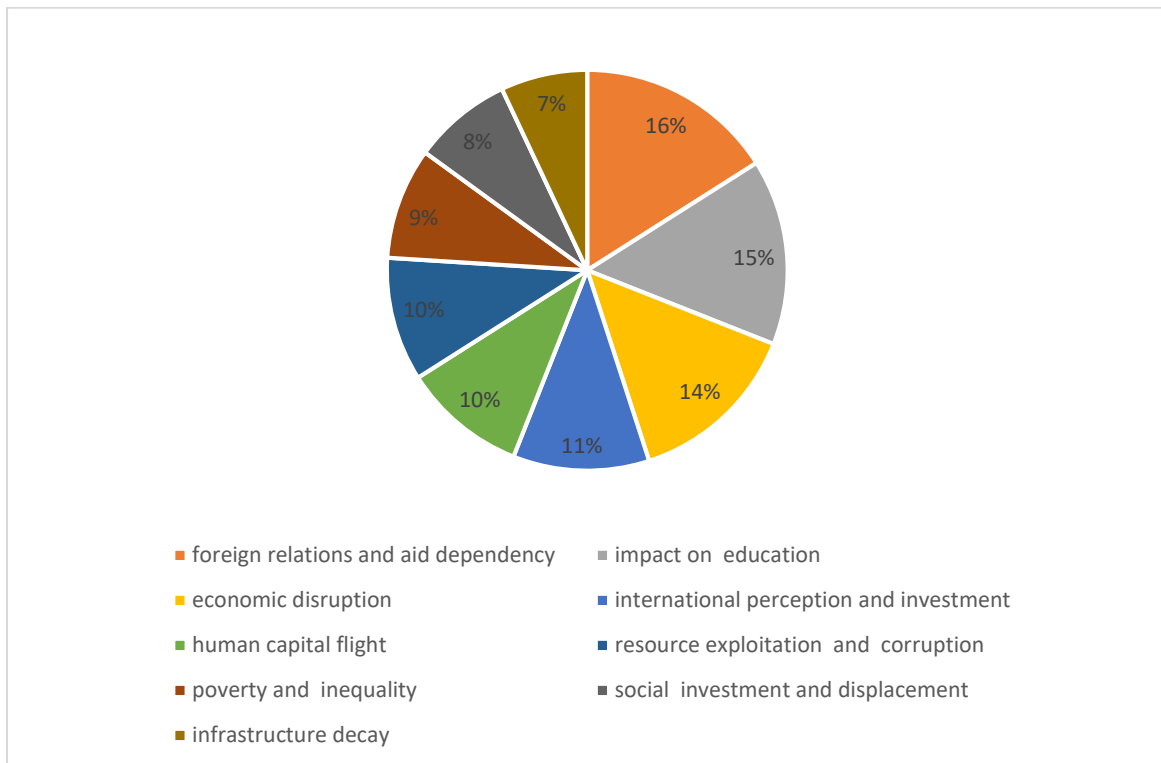
The study also reviewed that diplomatic relations with France has significantly impact the political decisions of former colonies. French influence is often exerted through diplomatic channels, and former colonies may align their policies with French interests to maintain diplomatic and economic support. France has been known to support or intervene in the internal politics of its former colonies. This can take the form of supporting certain political leaders or factions, especially those perceived to be aligned with French interests (Porter,2016). Conversely, France may oppose leaders or movements that challenge its influence. Also, International organizations, such as the United Nations and the European Union, can also play a role in shaping the political landscape. France, as a member of these organizations, may use its influence to shape policies and decisions that affect its former colonies. In addition, the global economic context, including international trade and financial systems, impacts the economic policies of former French colonies. French interests in maintaining economic ties and influencing trade relationships may shape the economic and political decisions of these nations (Hopkins,2015).

Further, the study reviewed that cultural and linguistic ties between France and its former colonies can influence political and social dynamics. The spread of the French language, education systems, and cultural exchanges may contribute to a sense of shared identity and influence political thought. Changes in the global geopolitical landscape also impact the political dynamics of former French colonies. Shifting alliances and the emergence of new global powers may influence the choices and strategies of these nations (UN,2016). Hence, the political landscape of former French African colonies is intricately linked to a complex web of external influences, with France playing a central role. The legacies of colonialism, economic ties, military presence, and diplomatic relations all contribute to shaping the political trajectories of these nations. Additionally, broader international factors further contribute to the complexity of the political dynamics in the region.

4.3 The socio-economic consequences of political instability and military coups on affected former French African colonies and their populations

According to study findings, the political instability and military coups in former French African colonies can have profound socio-economic consequences on both the affected countries and their populations. These consequences are often complex and multifaceted, impacting various aspects of society and the economy. Some key areas to consider on these consequences includes: Foreign relations and aid dependency which according to responded was the highest at 16%, followed by impact on education at 15%, economic disruption at 14%, international perception and investment at 11%, both human capital flight and resource exploitation and corruption at 10%, poverty and inequality at 9%, social unrest and displacement at 8% and infrastructure decay at 7% as illustrated in Figure 2 below.

Figure 2: Distribution of socio-economic consequences of political instability and coups



Source: Research findings 2023

The study reviewed that instability may strain diplomatic relations between the affected country and the international community, potentially leading to reduced foreign aid and cooperation. dependence on foreign aid can create vulnerabilities and limit the country's ability to pursue independent economic policies. Political instability often disrupts education systems, leading to school closures, teacher shortages, and a decline in the overall quality of education. This can have long-term consequences on the workforce and the ability of the population to participate in the global economy (William,2016). In addition, political instability and coups can disrupt economic activities, leading to a decline in foreign direct investment, trade, and overall economic growth. Instability may also result in the mismanagement of resources and corruption, hindering

economic development. Persistent political instability can negatively impact the international perception of a country, deterring foreign investors and lenders. The perception of risk associated with political instability can hinder economic growth and development.

The study also reviewed that political instability can trigger a brain drain as skilled professionals, entrepreneurs, and educated individuals seek better opportunities abroad. The loss of human capital can hinder the development of crucial sectors such as healthcare, education, and technology. Political instability may lead to increased corruption and exploitation of natural resources for personal gain, diverting funds away from public services and development projects. This can contribute to a cycle of poverty and hinder sustainable economic growth (Tariq,2012). Economic disruptions often lead to increased poverty levels as businesses close, unemployment rises, and essential services are compromised. Inequality may be exacerbated as resources are often concentrated in the hands of a few, especially those in power or with connections to the ruling regime. Further, the study reviewed that political instability can contribute to social unrest and internal conflicts, leading to displacement of populations and disruptions in social cohesion. This is so because internally displaced persons and refugees may strain social services and create additional economic challenges for both the host and home countries. Last but not the least, political instability can result in neglect of infrastructure development and maintenance, affecting transportation, communication, and energy sectors. Deteriorating infrastructure further hampers economic activities and impedes long-term development (Marsh,2013). Nevertheless, addressing these socio-economic challenges often requires a combination of domestic and international efforts, including good governance, institutional reforms, conflict resolution, and targeted development assistance. The international community, including former colonial powers like France, may play a role in supporting stability and sustainable development in these countries.

4.4 The effectiveness of past and current governance mechanisms and interventions in preventing and addressing political instability in former French African colonies

According to study results, assessing the effectiveness of past and current governance mechanisms and interventions in preventing and addressing political instability in former French African colonies is a complex task that requires considering various factors. It's important to note that each country has its unique historical, cultural, and political context, and the effectiveness of governance mechanisms can vary widely (Moore and van Nierop,2017). However, some factors the study reviewed and considered when assessing the effectiveness of governance mechanisms and interventions includes: Historical context and all stake holders should consider the historical legacy of colonialism and how it has influenced governance structures and political institutions in these countries. The post-colonial era often inherited institutions and governance systems that were not necessarily designed to meet the needs of the local populations. Also, they should evaluate the stability of political systems in these countries over time. Examine instances of political transitions, whether they were peaceful or marked by instability, violence, or coups (Holliday,2012).

The study also reviewed that in assessing the effectiveness of past and current governance mechanisms and interventions in preventing and addressing political instability in former French African colonies, they should assess the impact of governance on economic development. Stable and effective governance can contribute to economic growth, poverty reduction, and improved living standards. They should consider the level of corruption in the governance structures. High levels of corruption can undermine political stability and hinder socio-economic development. Transparency and accountability mechanisms are crucial for preventing corruption (UN,2017). In addition, they should examine the extent to which the rule of law is respected and implemented. An effective legal system is essential for maintaining political stability and ensuring citizens' rights and security. Evaluating the role of civil society in holding the government accountable is cardinal as an active and engaged civil society can contribute to transparency, good governance, and political stability (Marsh,2013). Assessing the impact of international interventions, including diplomatic efforts, peacekeeping missions, and development assistance counts in that international support can play a role in stabilizing countries facing political challenges.

Further, the study reviewed that stakeholders should consider the extent to which democratic institutions and governance reforms have been implemented. Democratic governance, if effectively practiced, can contribute to political stability (Walter,2013). Analyzing the influence of ethnic and social factors on political stability is important because ethnic tensions and social divisions can contribute to instability, and effective governance should address these issues. Should consider the perceptions of the public regarding governance. Public satisfaction or dissatisfaction can be indicative of the effectiveness

of governance mechanisms. Furthermore, to come up with accurate and specific information, it is important to conduct a country-specific analysis for a more accurate assessment, as each former French African colony has its unique set of challenges and opportunities. Moreover, ongoing monitoring and evaluation are crucial to adapt governance mechanisms to changing circumstances (Porter,2016).

5. CONCLUSION

By delving into the complexities of political instability and military coups in former French African colonies, this study aspired to contribute valuable insights that can inform evidence-based policies and interventions, fostering a more stable and prosperous future for the nations in question. Political instability and military coups have been recurring challenges in several former French African colonies, reflecting a complex interplay of historical, economic, and political factors. While it is essential to avoid overgeneralization, certain common themes and trends can be identified. The history of colonialism has left a lasting impact on many African nations as the arbitrary borders imposed by colonial powers often ignored ethnic, linguistic, and cultural realities, contributing to internal tensions. The relationship between former French colonies and France has often been characterized by a continuation of economic and political ties and this neocolonial relationship has hindered true independence and fueled resentment, potentially contributing to political unrest. In addition, many former French African colonies face economic challenges, including high levels of poverty, unemployment, and corruption and this economic instability can create social unrest and provide fertile ground for military coups as individuals or groups vie for control of valuable resources. The prevalence of long-standing authoritarian leaders in some former French colonies has been a contributing factor to political instability. Leaders who consolidate power, suppress opposition, and manipulate the political system may face resistance, potentially leading to military interventions. Furthermore, ethnic and regional divisions within these countries have sometimes been exploited for political gain, contributing to internal conflicts. The weakness of democratic institutions and the rule of law in some former French African colonies has allowed for power concentration and limited accountability. Geopolitical interests and interventions by external actors, including France and other global powers, influence the political landscape as foreign involvement exacerbate existing tensions or contribute to power struggles within these nations. The challenges of political instability and military coups in former French African colonies are multifaceted. Addressing these issues requires a comprehensive approach that considers historical legacies, economic development, governance, and international dynamics. Efforts to strengthen democratic institutions, promote inclusive governance, and address economic inequalities can contribute to more stable and resilient political environments in these nations. Additionally, fostering regional cooperation and addressing the root causes of internal conflicts are crucial for sustainable peace and development.

6. RECOMMENDATIONS

Addressing political instability and military coups in former French African colonies requires a comprehensive and multi-faceted approach that takes into account the complex historical, social, economic, and political factors at play. Nevertheless, the effectiveness of these recommendations depends on the specific context of each country. Tailoring strategies to the unique challenges and opportunities within each nation is crucial for success. Additionally, involving local communities and stakeholders in the decision-making process is essential for sustainable and inclusive development. Here are some recommendations:

1. Promoting Good Governance:

- Encourage transparent and accountable governance to reduce corruption.
- Strengthen democratic institutions and electoral processes.
- Support the rule of law and an independent judiciary.

2. Economic Development:

- Invest in economic development to reduce poverty and inequality.
- Diversify the economy to make it less dependent on a single sector.
- Encourage foreign investment and trade to stimulate economic growth.

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3. Civil Society Empowerment:

- Support and strengthen civil society organizations that promote human rights, democracy, and good governance.
- Foster an environment where citizens can freely express their views and participate in decision-making processes.

4. Conflict Prevention and Resolution:

- Invest in conflict prevention mechanisms and early warning systems.
- Support peacebuilding initiatives and reconciliation processes to address historical grievances.

5. Military Reform:

- Work towards a professional and apolitical military.
- Provide training and resources to build the capacity of security forces.
- Establish mechanisms for civilian oversight of the military.

6. Education and Information:

- Promote education and media literacy to empower citizens with critical thinking skills.
- Ensure access to accurate and unbiased information through a free and independent media.

7. International Cooperation:

- Collaborate with regional organizations, such as the African Union, to address common challenges.
- Engage in diplomatic efforts to encourage stability and democratic governance.

8. Addressing Neo-Colonialism Concerns:

- Be attentive to concerns about neocolonialism and work towards mutually beneficial partnerships.
- Foster a sense of national pride and ownership over development initiatives.

9. Human Rights Protection:

- Advocate for the protection of human rights and freedom of expression.
- Address social justice issues to promote inclusivity and social cohesion.

10. Long-Term Development Planning:

- Encourage countries to develop and implement long-term development plans that are inclusive and sustainable.
- Ensure that development benefits reach all segments of the population.

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Authors’ Biographies


Lufeyo Chitondo specializes in Language Education and Research and is currently lecturing Language Education at Twin Palm Leadership University in the Languages and Literacy Department.



Thelma Chansa Chanda specializes in Civic Education and Political Science. She is currently lecturing Political Science, Social Sciences and Research at Rockview University.

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