

## ANALYSIS OF ECOWAS QUEST FOR REGIME SURVIVAL VERSUS REPUBLIC OF NIGER: ECONOMIC AND POLITICAL IMPLICATIONS

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### Abstract

*The study explores ECOWAS quest for regime survival in the aftermath of the collapse of the democratic government in the Republic of Niger, being the fifth country in the row in West Africa within three (3) years. It sought to unveil the latent reasons behind ECOWAS stand, interrogate whether it was acting as a proxy and identify the linkages between the destruction of Nord-Stream Gas Pipeline phase 1 and 2, the renewed interest in Trans-Sahara Gas Pipeline (TSGP) and ECOWAS pursuit of regime survival. The analysis approached the study through an exploratory and diagnostic method, which explored historical and time-series events in the analysis. The procedure revealed that wherever democratic regimes failed to add value to the lives of citizens through democratic accountability, the people will embark on protest actions out of relative deprivation that confront them. Military coup d'etat is*

*an extreme form of protest at the level of supplantment as witnessed in Niger. It further disclosed that ECOWAS quest for regime survival is unconnected with TSGP project meant to convey gas from Nigeria through Niger Republic via Algeria to western Europe through Italy. The declaration by the coupists that Niger will not honour its own part of the contract any longer would result in extreme dependence of Western Europe on Russia for gas. The logical alternative is to get ECOWAS to embark on regime restoration in order to honour the pipeline contract and possibly free Europe from the stranglehold of Russia. The analysis concluded that Russian -Ukraine kind of war looms in Niger, which is capable of engulfing Nigeria and the sub-region.*

**Keywords:** *Trans-Sahara Gas Pipeline, Nord-Stream, Supplantment, Regime-Survival, Proxy-War*

**JEL Classification:** F51; F52 & F54

## 1. Introduction

The 1990s could be described as the years of democratization in Africa, because many African countries transited from military regimes, monarchies, and all forms of governance systems operated in the continent, embarked on elections to obtain semblance of democratic system. Elections are the most known indicator of democracy (Frank, 2018 p.83).

Whether these elections brought about good government base on the desires of the governed and meet the expectations of the citizens it is never evaluated. It is important to state that the final outcome of any government civil or military or any hybrid form of government is often the continuous improvement in the welfare of its citizens (Frank, 2018). Where that is not the case, the citizens reserve the options of waiting for the next elections to throw out the politicians. However, because they are aware that with rigging, their votes may not count, public protests become an option. When the demonstration of the relatively deprive in the streets are not causing a rethink by the public officials, then the extreme protest come in the form of supplanting them by the combine forces of the society. The supplantment of sitting Government in Coup d'etat is therefore, an indication of failure of the democratic regimes to meet the expectations of the citizens. It is an indication that democratic regimes must have failed in the continuous generation 'Pareto Optimality' or improvement in the welfare of the citizens of the nation (Frank, 2018).

It is instructive to note the other dimensions of the problem, which may be restricted to the situation to Francophone Sahelian West Africa, may, as well, affect the stability of Anglophone West African States adversely. This is because in recent time, Chad, Guinea, Mali, Burkina-Faso and now Republic of Niger have all come under military rule, which is the focus of this critical analysis. Democratic practices rest on imbibing democratic values, which include among others allowing everyone to be part of the system (rights and freedoms for everyone), equality (everyone is the same basis), equity (fairness), rule of law (everyone is the same before the law). Hence, the ultimate outcome of democracy is for every citizen to have the opportunity to live well (Sodaro 2008). Whether the civilian regimes in West Africa guaranteed these values is a matter for concern. When democracy collapses, as it is doing in West Africa, it is only reasonable to assume that the citizens are not getting the economic benefit of being members of the nation, which is supposed to be the dividend of democracy. When democratic values are absent in democracies, public protests become the order of the day. One variant of such protest is coup d'état, especially when the politicians commit civilian coup through rigging of elections and using the state apparatus to protect themselves. This perhaps provide the explanation for the events in West Africa, which put democracy on the reverse gear, with military rule on the rise in the region.

Consequent upon the failure of the Government of Mali to meet the expectations of the citizens, led the head of the military to sack the head of state and assume executive power from his earlier Vice-Presidential position. He fused the power in himself and the military council in the Malian government on the 24<sup>th</sup> of May 2021. Mali then had a form of 'dyarchy' which was a mixture of military and civilian in the government. The Malian military had watched the political class perpetrated irregularities in parliamentary elections, kidnapping of political opposition leader, Cisse Souleman Cisse. As a result of these developments, Malians have been on the streets protesting and demanding good governance, which led to the house arrest of President Bah N'daw. It had named a civilian prime minister, Choguel Kokalla Maiga into its government and the Constitutional court had since legitimized the government with its pronouncement.

On the 25<sup>th</sup> of May 2020 former president Goodluck Jonathan successfully mediated between Assimi Goita ousted President Bah N'daw and Prime Minister Moctar Ouane who submitted their letters of resignation from detention and calm was restored to Mali. The opposition leader was named prime minister while the

military leader assumed the position of the Head of State and Government. The Contagious effects of the event sipped into Burkina Faso on 30<sup>th</sup> September 2022.

Guinea came under a democratically elected government, which concluded its constitutional two terms but went ahead to organize a referendum to extend his tenure to a third term in what George Weah the Liberian president termed '*constitutional coup*'. On September 6, 2022, Guinea came under a military rule suspending democratic governance. The Republic of Niger on her own had its current coup d'état on July 26, 2023, President Mohammed Bouzam was held in the presidential palace incommunicado.

On the account of bush-fire effect of coup d'état in the Sahel, Chad changed its ruler in April 2021, Guinea, soon followed on September 2021, while Sudan took her turn in October 2021, Burkina-Faso, in January 2022 and now Republic of Niger, in July 26, 2023 supplanted president Mohammed Bazoum through house arrested These countries are contiguous, hence the fear that the military fever would keep spreading like wildfire. Military rule now stretches from the extreme West coast to the Red Sea dividing the African continent into Maghreb north and the South. What could be responsible for the rapid recession of democratic experience in West Africa?

### **1.1 Statement of Research Problem**

The main issue explored in this work relate to the fact that the hitherto democratic Francophone states in west Africa are now relapsing into military rule. This constitute problem for other West African nations because there is the concept and principles of 'contagious or osmotic pressure of coup otherwise known as 'bush-fire effect'. This principle operates in such a way that the event in one state gets replicated in another, after all, they are the same military, probably trained in the same institutions and could have been course mates. The courage of the coupists in one state could encouraged coup in another. This seem to be the fear in Nigeria, which has dictated her steps within the ECOWAS against the Republic of Niger. It is just proper to halt the contagious effect in not only the Sahel but in the entire continent merely to ensure 'regime survival' irrespective of good governance and accountability.

However, the more relevant questions to interrogate are: where was ECOWAS when Mali, Chad, Burkina Faso and Guinea fell to the power of the bullets? What is the interest in Niger, which did not exist in other states to trigger Nigeria's interest. Equally important to ask is whether ECOWAS is aware of obnoxious

colonial agreements (the repayment of colonial debt for colonizing Niger, automatic confiscation of national financial reserves of former French colonies, which must be held in ‘Banque de France’; the fact that the colonial agreement these Sahelian francophone countries signed, gave the right to exploit, buy all minerals found in their territories before they could offer to anyone else (*the right of first refusal of any raw material or natural resources found in Niger*); the exclusive right to provide military equipment and train military officers of the colonies and the obligations to ally with France in the event of war or global crisis, even if it is against a sister African state and the right of France to intervene in any Francophone state to protect its interests, which have bounded Francophone states to France since independence (Quoa, 2023). Are these clauses not offensive enough for ECOWAS and even African Union to have worked hard to address the challenges in order to free Francophone African states from neo-colonialism?

Akin to the above is the fact that democracy delivers welfare as democratic outputs, which include economic welfare of individuals, groups and society as a whole. Welfare and the economy have long been a top priority of practically every government in the world. Hence, the government is to stimulate economic growth, widen economic opportunities, alleviate poverty and provide generous welfare benefits ranging from educational assistance and unemployment relief to medical care and social security. Economic well-being is thus a widely recognized component of democracy (Sodaro, 2008 p.184), when the states in the region cannot provide these outcomes, obviously the people will protest as they did in Mali and Kenya and the military could intervene as a form of protest. This could be because the politicians usually rig election processes to perpetrate themselves in power. The military institutions often do feel compelled to intervene to save the state from degenerating into something else. When the military intervenes, it does so, at either the levels of supplantment, displacement, pressure and influence, respectively. The situation in the republic of Niger is at the level of supplantment.

It is very instructive to note that before Republic of Niger’s unconstitutional change of Government on July 26, 2023, Mali, Sierra Leone, Gambia, Chad, Burkina-Faso, Guinea had all changed their governance systems in similar manner (Quoa, 2023). How did ECOWAS resolved the conflicts there and why did they change the strategies when it came to the Republic of Niger?

In 1978, ECOWAS adopted the protocol of non-aggression, which bound its members to the peaceful resolution of dispute and called on them to refrain from supporting subversion or aggression on their territories (*ECOWAS, 2010.*) This

provision vitiates the act of military intervention and the act of switching off electricity from Niger when there is a subsisting covenant. In December 1999, ECOWAS adopted the protocol related to the mechanism for conflict prevention, management, resolution, peace keeping and security (ECOWAS Protocol 1999). This provision relates to conflict between one state and another within the region and not when it is intra-conflict within each state of the community. The international protocol of Non-interference in the domestic affairs of every sovereign state prevails as a protocol in all international and regional organizations. Against the backdrop of the above, military intervention could not have been contemplated in that provision.

It would be recalled that Nigeria obtained a World Bank loan around 1961 to build the Kainji dam and by 1963 entered into a covenant with the Republic Niger to supply it electricity in-lieu of building its own dam upstream, which would have cut off the water flow into Kainji. Denying the Republic of Niger electricity is a violation of the principles of *pacta sunt servanda* (*agreement must be respected*). Even the 2001 supplementary protocol of ECOWAS which relate to the growth and practices of democracy abhors intervention in another territory (OECD, 2023). These are the dynamics of the problem which ECOWAS has threatened the Republic of Niger, which is the subject of this study and analysis. It is clear that ECOWAS have no locus-standi to invade Republic of Niger, militarily. It should do what it did when others became military regimes. Nigeria erred in switching electricity off against Niger in the face of subsisting agreement. The fear of Bushfire or Osmotic effect seem to be the latent reason for Nigeria action through ECOWAS.

## **1.2 Research Questions**

The study was guided by the following research questions:

- (i) What factors could have motivated Nigeria through ECOWAS to take the stand it took towards the Republic of Niger when this not the first coup?
- (ii) In what ways could the current stand of ECOWAS likely to lead to its break-up?
- (iii) Could venturing into Niger internal affair turn out to become Nigeria's unending war as experience by USA in Vietnam and Somalia.?
- (iv) What are the relations of the Trans-Saharan Gas Pipeline Project from Nigeria to Europe and ECOWAS quest for regime survival in the Republic of Niger?



- (v) Could Nigeria through ECOWAS be playing a script for a proxy war?
- (vi) What could be the economic implications of possible conflict for countries in the West African region?

### **1.3 Aims and Objectives**

The broad and specific purposes of this study were.

- (i) To establish factors that could have motivated Nigeria's stand through ECOWAS on the Niger coup d'état.
- (ii) To establish the ways in which the current stands of Nigeria/ECOWAS in the Republic of Niger could likely lead to ECOWAS break-up.
- (iii) To establish whether venturing into Niger internal affair could turn out to become Nigeria's unending war as experienced by USA in Vietnam and Somalia.
- (iv) To gain a better understanding of the association of ECOWAS stand and the Trans-Saharan Gas Pipeline Project which was intended to convey gas to Europe through the Republic of Niger.
- (v) To clearly understand whether Nigeria through ECOWAS could be playing a script for a proxy war.
- (vi) To establish the economic implications of possible conflict for countries in the West African region.
- (vii) Finally, to recommend robust diplomatic steps necessary to resolve the impasse.

### **1.4 Significance of the Study**

First it would reveal to the academic communities the theoretical linkages of Nigeria's actions and the manifestation of the theory of 'bushfire or Osmotic or Contagious effect of military coup d'état as the cardinal reason for Nigeria's actions. Secondly, it would illustrate to scholars that ECOWAS does not have in its protocols a clause which mandates it to intervene in another member state militarily except authorize by the United Nations based on the advice of the Security council. It would further highlight how the intervention could result in the break-up of ECOWAS through powerful economic and political alliances. Such alliances would prolong the war. For the diplomatic communities, it would illustrate how Nigeria's actions would violate both international and municipal laws without authorization, thereby opening ways for anarchy in the region. Thirdly the case analyses approach would revealed in-depth fact about the situations in the past and reveal whether Nigeria and ECOWAS have either

followed best practices or not in the case of Republic of Niger. Fourthly, it would demonstrate how the actions of ECOWAS to intervene may be likening to a proxy war.

### **1.5 Scope of the Study**

The Republic of Niger is a landlocked state lying across the Sahel Savanna with seemingly low Human Development Indices arising from failed leadership (HDI) (UNDP, 2020). It is indebted to the international creditor institutions like any other African state. Its agriculture is mostly subsistence in nature and is carried out around the river Niger basin, but the nation possesses large array of solid minerals. Though the quantity of the solid minerals has not been measured but estimate placed some of its at global level.

The Republic of Niger ranked second in Africa after Namibia in the production of Uranium-235, which is mined at the central Niger minefield, Air-Massif, Arlit, Imour ravin and Dasa fields respectively. It is among the largest global producer of Uranium, mostly utilize in nuclear defence system for ‘bomb fission making, nuclear generation of electricity (nuclear reactors) and nuclear medicinal, including X-ray machines in bio-medical units of health institutions. According to the European Nuclear Society (2003), 1 kilogram (Kg) of coal can generate 8-Kilowatt hour (Kwh) of heat, 1 kilogram of mineral oil generates 12-Kilowatt hour of heat and 1 Kilogram of Uranium bring forth 24,000,000 Kilowatt of heat (electricity).

This is how important, economically and strategically Uranium is in the energy generation industry. This is mostly consumed by France, hence its military presence in and around the mines where Uranium is being extracted. The other buyers of Nigerien Uranium are the USA and China. The Uranium-235 is an opportunity cost to the Republic Niger in terms of electricity generation. It is instructive to note that Niger relies on Nigeria for its supply of electricity, while France relies for about 17 percent of its electricity supply on uranium from the Republic of Niger for its nuclear reactors.

It was also discovered that the last market price of Uranium was about \$100,000 per kilogram. This translated to the fact that Republic of Niger on this product alone has no reason to be classified as part of the least developed nations in Africa nor in the Sahel (Morgenthau, 1973; Maktoum, 2015). The other natural resources found in commercial estimated quantities in Niger include crude oil, which was found in the Agadez and produces about 20,000 barrels daily, refined by *Soraz* (*Chinese*) refining company in Zinder region. Out of this, 5000 bpd refined barrels are consumed in the domestic economy (Savannah Energy, 2023).



The other natural wealth of the Republic of Niger includes gold, coal, Iron, phosphate, salt, copper, silver, tin, zinc and marble. The coal reserves have been estimated at a very high tonnage. Other solid minerals found in Niger include gold and Gypsum. A dynamic leader could harness all of these to take the nation away from a poor nation to a moderately rich one when value are added to these ranges of natural resources, like Singapore and Malaysia have done. Politically, the republic of Niger have had a total of five (5) coups since independence. In 1999 Ibrahim Manasarra was overthrown by Majour Dauda Wanke. Nigeria's former president Olusegun Obasanjo through 'track2' or 'back door diplomacy negotiated with Wanke for on early transition to democracy because it is often very difficult to reverse a successful coup d'etat. Through Nigeria foreign affairs minister, Sule Lamido, in a shuttle diplomacy, Wanke transited to president Mamadou Tanja in 2020, who later wanted to remain in office beyond his term. The republic of Niger is a home to a large Nigerian Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs) who can be used as human shield in any war situation. They are in a region of 5000 (IDPs) in the Republic of Niger. The paper also explores the economic implications of the possible conflict for both Nigeria, Niger and other ECOWAS countries.

## **2. Theoretical foundation**

### **2.1 The Warrior Tradition in Africa**

In every state in pre-colonial Africa, the military have been part and parcel of the processes of state formation. The degree of affinity between the military and the state differs from state to state (Mazrui, 1977). In Africa there existed a norm known as the 'warrior tradition' wherein the role of the soldier, the king and statesmen were all fused into one person. The warrior tradition was the route to securing the power of the state. The ruler was first of all a soldier who led in inter-tribal warfare (Uzoigwe, 1977). This cultural norm made the concept of a professional soldier in Africa a novel concept and practices. This stand in contradiction to Huntington's professional postulation in African states. Samuel P. Huntington it would be recalled had postulated that a highly trained and professional soldier who is imbued with the norms, values and ethics of professional western soldier, would often acknowledge the supremacy of civilian government, which is legitimate within the confines of the state (Frank, 2018 p.107). This has proven to be difficult in Africa as shown in the Republic of Niger and other Francophone states, which become the subject of this analysis. This and

many others accounted for the situation in the Sahel region. The associated factors are discussed below.

## 2.2 Causes of Military Coup

It is pertinent to therefore categorize the causes of military intervention into four major groups. These are (a) *ecological or societal factors* which include the civil authority's inability to manage the economy (corruption, inflation, poor management of the state, insecurity, too much strike in all sectors, extreme nepotism in government, etc.) hence resulting in street protests, demanding better economic management to provide better economic welfare for the citizens. Desires of leaders to perpetuate their rule in office, which the Liberian President George Opong Weah termed 'institutional coup', (Guoa, 2023) such as the suppression of the rights of opposition leaders and suppression of public opinion with arbitrary arrest and rigging of elections; (b) *Intra-military or socio-political factors*, where there are specialist military corps, which are treated differentially, it breeds jealousy and eventual coup. For example, in Guinea, GPS versus Presidential Guard, in Niger, presidential guard, National guard and intelligence corps, where one unit may be favoured against the other. In Niger Republic there exists the Presidential Guard and the Counter-Terrorism unit respectively. The counter-terrorism unit enjoy almost all the military aid which came into Niger, while the presidential guard remained unaffected, when it should have equally shared in the largess (Guoa, 2023). Secondly, the commander of the presidential guard had been in that commanding post for twelve (12) years. The president was planning to change him as he did with the Chief of Army staff. The commander perhaps got a grapevine information of the plan not only to change but also to retire him, couple with the bickering of inadequate funding unlike the case of the 'Counterterrorism' unit, prompted them to topple the government. These factors often do not relate to the entire society but personality clashes, which consequence affect the entire society; (c) Extra-Societal factor refers to military interventions instigated from outside the continent especially during the cold war (Frank, 2018). It has been established that most coup d'état in Africa in the 70s fall into this category. Where a government in African state was considered ideological, such as that of Late Thomas Sankara of Burkina Faso regime. The Western Government, which trained and equip Burkina Faso's military had to use the rank and file of the military to instigate counter coup to install a government which would be ideologically friendly to them and their interests; (d) Miscellaneous factors are flimsy reasons

such as those offered by Late Idi Amin Dada of Uganda for interventions, wherein he stressed that the politicians were the only one with free money to enjoy themselves (Frank, 2018 p.108). All the reasons for military intervention could be compacted into these four broad categories. The event in the Republic of Niger finds expression herein. These factors acting in combination with others cause coup d'état anywhere as they did in the Republic of Niger.

When regional bodies meant to enhance economic development go for 'regime survival for their colleagues, the people will revolt, and military coup may be the outcome to maintain the cooperate survival of the State. African rulers must be made to understand that civil protests are democratic rights. Coup d'état could be the beginning of 'Revolutions' against unjust colonial agreements as revealed by Dr. Arikana Guoa the former permanent representative to African Union Mission in Washington DC in her recent interview on 'Arise News TV'.

### **2.3 Cases of ECOWAS Intervention**

This section focuses on case-reviews of the collapse of or threat to democracy in the sub-region in order distil on the antecedents of ECOWAS in dealing with cases of military interventions. This was meant to identify best practices in accordance with its protocols in the instances of Guinea-Bissau 1999, Cote d'Ivoire 2003, Gambia 2017 and Guinea 2021.

i) The Gambia 2017: Christof Hartman (2017) provided narratives on how ECOWAS treaty was reviewed in 1993, particularly its conflict prevention protocol in 1999 and the principles of democracy and Good Governance and narrated how Yaya Jammeh loss election and accepted the outcome won by Adama Barrow, which he later rejected. ECOWAS reported Jammeh's intransigence to the United Nations, which approves all steps proposed by the regional body, short of approving the provisions of Chapter 7 of the UN Charter. The Chapter deals with authorizing the use of force to militarily intervene in another sovereign state through the Security Council. Gambia is almost surrounded by Senegal in strategic location. Their earlier attempts to collapse into 'Sene-gambia' had failed owing to colonial experiences. Jammeh intransigence led to Adama Barrow being sworn in at the Gambian embassy in Dakar. Robust diplomacy rather than the threat of military intervention caused Yaya Jammeh to vacate the office. The lessons include reporting to the UNO, African Union and deploying robust diplomacy short of the use of arms through Chapter 7 of the UN Charter, meaning only UN through the Security Council can authorize invasion of another state.

ii) Cote d’ivoire 2003: Thomas Fessy (2010) narrated how, President Lurent Gbagbo had ruled 2000-2011 after the military leader Robert Guei through elections. He conducted an election believed to have been won by Alassane Quattara, yet Gbagbo refused to accept the outcome of the election just like Jammeh. Almost a civil war ensued between their supporters. In the standoff, which emerged the French soldiers stationed in the country intervene and clear the way for Allasane Quattara to assume office and Laurent Gbagbo was arrested. Allasane Quattara was seen as ‘*mona ami*’ ‘*our friend*’ who would do the bidding of the French to keep to the terms of all the colonial agreements, which bounded the Francophone states to France in a ‘Neo-colonial arrangement.

The 2016 Constitution of Cote D’Ivoire provided for two terms of five (5) years each. Allasane Quattara had completed two terms and had gone ahead to alter the grundnorm to allow him a third (3th) term. It is instructive to note that ECOWAS has not seen his extension of tenor in office as running against the provisions of A/SP.1/12/01 on Democratic Good Governance Supplementary protocol. It silences translated to ECOWAS being interested in ‘*Regime Survival*’ and not concern with ‘*functus officio*’ or ‘procedural irregularity’ of West African rulers which is a breach of democratic protocols. Consequent upon this act, many political opponents boycotted the last election, which gave him the third term in office. The electoral coup was carried out against Pascal N’Guessan and Henri Bedie, who are the main opposition candidates respectively. ECOWAS was silence perhaps because Allasane Quattara was installed by the French military. ECOWAS stood by in the face of France involvement in this instance. This amounted to tolerating a third term which violated the constitution and above all, it accepted French military assisted government in Guinea.

iii) Mali 2020: Kabir Yusuf (2022) presented how President Ibrahim Boubacar Keita (IBK) led the Malian government and got public protests from the state failure to deliver democratic dividends, insurgency in the north and controversy in military promotions were the immediate cause of public protest against President Keita. The president was accused of not respecting democratic values of free speech and intolerant of political oppositions who were locked up in most times. The gap in military investments without governance was just equipping the military to act independently. Mali coup in 2012, was excused on government ineffectiveness and corruption. The coup in 2020 was after months of public protests led by June 5 Movement (M5-RFP), which was caused by rigged legislative elections and kidnapping of opposition leader Souleman Cisse. The

Constitutional court overruled election result in 31 constituencies, which had to be conducted again at a higher cost. The president's response to the protest was high handedness and many people were killed. Mali had been a known for public protest since 1991 when they used it to end 23 years of one-party rule for multi-party democracy. The soldiers joined the protesters when they were sent to quell the riots. 1991-2012 Mali was an example of democracy in the Sahel, this was short lived, indicating revolutionary prodrome. Election postponement by IBK in 2013 and many other dates failure led to several coups. ECOWAS as its customary focused on 'regime survival' against failed governance (Cole, 2020). The junta set date for election is 2024, which lessened the sanctions and ECOWAS accepted the military regime in Mali. Malians currently see ECOWAS as weaning club of Presidents who take a harsh line against military coupists but overlook their own faults in governance.

ECOWAS pressured Laurent Gbagbo to honour election results, which indicated Allasane Quattara won. ECOWAS also cooperated with the French military intervention to install Quattara in violation of the constitution beyond the two term provisions. ECOWAS deliberately refused to understand that failure of governance lead to military takeover in extreme cases. Whenever the military announced dates for return to civil rule, sanctions were relaxed.

iv) Guinea 2021: Alpha Conde was removed by Colonel Doumbouya of the Special Forces Group who fought the Presidential Guard to arrest the president 4-5<sup>th</sup> September 2021. He had raised taxes in an attempt to balance the budget. He slashed the military and police budget but increased the allocation to the national assembly and the presidency. He was accused of attempting to prolong his stay in office through constitutional violation by the opposition. They were jailed unjustly. Corruption, poverty unemployment, lack of free and fair elections, insecurity and poor service delivery was the outcome of governance (BBC News, 2023).

What is visible in all the above cases are poor governance output, personal ambition of the coup leaders, and the obsessions of the presidents to violate the constitutions and lower the standard of living of the citizens. When the citizens protest, military coup, which is a form of protest, surfaces.

#### **2.4 Theory underpinning the study: Diplomatic leadership**

Every theory in the social sciences performs four basic functions, namely, to explain the phenomenon, how one variable connects to the other, and to firm up a position of scholastic argument as well as draw connections to other issues and

ultimately grant the capacity for predictive wisdom about a study. In order to explicate the phenomenon of this study the theory of diplomatic leadership was adopted wherein it combined the substance of traditional diplomacy with the elements of leadership functions as the theory with the capacity to explain and avoid cataclysmic war, which is a manifestation of ego-trip, which is alien to diplomacy.

#### **2.4.1 Diplomacy**

Hans Morgenthau (1973) in his classic 'Politics Among Nations-The Struggle for Power and Peace' averred that the tasks of diplomacy are fourfold:

(i) diplomacy must determine its objectives in the light of the power actually and potentially available for the pursuit of the objectives. On this, we interrogated ECOWAS and Nigeria, if they have assessed their stock of arsenal in their attempt to go to war with the Republic of Niger. Do they mind that though the population is relatively small, other nations could join them to increase their arsenal to fight ECOWAS states until they are weary? Russia versus Ukraine is very instructive in this regard. The war may become Nigeria's Vietnam via international assistance to Niger through a proxy warfare.

(ii) Diplomacy must access the objectives of other nation and the power actually and potentially available to it in the pursuit of its objectives. ECOWAS/Nigeria must have conducted its calculus and arrive at the point that it can defeat Republic of Niger in a matter of days, pursuant to the reinstatement of democracy in Niger. Russia (a world power) versus Ukraine is instructive. Niger could have the Wagner, Russia and others behind it. Niger could pull out of the Multinational Joint Task Force against Boko Haram and Nigeria could become destabilize in a region with the attendant diversion of resources and attention to the ECOWAS war against the republic of Niger. It may not be a quick win. The other members of ECOWAS would not foot the bill, Nigeria's economy is not healthy to cover all the expenses of the war. Increasing internal hardship, may generate internal uprising against the government during the war.

(iii) To what extent are the objectives of Republic of Niger and the objectives of ECOWAS/Nigeria compatible with each other. Both sides should be able to identify the common denominator on the matter. The desire for peace and development run through both Niger, Nigeria and in ECOWAS States, but the fear of contagious effect of coup in Nigeria seem the most prominent. The incompatible elements should be thrashed out with compatible ones generating cooperation on a common ground.



(vii) Diplomacy must employ the means suited in the pursuit of its objectives-It is certainly not threat, which is the path chosen by ECOWAS/Nigeria but tact to get the other side to see your point and engage for amicable settlement of the issue at stake.

All these are to be conducted through the use of negotiation, consultation, back-channel or 'track2' when the front channel seems murky, summits and conferences where bilateral and multilateral covenants and protocols are sign would certainly be the arena for peace-making.

#### **2.4.2 Leadership:**

The application of above fundamentals of diplomacy required leadership. According to Maktoum (2015 p.69) it is all about being capable of making successful decisions. Conversely, behind every failed decision lies a government that failed its people. He went further to posit that a leader should have a vision, the ability to see what others cannot see about where he is taking the people to, anticipate the future, predict the challenges it will bring and prepare the people to face them. A leader must acquire new skills and explore their hidden potential, so they can discharge their duties as best as they can. He must be a good student of history. In this respect the Nigeria leader should have known that the former Nigerien President Diori Hamani when he was the president of '*Organisation Commune Africaine et Malgache* (OCAM), and France influenced all Francophone African countries to recognise Biafra during the Nigeria civil war. Niger broke out of Ivorian and French pro-Biafran stance in support of the Federal Government of Nigeria (Nwokedi, 1992, cited in Ate and Akinterinwa, 2021). Then he must have the ability to lead from the front and to take initiative for others to follow. Given the economic situation, Nigeria may not be ready go to war now or in the nearest future with the Republic of Niger.

A leader, Maktoum (2015) went on to illustrate, must take blame for wrong decisions and credit success to his team, he must engage in dialogue (diplomacy) and try to gain knowledge from other acquaintances. Nigeria dealt with coup situation before in Mali strictly through diplomacy. The current leadership should have gained tactics from the previous Nigerian leaders. Why did the current leaders not learn from the past leaders how they dealt with similar problem in the past. Failure of leadership promotes coup, in extreme instance and street protest from civil populace. The more satisfied the people, the more focused they would be on building up national wealth (2015). It is clear from the above that leadership deploy diplomacy and diplomacy make a good leader through deep consideration,

consultation, research before reaching the right decision. If a leader fails to turn his vision into a decision and that decision into reality, then he is a failure (Maktoum, 2015). This is the theoretical underpinning upon which the entire analyses rested.

### 3. Research Method

The events in the Republic of Niger and ECOWAS were still evolving, hence, the most appropriate approach of study was the exploratory and diagnostic system. It is often applied to research questions that have not previously been studied in detail, while the diagnostic analysis component, review the time-series component of coup d'état in Francophone West African States. The diagnostic method would examine when the coup d'état phenomenon started, what ECOWAS did in the previous cases, and why they are now treating the current case of the Republic of Niger differently. The combination of the exploratory and diagnostic method evaluates the 'bushfire or contagious effect or the osmotic pressure' of coup d'état against the set of actions, which ECOWAS indulged in against Republic of Niger to find explanation. It assessed the strength of association between the event in Republic of Niger and likelihood of impact in Nigeria, hence the concerned for regime survival in Niger.

Though qualitative, could be primary in nature because it generates issues and data for further study through its approach of case study analyses (Ndiyo, 2005). Exploratory or grounded theory or interpretive and diagnostic research were flexible an open-ended in nature in their applications to the cases studied. They were the most appropriate means of data gathering from the case analyzed. They were applicable because we had general idea of the situation in the Republic of Niger and are conversant with previous coup d'état in the region. We then generated research questions to guide the study out of this knowledge base.

Firstly, the identification of the problem of the study. In this context, we inquired if ECOWAS has provision in its charter which allow for invasion of other's territory with the force of arms to reinstate an ousted president. Secondly, the study was curious to establish how ECOWAS had brought Article 53 of the UNO Charter which states that ...no enforcement action shall be taken under regional arrangements or by regional agencies without the authorization of the Security Council, (UN Charter 1945). Thirdly, we sought to know what happen to the principles of sovereignty and non-interference in the internal affairs of member state. The fourth step was the identification of sources of data. It was secondary, from published works on the Republic of Niger as posted in the internet, books,

encyclopaedia and materials on the military capability of the Niger Armed Forces and Air Force etc. This allowed for extensive latitude to generate data to respond to the research questions. The fifth step was to seek an understanding of the relationship of Trans-Saharan Gas Pipeline Project (TSGPP) from Nigeria through the Republic of Niger to Europe and the quest for regime survival by ECOWAS in Niger.

The sixth step was the subjection of the data obtained from the secondary sources to content analyses, interpretation of the result and the triangulation of all the qualitative data to address the problem with scope for further studies.

#### **4. Analysis**

##### **4.1 Assessment of Research Questions 1**

We had earlier wanted to know the factors motivating Nigeria's actions through the ECOWAS towards the Republic of Niger. It was found that Nigeria and most ECOWAS members felt threatened by the rate in which erstwhile democratic governments were collapsing in the region with the most recent being Republic of Niger.

One of the causal factors for coup d'état is extra-societal component, which includes 'cross-sectional contagious or Osmotic spill-over effects of coups because of their proximity or sharing of common boundary (such as Niger and Nigeria). It also refers to a situation in which the course mate at Sandhurst or from other military academy would stage a coup in one country and their mates in another would follow suit, after all they were course mates. Earlier in the same West Africa we once had this scenario, Osmotic effect of coup d'état. Togo experienced coup in 1963, Dahomey (Benin Republic) 1966, Ghana and Nigeria 1966 (Frank 2018). This is what is referred to as bushfire or contagious effect of coup d'état. This could explain Nigeria and ECOWAS fears especially those who are unaware of the final output of democracy, which is to generate 'Pareto Optimality' through accountability. Any regime that cannot render this, will face protest of any form and in extreme case coup d'état. Nigeria's involvement is majorly the fear of contagious effect of coup d'état.

##### **4.2 Appraisal of Research Question 2**

It is just instructive to note that ECOWAS consists of Francophone and Anglophone states. It should also be noted that the Francophone states were initially reluctant to be part of the Union but had to be persuaded. It should be further noted that all the Francophone states have colonial agreement with France,

which would never allow for the actualization of the essence of ECOWAS. It is important to note that France had earlier masterminded the formation of Communiqué Economique de l' Afrique de l' Ouest (CEAO) as a counter force to Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS). The spirit of cleavages still persists in France and may play out during the intervention. All the states where Coup d'état had occurred are Francophone states, which had shown solidarity with the Republic of Niger. The probability of these states pulling out of ECOWAS is very high because they are mostly military government against the democratic ones. Since ECOWAS want to restore Mohammed Bazoum, all others may well presume that the democratic leaders they supplanted may well be restored too. They may on this assumption decide to withdraw their membership of ECOWAS to form another economic group.

The militarization of the state is seen as a movement away from continue alliance with underdevelopment by the civilian authorities with erstwhile colonial masters. Attack on anyone would breed alliance, as the faith of one in the hand of ECOWAS would mean what is likely to be their faith too. They may invite the 'Wagner Private Military Company in Russia controlled by late Yevgeny Prigozhin to help, as well as Russia or China. It is important to note that both America and France have one thousand strong military men in Niger. We may end up having African Continental War out of all these. If military rule is the problem, what is the like of President Faure Gnassingbe of Togo doing there? Let it be known that President George Opong Weah would not go with them because as he stated: 'ECOWAS tolerate civilian coup through election rigging'. Against these backdrops, ECOWAS is on the brink of 'break-up' into Francophone and Anglophone Groups. Mauritania had earlier left the group. The dreams of the founding fathers for an economic union would be buried.

### **4.3 Assessment Research Question 3**

International organizations are created to sustain global harmony and security. It then facilitates creation of regional organizations such as ECOWAS not only to guarantee economic prosperity but also to enhance regional peace and security. Both international organizations and regional groups consists of sovereign states guided by the principles of non-interference in the domestic affairs of member states. Consequently, Coup d'état in Niger as in any other state is an internal affair of the Republic of Niger. Chapter 7, Articles 39, 41 and 42 of the United Nations Charter provided that 'the security Council shall determine the existence of any

threat to the peace, breach of the peace, or act of aggression and shall make recommendations, or decide what measures shall be taken in accordance with Articles 41 and 42, to maintain or restore international peace and security' (UNO, 1945). How has the events in the Republic of Niger violated these provisions? If in the affirmative, it is the UNO that shall authorize the use of force not ECOWAS, then ECOWAS need to first report the matter to the UN.

ECOWAS has not reported the matter to the UN, nor did the Republic of Niger attack any member state of ECOWAS. It has not constituted a security threat to any of its members. If that was the case, they could have activated the '*Caroline Conditions*', and responded with commensurate force and thereafter report to the UN. On the basis of this provision, the action of ECOWAS violates the provisions of both its protocol, and that of the UNO and may have acted ultra-vires. Article 41 further provided that the Security Council may decide what measures not involving the use of armed force are to be employed, while 42 stated that if the actions prescribed in articles 41 is considered inadequate or have proved inadequate, it would decide on the next line of action including sea, air blockade, etc. None of these steps have been taken by ECOWAS in all that they have done. Hence, ECOWAS could have violated the international protocols in seeking intervention in the Republic of Niger without authorization. According to the former Nigeria Chief of Defence staff, General Lucky Irabor in a speech during his pulling out from the army following his retirement, stated that Nigeria spent 8 billion US dollar to bring peace to Liberia without any economic benefit (Akunnah, AIT Kaakaki 2023). We lost soldiers, two journalists and many other assets in Liberia and Nigerians were attacked. Nigeria currently has many refugees in the Republic of Niger who could be used as human shields should Nigeria lead ECOWAS to war in that country. Besides, Niger is 1,650 kilometres from Nigeria border which would automatically become the theatre of the war. Hence, such would have serious implications for Nigeria economy.

#### **4.4 Assessment of Research Question 4: Nord-Stream Gas Pipeline/Trans-Saharan Gas Pipeline and ECOWAS**

In the course of international political economy, Russia entered into an agreement to supply Europe with gas. A network of offshore natural gas pipeline running under the Baltic Sea to Germany were laid in phases (Nord-Stream) 1 and 2. On September 26, 2022, the pipelines exploded in what is suspected to be the greatest sabotage in the Baltic Sea near the Danish Island of Bornhorn. Consequent

upon this, all the sanctions against Russia over invasion of Ukraine exempted gas export to Europe. Europe had to revive Trans-Saharan Gas Pipeline (TSGP), which was meant to transfer gas from Nigeria (Warri in Niger Delta) through the Republic of Niger via Algeria to Europe. The success of this project would free Europe dependency on Russian gas. However, the Nigerien coup plotters have severed all relations with France, including existing agreements. This has affected the TSGP with heavy implications for Western Europe, which desire for alternative source of cheap gas away from Russia (Rachel, 2022). This explains Russian preparedness to assist the Republic of Niger to maintain its sovereignty against ECOWAS threats. This would hurt Europe. ECOWAS itself is under pressure to pursue regime survival that would honour the existing international agreements, which would keep the TSGP project alive with the support of European states. The situation could result into war like Russian/Ukraine kind of situation.

#### **4.5 Appraisal of Research Question 5: Proxy War**

In this section of the discourse, we were concerned with interrogating whether Nigeria through the ECOWAS position on the Republic of Niger is externally determined. The concern arose pursuant to the following fact: (i) The USA has a 1000 strong military at its African drone base in Niamey. (ii) France also has about 1000 strong military presence located in Agadez at the time of the Coup detat on July 26, 2023. As part of the colonial agreement with Francophone former colonies, it reserves the the right to deploy troops and intervene militarily in the country to defend its interest (Quoa, 2023). Why was this not carried out since they are interested in regime survival and not in good governance? (iii) Why have the USA refused to call the event coup d'etat? However, the US ambassador has resume there amidst the crisis. Why have they not moved in to reinstate President Mohammed Bazoum? (iv) Could it have been a co-incident as alleged, that Nigeria President had chosen Paris as his location for medical tourism and France has extensive economic interest in the Republic of Niger. Thus, France wants normalcy restored in Niger through Nigerian President acting through ECOWAS.

#### **Evaluation of research question 6: Economic implications**

It would be recalled that in 1986 at the Economic Commission for Africa (EAC) meeting, an agreement was signed between Nigeria and the Republic of Niger. This granted Nigeria an opportunity to supply to Niger seventeen (17) manufactured products and purchase five (5) items only from Niger. In another bilateral trade agreement Nigeria was to supply 30,000 kilowatts of electricity from Kainji dam,



in turn Niger was to avoid building a dam at Kandadji to allow free flow of water to Kainji dam (Nwokedi, 1992; Otto & Ukpere, 2013; Otto, et al., 2021). It crucial to state herein that the Republic of Niger supply the bulk of cattle, sheep and goats, legumes, cotton, tin-ore and phosphate to Nigeria. Nigerians will be more affected by Ecowas sanctions more than the Nigeriens who had though costly alternative routes to obtained what Nigeria refused to sale to them.

Lastly, the sanction could lead to a relative deprivation on Nigeriens, which rather than push them to protest against the military rulers who precipitated the situation, may turn them into solidarity campaigners. This affirmed the position of Frank and Ukpere, (2024), that there is no direct correlation between relative deprivation and anomic political protest.

#### 4.5.1 The concept of Proxy War

Proxy war refers to conflict in which contestants use third parties as opponents to fight while they support indirectly by supplying arms and other logistic to serve in the final analysis their economic and political interests and not that of the fighters. It could be a contest between two sovereign states without direct warfare. They could be non-state actors acting on the instigation of other countries. The conditions precedent to proxy war includes (i) there must have been long time collaboration between belligerents and the sponsoring states. (ii) It is a tool of foreign policy and involves planting intrigues between the parties, while the sponsors gain from the wars. (iii) Nations resort to proxy warfare to avoid reprimand especially when there exist peace treaties, alliances and trade covenant. The consequences of proxy wars are borne by proxy nations including casualties and economic damages (Hughes, 2014). It is against the above framework that we now assess the events relating to the Republic of Niger, Nigeria and ECOWAS reactions thus.

a) **Iran versus France:** Iran the manufacturer and supplier of day and night drones being use by Russia against Ukraine is likely to support Republic of Niger to confront France. while France is in support of all the moves of ECOWAS/Nigeria against republic of Niger. The rationale for this relates to Mr Chalten Hebde-the cartoonist from France whose cartoon insulted the religious sensibility of Iran. Iran would want to pay France back through the hard way by granting even unsolicited aid to Niger to disgrace France. Where would ECOWAS and Nigeria obtain drone and drone aerial interceptor from? These are the main instrument of warfare in the Information Communication and Technology (ICT)

age. ECOWAS may just be the platform for Iran to engage France through proxism.

b) **The chairmanship of ECOWAS goes in alphabetical order.** President Buhari was the chairman July 2018 -June 2019, he handed over to President Mahamadou Issoufou June 2019 -June 2020. We then suspect that it could not just return to Nigeria, since the chairmanship is in alphabetical order. It must have been returned to Nigeria to serve the purpose of certain interests. The Nigerian president currently visits France for medical tourism.

c) The USA though not having an ambassador in the republic of Niger, in the course of this study, Kathleen FitzGibbon resumed as an ambassador in Niamey, has a drone base there to serve the continent. The United States have tactically refused to describe the event in Niger as a coup d'état because it would hinder her from granting further aids to Niger. America would rather go with the ECOWAS in its approach to reinstate President Mohammed Bouzam. This is the basis of France/America reliant and full support of the ECOWAS position to invade and reinstate the ousted president. It should however be known to ECOWAS that out of about 200 coup d'état in the African continent since 1960, it is only Leon Mba who was re-instated 1964 and in 2003 President Fradique Menezes of Principe and Sao Tome by Olusegun Obasanjo. The chances of doing what ECOWAS threatened is very low, actualizing the threat may not reverse the coup d'état.

d) The French and the American troops are supposed to help in combating Islamist terrorists in the country, yet there is very little progress that have been made in that direction given their sophistry in terrorist warfare and experiences in 'operation desert storm'. It would appear that this is an 'alibi' to secure a staging base in the Sahel. The junta in Niamey had placed ban in their airspace but according to the spokesperson of the junta, Colonel Amadou Abdramane, the French Air-force violated their airspace and breached the ban by flying in and out of Niger Airspace. The aggregation of all these events, point in the direction of a potential proxy war as conceptualized by Gerait Hughes (2014) referred to earlier in this analysis.

## 5. Conclusion and remedial measures

The evaluation of this study revealed that there are antecedents that could have been relied upon by the current chairman of ECOWAS to mainstream diplomacy and leadership rather than ego, which has led to unnecessary tension and actions likely to strain the relationship between Nigeria and the Republic of Niger with

other member states. Secondly, we conclude that the outcome of every democracy is development as value addition to the lives of the citizens. Where that is not the case, the people may likely revolt through the military, and it is futile to try reinstatement. The antecedent is that out of over 200 coup d'état in Africa, only two were reinstated in Sao Tome and Principe in 2003 and Gabriel Leon Mba of Gabon ENS-European Nuclear Society 1964. Given this low statistics ECOWAS should have followed its earlier line of actions in Mali and in other places. Just not to begin negotiation with a threat.

Diplomacy-leadership is what is required in dealing with sovereign states rather than ego or impulse. ECOWAS should know that municipal and international law are at play in their actions, hence, council of advisers on foreign affairs should and must guide the operation of the community in this and any other similar situation. The regional body is likely to step into proxy war should they attempt any military action in Niger republic, and all of them will create a Vietnam-like war in West Africa and engage in combat that may not end easily. The pursuit of peaceful resolution to conflict by setting a timeline and program for a return to democratic rule, while asking the ousted leader to resign peacefully is the only option.

a) Sanctions does not restore ousted regimes but rather ECOWAS should recognize the regime and work with them for a timetable to restore democratic government through elections. This was the case in Mali since a government is already formed in Republic of Niger. It should be known to ECOWAS that out of about 200 coup d'état in Africa, only Gabriel Leon Mba and Ferdihan of Principe and Sao Tome were reinstated in 1964 and 2003 respectively.

b) Diplomacy and leadership must remain the tool of engagement rather than a show of power. Russia and Ukraine should be the mirror for west African leaders. ECOWAS leaders must not be deceived that a combine force of ECOWAS states would defeat the Republic of Niger in a matter of days. Niger may well be the Vietnam and Laos for ECOWAS. They may not know those on the line to assist Niger.

e) Good government is the antidote to coup anywhere and the rest of the continent. Coup d'état cannot be halted by command of west African leaders. Good governance and accountability, which generate 'pareto optimality' or value addition to the lives of the citizens of the various countries is the antidote to coup in the region and the continent.

f) ECOWAS or the African Union may have '*Democratic Charter*' to which all states and their political elites would subscribe to the defined indicators of

democratic state. This is to ensure that people keep to the democratic values that would be evolved. Punishment would also be agreed upon, to deal with ambitious leaders who often amend the Constitution to accommodate their selfish ambitions. This would stand against the current strategy of ECOWAS, which is focused on Regime Survival irrespective of whether the regime is unaccountable, and its citizens in poverty in the midst of plenty. ECOWAS should come together to agree on what constitute democracy and sway members to abide by it. The violators of any of the indicators of African democracy should be punish for an enduring democracy rather than regime survival pursuit at all times.

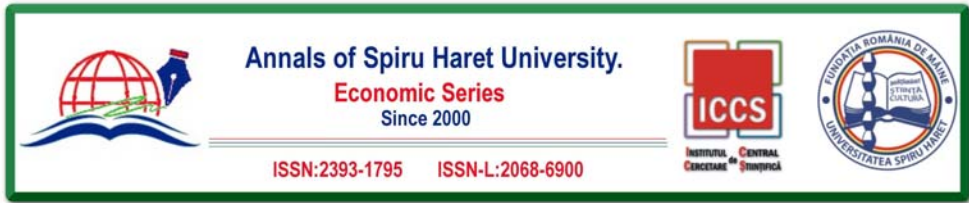
g) ECOWAS should create a structure for peer-review mechanism on Good Governance and be honest enough to serve as a democratic barometer to gauge the progress being made in governance to entrench democracy, if they want coup d'etat to stop, else coup d'etat would remain with us as the Warrior tradition in African politics indicates. Alternatively, West African political elites should attend a minimum of six months course before assuming office to teach them the rudiments of governance.

Finally, the end result of all forms of governance is continuous improvement in the lives of the people. When there is value addition to the general society, everyone would be better-off and military coup d'état as a protest movement would recede to the barracks. ECOWAS should shift its attention from Regime survival to good governance, otherwise Coup d'état would remain in West Africa and spread to other African nations as the Warrior Tradition in Africa indicates.

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