AFRICAN DEMOCRATIZATION AND MILITARY COUPS

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Foreword by
Lieutenant-General Emmanuel A. Erskine

PRAEGER

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Foreword

With the end of the cold war, seeking democratic ideals as the underlying principle for good governance in Africa has been pursued by a considerable number of African governments. This pursuit was given more serious attention when the heads of state and government of commonwealth countries at their meeting in Harare in 1991 decided that only governments upholding sound democratic principles and practicing good governance should be supported by the international community. Hence, the intensification of the democratization process, which is gaining momentum on the continent of Africa.

Some African political leaders, for reasons of entrenching themselves in power for perpetuity, attempt to define and brush aside Western principles of democracy as foreign and, therefore, alien to African culture. Dr. Chuka Onwumechili, argues that principles of Western democracy are not too different from African traditional democracies. So far, no viable alternatives to the concept of the "ballot box" in electing governments have been found. It is therefore vital that the arguments adduced by the author are critically examined. This can help re-orient the attitudes of African political leaders and thereby facilitate the democratization, march towards peace, stability, and development on the continent.

The fact that the principles of Western democratic practices have been successfully and effectively applied to change incumbent governments in Benin, in West Africa, should give us the hope that with the strong political will of African leaders, their governments, and the people, application of the ideals of Western democracies in Africa is feasible and should be pursued.

To strengthen the pillars of democracy, the institutions in the civil society have an invaluable role to play. Strong media that continue to ensure that governments are on their toes and uphold the principles of good governance, irrespective of the myriad difficulties that face them, and impartial and objective judiciary, vibrant associations of members of the legal profession, the labor

force, the academic and the student body, and public institutions for international studies and research have a phenomenal role to play in the democratization process and, collectively, could effectively influence the attitudes of governments.

As rightly pointed out by the author, military coups continue to pose the major threat to the democratization process in Africa. Coup makers have always sought to justify their unconstitutional, armed intervention of governments and have never been economical with their reasons for seizing power. Incompetence and corruption, whilst the element of ethnicity, the economy and, consequently, the poor quality of life of the average citizen almost always is contained in the glossary of accusations. But in actual fact, as the book explains, the principal reason for coups in Africa is insatiable greed and inordinate ambition for power. It is the personal ambition of the few armed men who end up with legacies of incompetent, corrupt, and tribalistic governments.

Whilst armed intervention of governments should always be condemned, no matter what the justification is, incumbent civilian heads of government should try, as best as possible, to apply the principles of sound governance and democracy. For example, the practice whereby political leaders try to hang on to power for two to three decades should be discouraged. Longevity in power is always a catalyst for military intervention and potential coup plotters to strike, but they should be denied this privilege. The entrenchment in the 1992 Constitution of Ghana, by which the president can only serve two terms in office, should be seen as an effort to overcome this longevity syndrome, and I strongly recommend its adoption by other African governments.

While it is extremely difficult to prevent or eradicate military takeover of governments in Africa, observance of good governance by the government and strengthening of the institutions in the civil society could be useful ingredients to prevent or, at best, minimize the incidence of military interventions. In this regard, prescriptions by the author to help keep the military in barracks, and consequently, out of power, merits the serious attention of African political chiefs and their partners in the international community. Economic, social, cultural, and total political isolation, with the strong support of the international community, could serve as a useful disincentive to potential coup makers.

The Organization of African Unity (OAU), as Africa's continental body, which since 1993 has established a division for conflict prevention, management, and resolution, could play a positive role in fighting against military takeover in Africa. The author calls for the abandonment of the provision in the OAU charter on non-interference, which poses the major obstacle to the effective functioning of the continental body in its conflict management endeavors. Unfortunately, the United Nations suffers from the same handicap, hence the inability of the world body to demonstrate its efficacy in preventive diplomacy to preempt conflicts.

Dr. Chuka Onwumechili's book researches some of the vital issues that provide the basis for instability in Africa and attempts to prescribe some possi-

ble solutions. Even though he does not have complete answers to all these issues, the author, with his profound knowledge of the African political and military scenes, strengthened by his intensive academic studies and research, nevertheless offers some useful theoretical and practical suggestions that should be studied, modified, and applied. Democracy takes time to evolve and inasmuch as there are no ready-made solutions or panacea to prevent military coups, it is worth trying innovative ideas.

I sincerely hope that both present and future leaders in Africa will read this book, which should help them in their current and future leadership roles to promote peace, stability, and development for the benefit of the average African.

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Preface

More than half of Africa was under democratic government by 1995. This was a far cry from the 1970s when more than half of the same countries were under military rule. But this seeming acceptance of democratization in Africa has obscured two important points: (a) African democracies are not yet consolidated, and (b) there is a continued military threat to democracy all over the continent.

This book is designed to investigate the link between the continued military threat and democracy's inability to be consolidated in Africa. We have been reminded of the strength of the military threat through the recent coups in Burundi, the Republic of Congo (Brazzaville), and Sierra Leone. We mention those three countries because they represent recent cases. In fact, in several other instances the military has overturned other democracies in Africa, including Nigeria and Lesotho. In essence, we believe that the military remains the most prominent and observable threat to the ability of African democracies to consolidate.

This book is written not only to remind us of the military threat, but much more importantly to suggest various ways in which such threats can be effectively extinguished. The book is organized in such a way as to add some unique elements to the discussions of African democracies and military coups.

Chapter 1, for example, focuses on traditional African democracies. It argues that democracy is not new to Africa. The chapter provides examples of various democratic structures in traditional Africa and identifies the role of the military in that era. Clearly, most of the traditional African armies were temporary in nature, that is, they existed primarily to fight wars and then largely disappeared in more peaceful times. But there were exceptions, such as the reported 1823 military coup in Ashanti where the military expressed its interest in social governance.

Chapter 2's focus is on the principles of Western democracy. The chapter is designed to show similarities between the principles of democracy in

traditional Africa and its counterparts in the Western world. Effort was also made to separate the fundamental principles of democracy from its second-tier principles. The second-tier principles serve as examples of democratic consolidation and they become ingrained only after the observable acceptance of the fundamental principles of democracy. The last section of the chapter uses the democratic principles to measure the status of democracy in selected African states.

Chapter 3 concentrates on the reasons for military coups in Africa and includes detailed analyses of coups in selected countries. The reasons for military coups go beyond those that are usually announced by the coup makers. For instance, some reasons revolve around personal gains and ethnic rivalry.

Chapter 4 meshes the essence of Chapters 2 and 3 together in order to demonstrate how military coups threaten democracy. It also shows that various attempts to legitimize military governance threaten democracy. In short, it concludes that military governance cannot go hand in hand with democracy.

The last two chapters seek solutions to the continued military threat. Chapter 5, for example, identifies weaknesses of previous attempts to extinguish military coups and outlines more effective strategies. Chapter 6 concentrates on the role of the Organization of African Unity (OAU) in maintaining democracies in Africa. This discussion begins by identifying the states where military governments have been effectively removed and then identifies OAU's present initiatives and obstacles before suggesting various ways to extinguish military coups.

Overall, this book presents a different perspective in its analysis of military coups and democratization in Africa. For instance, it delves into the African past and uses it as a basis for analyzing present-day African democracies and in the end it proffers solutions to the military coup crisis. Therefore, it goes beyond the usual case of describing coups and the status of democracies.

At this point, it is important to express my heartfelt thanks to Ms. Audrey Gadzekpo of the University of Ghana at Legon, whose insightful suggestions and provision of historical data were so important to the successful completion of this book. My thanks also go to Dr. Ritchard M'Bayo of Bowie State University in Maryland and Ms. Chataun Porch, Bowie State University graduate, who helped to edit some of the chapters. I also appreciate the help of Dr. Robert Nwanko of Howard University in Washington, D.C., whose analytical and critical thinking provided a wide array of influence on the writings in this book. My thanks also go to my parents, Dr. Cyril and Cecilia Onwumechili, and my brother-in-law, Joseph Okoli, who supported the project from start to finish. Of course, many thanks to my lovely wife, Adora, who provided the time that was necessary to finish the work demanded by this book. Thank you!

1

Traditional African Democracies

INTRODUCTION

"We are at a stage in Africa where, for the most part, one should concentrate on those social and political forces, such as the potential for military coups, that may possibly endanger the early sustenance of democracy" (Kpundeh, 1992, p. 52). Recently, military coups overthrew new democracies in Burundi, the Republic of Congo (Brazzaville), and Sierra Leone. In Zambia, a coup attempt was foiled in 1997. Thus, coups have become one of the most remarkable political upheavals in Africa since the wave of political independence in the 1950s and 1960s. The frequency of military coups is such that they threaten to derail several moves towards democratization across the continent. In fact, the call for democratization in Africa cannot be heeded without the realization that African democratization will only come hand in hand with a solution to military coups. Hence, this book outlines how Africa can achieve the goals of democratization by eliminating coups.

  Some scholars have justified military coups by stating that the African's authoritarian personality does not support the practice of democracy. They provide examples of authoritarian characteristics by pointing to various ancient African kingdoms, that were under despotic rulers, and also to the paternal relationships between males and females in Africa. But this perspective ignores the fact that ancient Africa also had kingdoms that allowed citizen participation in governance and that there were communities that were not ruled by kings. In fact, Africa has long practiced its own brand of democracy, which we shall discuss in the next section.

TRADITIONAL AFRICAN DEMOCRACIES

There remains a disagreement between scholars on the structure of traditional African government, as we have noted above. This is partly because there was never *one* African government. Instead, there were several types of governments. Fortes and Evans-Pritchard's 1940 landmark study of eight widely varied African communities sought to categorize the basic characteristics of traditional African governments and concluded that they were two types, centralized and decentralized. Several studies, including Busia (1978), have largely agreed with this early categorization. What is clear is that communities such as the Binis of Nigeria, with a traditional centralized government, were different from the Igbos of Nigeria, who had a tradition of decentralized government. This validates the fact that since Africa has several communities with different histories and cultures, it should not be unexpected that Africa should also have different governmental structures. For expediency, however, Africa is often discussed as one unit. There are several justifications for this. First, several cultural patterns are shared by a large number of African states. These patterns enable scholars to identify a single African world view. Second, African communities are more culturally related to each other than they are to other communities outside Africa. Finally, African countries regard themselves as sharing the same cultural patterns and they align themselves invariably under the same political groups on several global issues.

Hence, in our discussion, we shall portray Africa as a continent with several communities, that share similar cultural patterns. At the same time we shall point out differences between various African states whenever the situation calls for it.

Traditional Africa had several elements of democracy. Kpundeh (1992) points out that African participants at a recent conference on democracy agreed that democracy could be found in all cultures including Africa.[1] What is different is the type of practiced democracy. Democracy in Africa included various principles that are similar to democracy practiced in the West but these principles were also different in certain aspects. Fortes and Evans-Pritchard (1940) describe African traditional societies that practiced democracy as "societies which lack centralized authority, administrative machinery, and constituted judicial institutions—in short which lack government—and in which there are no sharp divisions of rank, status, or wealth" (p. 45). The Igbo of Nigeria is one such African society and forms of its government remain today.

Igbo is a common language of various small-sized communities located in Eastern Nigeria. The majority of these communities do not have a king and a hierarchy of councils rules each one. Igbos often proudly refer to themselves as *Igbo enwe eze*, meaning "Igbos have no kings" (Cyril Onwumechili, 1996). Igbo enwe eze is more a reference to the democratic characteristic of the Igbos than a total denial that any king ever existed anywhere on Igboland. In fact, kings have existed and continue to exist in certain Igbo communities such as in Onitsha,

which has an Obi, and Nri, which has an *Eze Nri*. But these communities had
their own separate governments and the Igbos as a group has never had a king
or *Eze Igbo*. It is only in modern times that Igbo opinion leaders have created an
Igbo-wide council described as the *Oha na eze Igbo*. This is a council of Igbo
opinion leaders who meet to discuss common political concerns.

Nzimiro (1972), Njaka (1974), and Isichei (1985) are among scholars
who have written at length on Igbo political structure. What is remarkable about
the political structure is the enormous powers vested in various representative
councils. Some of these powers are similar to those vested in representative
houses of Western democracies. The Igbo people, however, retain the power to
"recall their representatives whenever they demonstrate bad faith or refuse to
bow to public opinion" (Njaka, 1974, p. 64).

The state or community council is at the apex of a hierarchy of ruling
Igbo councils. Members of this council are ascribed on the basis of age and title.
Age variations are wide because the ritual male leader (*Okpala*) of an *Umunna*
(lineage or clan) represents his Umunna irrespective of his actual age. Titlehold-
ers serve on community councils primarily because title is important in Igbo-
land, since it represents the acknowledgment of a man's wealth and wisdom.
There are various title associations across Igboland such as *Igbu* and *Ozo* at
Onitsha; *Ozo* at modern times in Inyi and Akpugoeze; *Ikwa Muo* and *Igbu* at
Oguta; and *Inyakpa, Agana*, and *Igbu* at Osomari.[2]

All Igbo adults participate in their respective Umunna councils (Oriji,
1990). Umunna is literally translated as descendants of the same father, that is,
those who share the same lineage. It is not surprising to encounter adolescent
males at an *Nzuko* (meeting) of Umunna. These adolescents do not often con-
tribute much to such meetings, but rather use such occasions as a process of
learning. All adult males at Umunna meetings are considered equals. Umunna,
as the name implies, is restricted to males only.

Females have their own council, the *Umuada* (Daughters of the Com-
munity), which is very influential within all Igbo communities, especially on
social issues. The Umuada is highly respected even though Igbo society is patri-
lineal. Njaka provides a convincing description of the powers of Umuada in the
following passage:

> The Umuada do intrude in the affairs of the state and can im-
> pose sanctions which may include heavy fines, sit-ins, and
> other measures. Certainly the elders will go to great lengths to
> avoid a confrontation with the Umuada, and in this way the
> women do, indirectly, exert a strong influence on affairs of
> state. (1974, p. 123)

Several historical examples demonstrate the power of Umuada. The
Umuada were responsible for the Igbo women rebellion of 1929 and 1930 and
the women's riot of 1957, which were widely recorded by Igbo historians.[3] In

recent years, Umuada has influenced Igbo local politics by playing a strict role of what Njaka describes as "custodians of the constitution."

Several other groups share political power with the councils we have just discussed. These groups include *Mmonwu* (Secret Society of the Spirits of Ancestors) and *Otu ebiri* or *Otu Ogbo* (Age Group). We will briefly describe the political structures of both groups before focusing on the elements of Igbo traditional democracy and the role of the military in such structures.

Mmonwu secret society is politically strong and revered among Igbos. Njaka points out that the name Mmonwu is a contraction of *Mma onwu* (the goodness of death). Ancestors are believed to be Mmonwu and are believed to be sanctified and endowed with powers to maintain social order. It is in the light of these beliefs that Mmonwu plays two major roles (a) exposing and rebuking wrongdoers regardless of the wrongdoer's social position, and (b) acting as a police agent by collecting council fines. Mmonwu appears publicly as a masquerade often accompanied by able-bodied youths. It is an abomination to unmask Mmonwu, since it is believed to be the ancestral spirit. In the ancient Igbo culture, one who unmasks an Mmonwu will have to flee the community forever or take refuge at the community shrine. The consequence is that this individual becomes a *Nwa Ajala* (a slave or literally a child of the *Ala* shrine) and this restricts the culprit's (and his descendants') participation in various community activities.[4]

The *Otu Ogbo* is the age group. It is important to note at this point that some scholars such as Njaka have confirmed that Otu Ogbo is "a source of recruits for the state army" (p. 130). *Ogbo* is literally translated as peer and *Otu* as group. There are various Otu Ogbo groups in each Igbo community. Such groups are formed at adolescence and membership is for life. Each group takes a name for which it becomes widely known in the community. The Otu Ogbo for youths acts as community police just as the Mmonwu secret society to which most of these youths also belong. Though Otu Ogbo is used to implement several community activities, we will focus our discussion, in the next section, on the military activities of the Otu Ogbo and also include other African traditional military structures.

Fortes and Evans-Pritchard's (1940) conclusion that only decentralized societies, such as the Igbos, were democratic is not entirely true. We now know that various African kingdoms practiced some form of democracy in the sense that they allowed substantial citizen representation in governance.

The Ashantis of Ghana had one of the large kingdoms in Africa, and yet there were various elements of democracy in their government. The powers of the *Asantehene* were not absolute, because he had to abide by custom and advice of a representative council. If an Asantehene decided to ignore these checks on his power, he could be deposed. Though the throne of Asantehene was hereditary, the electors had a choice of replacement from "other members of the same lineage" (Busia, 1968, p. 30). In this way the citizenry adequately participated in their own governance. Each Ashanti lineage was largely inde-

pendent, especially in its administration. Members of the kingdom were allowed to participate in public discussions concerning their own community.

Lloyd (1960) also informs us that Yoruba kings were hardly autocratic. The Yorubas are several communities ruled by kings in Southwest Nigeria and south of Benin Republic. In many instances, these kings were ritual heads who left the daily running of their kingdoms to representative bodies of title holders, whom Davidson (1981) describes as nobles. In *Ile-Ife*, the mythical origin of the Yorubas, the *Ooni* (King) of Ife ruled through a council of lineage representatives who had powers to depose and crown the Ooni. In fact, the Ooni or any Yoruba king could not be autocratic because he (the king) ruled through the benevolence of his people. His people, through their representatives on the king's council, could depose the king. In ancient times, the king was not simply deposed. He was asked to *Shi gba* (open the deadly calabash) from which he would die, and a new king could then be crowned. Thus, most kings were content to rule democratically through the representative council. They gave their ritual authority to decisions taken and transmitted to them by these representatives of the various lineages in the kingdom.

We do not claim that all traditional African societies were democratic. Several were ruled by despotic kings. For example, the kings of Rwanda and Buganda (in Uganda) were autocratic. They had informal councils of chiefs, whom they consulted on how to implement decisions, but not on which decisions should be made. In Rwanda, in particular, the king was very popular and could only be countered by the Abiru. The abiru is the council responsible for installing as well as controlling the rituals the king performed for the good of his subjects. These rituals were secret as well as powerful. The king, therefore, owed some of his survival powers to this council. Maquet (1960) describes the kings and elite system of Rwanda as dominant with a networked hierarchy of master-client relationships, which have persisted over the years. He vividly explains how the class and caste system in such a society has bred the minority herdsmen class of Tutsis to dominate the majority Hutu farmers.[5] The *Mwami* is the king, who is also a Tutsi. The king was regarded as supernatural. The Tutsis were also the traditional army and they formed the wealthy class in an economy dominated by cattle ownership. The Hutus survived by "renting" cattle in a feudal-like system. In modern times, the authoritative powers of the king have been largely watered down but the power relationship between the Tutsis and Hutus has led to various periods of ethnic massacres, that have not only engulfed Rwanda but have also affected Burundi, where both ethnic groups can also be found.

The *Oba* of Benin also had numerous powers over his kingdom (Bradbury, 1973; Isichei, 1985). Though a council of Benin chiefs, *Uzama*, existed, they played a minimal role in decision making. Isichei (1985) goes to great lengths to point out that the Uzama were intensely subordinate to the Oba. Theoretically, all freeborn Binis were the Oba's servants. In fact, it was only the *Iyasere* (senior town chief) who could oppose the Oba in public.

THE MILITARY IN TRADITIONAL AFRICAN DEMOCRACIES

There is very little in the literature about the military in traditional African societies. Most of the literature on such military focused on their prowess or weaknesses during warfare. Very few studies have discussed the role of the military during more peaceful periods.

What is clear is that there were several types of armies in traditional Africa just as there were several types of governmental structures. A unique army was the women troop of Dahomey (now Benin Republic), which has become known historically as the Amazons (Argyle, 1966). These women soldiers guarded the royal palace where only women were allowed to live. At other times, they participated in warfare. In 1851, for example, they reportedly played a leading role in Dahomey's assault on Abeokuta (Smith, 1976). The Amazons were one of Africa's standing army and they were fiercely loyal to the Dahomey king to the point that Smith describes them as having "the status . . . (of) royal wives" (p. 47).

In most traditional Africa, the nature of the community's needs determined whether a standing or an ad hoc army was used. In the following paragraphs we shall discuss these types of army—standing and ad hoc—and the role of each in traditional governance.

Traditional African communities that were engaged in frequent warfare found it necessary to maintain permanent or standing armies. The Zulus of South Africa, particularly under Shaka, and sixteenth-century Borno kept permanent armies. Six settlements, some containing as many as 1,400 huts (Omer-Cooper, 1966), were established for Shaka's army. In Borno, a strong and well-trained standing force was formed from foreign mercenaries and household slaves. When these armies were not busy fighting expansion wars, they were used to herd cattle and till the land. Their role in governmental administration was often minimal or nonexistent. The Azande, who resided in the north of what today is known as the Congo, is another example of a community that had a standing army. This army was made up of youths who volunteered their services to the king. The youths were placed under various regional commanders who answered to the king. The Azande army, just as was the case with the Zulus, did not have much military-type duty to perform at the time of peace.[6] Instead, the youths were used to work on the king's farmlands, which were quite extensive (Evans-Pritchard, 1971).

There were limited standing armies in places such as Yorubaland and Kumase in Ghana. These communities had small-scale armies who guarded the king's palace and formed the core of a larger army, which was raised on an ad hoc basis during a war. The soldiers of the Yoruba standing army were known as "war boys" or *Omo ogun,* while the small-scale standing army of the Ashantis (located in and around today's Kumase) king was largely picked from youths who were captured from vassal states.[7] Anti (1996) describes these soldiers as

forming "two [standing] battalions of about 200 strong each with the names of *Akonsan* and *Hiawuo*" (p. 47).

Standing armies became more common all over Africa in the mid to late nineteenth century. The increase came about as firearms became widely available and new forms of warfare demanded regular training rather than a continued dependence on a hastily mobilized group of youths. Later, the rise in standing armies became linked to the rise in division of labor and demands for professionalism. The military, in this sense, was considered a major labor sector, that needed to be professionalized, especially in those states where wars were frequently fought.

On the contrary, segmentary communities such as the Igbos, described earlier in this chapter, relied on ad hoc armies. Armies were raised only when there was a need. Earlier, we mentioned the Ashantis of Ghana as an example of a group, that had a limited standing army. Such an army was inadequate for most Ashanti wars. Instead, the Ashantis relied largely on an ad hoc army for several of its wars. The Asantehene required the regional chiefs to mobilize their youths in the fight for the Ashanti kingdom. Youths who had been drafted into an ad hoc army went about their daily lives after the armies were disbanded at the end of each war. The role of the army in such communities was to fight wars. No administrative role was possible. Instead, the youths were used as community police in time of peace.

The little information that exists on the African army does not include detailed insights into military uprising against legitimate civilian authority. This may be due to the fact that most African armies were established on an ad hoc basis, but even the standing army revered the civilian administrative authorities. Ad hoc armies usually arise because of a common goal, which is the war, and there is rarely time devoted to other pursuits such as leadership coups. The history books do, however, mention a few cases where the army was used to remove or install state leaders. Isichei reports, for example, that an Asante army overthrew Asantehene Osei Kwame in 1801. This forced a subsequent Asantehene, Osei Bonsu, to establish a palace regiment of foreigners to "guard against the danger of a further military coup" (Isichei, 1977, p. 63). McCaskie (1995) also writes that Osei Yaw Akoto had mustered military support to ensure that he was installed as the Asantehene after the death of Asantehene Osei Tutu Kwame in 1823. Before his death, Asantehene Osei Tutu Kwame had expressed a preference for Kwaku Dua Panin, and it was only a military support for Akoto that denied Panin the crown. In addition, Smith (1976) cites a report by Barth which illustrates how Borno soldiers launched a protest before the tents of their officers complaining about the lack of plundering rewards after a successful war campaign.[8]

Clearly, military coups are not a modern phenomenon, because they had existed in traditional Africa. However, military coups were few and far between at that time. Most of the time, the African military was easily subordinated to the African civilian administrative authority, which was a democratic or

an authoritarian authority. It is certain that the traditional ad hoc armies did not have governance chores nor were they identified as being interested in such chores. Most likely, these were men whose mutual interests were largely focused on winning wars because wars posed an immediate challenge to their livelihood. Many of them were glad to return to their own homes, farms, and lifestyles after the war. They were rarely interested in governance. In any case, the communities had strict rules and a long revered history of political structure and expectations. These political rules were usually respected and disruptions such as military coups were largely absent.

There were other reasons why coups were also rare in communities with standing armies. We have already noted that standing armies arose because of the demands for military professionalism. One would have expected that professionalism would also breed a cadre of men who would seek to expend their energies in governance, especially during the time of peace. But this was not the case. The difference between today's standing army in Africa and the traditional standing African armies of the precolonial days may lie in the tasks those armies were expected to perform during peaceful times. Today's armies are often used to quell internal uprisings and, hence, are seen as somewhat synonymous with the police, except of course that the army is much more heavily armed. The traditional standing army was not used for internal police actions. Instead, those armies were strictly used to attack external enemies or defend the nation against external enemies. This difference is infinitely critical in any discussion of military coups, because armies that are used for internal police actions often begin to see themselves as critical solutions to crises related to internal affairs and politics, and thus such armies are more prone to military coups. Often such military men attribute their coups to their need to carry out a state obligation to maintain internal peace (which should be a police and not a military function). In the next section we will focus our attention on the traditional African democratic principles to which many traditional African military units were subordinated.

DEMOCRATIC PRINCIPLES IN TRADITIONAL AFRICA

We have taken pains to illustrate democratic structures that existed in certain traditional African communities. We are quite aware, however, that those mere structures do not ensure democracy. Democracy is often entrenched in practice rather than structure. In the following paragraphs we turn our attention to the principles that guided the practice of democracy in traditional Africa. Rather than focus on specific communities, we shall focus on generic principles while illustrating such principles with examples from various traditional communities.

The principles of democracy in traditional Africa are remarkably similar to such principles in Western democracy. However, the practices were dif-

ferent because the societies were different from each other. Nevertheless, demo-
cratic principles such as participation, equality, representation, local autonomy,
rule of law, and accountability mechanism, that existed in the West were also
characteristic of traditional African democracies. In addition, the principle of
unanimity was prevalent in traditional African democracy. On the contrary,
Western democracy often prefers pluralism to unanimity in democratic decision
making. As we discuss each of the democratic principles in the following pages,
we must be aware that the principles are interdependent and that the attempt to
separately describe each principle is simply for academic expediency.

As we have noted above, one of the principles of democracy that was
practiced in traditional Africa can best be described as participatory democracy
because of its close resemblance to the Western theory of participatory democ-
racy. But there are differences between the Western style and the practice in
traditional Africa. First and foremost, the formality of voting that is so ingrained
in Western democracy was glaringly absent in traditional Africa. Instead, par-
ticipation in traditional Africa meant that debate was allowed, leading to a con-
sensus or an acquiesced acceptance of a perceived majority view, which then
resulted in the crafting of policies and community decisions.

The debates were often spirited and the debaters employed several
strategies of persuasion, including folklore, proverbs, and allusion to a glorified
past. This was necessary because the goal was not merely to win over pluralistic
support but to win unanimous or at the very least a substantial majority support.
One must remember that traditional Africa was a predominantly oral society
without the benefit of the printed word or the present day electronic media.
Thus, it was paramount that each debater literally used words to paint emotional
or evidenciary pictures into the heads and minds of the audience. But everyday
usage of words was not enough. Words had to be embellished with folklore and
proverbs. Persuasion was, therefore, an art that all citizens endeavored to pos-
sess if they wished to generate support for their views.

Spirited debates were also used to check the powers of authority fig-
ures. Njaka (1974) points out that "an Igbo has a right to challenge another in
open verbal confrontation, whatever the other's status. . . . Parademocracy, to
the Igbo, postulates the concept of checks and balances in the distribution of
authority" (p. 58). Such challenges cut across age groups. A youth could chal-
lenge an elder's opinion just as an impoverished member could challenge a
wealthy or titled member. In fact, it is this principle of democracy that best typi-
fies the phrase *Igbo enwe eze*, which we discussed earlier in this chapter.

Participation was not only beneficial because it created great debates or
acted as a check on authority. It was beneficial because it involved equality of
community members. Busia (1968), citing Cruickshank's 1854 report on the
then Gold Coast (now Ghana), points out that:

> Any member of the community could take part in the public
> discussions of community affairs, or in the public hearings

and "anyone—even the most ordinary youth—will offer his
opinion, or make a suggestion with an equal chance of its be-
ing heard as if it proceeded from the most experienced sage."
(p. 25)

The Igbos of Nigeria exhibited the qualities that were pointed out in
Cruikshank's report. Any member could express his opinion at a state council or
the Umunna meeting. This allowed a varied perspective on each issue. In fact,
this could be overdone to the point that meetings appeared to go on forever with
one member after another demanding to be heard. The phenomenon of voting in
order to reach quick pluralistic or majoristic decisions that is so ingrained in
Western democracies was not practiced, nor could it have been a preferred al-
ternative in this traditional African community. The concept of voting often
leads to the feeling that decisions are not wholesome, that decisions are forced
upon a minority who may then not be committed, or that a decision is rushed
even when an issue may have far-reaching effects. Thus, to the Igbo the time
spent reaching a consensual decision was well worth it, because it was ulti-
mately important that the decision was a group decision to which every member
was fully committed and convinced that it was well thought and understood.

Of all the democratic principles, that of unanimity was most different
from what obtained in Western democracies. Plurality was preferred in the West
as we have mentioned earlier in this chapter. In any case, unanimity was re-
markably the goal of most traditional African communities. Busia (1968) notes
that this goal was so strong that "the chief aim of the community councilors was
to reach unanimity, and they talked till this was achieved. Some have singled
out this feature . . . as the cardinal principle of African democracy" (p. 28). The
ultimate idea was to ensure that all members of the community were committed
to any decision reached by the community. Without this, it was felt that com-
munity solidarity could not be achieved and community actions could not be
relied upon to be effective. The preference for unanimity could also be attrib-
uted to the fact that these communities were very small and the topics on which
the community had to make decisions were few. These points are important be-
cause Western society, on the contrary, often had to debate a larger volume of
topics and time, thus, became an essential variable.

Another democratic principle that was practiced in traditional Africa
was representation. Each important segment of the community was represented
on each level of governance. This ensured that the views of each citizen were
represented and each citizen's right was protected.

What is truly remarkable is that segments of communities were repre-
sented at the peak of the governance hierarchy even in certain kingdoms and
hereditary type of governments. This was unlike the old Western empires where
the kings or queens appointed their stooges to oversee sections of their kingdom.
In traditional African societies, kings demonstrated their power by collecting
taxes and demanding other obligations, but for the most part they allowed their

subjects to present representatives who sat in the king's immediate ruling council. The subjects could also change their local council representative whenever they felt that the representative was ineffective.

Representation could be stretched to explain the remarkable democratic selection of kings even in hereditary systems such as that of the *Ashantis* and Yorubas. The council of kingmakers in these two communities ensured that the king was the choice of the people even though kingship was limited to a royal lineage. This was possible because a royal lineage often provided several eligible candidates for kingship, and it was the kingmakers who made the final choice of who to crown king. In addition, these kingmakers had the authority to depose a king whenever he was deemed not to be performing his duty satisfactorily. This way a semblance of people's choice and democracy was kept.

In decentralized governments, representation was the key to governance. Among the Igbo of Nigeria, representation formed the bedrock of their hierarchy of ruling councils from the Umunna council to the state council. The Umunna chose its own representative to the higher state council. This representative was often the Okpala of the Umunna (lineage), who held the Ofo stick of that lineage. The *Ofo* stick symbolizes the titular head of a lineage and belonged to the living Okpala (first son) of that lineage. Though the Okpala was highly respected by the rest of his Umunna, he was not revered or feared. He could easily be recalled from representing the Umunna if he was perceived to be ineffective or if he refused to fully represent the views of his Umunna.

Traditional African democracies also provided extensive local autonomy. This autonomy was not only found in decentralized governments, but was also prevalent in traditional African kingdoms such as those of the Ashantis and Yorubas. Most scholars, including Ottenberg and Ottenberg (1960), Busia (1968), Njaka (1974), Mair (1977) and Oriji (1990), point out that the basis of all African governments—both centralized and decentralized ones—was the kinship system. These systems existed all over Africa and Busia says, "African communities provided for the maintenance of social order through their systems of kinship. These systems played such an important role in traditional life that they have stood up to severe strains of social change" (p. 18). The kinships were small groups where members knew each other and as the group grew larger, newer kinships were formed. This ensured that the groups remained small, manageable, and efficient.

Among the Ashantis, the kinship or lineage had an independent administration or what could best be described as local autonomy. The kinship was linked to the centralized authority (the Asantehene or king) while, at the same time, being independent from the king's total control. This worked efficiently although it seemed paradoxical. The Ashantis focused their daily governance within the kinship while being obligated to pay taxes to the king, contribute armies to the king, and send a representative to the king's council. Busia concludes that:

> The political organization is thus based on small social groups
> joining with other social groups to form a larger unit. It is
> based on the recognition of the sectional interests of the com-
> ponent groups; but it also realized that these have to be har-
> monized with the wider interests of the larger unit. (p. 22)

The traditionally decentralized African governments were governed
solely at the local kinship levels. Even the military was often established at the
local level. Lineage in such communities was highly independent, but they also
established some mutual dependent links to neighboring lineage, particularly on
activities such as marriages, commerce, and festivities.

The rule of law is critical to the practice of democracy in all parts of
the world. This was also the case in traditional Africa. When we talk about the
rule of law we focus on the citizen's respect for the law as an objective society
tool and also the recognition of law as being above an individual citizen's pref-
erence for certain behavior. In essence, the law becomes a guideline for com-
munity activities and behavior. In traditional Africa, the laws were not docu-
mented because the society was essentially oral. Instead, the laws that we speak
of could more appropriately be referred to as norms. We have used *laws* to de-
scribe these norms simply because we seek to make an analogy between those
norms and the Western democratic principle, which is often referred to as the
rule of law.

These norms were customary standards that have been recognized
through the ages by the community. Elders grew up to become the repositories
for such standards. Ottenberg and Ottenberg (1960) cite Tait's description of
how the rule of law was maintained among the Kokomba of Togo as follows:

> The elder's role in social control is to insist on the observance
> of customary standards. He has no power to enforce a decision
> but he can pronounce what is proper, the customary procedure
> on all occasions. His power to do so arises from his relation to
> the land, of which he is guardian, and from his relation to the
> ancestors, for he is the closest to them. (p. 275)

There were other repositories of such rules or norms. In fact, various
institutions were established to imbibe and enforce these norms. Among the
Igbos of Nigeria, for example, the Osu (Umu Ajala in certain areas) caste sys-
tem was developed as a consequence for violating the cardinal rules of the
communities, such as homicide. In homicidal cases, a culprit could either flee
the community or take refuge in the community shrine. The culprit became an
Osu (servant of the shrine), who could no longer mix socially with others. An
Osu and his offspring were barred from marrying, sleeping with, taking title, or
eating at the same table as non-Osus. For minor violations, the Mmonwu society
and the community youths were sent to mete out consequences. These conse-

quences, some harsh, were enough to keep the rule of law from being frequently violated in the traditional Igbo communities.

What is noteworthy was that community rules or norms in traditional Africa applied to commoners, nobles, and kings. This principle was central to democracy in traditional Africa. For instance, Yoruba and Ashanti kings were restrained by customary standards that were used to check their powers. Busia describes this phenomenon as mechanisms used in enforcing accountability. McCaskie records an 1871 case in Kumasi (an Ashanti city):

> The Oheneba Owusu Ntobi, a son of the Asantehene . . . charged with the capital offense of committing incest. . . . [J]udgment was given against him. The Asantehene Kofi Kakari argued for a sentence of internal exile rather than death. . . . [I]t is known that the court adamantly opposed the Asantehene, refused to countenance his recommendation, and urged execution on the grounds that it was the penalty stringently mandated and prescribed in law for such cases. (p. 230)

The Asantehene was restrained by custom to act upon the advice of his council on major state issues. Anti (1996) notes that "Asante kings had no absolute power" (p. 58). The distribution of all important war spoils was coordinated by the Kotoko council and not the Asantehene. Instead, the Asantehene waited, like other Ashanti citizens, to receive an apportionment of spoils from the council. If the Asantehene decided to act arbitrarily he could be deposed. This was also the case with Yoruba kings as mentioned in earlier sections of this chapter.

In several other traditional African societies there were other ways in which the powers of the kings were curtailed. Traditional religion was one of the institutions used in curtailing the king's powers. Among the Yorubas, the king was also the religious or spiritual ruler of his people. This position required the king to perform various functions, which circumscribed any attempt to arbitrarily wield power. Mair (1977) writes that Yoruba kings were often asked to die through divination of powerful oracles if the king's kingdom was in the midst of declining fortunes. Thus, kings were obligated to build goodwill among their subjects and to maintain successful kingdoms lest they were divined to die.

SUMMARY

In this chapter we have provided evidence to demonstrate that democracies existed in various traditional African communities. These communities included the Igbos of Nigeria, who could be described as decentralized, and the Ashantis of Ghana, who could be best described as a kingdom. The govern-

mental structures of each of these types of governments were described. It was also noted that there were indeed autocratic African governments such as the Binis of Nigeria and the Rwanda and Buganda kingdoms. However, there were counterbalancing powers even in those autocratic states.

The military in traditional Africa was also described. The focus was on the peacetime role of the military, particularly the issue of governance and military attack on civilian authorities. Discussions included whether such military was a standing (permanent) army or an ad hoc army, which reflected the type of traditional African government that was practiced in the communities where such armies were based. It was also noted that the traditional army, whether ad hoc or standing, was rarely used for internal "police" activities. This is one of the reasons why traditional armies were rarely interested in the internal affairs of the states. Thus, coups were very rare.

Finally, seven principles of traditional African democracies were discussed. These principles included participation, unanimity, equality, representation, local autonomy, rule of law, and accountability mechanisms.

NOTES

1. Kpundeh's report was based on panel discussions on issues in African democratization. The discussions were sponsored by the Commission on Behavioral and Social Sciences and Education of the United States National Research Council and the United States Agency for International Development. Discussions took place in three workshops, which were organized in Benin Republic, Ethiopia, and Namibia. Each workshop attracted an average of over thirty African participants.

2. See Ikenna Nzimiro's (1972) *Studies in Ibo Political Systems* for detailed information on these title associations. His work includes the structure and practice of these groups.

3. The riot that took place between 1929 and 1930 involved Igbo, Ibibio, and Delta women who took to the streets stark naked to protest against women taxation and many other exigencies of the colonial rulers and appointed warrant chiefs. As many as fifty-five women were killed in this riot and scores of others were injured.

4. In certain areas of Igboland these cult or shrine slaves were referred to as *Osu* or *Ohu* because of dialect variations. See Nzimiro's (1972) *Studies in Ibo Political Systems* and Isichei's (1985) *History of West Africa Since 1800.*

5. Hutus form 80 percent of Rwanda's population and the Tutsi form only 10 percent. The other prominent ethnic group is the Twa, who are mainly hunters and pottery makers.

6. Military-type duty refers to those tasks that are considered military tasks in modern times. Such modern-time tasks do not include farming.

7. The Omo Ogun were well trained and well armed for the frequent Yoruba wars that took place late in the nineteenth century. See Smith's (1976) book titled *Warfare and Diplomacy in Pre-Colonial West Africa* for more detail.

8. McCaskie cites Barth as claiming that the soldiers had besieged the officers' tents, shaking and beating their shields in protest.

2

Western Democracy and Democratic Consolidation in Africa

Western democracy has become the democratization model for all nations. Thus, it serves as the model for East European nations that have moved from the communist era to democracy. In Africa, the story is the same (Diamond, Linz, and Lipset, 1988; Huntington, 1991; Diamond and Plattner, 1993). Africa no longer hopes to return to the strictures of traditional African democracies. Instead, it hopes to adopt modern-day Western democracy. In this chapter, we will discuss the prelude to Western democracy in Africa, the principles of Western democracy, various types of Western democracies, and the status of democratization in Africa.

PRELUDE TO WESTERN DEMOCRACY

African nations have changed both in geographical boundaries and their concepts of governance since the days of traditional African democracies, which we discussed in the previous chapter. This is not to say that aspects of traditional African democracies can no longer be found on the African continent. Instead, they have waned in their dominance and popularity even in rural Africa where traces of these democracies can still be found. Why is this the case?

The colonization of Africa in the nineteenth century broke up most of the large traditional African democracies and distributed them into several modern-day countries without regard to kinship affiliations. This meant that the democracies could no longer be governed by the traditional systems. Instead, the colonial government took total control of governance. Traditional kings were forced to serve as mere agents of the colonial government while maintaining

their titles as kings.[1] Ultimately, the democratic powers of the subjects largely eroded.

Furthermore, members of the African political elite were trained in Western educational institutions in places such as London, Paris, and New York. Those who stayed home in Africa were also educated in Western values through texts and the Western curricula that were used in African institutions such as Makarere University in Uganda, University of Ghana in Legon, and the University of Nigeria at Nsukka, Nigeria. Western-style democracy became their brand of democracy long after colonization and the traditional African democracy had been relegated to historical antiquity.

The African political elite did not participate in the autocratic colonial rule nor did they actually experience Western-style democracy. For more than half a century, the colonial governments ran democracies in Britain, France, and other colonial home countries but did not allow the Africans to participate in the Africans' own governance. This was the autocratic system that was largely practiced in the African colonies. In fact, the policy of internal self-government that eventually allowed African self-governance did not take place till the last few years of colonial rule.

Busia (1968) describes colonial rule in Africa as "authoritarian and paternalistic. They (colonialists) operated institutions which made it possible for a minority of whites to rule large African populations" (p. 49). The Africans were not allowed to vote, they were victims of apartheid all over the continent, and they were forced into hard labor for the colony's trade.

The colonial era was not a democratic one for Africa. Isichei (1977) writes that:

> Before the advent of colonial rule, the ruler was responsible
> only to his people. . . . Most, if not all, African states had, as
> we have seen, an elaborate structure of checks and balances,
> to prevent the ruler from becoming too powerful. Colonialism
> disrupted this delicate mechanism. (p. 205)

The colonialists enforced policies that ensured that traditional rulers owed allegiance to the colonial government, instead of their people. These rulers could no longer be removed by their subjects, as was the case in the past. Instead, the colonial rulers became the ones that installed and deposed those rulers in most cases. Even in places where the colonial rulers pursued a policy of indirect rule, the rulers were still forced to pursue the goals of their colonial masters.[2] In certain cases, the colonial governments went as far as curtailing or abolishing traditional African governments that had existed for centuries. For instance, the British abolished the office of Asantehene in Kumase from 1900 to 1935. The French clipped the powers of Dahomey kings.[3] The British imposed Gbelegbuwa II on the Ijebus of Yorubaland in Western Nigeria (Isichei, 1977).

The colonialists did not advocate for democracy even when they allowed the Africans to elect their own representatives to the various national governments in the early twentieth century. These representatives were limited in their powers. They could not reject laws, which were issued by the colonial governor-generals. They could only debate and ask questions but the colonial master still autocratically made the decisions.

Invariably, the years of autocratic colonial rule left their mark on several independent African states. Some adopted one-party autocracy where citizen voting was turned into a farce that was used to justify the maintenance of power by the ruling party leader. Many of these governments were steeply corrupt while the citizens were left in abject poverty. Justifiably, it was the distress felt by the citizens that culminated in the early post-independence wave of military coups. Coups became a reason for an overwhelming number of citizens to besiege the city streets in celebration and hope of a just government. It mattered little whether the government was military or not. But the military, which were ushered in as saviors, became despotic and in many cases worse than the governments that they had overthrown.

Thus, the Africans saw their chance in the late 1980s and early 1990s when East European nationals took to the streets to remove their communist dictatorships whom they considered to be economic oppressors. Massive East European protests were seen all over Africa on television and were reported on radio and in the print media. Africans then took their own action. In 1992, Bratton and van de Walle describe this action by writing as follows: "In Africa [too], authoritarian regimes [including the military] are under siege . . . . During 1990 citizens took to the streets of the capital cities in some fourteen African countries to express discontent with economic hardship and political repression and to demand democratic reform" (p. 27). Western democracy was the democratic reform they sought. After all, it was clearly the prevailing system of government after communism had failed in East Europe.

PRINCIPLES OF WESTERN DEMOCRACY

The principles of Western democracy are not much different from those of traditional African democracy, which we analyzed in Chapter 1. In fact, several of the principles are similar. What is different is the context in which the principles are practiced. Modern-day African administrations rule very large nations compared to the small communities we described in Chapter 1. Even ancient African kingdoms, which we also described in the previous chapter, did not have the complex administrations required in today's world. The differences in size and administrative complexity affect how democratic principles may be applied or practiced. In the earlier chapter we showed how such differences, particularly the volume of administrative activity or what can also be described as "administrative complexity," affected whether the citizens preferred the use

of plurality or consensus in reaching democratic decisions. In the less complex traditional African governments it was much easier to pursue a consensual decision whereas in the West such a choice would have bogged the system because the West had a far larger volume of administrative activity.

The principles we shall be discussing in this section are as follows: Participation, representation, decentralized power, accountability, plurality, equality, political competition, and rule of law. We shall also discuss additional principles, which can be best described as second-tier principles because they do not serve as guidelines for democracy. Instead, they are outcomes of a democratic environment. These additional principles include tolerance, human freedom, presence of democratic institutions, and citizen morality/discipline. We will discuss each principle in detail because of the effects of the context we have indicated above. Our discussion of the principles will be supported with the works of Kelso (1978) and Fischer (1996). It is important to reiterate that these principles are interdependent. For instance, the principles of participation and representation are closely related. Nevertheless, we will discuss each of them separately so that each can be clearly understood.

Participation is a core democratic principle. The importance of participation is revealed in the famous speech made by American President Abraham Lincoln at Gettysburg in 1863 when he described democracy as "government of the people, by the people, for the people." The speech, makes it clear that participation by the citizenry is a must in any democracy. Reality, however, makes participation of every one quite optimistic, especially in large-sized modern states. We shall learn in the next section that there are various types of democracy that have developed in response to the difficulty of ensuring direct participation for all. In fact, the principle of representation, which we shall discuss shortly, was developed as a response to the difficulty of ensuring direct participation for all. Nevertheless, participation remains a goal of all democratic states even though methods for ensuring it may widely differ. In most democratic states, citizen participation is felt during general elections and through the voicing of opinions in mass media channels that exist in such states.

Representation, as we mentioned earlier, is closely related to the principle of participation. Dahl (1989) categorizes democratic representation into two: (a) *referendum democracy*, which he describes as the use of elections to choose representatives, and (b) *primary democracy*, which he describes as the legislative process where citizen representatives make laws through discussions and voting. This principle, like several other principles of Western democracy, existed in traditional African government but the actual practice of representation was quite different. The principle is critical to democratic practice in all modern states simply because such states are large and the direct participation of all citizens (without representation) is not viable. Instead, all citizens continue to indirectly participate in the act of self-governance through their elected representatives.

Decentralized power, just like representation, is another way citizens' participation is ensured. There is usually a hierarchy of governments in Western democracies, and this goes a long way in localizing power. Citizens participate in their local governments while their representatives present citizen opinions at the higher levels of government. The day-to-day impact of government on the citizens is felt in the citizens' relationship with their local government.

Accountability refers to a system where the ruler is obliged to respond to the citizenry and the citizenry have a mechanism by which they ensure that their preferences are satisfied. The mechanisms used to ensure responsiveness in Western democracies are candidate elections and various types of voting. Dahl (1989) and Fischer (1996) list responsiveness as a major principle of democracy. Political campaigns in the West vividly illustrate this principle. Candidates and elected officials often make public announcements of what they accomplished in office or what they plan to accomplish. It is not an accident that such announcements focus on issues that each candidate perceives as paramount to his or her constituents. These announcements are made through media channels—such as direct mail, public campaign speeches, electronic media, and so forth—which the candidate has determined are the best means of reaching his or her constituency. The announcements represent the candidate's process of accounting to his or her constituency of citizens, or in essence a means of being responsive. The citizenry, theoretically, are expected to analyze the contents of each candidate's account and then make a decision on who is most appropriate for the task at hand. That decision is symbolized by voting on Election Day. Thus, campaigns, voting, and candidate elections are essential mechanisms of democratic accountability.

Democratic decisions in the West are made through a plurality of votes. This is necessary because participation and representation entail a variety of conflicting opinions. Let us quickly point out that plurality, which is the votes cast for the leading issue, candidate, or opinion (as the case may be), is not the only way decisions are made to settle conflicts in a democratic state. For example, we mentioned in the preceding chapter that consensus was the preferred choice in several traditional African democracies. The reason why plurality is used in Western democracies is that it saves time. Western democracies, and indeed modern African states, have a large volume of issues to discuss and, thus, less time to deliberate. In such situations, it is easy to explain why plurality is preferred over the more cumbersome consensus as a decision-making mechanism.

The notion of equality is another democratic principle. Equality refers to each citizen receiving political rights that are of the same value. This principle ensures that each individual has a say in his or her own governance and that no individual, theoretically, has more say than others in the political process. Usually, this principle is implemented in the rule that each individual is entitled to one vote. Hence, equality is limited to political participation and does not encroach on other areas such as the economy or education. The notion of equal-

ity and its limitations differ greatly when some traditional African democracies are compared to modern Western democracies. The Igbos, who were discussed at length in the previous chapter, largely did not include the *Osus* or *Umu Ajala* (servants of the gods) as citizens and, thus, this segment of Igbo population did not share political equality with Igbo freeborn. This was the same in Western democracies as recently as midway in the twentieth century when African-Americans and women were denied political rights in the United States. In fact, presently the United States—a bastion of Western democracy—does not provide voting rights to non-citizens even though these non-citizens are governed by the laws or rules of the United States.[4] In essence, they are denied participation in their own governance.

Dahl mentioned the presence of political competition for office as one of two critical requirements for democracy. The other is widespread participation, which we have all ready discussed. The presence of political competition works in tandem with some of the principles we have mentioned earlier in this chapter such as accountability. Parties are established primarily to facilitate competition for political office. In the United States, for instance, the Republican and the Democratic parties have a long history of competition for the country's political offices. Competition for political offices does not automatically mean the presence of rival political parties. In fact, competition for political offices can be enshrined in one-party states where members of the same party compete for offices during elections. Even in such situations, the competition obliges politicians to publicly account for their past or proposed stewardship. Essentially, without competition, the likelihood of accountability will be less.

Invariably, it is the rule of law that neatly ties all the democratic principles together. In most Western democracies the laws that serve as democratic guidelines are clearly specified, usually in the national constitution. It is important that democratic rules are enshrined in the national constitution because rules cannot be uncertain, neither should they be overly subjective as Fischer (1996) pointed out in her book titled *Establishing Democracies*. Most of the principles that we have discussed in this chapter are explicitly provided for in a democratic national constitution. In fact, Przeworski (1991) has said "the decisive step toward democracy is the devolution of power from a group of people to *a set of rules*" (p. 14).

The eight principles we have described are core democratic principles. In the next section we switch our attention to a discussion of the second-tier principles that often result from the practice of the core principles.

Second-Tier Principles

Second-tier principles of democracy are as follows: tolerance, human freedom, presence of democratic institution, and citizen morality/discipline. Often the degree of democracy or the extent of its consolidation in a nation can

be measured by analyzing the observable presence of the four principles listed above. Human rights advocates and various democracy think tanks make use of the four principles in their analyses of the democratic status of various states. We will describe each of these principles in the following paragraphs.

Fischer (1996) notes that tolerance is a behavior that is expected in democracy, which is an environment where people recognize the rights of others to think, choose, and act differently. An example of tolerance is when elected officials accept "compromise as both necessary and positive" (p. 4), because political opinions and goals are diverse. At times, these differences lead to conflicts, which can threaten the effectiveness of the democracy if there is no climate of tolerance. Thus, tolerance is not always present in a democracy but its absence only makes democracy less effective, it does not destroy it.

Democracy should also breed a climate of human freedom. All the principles we have stated earlier can only work if the citizens are free. Human freedom involves several rights, most of which can be found in the United Nations' (UN) Declaration of Human Rights and which are adopted by several democratic states. Several modern African countries including Kenya, Nigeria, Senegal, and Uganda have at one time or another enshrined provisions of the UN Declaration of Human Rights into their national constitutions. These rights include provisions that grant freedom from inhuman treatment and discriminatory legislation; freedom to peaceful association, movement, and expression; as well as rights to life and religion.

Several democratic institutions thrive in sustained democracies. Busia (1968) has listed such institutions as "newspapers, trade unions, and other voluntary associations, political parties, and elected parliament which has continual opportunity for criticizing those who rule, and for expressing the views of the governed" (p. 98). The American Civil Liberties Union (ACLU) is an example of a democratic institution. It was established independent of the government and its primary role is to fight for the preservation of American civil liberties. Thus, it initiates litigation or provides attorneys to fight perceived anti-civil liberty actions all over the United States. The judiciary is another democratic institution that is independent from the government in several Western democracies, including the United States, where the judiciary interprets the constitution's democratic provisions.

Busia (1968) also mentions the importance of citizen morality and discipline as what he called "ingredients of democracy":

> Rules governing elections may be made; freedoms may be provided in constitutions; and Bills of Right may be passed; they will make arbitrary acts easier to resist publicly, but they will not by themselves secure democracy. There are other rules which are unwritten, such as honesty, integrity, restraint, and respect for democratic procedures. We could add an impartial and incorrupt civil service, or the willingness to serve

in voluntary organizations, all of which call for moral stan-
dards and good behavior. (p. 107)

Thus, citizen morality and discipline are critical to sustained democ-
racy. A careful analysis of all the principles we have mentioned in this chapter
shows that they are all dependent on an active and willing citizenry. The task of
maintaining a democracy is not easy, because it requires an eternally alert citi-
zenry.

Hopefully, the discussions of the principles of Western democracy
have enlightened our knowledge of democracy. We will now shift our discus-
sion to various types of Western democracies.

TYPES OF DEMOCRACIES

Democracy can simply be understood by the various principles we
have all ready discussed. But those principles are merely generic and do not
help us understand particular democracies because there are certain peculiarities
such as the degree of public participation and the process of decision making
that help differentiate one type of democracy from another. We will use Kelso's
(1978) book on democratic theory to differentiate among several types of de-
mocracies. We begin by quoting Kelso:

(a) polyarchy, which sees the essence of democracy as com-
petition among political elite, (b) pluralism, which conceives
of democratic government as a twofold process involving
competition among elite and bargaining among interest
groups, (c) populism, which equates democracy with maxi-
mizing the power of the majority to decide substantive politi-
cal issues, and (d) participatory democracy, which views
democratic government as a form of community decision
making in which all citizens can actively participate on a day-
to-day basis. (pp. xi–xii)

Polyarchy theory of democracy does not necessarily deny participation
of the total citizenry. Instead, it limits the extent of citizen participation to peri-
odic election voting, which it justifies as a way to ensure continued account-
ability of the political elite. On the other hand, it assigns the day-to-day admini-
stration of government activities and legislation exclusively to a political elite.
Advocates of this type of democracy include Schumpeter (1950) and Lowi
(1969), who make several assumptions about democracy and the public. These
assumptions include: (a) daily direct participation in political administration by
the citizenry wastes time, (b) political issues are too complex for the vast ma-
jority of citizens to understand, (c) citizen views are largely represented by a

knowledgeable cadre of political elite, and (d) citizens retain the right to hold the political elite accountable through periodic election voting. Hence, they conclude that daily citizen participation in politics is unwarranted.

Democratic pluralism involves not just political rivalry among the elite but also political bargaining among various interest groups. Lindblom (1965) and Dahl (1967) are the major advocates of democratic pluralism. A clear difference between this type of democracy and polyarchy democracy, which we have just described, is the acceptable breadth of participation. Democratic pluralism calls for direct participation by the most affected publics on each issue, while polyarchy democracy restricts all direct participation to the political elite. Democratic pluralists justify their beliefs about how democracy should be practiced on the following grounds: (a) the interests of the larger public or citizenry need to be represented in daily political decision making, (b) the elite may not often represent the needs of the larger public, (c) groups serving the interests of the larger public are needed to ensure representation of public views and not to encumber the need to make quick political decisions (this would be the case if direct citizen participation occurs), and (d) competition and bargaining among interest groups offset limitations in knowledge of political issues.

Populism, on the other hand, focuses attention on the rights of the majority to decide political issues. Harrington (1970), who is a democratic populist, has argued that the political elite should not be the only ones who directly participate in democratic politics. Instead, he argues in favor of majority participation through periodic referendum on political issues. In addition, populists recommend that the state should have the power to prevent small but strong minority interests from overwhelming the wishes of the majority. The populist views, which we have just stated, rely on several beliefs which include: (a) a majority perspective exists on any one issue, (b) majority views are not represented by a small group of elite, (c) interest groups and the political elite can often frustrate the wishes of the majority, and (d) the state is duty bound to protect the governing rights of the majority.

Participatory democracy represents what most people identify as classical democracy, because it provides the best opportunity for all citizens to participate in their own governance. It does this by allowing small units of government at community levels, which enable citizens to participate in day-to-day community affairs. Thus, this type of democracy is similar to traditional African democracies, which we discussed in Chapter 1. Kotler (1967) and Altshuler (1970) are among several advocates of this type of democracy. They have pointed out that such democracy provides citizens with the only avenue to directly participate in their own governance. This enables all groups, including minorities, to wield governing powers, which would likely elude them in other types of democracies. Participatory democracy, therefore, makes the following assumptions: (a) democracies should serve all citizens, including minorities; (b) only smaller units of government can ensure the protection of the rights of all citizens, the elite and the poor, the majority and the minorities; (c) all citizens

are interested in daily participation in their own governance; and (d) other types of democracy underestimate the citizenry's ability to make knowledgeable decisions.

The discussion of various principles and types of Western democracy has been necessary as a framework for understanding the meaning of democracy. Several brands of Western democracy or its adaptation are presently practiced in modern Africa in places such as Benin Republic, Senegal, and South Africa. What we now need to understand is the status of democracy in several modern African states.

STATUS OF DEMOCRATIZATION IN CONTEMPORARY AFRICA

Half of African states, including places such as Benin Republic, Madagascar, Mali, Niger, and Malawi, went through multiparty elections between 1990 and 1995. Bratton (1995) reports that fourteen of these elections led to the removal of an incumbent leader and transfer of power to a newly elected one. More importantly, *Africa Demos* (4 March 1995), which is a democratic publication of the African Governance Program at the Jimmy Carter Center of Emory University in Atlanta (United States), notes that "virtually all (African) regimes feel compelled to accept at least in theory, the necessity of a democratic transition" (p. 1). Furthermore, and perhaps surprisingly, there is a "widening trend of African military regimes fostering institutional arrangements that allow for direct participation of the populace in local level decision making" (Robinson, 1992, p. 144).

How sincere? Or more appropriately, how sustainable are these events? The sustainability of these new democracies is extremely doubtful. Already in June of 1993 a military dictatorship under General Ibrahim Babangida canceled a Nigerian presidential election when it became clear that the apparent winner, Chief Moshood Abiola, was not a favorite. This was in total disregard of the wishes of the millions who had voted. In the same year, a military coup overthrew the elected government of Melchior Ndadaye in Burundi and quenched a very brief rule of democracy.[5] Burundi subsequently went into crisis. In May of 1997, military strongman Johny Paul Koromah shot his way to power in Sierra Leone by forcefully unseating the democratically elected President Ahmed Tejan Kabbah. Then in October of the same year, former military head of state in the Republic of Congo (Brazzaville), Denis Sassou-Nguesso, led a group of militia to battle the democratically elected government of President Pascal Lissuoba for four months before grabbing power in Congo (Brazzaville).[6] At about the same period, the democratically elected government of Frederick Chiluba in Zambia was fortunate to survive a coup attempt. This may be a harbinger of the future, if serious measures are not established to sustain these democracies. This book, of course, is focused on only the military threat to democracy and we will

discuss this continuing threat in the next chapter. In this section, however, we focus our attention on descriptions of newly democratized African nations.

Multiparty elections and citizen voting are regarded as essential to democracy, but it is quite clear that elections alone cannot constitute consolidation of a democratic state as the Burundi, the Republic of Congo (Brazzaville), Sierra Leone, and Zambia cases demonstrate. Instead, elections merely signal a first step in the process of democratization, particularly in those states where the military had usurped power or in states where there is an absence of a long history of democracy. To sustain or consolidate democracy, therefore, all the principles of democracy should be observable in a state.

Military coups continue to threaten democratic states particularly in those places where all democratic principles are not yet in place. According to Gutteridge (1985), the question is not whether the military will participate in African politics but to what extent and by what means. Depressingly, military intervention happens so quick that the citizens are not given the opportunity to remove ineffective governments through the ballot box. This clearly demonstrates a lack of faith in achieving a consolidated or sustainable democracy. *Africa Demos* (May 1996) confirms that no African state is at the phase of democratic consolidation. It describes democratic consolidation as follows: "Democracy becomes 'consolidated' when there is widespread respect for fundamental constitutional provisions especially the rules governing succession in office" (p. 27). Therefore, consolidation entails much more than elections. It involves most of what we have all ready described as the second-tier principles of democracy. Our discussion of the state of democracy in some African states will entail not just elections but the presence or absence of other principles of democracy. We now focus our attention on the following states: Benin Republic, Ethiopia, Ghana, Liberia, Madagascar, Mali, and Zambia. In addition, we will describe two countries—Nigeria and Sierra Leone—where democracy has been disrupted by the military.

Benin Republic

The Benin Republic is one of few African countries that have undergone more than one democratic election without military intervention. This puts the country in the enviable position of having the potential for consolidated democracy. In fact, *Africa Demos* (1996) rates the country at the seventh of eight phases on the publication's scale titled *Phases of Transition to Democracy*. The publication's seventh phase is legitimization, which is described as "the legitimacy of the government as well as the constitutional democratic system is generally accepted. Challenges of particular policies, such as economic reforms and wage policies, do not automatically indicate a rejection of the democratic system" (p. 27). No African country was said to be on the eighth phase.

Benin Republic had been under military dictatorship of Mathieu Kere-kou for seventeen years before democratic elections in 1991. Kerekou, who re-tired from the army but lost the 1991 elections to former World Bank official Nicephore Soglo, is the present president having been elected in the second elections conducted in 1996.

The independence of several democratic institutions is doubtful in Be-nin. The judiciary, for instance, is generally perceived as corrupt. The govern-ment itself has, at times, disregarded judicial decisions such as when it ignored a court-ordered release of Col. Maurice Kouandete, who was arrested for political reasons just before the 1996 presidential elections. The court had ruled that Kouandete's detention was unconstitutional. Other democratic institutions are flourishing, including non-government organizations such as the League for the Defence of Human Rights and the Research Group on Democracy. The High Authority for Audio-Visual Media and Communications (HAAC) requires sub-mission of planned broadcast programs and copies of all publications even though the constitution provides for the freedom of the press.

A major concern remains the threat of military coups. The military is still dominated by the North in a country where there is a fierce ethnic rivalry between the North and the South. Kerekou is a Northerner and, thus, his tenure as the head of government may not be problematic. But what happens when a Southerner becomes president? When Soglo, a Southerner, ruled in 1991–95 there was an attempted coup in 1994.

Ethiopia

Ethiopia had been under authoritarian regimes for a long time. There were authoritarian imperial rulers before the onset of military dictatorships in the 1970s. In 1995, President Negaso Gidado became the first democratically elected leader. Melas Zenawi, who is prime minister in President Gidado's gov-ernment, had served as transitional president since 1991 when the Tigrean Peo-ple's Liberation Front (TPLF) army forced military dictator Col. Mengistu Haile Mariam from power.

The prognosis for Ethiopia's new democracy is not bright. One of the major opposition groups, the Oromo Liberation Front (OLF), withdrew from deliberations on Ethiopia's democratic structure during the transition period because it felt that the dominant Ethiopian People's Revolutionary Democratic Front (EPRDF) had taken control of transition and had prevented broad partici-pation. Both Gidado and Zenawi are members of the EPRDF. A majority of the organized opposition parties threatened to boycott the 1995 elections in protest of the new Ethiopian constitution, which had fragmented their power bases into several ethnic provinces. They also perceived the EPRDF as creating a general anti-opposition political environment. At that time, the EPRDF had restricted and muzzled the press, whose freedom is ultimately a symbol of a consolidated

democratic institution. Additionally, an estimated 20,000 OLF fighters and supporters were arrested following the 1992 regional elections.

Things are now much calmer even though some of the opposition groups are not committed to democracy, because several of them, including Ogaden National Liberation Front (ONLF) and the Ethiopian Medhin Democratic Party (EMDP), continue to advocate secession from Ethiopia. In essence, there continue to be concerns for the consolidation of democracy and a potential for the outbreak of ethnic wars.

Ghana

Ghana has had several elected governments repeatedly interrupted by military coups beginning in 1966 when Ghana's first post-independence leader, Kwame Nkrumah, was overthrown. Additional military coups took place in 1972, 1978, 1979, and 1981. The last one in 1981 was the second led by military strongman Jerry Rawlings, who later quit the military to contest successfully in the 1993 democratic elections. He began his second term as president after winning the 1996 elections.

Ghana, like every other democratic country in Africa, presently allows elections, which is one of the core democratic principles. Other core principles, which were discussed in the earlier sections of this chapter, are practiced in one form or another in Ghana. For instance, representation is ensured through legislative elections, while political competition is ensured through political campaigns and elections. The problem lies in the absence of practice of second-tier principles. Tolerance, for instance, is not widely practiced in Ghana's democracy where several arrests, detentions, and bombings of the opposition took place in late 1992 at the commencement of the first democratic elections for the national legislature. A leading opposition candidate, Professor Adu Boahen, was arrested and charged for "obstruction of justice."

The government has failed to investigate the killing of four anti-government tax policy demonstrators in 1995. Journalists are repeatedly harassed by threats of litigation or at times detention. The government dominates ownership of the press and controls independent press by using threats not to do business with private organizations advertising in 'unfriendly' independent papers. The Ghanaian judiciary and several autonomous commissions are constitutionally independent but in reality the executive branch largely influences them because the judiciary lacks independent resources.

Liberia

Liberia has the longest history of modern democratic rule in Africa. Liberia was founded in 1817 by the American Colonization Society and was

settled by freed American slaves in 1822. Since then it has been ruled demo-
cratically until a brief military rule that begun in 1980 under Master Sergeant
Samuel Doe.[7]

It is important to briefly discuss Master Sergeant Doe's tenure as ruler
of Liberia because his tenure denotes several important points in Liberia's his-
tory. For several years, many Liberian natives detested the Americo-Liberians
who provided Liberia's president and formed the elite group. Thus, Liberian
natives widely welcomed Doe's overthrow of William Tolbert in 1980 to be-
come the first non--Americo-Liberian head of state. Tolbert was assassinated
during the coup and Doe declared martial law.

Doe's rule was authoritative with a general disregard for democratic
principles that had been built up over the years. Charles Taylor, later president
of Liberia, served as Chief Procurement Officer for Doe's government. Taylor
fled to the United States after he was sought for alleged embezzlement. He was
imprisoned in the United States and was awaiting extradition to Liberia when he
escaped from prison. He soon built up a Liberian insurgent force, with the help
of Libya, from his new base in the Ivory Coast. At about the same time, Doe
transitioned into a civilian to win the 1986 presidential elections but his leader-
ship style continued to alienate Liberians, some of whom escaped to join Tay-
lor's forces in the Ivory Coast.

In December 1989, Charles Taylor invaded Liberia from the Ivory
Coast and in September of the next year his forces assassinated President Sam-
uel Doe. At this time, however, several Liberian liberation groups had sprouted
to compete with Taylor's forces. The groups fought against each other from
1990 until 19 July 1997 when Taylor won the presidential election.[8] He received
75 percent of the votes against the 10 percent for Johnson-Sirleaf.

Democracy is at a very early stage in Liberia and Taylor's patience for
democracy will be tested in the six years of his presidential term. Distrust in
Liberia is at a paranoid level and there are also problems with respect for human
lives and rights.

Taylor's government needs to build trust after years of distrust which
Taylor had built up during the seven-year war. Distrust led to the failure of as
many as thirteen agreements among the warring groups until the Abuja accord
ending the wars was signed in August 1995. The truth, however, is that the
situation is now different, and the blame for breaking the various agreements is
shared by all the warring groups.[9]

The war bred a distrustful situation because each warlord sought to
take a winning advantage. In the new era of democracy, Taylor is charged with
uniting the country and trust is at the core of rebuilding national unity. Thus,
Taylor's attitude has to change. However, Taylor began his tenure as president
by reneging on the Abuja accord that required the reformation of Liberian
armed forces and police under the auspices of the West African military force
(ECOMOG). Instead, for months, he attempted to convert his security forces to

Liberian army and police. His only gesture of regaining trust has been his inclusion of some opposition politicians in his government (Sannah, 1997).

There are several concerns for human rights since Taylor assumed the presidency. Taylor has set up a human rights commission but his security agents have been accused of threats, intimidation, arrests, and murder. For example, in December 1997 the government threatened to shutdown a Catholic radio station in the country for airing uncomplimentary programs. In addition, Taylor's government is largely believed to have a hand in the deaths of opposition leaders Samuel Dokie and Melvin Leah (Hule, 25 Dec., 1997).

Furthermore, media freedom has been abridged. Many journalists have been arrested and others threatened with death. In March 1998, the government issued stringent guidelines for the press including high registration fees and educational criteria for journalism practice. These guidelines were rescinded only after the media vehemently protested (Sannah, 21 March, 1998 and 25 March, 1998).

Madagascar

Madagascar, an island off the coast of East Africa, is one of the African states that was under military dictatorship before the wave of democratic reforms spread throughout the continent in the 1980s. Albert Zafy was first elected president for a five-year term in 1993 but was impeached in 1995. In late 1996, Didier Ratsiraka was elected as president with 50.7 percent of the votes. Democracy is far from being consolidated in Madagascar. There have been threats to the new democracy since 1991, when Didier Ratsiraka was the last military head of government. He had been ousted by sustained citizen strikes and mass action. The enemies of democracy have struck twice at the early stages of democratic reforms in 1992 but were unsuccessful. Neither an assassination attempt on Mr. Zafy's life nor a military coup which took place shortly after, was successful. Several clashes between Ratsikara and Mr. Zafy's supporters followed Zafy's 1993 election victory.

The constitution provides for consolidation of democracy through an independent judiciary and freedom of the press but implementation of constitutional provisions has been slow. A senate was not elected until 1995, and departmental and regional elections have been also delayed. The judiciary's independence is only in theory because there is belief in the widespread corruption of the judiciary. Also, there have been reports of violence against journalists even though the press is widely free. In 1994, for instance, a radio journalist (Victor Randrianirina) was beaten to death for reporting on the smuggling of sapphires.

Mali

Mali has been independent of French colonial rule since 1960, and the country's first leader was Modibo Keita of the Union Soudanaise party. Keita was an avowed socialist but this ideological practice soon put his country into severe economic distress, which prompted the first Malian coup of 1968, led by Captain Yoro Diakite and Lieutenant Moussa Traore.

It was not until 1992 that Mali again returned to true democratic elections. Alpha Oumar Konare won the presidential elections in 1992 to take over from military dictatorships of Lt. Col. Amadou Toumani Toure and Lt. Moussa Traore. Konare's task has not been easy, considering that the army had only agreed to democratic elections following mass demonstrations by citizens who called for economic reforms and democracy. Konare was elected by close to 70 percent of all votes cast in the presidential elections. In 1997, he was reelected with 84 percent of the votes cast, but twenty-one political parties had boycotted the elections (most of these parties were minor ones).

Demonstrations, which have sometimes been violent, have continued under Konare because economic conditions have failed to improve. To worsen the situation, international aid to Mali is "slowly dissipating" (Martin, 1993, p. 5), and the rule of law has declined while anarchy has taken over. People are beginning to question the viability and the benefits of a democratic government.

Democratic institutions, particularly the judiciary, remain under the influence of the executive branch. This has led to a situation where the ruling party's powers appear to have been consolidated to the detriment of democracy's future. The 1997 general elections, for instance, were widely denounced both internally and by most international observers. The polls that were organized by the Independent National Electoral Commission (CENI) led to serious lack of electoral registers and late polling.[10] Opposition demonstrations and litigation immediately followed the elections. The constitutional courts annulled some rounds of the legislative voting after widespread public calls for annulment and the acknowledgment of irregularities by both Konare's party and the opposition.

Mali has improved in some areas of democratic consolidation, despite glaring shortcomings. For instance, independent human rights groups have begun to flourish, including a local chapter of Amnesty International. In addition, the Malian press is largely free even though the government passed measures in 1993 to restrict criticism of top government officials and independent radio station Kayira's news broadcasts were jammed early in 1997.

Zambia

Zambia, for years, has had one of the few stable governments in Africa. There has not been a successful military coup in Zambia since its independence

in 1964. The present government in Zambia led by Frederick Chiluba was elected in 1991 in the country's first multiparty elections. In 1996, Chiluba was re-elected for a second five-year term.

The only other president of Zambia was Kenneth Kaunda, who was president under a one-party rule after the 1964 independence. Kaunda was born by Malawian parents, who were missionaries who had settled in Zambia. Kaunda immediately reinforced his presidential powers after independence and seemed to be preparing for a lifelong stay as the country's president. Zambia was relatively free compared to many African countries but fair democratic elections were not available under Kaunda.

In fact, there were two coup attempts against Kaunda's government, as political frustrations began to build up within the country. In 1980, a prominent lawyer, Edward Shamwana, led several other civilians and military personnel in an unsuccessful coup attempt. Ten years later, Captain Mwamba Luchembe captured the national radio station for two hours to announce a coup but his attempt was immediately defeated.

These pressures forced Kaunda to give in to the demands for multiparty elections. It is also important to note that the rapid move toward democracy and multiparty elections in neighboring states also influenced situations within Zambia. Chiluba won the first multiparty elections in 1991 by defeating Kaunda.

Chiluba's government, however, has not created an atmosphere conducive to freedom of speech or political tolerance. Thus, the likelihood of democratic consolidation in Zambia is low. Chiluba's government, for instance, has made attempts to muzzle the Zambia press. In February 1996, the government banned an issue of the *Zambian Post*, including the Internet version hosted by the government's Internet provider, ZAMNET. The speaker of the legislative house also ordered an indefinite detention of three *Zambian Post* writers. In addition, Chiluba has vigorously supported measures to institute a government-initiated press council, which was rescinded when the press became vociferously outraged. A similar situation arose when Chiluba's government attempted to expand the president's constitutional powers by granting the office the power to dismiss judges. The government only backed down when the public widely opposed the proposed constitutionally amendment. In the case of political intolerance, Chiluba's government passed a widely criticized constitutional amendment just before the 1996 presidential elections. The amendment barred Zambians, whose parents were born, outside the country, from running for Zambia's presidency. Many observers believe that the amendment was intended to prevent the former president, Kenneth Kaunda, from challenging Chiluba at the 1996 presidential elections. Kaunda was effectively barred and his party, the United National Independence Party (UNIP), boycotted the elections. Kaunda has been bitter ever since.

The acrimony between Chiluba and Kaunda may have risen to a more dangerous level after a military coup attempt on 28 October 1997, when Chiluba

accused Kaunda of instigating the coup. The coup was allegedly planned by Major Musonda Kangwa and Dean Mung'omba, who was the president of the opposition Zambia Democratic Congress (ZDC).[11] On 28 October 1997, Captain Stephen Lungu, identifying himself as "Captain Solo," announced the coup after he briefly seized the Zambian Mass Media Complex, which houses the Zambian National Radio and Television. Kaunda was outside the country at this time but he was immediately detained upon his return to Zambia. Kaunda denied any connection with the coup and so did many of the arrested members of the Zambian opposition party.

There are several problems with Zambia's move toward democratic consolidation, as the preceding discussions indicate. In addition, the government and its agents, particularly the police, have continued to harass citizens. In 1996, for example, a government official ordered the police to attack a peaceful student demonstration, and in another case the police arrested eight UNIP members on trumped-up charges of treason, but these members were later released after months of incarceration. In 1994, the Zambian government also deported John Chinula of UNIP because he had Malawian parentage even though Chinula was born in Zambia. These actions have increased tensions between the government and the opposition parties.

So far our discussions have focused on a few African states where democracy presently exists. There are other states where the military has adversely disrupted the move toward democracy. Nigeria and Sierra Leone represent the latter states. The situation in both countries will be discussed next.

Nigeria

Nigeria is acclaimed as the most politically important country in West Africa; yet, it is presently (at the time of this writing) under the military rule of General Abdulsalam Abubakar, who promises to hand over power to a democratically elected government. Military rulers who led successful coups in 1966, 1975, 1983, 1985, and 1993 have largely ruled Nigeria.

The first democratically elected government ruled from independence on 1 October 1960 till the military coup of 1966. That government adopted the British parliamentary system of governance, which the political elite had learned from their British colonial rulers. Principles of democracy were widely practiced, but ethnic intolerance proved to be a major influence that eventually instigated the military coup of 1966.

The next democracy did not come till 1979 when the National Party of Nigeria (NPN) led by President Shehu Shagari won the national elections. Again, the parties had strong ethnic affiliations and, thus, ethnic squabbles dominated discussions within the democracy. Many agree that democracy was not perfect, but the acceptance of citizen participation in governmental affairs was much higher than in any of the military regimes.

The 1979 democracy was removed in a December 1983 military coup that was led by General Ibrahim Buhari. Elections for a new democratic government eventually took place on 12 June 1993 after several postponements and tinkering by the military government of General Ibrahim Babangida. The army forced the establishment of only two political parties in an attempt to solve the long-running problems of ethnic divisions. It also selectively banned several members of the top political elite who had participated in earlier democracies. These were the conditions under which the 12 June 1993 elections were held. Yet, the military canceled election results as they were being announced and Chief Moshood Abiola was on his way to a landslide victory over Alhaji Bashir Tofa. In later interviews, General Babangida was quoted as saying that he had ordered the cancellation of the 1993 Presidential elections because of electoral fraud, but many Nigerians believed that the elections had been annulled because Chief Abiola was not acceptable to the military leaders. Clearly, Babangida was not concerned that a majority of Nigerians had voted and found Chief Abiola acceptable! Babangida himself was forced to resign after a huge protest and riot were mounted in Nigeria and international pressure also rose against election cancellation. He appointed Chief Ernest Shonekan, a businessman, to lead a caretaker government before another election was to be conducted. The public did not accept Shonekan's government, nor did the public accept General Sanni Abacha's government, which replaced Shonekan a few months later in a palace coup. Since then, the country has been controlled through military dictatorship and decrees. Terrorism against the military, from unhappy citizens, increased and several international sanctions were applied against Nigeria.

Sierra Leone

Democracy in Sierra Leone has been a long and rough journey, which eventually led to the election of Alhaji Tejan Kabbah in March 1996. On 25 May 1997, Kabbah's government was ousted by a military coup led by Major Johny Paul Koromah. Kabbah's government was not restored to the seat of power till March 1998 after a West African military force (ECOMOG) out gunned the coup makers. Before May 1997, the Sierra Leonian military had delayed democracy with an earlier coup, which kept military Captain Valentine Strasser as head of state for four years. In fact, it took another military coup led by General Julius Maada Bio in January of 1996 to ensure that the March 1996 elections stayed on schedule. The 1991 constitution was used as the framework for the implementation of democracy under Kabbah.

The democracy under Kabbah faced numerous problems including concerns with tolerance. There were several reports of political violence at the time of the 1996 elections but all these were at the time linked to members of Strasser's National Provisional Ruling Council (NPRC). Civil strife followed, particularly in the hinterland of Sierra Leone before the May 1997 coup led by

Major J. P. Koromah. Koromah's coup was unpopular both within and outside Sierra Leone. Sanctions were imposed against Sierra Leone before the West African military force (ECOMOG) to forcibly removed the coup plotters and returned Kabbah's government to power.

The selective analyses of the status of democracy in African countries were meant to demonstrate that the establishment of democracy in various African states has not stopped the threat of military coups. Democracy involves a slow and accumulative process from elections to a consolidated phase at which point the threat of military coups will have substantially declined. Therefore, military coups—as has been demonstrated in the cases of Nigeria and Sierra Leone—are possible until African democracies become consolidated.

SUMMARY

The present preference for Western-style democracy in Africa can be linked to two recent historical events: (a) the move to democratization in East Europe during the 1980s when citizens of former communist countries of East Europe rose against economic hardship and were able to successfully force democratic reforms, and (b) gross mismanagement of economies by both the post-colonial elected governments and military dictatorships in Africa. Africa could not return to its traditional democratic past because the colonialists of the nineteenth century had balkanized the continent and Africa's political elite were all ready assimilated to Western style governance.

In certain cases, the principles of Western democracy are similar to some principles of African democracy. Principles of Western democracy can be classified into two tiers: (a) the core principles, which include participation, representation, decentralized power, accountability, plurality, equality, political competition, and the rule of law; and (b) the second-tier principles, which include tolerance, human freedom, presence of democratic institutions, and citizen morality/discipline. It is this second tier that consolidates democracy. Four types of Western democracy—polyarchy, pluralism, populism, and participatory—were also discussed.

The chapter also focused on the status of democratization in several African states—Benin Republic, Ethiopia, Ghana, Liberia, Madagascar, Mali, and Zambia. Each of these states experienced military coups prior to democracy and each continues to face military coup threats because their democracies remain unconsolidated. Two other countries—Nigeria and Sierra Leone—were discussed as examples of African states where the move towards democracy was disrupted by military coups. Details of military threats to democracy will be discussed in Chapter 3.

NOTES

1. Elizabeth Isichei describes this type of governance as "indirect rule" in her book, *History of West Africa since 1800*. She points out that indirect rule was widely practiced by the colonial government in West Africa. Indirect rule simply means ruling through an African ruler.

2. Indirect rule represents the type of colonial government where the colonies were largely left to manage their own affairs and the colonial masters simply acted as hands-off overseers.

3. Dahomey is now Benin Republic.

4. In the United States, the voting laws deny voting rights to permanent residents who may have resided in the United States for several years. The denial of voting rights means that these residents do not have the opportunity to influence how they are governed or taxed.

5. Major Buyoya, who had been defeated by Ndadaye during the presidential elections, was the instigator of this coup. Buyoya had been the military head of state before the election of Ndadaye as President.

6. The retired General Denis Sassou-Nguesso had refused to disband his militia after he was ordered to do so by President Lissuoba. Lissuoba had linked the disbandment of militias as a necessity for the upcoming Congolese presidential elections in which Lissuoba and Sassou-Nguesso were both interested. Several top Congolese politicians maintain militias.

7. Liberia was under American protection until 1847 when it declared itself independent. In 1911 it was again under American protection because of internal disorder and bankruptcy.

8. Charles Taylor led the National Patriotic Part (NPP) while Ellen Johnson-Sirleaf led the Unity Party (UP). An estimated 150,000 Liberians were killed in the war and much of the country's 2.5 million people became refugees, scattered across West Africa.

9. The warring groups included Taylor's militia, the Liberian Peace Council (LPC), the Lofa Defense Force (LDF), and the splinter groups of the United Liberation Movement of Liberia for Democracy (ULIMO).

10. CENI features equal representation of both the ruling and the opposition parties.

11. Dean Mun'gomba of the ZDC was runner-up to Chiluba in the 1996 presidential election. Mun'gomba won 12 percent of the votes against Chiluba's 70 percent.

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3

Reasons for and History of Military Coups

INTRODUCTION

The continuing military threat to democratization was the focus of earlier discussions on the status of democratization in Africa. We have pointed out the rapid overthrow of democracy in Burundi, the Republic of Congo (Brazzaville), Nigeria, and Sierra Leone. Democracy lasted barely a few months in Burundi and in the case of Nigeria it was stillborn. The African military has not retired to the barracks, and it is only a matter of time before it returns, unless something drastic is done to prevent a return. Even though it has been argued that the military often takes advantage of a democracy's inability to consolidate, it is important to add that in many cases the military has carried out coups for other less altruistic reasons. Some of those reasons will be addressed in this chapter. The chapter will also include a discussion of the history of military coups in Africa with a focus on a selected list of countries. These discussions will serve as a prelude to the next chapter, which focuses on analyses of why military leadership is considered anti democratic.

AFRICAN MILITARY COUPS

The first post-colonial military coup (led by Lieutenant General Ahmed Abboud and Major General Wahhab) took place in the Sudan on 17 November 1958 when the army overthrew the Sudanese civilian government following a yearlong economic unrest. By 1990, more than sixty military coups had taken place in the continent. Decalo (1990) makes the direct effects of these coups on democracy clear in this statement: "By 1975, twenty of the continent's forty-one states were led by military or civil-military cliques. . . . Indeed, apart from Mauritius in 1982, *no elections* [sic] has ever ousted a ruling party from office in the

three decades of Africa's independence" (p. 2). Decalo's statement is a profound one and it remained an accurate description of governance in Africa for more than a decade and a half after 1975. In essence, autocratic one-party rule or military dictatorships have dominated post-independence in Africa.

We will focus our discussion on military dictatorships since this is the objective of this book. In the following sections we will devote our attention first to an analysis of reasons for military coups and the history of military coups in selected African countries.

REASONS FOR MILITARY COUPS

There are numerous reasons for military coups, but over the years most historians or scholars have simply assumed that the reasons are those that are often announced by the coup plotters themselves (Huntington, 1956, 1968; Welch, 1970; Uganda, 1971; Nordlinger, 1977; Sahlin, 1977). Those assumptions can often be classified as following either the development thesis or the guardian perspective.

The *development thesis* arrogates the title of people's representatives to military coup leaders, who claim to have militarily intervened on the behalf of downtrodden citizens. These types of coups occur in developing nations (thus explaining the name *development thesis*), where citizen political activity is considered weak and the military, being a strong and nationally organized group, is left to carry out political interventions. Wiking's elaborate study in 1983 lists various justifications that could all be considered to fall broadly under the development thesis. These include the lack of success in nation building and economic failures.

The lack of success in nation building includes accusations of tribalism and the failure to unite the nation. Wiking, for instance, notes that Major General Juvenal Habyalimana's coup in Rwanda in July of 1973 was solely based on accusations of increased national disunity during President Gregoire Kayibanda's rule. Idi Amin's coup of 1971 in Uganda was announced as a necessary intervention to prevent the then Ugandan leader Milton Obote's continued ethnic policies against the Ganda people.

Most military coups announce economic failures as a major justification, and we will present two major examples of such cases. General Ankrah's 1966 coup in Ghana listed several economic failures of Dr. Kwame Nkrumah's government, including the rising cost of living, and Sergeant Samuel Doe's 1980 coup in Liberia accused the overthrown Tolbert government of unequal distribution of the nation's economic resources.

The *guardian perspective* acknowledges the military as the unit that is entrusted with the nation's defense and military coups are, therefore, seen as part of the maintenance of political sanity and, thus, a necessary part of national defense. An example is political power tussles that are usually announced as

reasons for several African military coups. Such tussles frequently emerge after elections when the loser refuses to concede victory and claims electoral mal-practice. Rarely do presidential electoral losers concede victory in most African countries. Moreover, there are several election frauds that take place during these elections that it is easy to find reasons for an electoral defeat. The power tussles that follow those elections are usually protracted and they threaten the country's peace. There are other power tussles that are not directly related to elections. For example, the protracted squabbles between Sourou-Migan Apithy and Justin Ahomadegbe who were appointed (and not elected) president and vice-president in the Benin Republic. These power tussles do not warrant mili-tary intervention because the national judicial systems are capable of resolving those tussles.

Wiking lists lack of law and order; unlawful acts of the government, and the army's duty to guarantee order as additional justifications usually an-nounced by coup leaders. These additional justifications can all be considered also as being part of the guardian perspective. Coup leaders often give several justifications to support their activities and these justifications can fall both within the development thesis and the guardian perspective. Wiking identifies Lieutenant Colonel Sanguole Lamizana's 1966 coup in Burkina Faso and Major Blake's 1967 coup in Sierra Leone as announced attempts to maintain law and order. Lamizana's coup came in the wake of a prolonged unrest and a state of emergency. In Sierra Leone, there were disturbances surrounding the elections and then chaos after the Commander of the Army, Brigadier David Lansana, arrested the newly elected Prime Minister Siaka Stevens and the then British Governor-General Sir Henry Lightfoot.

Wiking listed numerous other reasons that cannot easily be classified as either a development thesis or a guardian perspective. However, they all are announced reasons, including the following: lack of democracy, corruption, interference in military affairs, and inadequate military budgets.

Let us elaborate more on the "lack of democracy," which should be ab-sorbed with a pinch of doubt. Coming from the military, this accusation is in-credible. Remarkably, the Malian coup leaders of 1968 had accused President Modibo Keita of being dictatorial and undemocratic but the subsequent military regime hardly proved different. For instance, elections did not immediately take place to restore democratic rights to the Malians. Instead, the soldiers clung to power. Coup makers exhibit other undemocratic traits apart from delaying elec-tions against the will of the majority. Most of these undemocratic activities are discussed in greater detail in the next chapter.

Corruption is frequently used as an excuse for military coups. Coup makers point to various and sometimes verifiable examples of government cor-ruption. This wins immediate support for the coup makers but does not stop corruption. The coup makers become engrossed in corruption. Several coup makers have led some of the most corrupt governments in Africa. For example, Jean-Bedel Bokassa in Central African Republic, Mobutu Sese Seko in Zaire

(now Democratic Republic of Congo), and Idi Amin in Uganda. Thus, coups do not cure corruption. Instead, an effective judicial system would take care of most of the corrupt practices.

Coup makers have also pointed to interference in military affairs as well as inadequate military budgets as reasons for military coups. In most of these cases, the coup makers believe that the military should not take orders from civilian administrators. However, national constitutions in most of these states grant the president powers over the national army. The coup makers, however, feel that they can pick and choose which orders to accept and which ones to ignore. To make matters worse, some coup makers feel that budget cuts that affect other sectors of the economy should not affect the army. Strasser's 1992 and Koromah's 1997 coups in Sierra Leone, and the 1997 military mutinies in the Central African Republic were all attributed to military finances.

Conclusions about the veracity of coup plotters are sometimes naïve because announcements by plotters should be analyzed amid their peculiar contexts. They should not be accepted simply on the basis that they were announced. Coup plotters are quite aware that governments should justifiably only be replaced because of incompetence and not for personal or other whimsical reasons. Thus, coup plotters provide incompetence as the publicly announced reason for overthrowing a government even though such a reason may be far from the underlying truth. What matters is that the announced reasons should satisfy citizens as well as the international audience. One must point out that some times the announced reasons for military coups appear quite truthful. Flight Lieutenant Jerry Rawlings' first coup in Ghana and those of Thomas Sankara in Burkina Faso and Muhammed Buhari in Nigeria were claimed to be crusades against government corruption and subsequent activities by the coup plotters seemed to support such claims. However, our discussions of reasons must not focus only on announced reasons for coups but should delve into implicit explanations for coups. Fortunately, some scholars (particularly Decalo in his 1990 work) have studied several of these implicit explanations and we will use their guidelines for our review. Decalo (1990) lists the following reasons for African military coups: ethnic rivalries, intramilitary quarrels, personal jealousies and ambitions (usually associated with the discussions on military praetorianism), and personal fear.[1]

It is obvious that numerous military coups are not altruistic. Instead, coups are often examples of naked greed at grabbing power without going through the uncertain process of democratic elections. Ethnic rivalry, for instance, is far from being nationally altruistic. In many ways it represents another level of greed—greed at the level of the ethnic group rather than the personal level! Ethnic rivalries are prevalent all over Africa and have been attributed as the cause of many societal ills that range from corruption to wars. These rivalries exist within the military and sometimes it is the politicians, traditional rulers, and other elite groups who use ethnic sympathies to whip military men into contemplating coups. For example, the second Nigerian military coup of 1966,

which was led by Northern Nigerian officers, was avowedly carried out as a revenge against the first coup, which the Northern Nigerians had perceived as an ethnic coup. Mostly Igbo military officers (who were from eastern Nigeria) led that first coup and the victims were, almost exclusively, Northern political and military leaders. The Northern elite considered the first coup as an affront and were then instrumental in getting Northern military officers to carry out a coup in which several Igbo officers were killed. A few months after that second coup, Nigeria became engulfed in a three-year civil war that was a direct result of the ethnic-based military coups.

A few other Nigerian military coups, including two failed attempts in February 1976 and April 1990, can be linked to ethnic rivalries. The 1976 coup led by Lieutenant Colonel Buka Suka Dimka (head of the Nigerian Army Signal Training Corps) was a plot by soldiers from the Middle Belt region of Nigeria to reinstate General Yakubu Gowon, who had been deposed in 1975 by soldiers who were primarily Northern Hausas.[2] The second one, led by Major Gideon Orkar and some Middle Belt soldiers, was a putsch against General Ibrahim Babangida's government, which was perceived as primarily Northern Hausas. In fact, the plotters explicitly announced that the coup was against people from the far North of Nigeria (which was a reference to the Hausa-Fulani group).

Decalo attributes both the 1966 and the 1972 military coups in Ghana to other types of intramilitary quarrels. In 1966, Colonel Emmanuel K. Kotoka and General Joseph Arthur Ankrah overthrew Kwame Nkrumah's civilian regime, which they accused of corruption. Decalo's analysis, however, shows that the coup was a reaction to Kotoka's doubt about his chances of promotion under General C. M. Barwah with whom he was reportedly at loggerheads, and the coup plotters also perceived that several military promotions made by Barwah were politically moti-vated. In 1972, Colonel Ignatius Acheampong overthrew Dr. Kofi Busia's government for similar reasons. This time, Acheampong and his military colleagues felt that military officers who were leaders of the 1966 coup passed them over for promotions.

Several African military coups can be directly attributed to personal jealousies and ambitions. Yet, it is likely that the number will be grossly underestimated because there are several other coups that may well be accurately attributed to jealousies and ambitions, but for want of evidence we will restrict our discussions to apparent cases. The military coup of Colonel Jean-Bedel Bokassa was clearly motivated by ambition. Bokassa, who was then army chief of staff, overthrew Central African Republic President David Dacko in 1965 after several months of explicitly aspiring to become president. The failed attempt of Lieutenant Samuel B. Arthur and 120 members of the Reconnaissance Squadron in Ghana in 1967 is another example of coups due to personal jealousy and ambition. During subsequent trials, Lieutenant Samuel Arthur agreed that he was inspired by his ambition to become the first lieutenant in Africa to lead a country. These ambitions are not far-fetched. Historically, the military has headed

African governments and, thus, soldiers now carry out coups that support their own leadership ambitions.

It was personal fear that brought General Idi Amin Dada to his remarkable reign in Uganda. Amin virtually had no plans to lead in Uganda when he overthrew Milton Obote's government in 1971. His years as military dictator were as planless as they were dehumanizing. In 1971, he had been genuinely afraid that Obote would remove him from his position as the head of the Ugandan Army. First, he was accused of unauthorized recruitment from his ethnic group and then he was charged with embezzlement. In addition, he had fallen out with President Obote.

Lieutenant General Gnassingbe Eyadema's 13 January 1967 coup was also a result of personal fear. He was under pressure from Southern Togolese who were widely calling for him to be tried for the murder of President Sylvanus Olympio who had been killed in the military coup of 1963. Eyadema preempted any trial by promptly removing President Nicholas Grunitzky while claiming that the coup was justified because of internal power struggle between Nicholas Grunitzky and Vice President Antoine Meatchi.

HISTORY OF MILITARY COUPS IN SELECTED COUNTRIES

There have been several successful and unsuccessful coup attempts since Lieutenant General Abboud's 1958 coup in the Sudan. We do not plan to discuss all of them in this section. Instead, we will focus on only a few of the successful military coups in order to primarily point out both explicit and implicit justifications for such coups. In the process we will also recall national situations in the selected countries at the time of the military coups. The situations we will be describing are similar to situations we had described for several democratic African states in the previous chapter. Thus, the threats of military coups still exist.

The countries that we will review are those that have experienced at least two military coups such as Burundi, the Republic of Congo (Brazzaville), Sudan, Togo, and Uganda. We will also look at some of the same countries that we discussed in Chapter 2 such as Benin Republic, Ghana, Nigeria, and Sierra Leone. This strategy for selecting countries for a historical account of military coups will help us do the following: (a) establish a trend for military coups in African countries, (b) identify situations that signal that a country is ripe for military intervention, and (c) show that situations that lead to military intervention continue to exist in several African countries.

Benin Republic

General Christophe Soglo led the first military coup in Benin Republic on 28 October 1963 shortly after a period of extensive national strikes and demonstrations. The union had called a strike to express dissatisfaction with President Hubert Maga's corrupt and mismanaged government. There were also various regional and ethnic conflicts at the same period. Soglo claimed that his takeover was primarily to maintain order and that it was temporary. Soglo did hand over power to civilians when he appointed Sourou-Migan Apithy (leader of the Yorubas in the southeast) as president and Justin Ahomadegbe (leader of Abomey and Fon areas) as vice president. The problem was that he then removed the northern leader, Hubert Maga. Thus, the problems continued and Soglo again took over power in November of 1965 and appointed the Speaker, Tahirou Congacou, as the interim leader whose task was to primarily address constitutional problems. Congacou failed to maintain control and Soglo was back in December of the same year when the government became paralyzed by a continuing power struggle between Apithy and Ahomadegbe.

Major Maurice Kouandete, a Northerner who seized an opportunity that was provided by a continued national unrest, led the next military coup. But Kouandete had been anti-Soglo for a while and took the opportunity presented by his takeover to justify his actions. He pointed out that governmental power was concentrated exclusively in the hands of Soglo's family, that the military had limited influence on the government, and that there was increased corruption. He then formed a government that was dominated by the military but headed by a civilian, Dr. Emile Zinsou. Zinsou had failed miserably in a general election conducted in May 1968 and won by Dr. Basil Adjou. The army refused that Dr. Adjou form a government because they saw him as a stooge of Ahomadegbe and thus a continuation of the old guard. Zinsou, on his part, refused to lead the government that was formed by the military and instead called for a national plebiscite to determine whether the people supported him or not. Zinsou won 55 percent of the votes cast at the plebiscite and became president. But he refused to be controlled by the military and on 10 December 1969 Kouandete removed him. Zinsou's family fled to the Ivory Coast. Kouandete then handed over power to a triumvirate of the old guards and the leaders were expected to rotate the presidency. The soldiers returned, but this time Major Mathieu Kerekou, who was a Northern protégé of Kouandete, led them. Kerekou's coup was not linked to any sustained social unrest, but he justified it by claiming a need for national unity and then installed a socialist government under complete military rule.

Our discussions on the various coups in Benin Republic and the social antecedents to those coups have pointed to underlying problems in the Benin Republic that could be attributed to extreme ethnic political rivalries that have gone on for a long period. The military was beset with the same ethnic rivalries beginning in the 1960s when President Hubert Maga, from the North, began to

recruit Northerners into the army to compensate for what he perceived as the Southern domination of the army. This ethnic policy enraged Southern officers and the military became divided. Both military men—Kouandete and Kerekou—continued to pursue similar policies from the late 1960s and thereafter. Decalo (1990) notes that "everytime a Northern group rose to power after an upheaval in Benin it purged the army's senior Fon and Yoruba officers and promoted Northerners in the administration" (p. 23). The army is now dominated by ethnic Northerners who were mostly recruited under the long rule of Mathieu Kerekou.

Burundi

Burundi is one of several African states where ethnic rivalry has intensified over the years. The competition between the Tutsis and Hutus is widely known all over Africa and has divided Burundi society, its government, as well as its army. This section's focus on military coups in Burundi will explore the dangers that are related to ethnic rivalry.

Burundi's first military coup occured on 28 November 1966 when Captain Micombero dethroned King Ntare V, thereby ending the reign of the Burundi monarchy. Michel Micombero became the head of the Party of Unity and National Progress (UPRONA), which was the only political party in Burundi. Micombero was both military captain and prime minister at the time of the coup. He was at odds with the king because the power separation between the king and the Prime Minister had been poorly defined. Micombero used the army to preempt what he perceived as the king's attempt to recruit mercenary soldiers, which would be used to suppress the Burundi National Army.

Exactly a decade later, Micombero was forcefully removed by Lieutenant Colonel Jean Baptiste Bagaza's coup. There were ethnic unrests for several years and months before the coup. Bagaza's justifications for the coup included: (a) Micombero had not been acting in the best interest of Burundi, and (b) Micombero had centralized power around himself. Bagaza's solutions consisted of adopting socialist policies, which were quite common among African military leaders in the 1970s. Socialist regimes in Africa, which were guided by the military, were often extremely repressive and Bagaza's governance was not different.

In September of 1987, Major Pierre Buyoya (a Tutsi) overthrew Bagaza's repressive regime in a bloodless coup. He, thus, assumed position as the new leader of UPRONA but his own reign became increasingly repressive, culminating in the killing of thousands of Hutus during the 1988 disturbances in the Northern districts of Ntega and Marangara. Buyoya had survived a coup attempt in March of 1992 before he allowed the first democratic election in Burundi in June of 1993, which led to his defeat at the polls by Melchior Ndadaye of the opposition Front for Democracy in Burundi (FRODEBU).[3] Buyoya was

stunned by the election results and he subsequently removed Ndadaye through a 1966 coup. Buyoya then appointed Pascal-Firmin Ndimira (UPRONA) as prime minister and sparked Burundi into an ethnic war.

Burundi's situation is precarious because of the continuation of ethnic rivalries and the intensity of the rivalry. These situations make it extremely difficult for democracy to survive, especially with the military lurking around for an opportunity to takeover. Thus, even an end to the ethnic war in Burundi does not ensure a successful return to democracy, neither does it prevent the Burundi military from intervening in the future.

Republic of Congo (Brazzaville)

The Republic of Congo has been under military rule for more than half of its post-independent existence. To complicate matters, it is a country that is dominated by politically active youth organizations. Most of these youths are well organized into militias.

Abbe Fulbert Youlou, a protégé of Congo's Andre Matsoua, became Congo's first president at independence in 1960.[4] Youlou was a catholic priest but his administration was "notable for its corruption, autocracy, and neocolonial political and economic stances" (Decalo, 1990, p. 53). These problems created outrage among the Congolese, who staged protests for successive days in August of 1963. Youlou's attempts to seek French help failed, and army captains David Maoutsaka and Felix Mouzabakani reportedly requested Youlou's resignation. The military did not immediately assume leadership of Congo even though the situation appeared to be a military coup. Instead, the military appointed Youlou's opponent, Alphonse Massemba-Debat, as the new president. Massemba-Debat was a former school teacher.

The new president chose Dr. Paschal Lissouba as his prime minister. Massemba-Debat moved the one-party state towards socialist policies in order to appease the unions and the Congolese youths.[5] At the same time, the youths were being organized and armed by Cuban socialist instructors who were socialist comrades who had been invited into the country to help the Congolese party. Ange Diawara, who was later to attempt a coup against Captain Marien Ngouabi's government, led the youths. By 1966 several problems arose when attempts were made to transform the army into a socialist party army and to integrate the party's youth wing into the Congolese army. Captain Ngouabi, who was opposed to these moves, was demoted and reposted because of insubordination. His military supporters mutinied, forcing Ngouabi to be named the new commander of the prestigious paracommando battalion in Brazzaville.

In July of 1968, Massemba-Debat ordered the arrest of Ngouabi and several youth leaders whom he suspected of plotting to overthrow the government. The result turned out to be devastating. Instead of providing Massemba-Debat with the control that he badly wanted, the arrest of Ngouabi turned sour.

The army revolted and forcefully obtained the release of Ngouabi and the other arrested military personnel. Ngouabi was subsequently named army chief of staff despite Massemba-Debat's misgivings. A month later, Ngouabi used his new position to immediately crush the youth wing in a brief confrontation at the youth headquarters, Biafra.[6] On the same day, Massemba-Debat resigned because it had become clear that Ngouabi's ascent to power was only a matter of time.

Ngouabi immediately assumed power and, being a Northerner, began to rectify the perceived injustices against the North. He quickly began to dismiss the largely Bakongo and Southern-dominated government officials. He also created the Congolese Labor Party (PCT) in December of 1969 and watered down the radical socialist policies of the government in preference for a much more moderate focus. This ideological shift led to a coup attempt led by Lieutenant Ange Diawara in 1972. Diawara's attempt failed and he was killed within a year. Five years later on 18 March 1977, unknown individuals assassinated Ngouabi.

Colonel Joachim Yhombi-Opango took over as the most senior military officer. Yhombi-Opango, an ostentatious capitalist who paid lip service to socialist ideology, promoted himself to general but his leadership lasted for only two years before he was overthrown and charged with deviation from socialism.

Colonel Denis Sassou-Nguesso took over as the new head of state and pursued moderate policies, similar to those that had been pursued by Ngouabi. In 1987, the Congolese army, assisted by the French and Cubans, crushed Captain Anga's coup attempt leaving about 100 dead. Anga escaped into the bush but he was captured a year later and killed. Nguesso stabilized the government and appeared headed for a lifetime rule when demands for multiparty democracy began. Lissouba, who had been in exile, was one of those loudly calling for multiparty elections. Nguesso gave in and elections were conducted in August of 1992 for a five-year term presidency. Lissouba of the Union Panafricaine pour la Democratie Sociale (UDAPS) led the elections with 36 percent of the votes. Bernard Kolebas of the Mouvement Congolais pour la Democratie et la Developpement Integral (MCDDI), 23 percent, and Denis Sassou-Nguesso of the PCT, 17 percent, finished second and third, respectively. Lissouba won 62 percent of the votes in a run-off against Kolebas. Lissouba's prime minister became the retired military man Jacques Joachim Yhombi-Opango of the Rassemblement pour la Democratie et le Developpement (RDD).

The test of Congolese democracy failed with a protracted coup in 1997, which was led by the former head of state, Denis Sassou-Nguesso. 1997 was a tense year for the Congolese government, which endured seven military mutinies that began in 1995. Most of the mutinies were related to demands for better living conditions, equipment and travel benefits, as well as an extended duration of military service. Finally, as the July elections approached, President Paschal Lissouba called on Denis Sassou-Nguesso to disarm his personal militia, the Cobras. The use of personal militias is widespread in Congo's political circles

going back to the days of the socialist youth movements. Sassou-Nguesso re-
fused to disarm the Cobras and instead accused Lissouba of seeking to delay the
elections that were scheduled for the end of the year. Lissouba responded by
forcefully attempting to disarm the Cobras. A war broke out lasting from 5 June
to 15 October, when Denis Sassou-Nguesso's Cobras defeated Lissouba's Ninja
militia. Lissouba fled to Burkina-Faso and his supporter, Bernard Kolebas, fled
to the Ivory Coast. Angolan troops and French backing helped Sassou-Nguesso.[7]
In the end, no fewer than 10,000 Congolese were said to have died in the four-
month protracted coup that overthrew the democratically elected Congolese
government.

Ghana

There have been several military coups in Ghana since Ghana's inde-
pendence in 1958. The Ewes dominate the Ghanaian army but this has not been
a big problem compared to class divisions within the army, where cliques are
formed to reap benefits from association with whomever is in power.

General Ankrah and Colonel Emmanuel Kwasi Kotoka led the first
military coup in Ghana on 24 February 1966. They accused Kwame Nkrumah's
government of mismanaging the economy, but Decalo has since provided evi-
dence that explicit favoritism towards certain military officers by Nkrumah's
army chief (General Barwah) was the reason behind the coup. General Joseph
Ankrah headed the government as leader of the National Liberation Council
(NLC) but resigned in 1969 after he was accused of accepting money from some
businessmen. Ankrah was replaced briefly by Major Akwasi Afrifa before the
military reintroduced multiparty politics in 1969 with Kofi Busia elected prime
minister. In 1972, the military returned, this time led by Colonel Ignatius
Acheampong. Acheampong introduced what he called the "Union government"
in 1978 after intense demands for a return to civilian rule. The union govern-
ment was to incorporate the military, police, and civilians in the governance of
Ghana. The union government was never given a chance, because in July of the
same year Colonel Acheampong's government was forced out in another coup
instigated by General Fred Akuffo. Akuffo claimed that Acheampong had cen-
tralized power around him and had run a corrupt government, but clearly the
coup was partly an intramilitary quarrel. It is significant that a major leader of
Akuffo's coup, General Odartey-Wellington, had been fired from Acheam-
pong's ruling council a few weeks before the coup. Akuffo promised to hand
over power to civilians and elections were to take place in 1979. Flight Lieuten-
ant Jerry Rawlings and his colleagues overthrew Akuffo's government shortly
before the planned elections and proceeded to execute top military leaders in-
cluding Akuffo and Acheampong. The intent of Rawlings' coup was to punish
all those they had suspected of corruption, perhaps as a warning for future lead-

ers. The elections went ahead as planned and a civilian government was elected in September of the same year with Hilla Limann as president.

Rawlings returned in a second coup in December of 1981 noting that Ghana had not changed. Ghana clearly had been under economic stress from the late 1970s to the early 1980s. Basic living items were difficult to find and emigration to neighboring countries was high. Chazan (1992) describes the situation as follows: "Conditions in the country were nothing short of disastrous. Food was often unavailable, infant mortality rose, per capita income declined, social services broke down, the road system became impassable, and daily life became simply miserable" (p. 128). Rawlings pointed to some of the problems and then instituted socialist policies with all their repressive aspects. Rawlings was smart enough to recognize the failings of socialist programs in other parts of the world and to also recognize that most countries were rediscovering democracy. Therefore, he agreed to democratic rule in the early 1990s and quit the military to win the 1993 democratic presidential elections in Ghana.

In Chapter 2 we discussed the present status of democratization in Ghana under Jerry Rawlings. Ghana remains one of the few African countries to go through two successive democratic elections without military intervention. One cannot say, however, that the days of military interventions in Ghana are over, because this is a country where ethnic rivalries still exist and the military, particularly the top officers, has experienced the personal benefits of military rule. The major question is whether the military will remain in the barracks after its former military leader Jerry Rawlings retires at the end of his term of office early next century.

Nigeria

The military has governed Nigeria for more than two-thirds of its years after independence. In fact, the longest stint that an elected government has been in power in Nigeria was from 1960 independence to 1966.

The first military coup took place early in January of 1966, but was largely unsuccessful. The coup leaders, who were primarily Igbo army officers, overthrew the government, killing the prime minister (Alhaji Abubakar Tafawa Balewa, a Northerner), the Northern premier (Alhaji Ahmadu Bello), and the top-ranking Northern military officer (Brigadier Maimalari), but inexplicably no major Igbo politician or top-ranking military officer was harmed. The leaders were unsuccessful because they had been defeated in Lagos by a counterattempt led by the Army Chief of Staff, Major General Johnson Aguiyi-Ironsi, himself an Igbo. Aguiyi-Ironsi became head of state by default and the plotters were imprisoned. It is important to note that Nigeria was in deep crisis for several months before the coup, especially in the West where political killings had raged to a dangerous level. The subsequent military ascension to power helped control the crisis, which the politicians had precipitated, but the apparent selec-

tive killings of Northern leaders by the coup plotters were to throw the country into a far deeper crisis.

Major General Ironsi's government lasted for only six months before Northern military officers carried out a countercoup that was extremely bloody. Ironsi was killed and several Igbo officers were executed in Lagos. The coup was essentially an ethnic revenge. Lieutenant Colonel Yakubu Gowon was then appointed head of state to replace Ironsi, but the killings had gone out of hand. In the North, a number of Igbos were attacked and killed on the streets and others fled to Igboland in the south east of Nigeria. The Igbos led by Lieutenant Colonel Emeka Ojukwu declared a secessionist state of Biafra. A three-year civil war commenced and only ended when Biafra surrendered in January of 1970.

Many Nigerians looked forward to a return to democracy after the war and at least one federal minister (Chief Obafemi Awolowo) resigned in 1971 in protest against the continued military rule. General Gowon promised a return to democratic rule in 1976 but put it off in an October 1974 speech (Joseph, 1987). This indecision about a return to civilian rule was one of the reasons that led to Gowon's removal in a July 1975 coup led by Brigadier Murtala Mohammed. Other reasons were corruption and mismanagement of funds, increasing concentration of decision powers around Gowon, and lack of control of the state governors' activities. Brigadier Mohammed was killed in a failed coup attempt early in 1976 and Lieutenant General Olusegun Obasanjo took over as head of state until he handed over power to an elected democratic government in 1979.

Major General Muhammed Buhari's December 1983 military coup was carried out as a means to cleanse the society of an increasing malaise of corruption and indiscipline. Buhari's scheme was elaborate and led to the imprisonment of many politicians, muzzling of the press, several detentions without substantiated charges, and the promulgation of a wide number of military decrees. Buhari's regime was very similar to the first stint of Lieutenant Jerry Rawlings regime in Ghana, without the execution of military officers.

On 27 August 1985 Major General Ibrahim Babangida, a Northerner, overthrew Buhari's government accusing it of insensitivity to Nigeria's diversity.[8] The accusation of insensitivity was the explicitly announced justification while rumors spread about fallout on policy between Buhari and Babangida (who was the head of army under Buhari). Babangida promised a quick return to civilian rule but reneged on this promise several times during his reign. Finally, in June of 1993 he allowed presidential general elections to take place. Votes were already being returned when he abruptly canceled the results. His government was under tremendous international pressure almost immediately and Babangida had no choice but to resign and appoint Chief Ernest Sonekan, a civilian, as interim leader of a caretaker government that would rule till another election was conducted. A few months later, General Sanni Abacha who had been defence minister under Babangida (and was the only significant military official under Babangida who had not resigned with Babangida in June of 1993)

forced Shonekan out. Abacha proceeded to detain Chief M.K.O. Abiola (who was widely believed to have won the aborted June 1993 election), accusing him of treason.

Abacha's government has allegedly endured two military coup attempts. In March of 1995, Abacha's officials arrested several military officers and civilians in a move that was supposedly made to prevent a military coup masterminded by Lawan Gwadabe. At least two former military leaders—retired General Olusegun Obasanjo (a former head of state) and retired General Shehu Yar'Adua (a former Chief of Army Staff)—and more than forty soldiers and civilians were imprisoned after a hasty trial by a military tribunal. There remains wide disagreement as to whether a coup plan was aborted or whether the imprisonment was simply a political ploy to quell an increasing opposition to the government. Two years later, in December of 1997, the government announced the arrest of several military officers and civilians who were accused of planning to topple the government. Six were condemned to death and a few others were sentenced to life imprisonment (including a journalist whose crime was that he wrote an article outlining divisions in the military at the beginning of the coup trials). Abacha's deputy, Lieutenant General Oladipo Diya, and two former Abacha ministers (Major Generals Abdulkarim Adisa and Tajudeen Olarenwaju) were among those sentenced to death.

Sierra Leone

Sierra Leone has also been beset by several military coups starting on 23 March 1967 when Major Charles Blake took over power shortly after the elections and amid the unrest that followed the elections. Blake and his fellow coup plotters claimed that the military intervention was justified to prevent Brigadier David Lansana (commander of the army) from imposing Sir Albert Margai as prime minister of Sierra Leone. Brigadier Lansana had arrested newly elected Prime Minister Siaka Stevens and the country's British Governor-General, Sir Henry Lightfoot. Lansana claimed that Lightfoot had no right to swear in Stevens when election results were incomplete. Stevens later claimed that the defeated Prime Minister Sir Albert Margai instigated Lansana's actions. Thus, Blake's coup was to quash Brigadier Lansana's actions. Wiking (1983) justifies Blake's coup by stating the following: "Brigadier Lansana had previously acted in such a way as to annoy many officers, and . . . Lansana's political intervention some days before the coup had led to the widespread political unrest in the country" (p. 91).

Lieutenant Colonel Andrew Juxon-Smith became head of government following Blake's coup. Blake had earlier announced Colonel Ambrose T. Genda as the junta's chairman.[9] Genda was on his way to Freetown from the United States to assume his position when he was abruptly replaced with Lieutenant Colonel Juxon-Smith, who failed to hand over power to civilians despite

his earlier promise to do so. This led directly to a second coup led by Army Sergeant Major Imadu Rogers and Warrant Officer First Class Patrick Gordon on 18 April 1968. Rogers promptly handed power over to civilians by restoring Dr. Siaka Stevens as prime minister.[10]

Dr. Stevens paid the army back for their magnanimity when in 1985 he appointed General Joseph Momoh (the commander of the army) as president upon his (Dr. Stevens') retirement. Momoh's government was beset with economic problems that reached an impasse when army salaries went unpaid for months. A group of young army officers led by 27-year-old Captain Valentine Strasser promptly removed Momoh from government on 29 April 1992. This was a few months away from a return to civilian rule and general elections had already been scheduled. Strasser put off the scheduled elections till 1966 but made moves to scuttle the new date as it approached until General Julius Maada Bio (one of his ruling colleagues) ousted him in January of 1996 and ensued that the elections went on as scheduled.

In May of 1997, soldiers overthrew the newly elected President Ahmed Tejan Kabbah after a brief battle with Nigerian soldiers who were guarding the presidential quarters in Freetown. Major Johny Paul Koromah became the new head of state. Koromah had been freed from prison where he had been kept after he was convicted of an earlier attempted coup against Kabbah's government. The new military rulers looted the city and invited the rebel group—the Revolutionary United Front (RUF)—to join the military government. Fortunately, most Sierra Leonians including the militia (*Kamajors*) condemned and countered the coup as did the international community, which unanimously isolated the new military regime. The military force for the Economic Community of West African States' Monitoring Group (ECOMOG), which was stationed in Freetown, fought against the coup soldiers and forced them to negotiate. The coup leaders largely disregarded a six-point agreement that was reached on 23 October 1997 in Conakry, Guinea.[11] Instead, the coup leaders increasingly resorted to making new demands until they were forced out by ECOMOG.

Sudan

Sudan is a nation that has been constantly beset with strife since independence and, thus, it is not surprising that Africa's first military coup took place in the Sudan. Lieutenant General Ibrahim Ahmed Abboud's coup of 17 November 1958 has been variously described as a handover and as a military takeover. What is important, however, is that it was the first time that a military officer became a head of an African government in modern times. The coup followed severe economic problems and election disturbances that marred the government of Prime Minister Abdallah Khalil. The army linked the economic and political problems to the ousted politicians and assured the Sudanese that General Abboud would solve the nation's problems.

Abboud was forced to hand over power to radical civilian leaders in October of 1964 after a popular opposition to military rule intensified. Elections took place shortly after and catapulted Ismail Al-Azhari to prime minister. But the long-running religious strife in the Sudan did not abate, whether the military or civilians were at the top of the government. In fact, for several years the ruling and wealthy North, who were mostly Muslims, continued a war against the largely Christian South, which fought back under the Southern Sudanese Liberation Movement (SSLM).

On 25 May 1969 Colonel Gaafar Mohammed El Nimieri, supported by communist leader Babaka Awadallah, overthrew the government of Ismail Al-Azhari, accusing it of mismanagement and an inability to end the war against Southern Sudan. Nimieri held a plebiscite in 1971 and was elected president, but several strikes and unrest also beset his rule. There were several attempts at his overthrow, most notably by Colonel Hashim al-Atta on 19 July 1971. The self-styled Marxist Colonel al-Atta had been removed from Nimieri's Revolutionary Command Council (RCC) only eight months earlier. Nimieri was fortunate to survive the coup and regain power after three days. He had been detained by the coup plotters but was rescued by noncommissioned officers who mutinied in al-Shagara barracks, and he also received support from his loyal Sudanese soldiers who had been airlifted to Khartoum by Egyptian airplanes. Then Libya forced a jet that was bound for Khartoum (with Colonel al-Atta on board) to land in Tripoli where the Libyans arrested al-Atta. Colonel al-Atta was taken to Khartoum for trial instead of him arriving triumphantly to Khartoum as the new head of state.

Finally in April of 1985, Nimieri was overthrown in a military coup and another military officer, Abdel Rahman Swar Al-Dahab, became the chairman of the Transitional Military Council (TMC), which handed over power a year later to a civilian government headed by Ahmed Ali Al-Mirghani and Prime Minister Sadik Al-Mahdi. Civilian rule lasted until 1989 when soldiers (under the command of General Omar Hassan Ahmed Al-Bashir) retook power and formed the Revolutionary Command Council for National Salvation (RCCNS). Al-Bashir made a transition from military head of state to Sudanese civilian president in 1993.[12]

Sudan continues to be a contested nation. Early in 1997, the Southern Sudan People's Liberation Army (SPLA), led by long-time opposition leader John Garang de Maboir and some Northern Sudanese opposition personalities (under the umbrella of Democratic National Alliance), began attacking various cities in the Sudan. They captured the towns of Kurmuk and Qissan in January 1997 and continued to threaten border towns in Eastern Sudan. On another front, Islamic groups such as the National Islamic Front remain strong.[13] Hassan Abdallah Al-Turabi is the secretary general of the national Islamic Front and is also a member of the Muslim Brotherhood.

Togo

President Gnassingbe (formerly Etienne) Eyadema's rule in Togo has been one of the longest in the continent, beginning in his early days as Lieutenant Colonel and head of state in 1967. He has managed to maintain his iron grip on power through nepotism, elimination of opponents, and a fortunate streak of survived coup attempts. Eyadema, then a sergeant, was a major participant in the first Togolese military coup on 13 January 1963, but he did not then assume the country's leadership. The 1963 coup also involved another key officer, Sergeant Emmanuel Bodjolle.[14] Both Eyadema and Bodjolle were among an estimated 300 soldiers, mostly from the North, who had been discharged from the French colonial army and refused integration into the Togolese army by President Sylvanus Olympio, who despised the colonial veterans for helping France clamp down on Algerian nationalists. Olympio did not have the support of the local Togolese army commanded by Major Kleber Dadjo, nor did he have the support of French military advisers who were in support of integration of the veterans into Togolese army. The colonial veterans decided to overthrow Olympio who was killed during the brief skirmish. The plotters looked to additional reasons to justify the coup. First, Olympio had pursued a consistent policy of development discrimination by largely ignoring the North in allocation of national development projects, he also instituted several draconian economic policies, and detained several political opponents.[15]

The army appointed Nicholas Grunitzky (son of a Polish father and an Atakpame mother) as interim president with Antoine Meatchi (a Northerner) as vice president. Those positions were ratified in a May 1963 election, which effectively excluded the Ewes, who dominated Togolese education and economy. The Ewes refused to accept the arrangement. In addition, their leader, Noe Kutuklui, persistently demanded the trial of Eyadema for the killing of Olympio.[16] Grunitzky lost total control and openly squabbled with Meatchi. Togolese began mass demonstrations in reaction to the government's ineffectiveness. Eyadema exploited this opportunity by taking over in a 13 January 1967 coup and implicitly put to rest the demands for his own trial for complications in Olympio's death. Eyadema did not declare himself president till April when he dissolved the National Committee of Reconciliation (NCR), which was established as a prelude to the new civilian government.

Since 1967, Eyadema has staged several referenda to support his continuation as president.[17] He has also surrounded himself with relatives in critical government offices and he continues to eliminate perceived enemies by charging them with unsubstantiated coup attempts.[18]

In any case, there have been several actual coup attempts. The late Olympio's sons—Gilchrist and Bonito—sponsored a 1977 attempt in which they used several British mercenaries (Ndovi, 1980). Togolese dissidents trained in Ghana and Burkina Faso led another attempt in 1987. These attempts have all been unsuccessful. Eyadema has responded by being more repressive. Now his

presidential guards are his village men and the Togolese army is about 90 percent Northerners.

Uganda

Uganda has experienced various types of military coups since its independence from Britain on 9 October 1962. The most remarkable military coup in Uganda occurred on 25 January 1971 when General Idi Amin overthrew Prime Minister Milton Obote's government to begin an eight years reign of terror that concluded with over 100,000 Ugandans dead.

Milton Obote ruled Uganda as prime minister since independence in 1962 with King Edward Mutesa II as president.[19] Uganda was, however, beset with ethnic conflicts. In February 1966, Obote sought to solve this problem by suspending the constitution, giving more powers to the president, and removing the king. A year later, Obote drafted a new constitution that granted greater powers to his office and abolished the traditional kingdoms.

Obote's misstep occurred in 1970 when he planned to remove his Chief of Army, Idi Amin Dada. Amin had been accused of embezzlement of army funds and illegal recruitment from his ethnic group that threatened the ethnic balance in the army.[20] Amin moved quickly against Obote by leading a January 1971 coup that exiled Obote.

Amin amended the constitution to give himself absolute powers. He sacked the parliament and began his rule of terror. Amin's rule led to the murder of many Ugandans who were identified as political opponents. Others fled Uganda out of fear. Amin also ordered Ugandan Asians out of the country in a move described as economic indigenization and the economy collapsed.

Amin's tenure provided various examples of egomania and megalomania. He took the titles of Chancellor of Makarere University and Field Marshall. But it was his megalomania that eventually led to his ousting from power. Amin, seeking new pleasures, attacked Tanzania with his troops in October 1978. Tanzania responded by routing Uganda with the help of many Ugandan exiles who had fled to Tanzania in fear of Amin's rule. The Tanzanians captured Kampala in April 1979 and Amin fled the country.

Yusuf Lule was named interim president. Lule was a member of the Uganda National Liberation Front (UNLF) that had fought alongside the Tanzanian army in the war in which Amin was defeated. Several leadership disputes led to various individuals being appointed to lead Uganda from 1979 to 1980.[21] Milton Obote returned as president in December 1980 after elections.

Lieutenant General Basilio Olara-Okello overthrew Milton Obote's government on 27 July 1985. Obote fled to Zambia and General Tito Okello (no relation to Olara-Okello) became the military head of state. Tito Okello's government was as repressive as Obote's and his government continued to fight insurgent forces that were led by Yoweri Museveni.[22] Fights between

Museveni's forces and the government continued inspite of various negotiations to stop the fighting. In January 1986, Museveni captured Kampala and Tito Okello fled to the Sudan.

Museveni became military leader of Uganda until the democratic elections on 9 May 1996. Museveni won 74 percent of the votes to defeat Paul Ssemogere of the Democratic Party (DP) to begin a five year term as Uganda's president.

SUMMARY

Reasons for military coups often go beyond those the coup plotters announce to the world. Soldiers are human despite the general perception of them as the epitome of professionalism and, thus, their reasons for carrying out coups are quite diverse and often subjective. Decalo's book, *Coups and Army Rule in Africa,* serves as a guideline for identifying additional reasons for military coups. Those reasons can be categorized into the following: ethnic rivalries, intramilitary quarrels, personal jealousies and ambitions, and personal fear.

This chapter provided historical analyses of military coups in Africa. It noted, for instance, that by 1990 more than sixty military coups had taken place in Africa. This is barely three decades after the first African military coup, which took place in the Sudan. Detailed analyses of military coups were also given for several African countries: Benin Republic, Burundi, the Republic of Congo (Brazzaville), Ghana, Nigeria, Sierra Leone, Sudan, Togo, and Uganda. Those analyses focused on explicit and implicit justifications for each military intervention and identified enduring problems that may lead to a continuation of military interventions.

NOTES

1. "Praetorianism" refers to corrupt military despotism. The term is now widely used to refer to the military tendency to carry out coups because coups have historically been carried out. In essence, the military (just like the historical Roman Praetor's guard) defends the established order.

2. General Gowon was also from the Middle Belt region of Nigeria.

3. FRODEBU was one of several political parties established during the period of democracy. UPRONA had been the only party in Burundi until the introduction of multiparty democratic system.

4. Matsoua was a politically popular Congolese who was born in the Bakongo area and died in exile in 1942. As a measure of his popularity, Matsoua was overhelmingly elected posthumously to represent Congo as its first deputy in Paris, France, both in 1945 and 1951. France picked the runner-up Felix Tchicaya, by default as first deputy for both years.

5. Congo was under a single-party state, and the national party was named the Mouvement National de la Revolution (MNR).

6. About 100 youths were killed during this confrontation.

7. Angola helped Sassou-Nguesso as revenge against Lissouba who had supported Angola's rebel group, UNITA, in its long-term acrimony against the Angolan government. France backed Sassou-Nguesso because Lissouba's policies had helped American oil companies make inroads in the Congolese oil economy that was dominated by France.

8. Buhari's ruling council was dominated by Northern officers and his government had released detained civilian governors of the former ruling party (NPN), which had been perceived as a Northern party, while Northern and Southern civilian governors of the opposition parties (UPN, GNPP, PRP, and NPP) were languishing in jail.

9. Lieutenant Colonel Juxon-Smith was at the time in training in England. News reports claimed that Juxon-Smith and Genda were on the same flight back to Freetown when the change in the junta's leadership was publicly announced.

10. Dr. Siaka Stevens had been Sierra Leone's first president from independence until 1967 when he was removed following Major Blake's coup.

11. The six-point agreement included the following: cessation of hostilities, disarmament, humanitarian assistance, return of refugees, restoration of constitutional government (by May 1998), and immunities to the coup leaders.

12. Al-Bashir continues to retain his title as a general in the Sudaneses Army and this transition to civilian president is similar to the one made by El Nimieri in 1971.

13. The Islamic movement is very influential in Sudanese politics. Several extremist Islamic movements continue to pursue an Islamic Sudanese nation.

14. Bodjolle was said to have failed to show up at the presidential palace at the time of the coup and was suspected to have tipped off the presidency. These allegations relegated Bodjolle to a secondary role after the coup.

15. These policies included a 5 CFA (currency used by French-speaking African countries) levy on cocoa and freezing of salaries. Also, his closure of the Togo-Ghana border adversely affected Togolese traders.

16. Kutuklui was perceived as the heir to Olympio in the Parti de l'Unite Togolaise (PUT).

17. These took place in January of 1972, December of 1979, and December of 1986. People believed that Eyadema rigged the referenda.

18. Appointment of friends and relatives include the 1986 appointment of his childhood teacher, Komlan Agbetiafa, as minister of interior in control of the police; and a 1987 appointment of brother-in-law Major Walla Akawelou as head of presidential guards. Eyadema's attempts at and actual elimination of perceived enemies include his accusation of Kutuklui of a plan to carry out a coup on 8 August 1970; Colonel Koffi Kongo was mysteriously killed in prison in March of 1985 after he was imprisoned for alleged involvement in the coup attempt of 1977. No strong evidence was provided to link either Kutuklui or Kongo with coup attempts.

19. Mutesa became president in 1963. Earlier, the British monarch served as head of state.

20. Many scholars believe that Amin recruited from his ethnic group because the army had been dominated by Acholi and Langi groups. Obote is an Acholi and he also received great support from the Langi group.

21. Yusuf Lule, Godfrey Binaisa, and Paulo Muwanga all served one after the other as Uganda's ruler from 1979 to 1980.

22. Museveni was leader of the National Resistance Army (NRA) that had fought persistently against Obote and Tito Okello's governments.

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Military Threat to Democratization

We have discussed the history of military coups in Africa and have identified several reasons for military coups. A reoccurring theme in those discussions is the tendency for soldiers to impose themselves on the people and the tendency of soldiers to apply the use of force. But have soldiers been successful in using those coercive strategies? The answer is that they have not been successful, particularly in their goal to represent an acceptable and legitimate governance system. Africans from all over the continent have called for democratic governments and have participated in widespread strikes and demonstrations against military and single-party governance beginning in the late 1980s. The basic complaint is that soldiers usually violate several democratic principles and, thus, continue to be unacceptable.

This chapter will address these violations and then describe various ways African military regimes attempt to legitimize their governance. In addition, the chapter will describe various other modes of governance that are used by soldiers but that are not intended to legitimize military governance. In essence, we shall learn that various modes of military governance are generally undemocratic and that if African countries wish to maintain democratic governments they must develop effective ways to prevent military interventions.

Some of the activities, which we will identify as "undemocratic," are also easily recognized as practices of several civilian governments in Africa. Thus, civilian governments can also be undemocratic. In fact, Chapter 1 briefly described a traditional African kingdom of Bini that was autocratic and several other scholars have pointed to autocratic single-party states in modern Africa. This chapter, however, is neither concerned with traditional kingdoms nor is it concerned with modern-day single-party states. Instead, we will focus our attention on military activities that are associated with military governments all over Africa.

VIOLATIONS OF DEMOCRATIC PRINCIPLES

Chapter 2 lists both the core and the second-tier principles of democracy. We have argued that second-tier principles often result from the practice of core principles of democracy. In essence, core principles usually exist before one can expect the second-tier principles to consolidate. It, therefore, follows that if one concludes that the African military has largely violated the core principles of democracy, then one must also deny the existence of the second-tier principles in those African states that are under military rule. With this in mind, we begin our analyses by investigating whether or not military regimes have abided by the following core principles—participation, representation, decentralized power, accountability, plurality, equality, political competition, and the rule of law.

We have already outlined various difficulties associated with ensuring participation for all citizens (see Chapter 2). We mentioned at least one major hindrance to direct participation. This hindrance is the large size of modern states and the accompanying large volume of activities. Such hindrance exists under all types of governance because it is associated with the population and the volume of activities in a country and not with the structure of the government. But the military, as a governmental structure, adds further hindrances to citizen participation. Decisions made by military governments do not often require citizens to participate in the decision-making process. Instead, the ruling military cadre, sometimes supported by a selected elite group, issues policies and/or decrees from the top that are often then enforced throughout the country. In most democratic states, citizens are aware of decisions or receive warning about impending decisions, and they also participate in decision making either directly or indirectly through their representatives. Under a military government, on the other hand, decisions can be announced overnight without citizen participation. The result is that a great majority of the citizens are caught totally unaware. Citizens feel detached from such decisions and are made to grudgingly carry out the dictates of those decisions. Moreover, force is explicitly used to clamp down on any subsequent and adverse reactions from citizens that may follow unpopular military decisions. The military considers such reactions to be "anti-system." Citizens feel helpless and are unable to react since they do not receive any protection against the use of military force. In cases where a few citizens heartedly support specific military decisions, they are doing so because such decisions fortunately correlate with their own expectations. One must, therefore, conclude that military governance renders citizens helpless by preventing citizen participation in their own governance.

Furthermore, military governments practice neither *referendum democracy* nor *primary democracy*, which are types of democratic representations that were mentioned by Dahl in 1989.[1] There are three primary reasons why the military cannot afford to practice the two types of representative democracies, which Dahl had conceptualized. First, military governments usually do not al-

low elections. But in certain nation states where the military has allowed limited elections, it is usually an attempt to legitimize military governance and the type of representation that result from such elections is limited. Second, the military may appoint representatives for the people in cases where elections are not allowed. It is clear that this type of representation cannot be classified as referendum democracy since the citizens do not have any input. The Nigerian constitutional conference, which was established by the military government of General Sanni Abacha after he took over power in 1993, is a good example. General Abacha simply appointed several members to the constitutional conference, which was ostensibly designed to be the voice of Nigerian citizens. In many cases, appointed local representatives were either unknowns in their local areas or they were not the preferred choice of the people. Third, primary democracy presumes that there is an elected body of legislative representatives of the people but this type of body is usually absent under military governance. As we have mentioned, (1) types of representations that exist under the military are more likely to be appointed than elected and (2) a body of such representatives is often advisory rather than law making. The law-making powers remain firmly the prerogative of the small ruling military clique, perhaps with the support of a small civilian elite group.

Most military governments are highly centralized with the head of state and the military ruling council at the top of the hierarchy. This ruling group usually does not provide substantial power to the military officers who it appoints to govern the local states or districts. These appointees are more likely to be members of the ruling council if they possess substantial decision-making power. The military rulers use this type of centralization to better control any excesses by appointed local military leaders. In addition, military governments are run the same way military commands operate, which means that such governments are intensely hierarchical, authoritative, and highly centralized with a widespread use of expeditious punishment to keep everyone in line.

Invariably, a military head of government can replace appointees at his whim, which makes the appointees accountable to the head of state and not to the local citizens who are directly governed by the appointee. Moreover, the military head of state and his council are only accountable to themselves. Since they were neither elected nor do they subject themselves to the electoral process, they have no reason to account to the citizens. This type of accountability is clearly anathema to the democratic principle of accountability, which we discussed at length in Chapter 2. The violation of this democratic principle by the military is always transparent. For instance, several military decrees are quite unpopular and it is impossible to foresee similar policies or decrees under a civilian government whose very existence depends on popular confirmation. We will provide examples of draconian military decrees when we discuss the military's violation of the rule of law.

The above discussions make it clear that the democratic principle of plurality (the rule of the greater number of people) is not obtainable under a

military government. We have already mentioned that all powers reside in the head of state or the military council. This is a very small group of individuals compared to the great majority of citizens who are resigned to following orders that are issued by the same small ruling military clique. To make matters worse, these citizens do not participate in nor are their views or opinions truly represented under a military government. Harbeson (1987a) points out the dissent that is often expressed against minority military rule:

> Opposition to the military's rule surfaced almost immediately (in Ethiopia), notably from organized labor which rejected the derg's evident decision to rule alone without participation by leaders of civilian constituencies.[2] They considered that the derg's decision to rule substantially alone violated the spirit if not formal agreements during the "creeping coup" that the military were to collaborate with, rather than preempt, all those groups who welcomed the demise of the ancien regime.[3]
> (p. 173)

Harbeson's writings underscore how the majority of the citizenry perceive the rule of a very small minority group of military leaders. It is clear that the Ethiopians saw military rule as undemocratic.

Moreover, there is no equality under a military government. We argued in Chapter 2 that democratic systems entitle each individual to one vote. Earlier in this chapter we also pointed out that military governments do not usually allow electoral voting, nor do they allow equal participation in the process of governance. These are serious violations or limitations. How can there be equality when citizens do not have a voice, do not vote, and do not participate? It is only the military leadership (i.e., the head of state and the military ruling council) who has political voice in a military regime and, therefore, they are the dominant political group while everyone else belongs to the dominated group.

The military is the sole instrument of power during the period of military rulership. There is no competing power, thus, the question of political competition is mute. In fact, all political activities are banned at the onset of military regimes. Military regimes justify the decisions to ban political activities by pointing out that military coups were made necessary by political bungling in the first place. Chapter 3, for instance, records several African military coups that the coup plotters had justified by blaming political crisis. Hence, it is natural to expect the military to ban all political competition. But we cannot simply explain coups by blaming the politicians while at the same time absolving the political structure from blame. It is amazing that the military continues to return to the political arena, especially if one considers that some of the same political structures that they had overthrown had been meticulously orchestrated by a preceding military regime. Decalo (1990) notes that the military's penchant for blaming politicians can at certain times be a mere smokescreen. He points out

other personal reasons that contribute to military coups. In such cases, the banning of political competition may in fact be routine and may not be linked to political crisis. Additionally, one must also reason that political competition cannot be conducive under military rule. First, political competition entails that there is/are mechanism(s) for evaluating competition such as the use of electoral mechanism. Second, political competition assumes that the competitors account for their activities so that they can receive positive evaluation from voters. Third, since the military does not account to any one for its activities, it means that political competition will lead to adverse evaluations of the military. These conditions illustrate why military governance cannot allow political competition.

We have mentioned the rule of law as the mechanism that ties all democratic principles together. The rule of law is generally enshrined in national constitutions. Military regimes, however, usually suspend national constitutions at the time of military coups. In fact, suspension of the national constitution and banning of political competition go hand in hand. Military decrees become the supreme law of the land instead of the national constitution, which the citizens had approved through their representatives as the supreme law. Military decrees are expeditious orders issued by the ruling military cadre and they are often so draconian that (as we noted earlier) it is difficult to foresee a democracy that would voluntarily legitimize such laws. Fortunately for the military, a democracy is not needed to legitimize a decree. Instead, a decree is forced on citizens. Nigerian military governments had issued Decree No. 24 of 1966, which gave the regime the power to detain, without trial, anyone who was considered a threat to national security, and then Decree No. 20 of 1985, which *retroactively* imposed death sentences for criminal activities such as arson and drug trafficking. General Ibrahim Buhari's regime, which enacted the 1985 decree, also sharply denied rights of appeal and bestowed the ruling military council with the sole right to review court sentences. In Uganda, a 1971 decree empowered the military to arrest anyone who had been *suspected* of crime. The military arbitrarily used this decree to arrest and murder hundreds of Ugandan elite.

Furthermore, the military disregards court decisions that are against the military government. For example, the Nigerian military government frequently disregards court decisions that it considers unfavorable. Sanni (26 May, 1998) reports that a Nigerian politician was urging "the head of state, General Sanni Abacha, to obey the Abeokuta Federal High Court ruling and release . . . Chief Bola Ige" (p. 1). Ige was not immediately released and the government failed to issue an official response to the court decision. Ige had been arrested following political disturbances in Ibadan. No formal charges were filed against Ige. It is important to note that court decisions against military governments are unusual in Africa. On the contrary, the courts are afraid to render decisions against military governments. Thus, such cases as the one described in Abeokuta are the exception.

The Military and the Second-Tier Democratic Principles

Military rulership widely violates the core principles of democracy as we have indicated in the preceding section. Hence, the relationship between African military leadership and the second-tier democratic principles is quite predictable. Military leadership creates a hostile environment, which impedes any chance for the development of second-tier democratic principles. In this section, we will show how activities by the ruling military dictatorship adversely impact the development of each of the following second-tier principles: tolerance, human freedom, development of democratic institutions, and the development of citizen morality and discipline.

The General Idi Amin era in Uganda, Jean Bedel Bokassa's in Central Africa, and Mobutu Sese Seko's government in the former Zaire (now Democratic Republic of Congo) were infamous military regimes that had a zero tolerance level. Amin's regime was remarkable for its high level of theater and bizarre acts, but what denoted his regime was a high intolerance for opposing political perspectives in Uganda. He went to the heinous extent of murdering those with publicly opposing views and there were many "missing" elite at the height of Amin's murders.[4] Furthermore, Amin went as far as threatening the lives of those who resisted his amorous advances. In one instance, Princess Elizabeth Bagaya of Toro (princess of the Buganda royal house) fled Uganda when she became increasingly unsafe after rejecting amorous advances made by Amin. At that time, the princess held a Ugandan ministerial position.

Mobutu and Bokassa's governments were not far off from the atrocities of Amin's government. They also exhibited high levels of intolerance but most of these were limited to treatment of political opposition. In the early 1980s, Mobutu's soldiers beat up and jailed ten ex-Zaire (now Democratic Republic of Congo) legislators who were meeting visiting U.S. congressmen. The Zairean (now Congolese) legislators had been jailed earlier for merely demanding change in government policies. Then in August of 1991, Mobutu's security forces cracked down on opposition supporters shortly after Mobutu had been forced by international groups to set up a conference to pave way for a multi-party democracy.

The military regimes headed by Amin, Bokassa, and Mobutu represent the intolerance level exhibited all over Africa by most ruling military persons. In fact, most recently, Burundi's Major Pierre Buyoya could not bear being defeated in a democratic election. Rather than accept the fact of his defeat, he retook power through yet another military coup. The late Sergeant Samuel Doe of Liberia was so intolerant of opposition that he arrested and detained several high-ranking members of the military and other politicians (Bienen, 1987). In Ethiopia, the military rulers of the Derg used their "control over police and army units to extinguish all the political parties" (Harbeson, 1987a, p. 179). This shows how endemic military intolerance of others' views has become in Africa.

Intolerance and the respect for basic human freedom are related because high levels of intolerance lead to violations of human freedom. For lack of space we will focus on rights to freely assemble and rights to free speech. One of the basic human freedom principles is the freedom to assemble with other people who share similar goals to discuss issues of interest with others and freedom from inhuman treatment. Unfortunately, several military regimes outlaw this basic right. In fact, the banning of free political assembly is a favorite among all African military regimes. This type of ban goes hand in hand with the suspension of democratic constitutions and the total ban on political activities. 'Violators' of this military order are often arrested and jailed without recourse to a court of law. In addition, military regimes drastically curtail freedom of speech. Decree No. 4, the *Public Officers' Decree*, which was enacted by a Nigerian military order on 29 March 1984 was designed to "protect" military officers and their civilian government officials from any press attack. It forbade the publication of any matter, *true or false*, that was capable of embarrassing a public officer. It also proscribed media houses and provided for a trial of alleged press offenders by a military tribunal. In essence, the law was stacked against the press and there was no pretense of fairness. For instance, the Nigerian military government had used Decree No. 4 to impede the freedom of the press and speech. Several military actions to curtail speech are vividly demonstrated in the treatment of journalists and media houses. Usually, actions include suspension of specific publications, arrest, and intimidation of journalists. The murder, long-term imprisonment, or torture of journalists as well as the proscription of media houses exemplify extreme cases. Onwumechili and M'Bayo (1995) point out that the *National Concord* and *Newswatch* were closed down by Nigeria's military government for unfavorable news reporting. Similar actions have taken place elsewhere in Africa. In fact, military governments take additional actions against free speech of the people, which are beyond those actions taken in reaction to media comments. We have already mentioned some of these actions when we discussed intolerance among military leaders. Captain Thomas Sankara of Burkina Faso showed a remarkable hardline attitude to freedom of speech when he stated that "we [his military government] will *strip the liberties* of those who use the freedoms created by the CSP to attack the [military government] and, in that way, to attack the Voltaic (Burkina Faso) people" (Anderson, 1987, pp. 15–16).

When one considers the above problems, it is easier to understand why the establishment of democratic institutions has been difficult in Africa. We have already learned that military regimes abhor all or most of the democratic principles that were discussed in Chapter 2 of this book. Most importantly, these regimes have no respect for either political tolerance or human freedom; hence the likelihood that they would support the development of democratic institutions is low. In essence, the development of democratic institutions is anathema to military rulership. Instead, most military regimes are more likely to move far away from any semblance of democracy. They are more likely to move toward

more centralization of power, use more authoritarian means to achieve consent, and are more likely to prefer the speedy trials of military tribunals than the slow but much more liberal civil justice courts. To be sure, African military governments do not ban the civil justice system. The military governments allow the system to exist in order to handle a deluge of civil cases, but the governments simultaneously install military tribunals to hear selected 'sensitive' cases. Selection of cases that are tried by tribunals is arbitrary and seems to involve those cases that in one way or another are in the interest of the government. Subsequent military coups head the list of cases that an incumbent military government selects for trial before military tribunals but other cases such as drug trafficking have also been heard by military tribunals.

The civil courts are officially independent of military control but this is far from the truth. Judges who preside over civil cases are not elected but are appointed by the military government. One need only to review several legal decisions taken on cases brought against military governments in Africa. Either such cases are decided in favor of the military government or the military government simply ignores the outcome. Joseph (1987) describes this phenomenon in the following statements:

> What was established during the (General) Gowon era, and would be magnified under each of his (military) successors, were the following legal dimensions of military rule: . . . and the right of the military to decide which principles of jurisprudence it would respect and which it would disregard.[5] (p. 70)

Other democratic institutions are often nonexistent under military rule. Groups such as those that advocate for human rights, for instance, find it difficult to exist under a hostile military environment. In some cases the military government has gone as far as establishing such groups to preempt any other independent move to form a human rights group that would likely become a persistent monitor of government actions. For example, General Sanni Abacha of Nigeria established a human rights group in an attempt to preempt an independent formation of such a group within Nigeria and also to temper international outrage against Nigeria's military government. It is clear that such government-sponsored groups cannot be truly respected by objective observers.

Military rulers frown at any development of citizen morality and discipline. They would prefer a subservient and obedient citizenry who will carry out military orders without any questions. Fortunately, several Africans, especially a few of the elite, have continued to voice their rejection of military and authoritarian rule. The late Chief Obafemi Awolowo of Nigeria went as far as resigning his ministerial position in General Yakubu Gowon's military government in protest against continued military rule. The mass demonstrations in the 1980s against military rule in many African countries also indicate citizen commitment to the establishment of democracies. The examples that have been provided here

simply point out that Africans wish to have a democratic government but a lot more needs to be done to establish democratic citizen morality and discipline. First and foremost, it requires the establishment of a democratic government. Then it requires citizens to act as alert watchdogs to ensure that democratic principles are constantly respected and applied. This is a very difficult requirement, but nonetheless it is one that a disciplined citizenry will easily achieve.

The next section will focus on Nigeria as an example of an African country where military rulers have continued to prevent democratization. The discussion will provide examples of several violations of democratic principles.

Nigeria

The focus on Nigeria is necessary because Nigerian military leaders threaten to maintain power even after announcing guidelines to democratization. Nigeria has been under military leadership for most of its post-independence era. The present military leader is General Abdulsalam Abubakar who replaced General Sanni Abacha. The latter died in office in 1998.

Abacha's government maintained a stranglehold on power by violating several democratic principles that we have reiterated in this chapter. The number of political prisoners increased. Political prisoners included many of the country's respected leaders such as Generals Olusegun Obasanjo and Shehu Yar'Adua, Chief M.K.O. Abiola, and Dr. Beko Ransome-Kuti. General Yar'Adua and Chief Abiola died in detention. In addition, several others died mysteriously or barely survived assassination attempts believed to have been carried out by Abacha's government. Mrs. Kudirat Abiola was mysteriously killed, while Chief Anthony Enahoro and Chief Mike Ibru survived attempts on their lives.[6] Two coup attempts that were believed to have been ruses occurred under General Abacha's tenure. Journalists received extraordinary length of prison sentences. In essence, Abacha's military dictatorship ranked among the most cruel in Africa.

Abacha's government announced a return to democratic rule in October 1998 but few Nigerians were aware of the details of the plan to return Nigeria to democracy. For example, by early 1998, the government did not issue a White Paper on the constitutional recommendations made by the largely appointed constitutional conference. Thus, no one was sure of the actual constitutional provisions for elections. In addition, General Abacha failed to clear the air on his presumed interest in becoming a civilian president. Instead, he was mute while being nominated as the unopposed presidential candidate for all the political parties.[7]

There were several questions about Nigeria's democracy had General Abacha assumed the presidency through his guideline for democracy. These questions focus on the following: (a) respect for a democratic constitution, (b) violation of democratic competition, and (c) ideological representation.

By early 1998, only a few months to the elections, no one was sure about the presidential electoral laws. The core of such laws are usually found in the Nigerian constitution but there was no constitution legally available in Nigeria at that time. In early March 1998, the Commonwealth Ministerial Action Group (CMAG) called on the Nigerian government to publish the Nigerian constitution to help bring credibility to Nigeria's transition program (Davies, 4 March, 1998). Most Nigerians, particularly those from the south, believed that the delay in publishing the constitution was because the recommended provisions barred General Abacha from running for the presidency. The Southerners argue that the constitutional conference had recommended that the presidency be rotated among various sections of the country. The first president to be elected in 1998 was to be from the south. Abacha, being a Northerner, stood no chance of being elected under such provision. Furthermore, the legality of an unopposed candidate and the term of a presidency were unknown. The seriousness of not publishing the constitution is captured by Onuah (20 April, 1998) who writes on the likelihood of General Abacha being the only candidate for the presidential election. Not even the country's Transitional Implementation Committee (TIC) knew the constitutional provisions. Onuah writes as follows:

> The Transition Implementation Committee (TIC) charged with overseeing the path to democracy said the August 1 vote would most likely be held as a referendum on Abacha's candidacy. "We should wait to know what the electoral law says," Khalifa Hassan Yusuf of the TIC told Reuters. (p. 1)

The more ominous specter of an unopposed presidential candidacy is the violation of democratic competition. The lack of competition for presidential power was pointed out in an earlier section of this chapter on violations of democratic principles. It will again be discussed as a strategy used by the military to achieve the goal of civilianization. Usually, the military leader conducts a referendum as a way of warding off competition for presidency and at the same time transforming himself into a civilian president. There are several examples of referendum such as those conducted by Lieutenant-General Gnassingbe Eyadema in Togo and Colonel Gaafar Nimieri in the Sudan. But unlike Togo and Sudan where there were no existing or competing political parties, Nigeria has five political parties. Four of the five nominated General Abacha as the unopposed presidential candidate. The fifth party, Grassroots Democratic Movement (GDM) nominated General Abacha after he purportedly outpolled a party member, retired Chief of Police Mohammed Yusufu. It is remarkable that all five political parties had to modify their constitutions to allow a non-member, General Abacha, to be nominated for presidency.[8] This prompted Nigeria's opposition group, the United Action for Democracy (UAD) to state that "Abacha has commenced the definitive stages of his self-transformation agenda via the proc-

ess of stage-managed endorsement by political parties" (Onuora, 20 April, 1998, p. 2).

Abacha's bid for an unopposed candidature had begun several years before the scheduled return to democratic governance. Several individuals and groups, reportedly with the support of General Abacha's government, openly canvassed for Abacha as presidential candidate. These groups went as far as organizing what was termed a two-million-man march in Nigeria's capital city, Abuja. This march was an avenue to canvass for Abacha's candidature. While the march went on without police interference, the police and state security personnel attacked and arrested participants at an opposition rally in Lagos. These events took place on the same day.

General Abacha's government did not discourage these activities. On the contrary, top government officials came out to attack any opposition to Abacha's transformation to a civilian president. Ejime (19 May, 1998) reports that Nigeria's Solicitor-General, Tochukwu Onwugbufor, challenged a law suit filed by government critic, Gani Fawehinmi to prevent General Abacha's candidacy. Onwugbufor is a top government official, thus, his challenge of the suit is an indication that Abacha intended to run for the presidency.

Abacha's nomination by all the political parties also raises questions on the credibility of party ideologies. Each of the five parties has stated support for different ideologies in order to separate each from the other in the mind of the voters. Thus, it was surprising that these parties, each with a unique ideology, will nominate the same individual as presidential candidate. It is even more amazing that the nominated candidate, General Abacha, was not a registered member of any of the parties. Thus, it is clear that the parties pay lipservice to their stated ideologies. Perhaps, this explains why voter turnout for elections has been very low in Nigeria. Voters were distrustful of the transition program and were frustrated by it. Many voters believed that those who will be announced as elected officials will be hand-picked by the military.

In conclusion, Nigeria's military government under General Sanni Abacha was dictatorial. Attempts made by General Abacha to return the country to democratic rule was not credible and opposition increased both within Nigeria and abroad. The situation in Nigeria shows how the military threatens the establishment of democracy.

ATTEMPT TO LEGITIMIZE MILITARY GOVERNANCE

We enumerated several violations of democratic principles by African military governments in the preceding sections. Those violations are not deliberate attempts by military rulers to make themselves unacceptable to the civilians whom they govern. On the contrary, African military governments have made several efforts to legitimize military governance and perhaps make the military an acceptable alternative to governance in Africa. In this section we

will review attempts by military governments to legitimize military governance. These legitimating attempts include the provision of certain levels of citizen participation under military rule, advocacy of power sharing between the military and civilians, and the process of civilianization.[9]

Several African military leaders have sought legitimation by creating 'participatory' structures at the rural level in certain countries, and officials who administer those structures may in fact be democratically elected. Villagers or residents of the rural areas are allowed to some extent to participate in their own governance while the military retains federal and other nationwide powers. However, the problem is that these structures do not function as well as they are designed on paper. In most cases, the military retains real control and even the elected officials see themselves as "representatives" of the military and not of the people who elected them. Such structures have existed in Benin Republic, where as many as 7,000 revolutionary committees were created but turned out to be largely ineffective, and in the Republic of Congo (Brazzaville), where the Army created a "party" that had only 164 members yet was the designated ruling party.

Robinson (1992) has written extensively about grassroots legitimation of military governance in both Burkina Faso and the Republic of Niger. He focuses on Captain Thomas Sankara's tenure as the head of Burkina Faso's military government and the attempt by Sankara to establish citizen participation in governance. Robinson points out that Sankara "insisted on locating legitimacy in the realm of 'the people'. . . . New participatory institutions at the grassroots level were designed, at least in part, to respond to issues arising from the regime's contestable validity claims" (1992, pp. 146–147). Sankara's Conseil National pour la Revolution (CNR) abolished the traditional political structure, which used local chiefs to administer local government. The chiefs remained but were without administrative powers. In their place were the elected Comites pour la Defense de la Revolution (CDRs), who had extensive local political and economic powers. However, Robinson concludes that the CDRs were largely perceived as more authoritative than democratic. The CDRs' high-handedness was also demonstrated in their penchant for using local based gendarmes, provincial police, and the military to crush anyone who stood in "their way."

Robinson adds that General Seyni Kountche of Niger also "established local level councils with oversight responsibilities for development initiatives and directed significant new resources to the countryside" (p. 155). Kountche's government established five tiers of Conseils de Developpement (CD)—village, local, subregional, regional, and national—to achieve its development goals. CDs at all levels were theoretically participatory and individual inputs were encouraged, but Robinson points out that Kountche's conception of this type of participation was "paternalistic and characterized by an unwillingness to regard the mass population as a mature citizenry" (p. 158). He goes on to say that "agendas for the CDs were preset and passed down through the administrative hierarchy, while grievances and interests articulated during the meetings were

frequently not referred up the line" (p. 161). Thus, citizen participation was per-
functory and a mere ruse to legitimize Kountche's military government.

The military, with the support of scholars and politicians, has also ad-
vocated power sharing between the military and civilians as an alternative and
legitimate governance structure. Nigeria's first post-independence president, the
late Dr. Nnamdi Azikiwe, was a leading advocate of such a structure, which he
labeled *diarchy*. His leaning toward diarchy came during the protracted military
regime of General Yakubu Gowon. Thus, Dr. Azikiwe may have been influ-
enced by the seemingly eternal military rule and saw diarchy as a ruse to get the
military to accept civilian participation in government. Anyhow, Dr. Azikiwe's
diarchy was not accepted by Gowon's regime and it has since been reserved for
scholarly discussions.

Colonel Ignatius K. Acheampong of Ghana also developed a power-
sharing structure that was strikingly similar to Dr. Azikiwe's diarchy. Acheam-
pong called his power-sharing concept the *union government*. It was designed to
provide room for the military, police, and civilians in the top echelon of the
government. Acheampong introduced his idea in 1978 but it was never tested
before he was ousted in the same year through another military coup. Acheam-
pong's idea could also be associated with the political environment in Ghana
during Acheampong's rule. Ghanaians were agitated and called repeatedly for a
return to civilian rule; therefore, union government was used to quell the con-
tinuing agitation for civilian rule.

Furthermore, among scholars from over forty African countries who
met in a series of workshops that were organized by the United States Agency
for International Development (USAID) in 1992, a few supported an idea of
power sharing between the military and civilians. Kpundeh (1992) reports that
these scholars argued that power sharing "would make it unlikely that they [the
military] would act against the democratic process" (p. 54). What is enlighten-
ing, however, is that a great number of the scholars opposed the idea of power
sharing.

It is clear that Azikiwe, Acheampong, and others who advocate power
sharing between the military and civilians are the results from several attempts
to assuage concerns about ruling military governments. In each case, power
sharing was to serve as a 'stopgap' or 'worst case' solution to a military rule that
was clearly unacceptable to the citizens. In none of the cases was power sharing
adopted as a means to appease citizens and to legitimize military governance.

The military also uses what can best be described as *civilianization* of
their positions as another means to legitimize their governance. Civilianization
involves two key tactics, (a) merely changing the designation of their office,
and/or (b) using a plebiscite to symbolically democratize their claim to office.

Harbeson (1987b) has reported on "many military leaders abandon[ing]
uniforms for civilian apparel at least in public" (p. 2). Nigeria's General Ibrahim
Babangida frequently appeared in civilian clothes during public events and went
on to change his designation from military head of state to Nigeria's president.

These acts may appear insignificant to the uninitiated but these symbolic moves are calculated for their effects. Appearing in civilian clothes or undertaking civilian designations softens the authoritarian image of military rulers.

A much more effective civilianization of a military ruler is often accomplished through plebiscites, which have become common among African military rulers. Lieutenant Colonel Gnassingbe Eyadema of Togo conducted such a plebiscite within one year of his military coup and undertook the title of president thereafter. Colonel Gaafar Mohammed El Nimieri of Sudan went a step further. Not only did he conduct a plebiscite to legitimize his governance, he adopted a civilian constitution and distanced himself from the military by stacking his government with several civilians. In fact, Nimieri's government was hardly a military one. Another variation of civilianization is when the military ruler retires to contest the presidency. For example, Flight Lieutenant Jerry Rawlings of Ghana and several others simply "retired" their military uniforms to contest the presidency as civilians.

These efforts to legitimize military rule have received mixed reviews. Some have opposed the much more acceptable strategy of retiring in order to contest the presidency because citizens fear that military rulers who 'retire' continue to use their control of the military to ensure that they win at the election polls. Also, the other strategies listed in this section have been unacceptable to the people.

SUMMARY

This chapter has focused on how military governments violate various democratic principles and how such governments have sought to legitimize their governance. Most of the democratic principles that have been discussed in this chapter were also discussed in Chapter 2.

Chapter 4 has enumerated eight core principles that military governments violate. These principles are as follows: participation, representation, decentralized power, accountability, plurality, equality, political competition, and the rule of law. The structure of the military and its habits are anathema to the practice of democracy and are the primary reasons why the core democratic principles are violated by the military. The chapter did not only provide theoretical reasons why core principles are violated, it also provided pertinent examples of such violations.

In addition, it reviewed the relationship between military rule and the second tier of democratic principles, which had been discussed in Chapter 2. The second-tier principles are tolerance, human freedom, development of democratic institutions, and the development of citizen morality and discipline. The chapter pointed out that second-tier principles cannot exist under a military environment because the core principles are rejected. The assumption is that

there is a certain linear or causal relationship between the core and second-tier principles where the existence of core principles will generate an environment for the development of the second-tier principles. Several examples were presented to show that military rule does not lead to an environment that supports the second-tier principles.

The chapter used Nigeria as an example of a country where various democratic principles have been violated. The section on Nigeria pointed to major democratic violations in Nigeria's transition program that was supposed to transform the nation's administrative structure from military to civilian.

Furthermore, several strategies that are used by military rulers to claim legitimacy were discussed in the final section of the chapter. These strategies are as follows: provision of certain levels of citizen participation under military rule, power sharing between the military and civilians, and legitimation through the process of civilianization. First, Benin Republic, the Republic of Congo (Brazzaville), Burkina Faso, and Niger were used as examples of countries where military leaders have provided certain levels of citizen participation. Second, it was noted that true power sharing between the military and civilians has not been practiced despite the presence of various advocated strategies such as diarchy and the union government. Third, the chapter reviewed variations of civilianization, which included changing office designation (for example, from head of state to president), appearing in public in civilian clothes, using plebiscites to achieve citizen acceptance or confirmation, and retiring military uniforms to contest for the presidency. In conclusion, the citizens accept none of these strategies and several examples were presented to indicate problems with each of the strategies.

NOTES

1. See section on *Principles of Western Democracy* in Chapter 2 for a detailed explanation of both types of democratic representations.

2. The derg was the ruling military council in Ethiopia after the overthrow of Emperor Haile Selassie in 1974.

3. Denotes the former social and governmental system under Emperor Haile Selassie in Ethiopia.

4. "Missing" was widely used to classify those who were presumed to have been murdered but whose bodies were never recovered. In 1974, the International Commission of Jurists estimated that General Idi Amin's men murdered over 250,000 Ugandans.

5. General Yakubu Gowon ruled Nigeria from 1966 until he was overthrown in a 1975 military coup.

6. Kudirat Abiola is the wife of late politician, Chief M.K.O. Abiola. Chief Abiola was widely believed to have won the June 1993 presidential election that was annulled by General Ibrahim Babangida's military government.

7. Politicians who were expected to contest the presidency were reportedly intimidated by state agents. General Abacha's unopposed candidacy led Nigeria's Electoral

Commission (NECON) plan for a presidential referendum on Abacha rather than the earlier scheduled presidential election. A news report from Nigeria indicated that international pressure persuaded General Abacha to consider ordering four of the five parties to reconvene and nominate presidential candidates. Abacha was expected to run as the presidential candidate for the fifth party, the United Nigeria Congress Party (UNCP). See Ojebisi and Emerole (27 May 1998) for detailed report.

8. A GDM presidential candidate, Mr. Tunji Braithwaite, withdrew his name from nomination in protest against the change in the party constitution, which enabled General Abacha to contest.

9. *Civilianization* refers to the undertaking of civilian characteristics through title redesignations and/or plebiscites.

5

Solutions to the Military Threat

The previous chapter focused on the continuing military threats to African democracies and how military rule and democracy cannot exist side by side despite several attempts by military rulers to legitimize military governance. Thus, military rule must be prevented in order to salvage the precarious democratic situation in Africa. This chapter will focus on how to contain military threats to democracy.

The task of extinguishing military threat to democracy is very difficult. Hence, nearly forty years after the first African military coup that had occurred in 1958 in the Sudan, attempts to forestall military takeovers of African governments have been futile. Several obstacles explain why solutions to the menace of military coups in Africa have remained illusive. To find lasting solutions to this menace, these obstacles must first be overcome. We begin this chapter by reviewing various attempts to prevent military threats to democracy and then discuss the various obstacles that prevent extinguishing military rule in the African continent.

PREVIOUS ATTEMPTS TO QUELL MILITARY THREAT
TO DEMOCRACY

There are usually five ways that African countries have sought to prevent military threat to an elected democracy: constitutional provisions, use of special units, co-opting the military in advisory rule, abolishing military units, and reducing the size of the military.

The use of constitutional provisions to legislate against military coups is the most common, and yet also the weakest strategy that is used to try to curtail military coups. Usually, the provision specifically outlaws military coup, making it a treasonable offense, and establishes capital punishment for those

who carry out military coups. These constitutional provisions are nothing but *paper* provisions, which military coup plotters have shunned and viewed with disrespect. The major reasons why the military disregards constitutional provisions are that, (a) a successful coup will give the coup plotters the opportunity and power to suspend all constitutional provisions including those that attempt to outlaw military coups, and (b) few will insist on putting successful military coup plotters on a trial for the violation of constitutional provisions. To date no one has been able to put successful coup plotters on trial. Trials only take place after a failed attempt.

There is more flexibility and better success with the use of special military units against coup plotters. In fact, the only weakness with special units is that their loyalty is never totally guaranteed and they sometimes lack overwhelming firepower, which is necessary to counter military coups. Special units come in varying forms: (a) presidential guards, and (b) foreign troops or mercenaries. Presidential guards are often considered separate from the national army and they receive several privileges to ensure unwavering protection of the president. But the presidential guards do not always ensure the protection of the president or head of state. In certain cases, members of the guard have been co-opted into military coup plans. For instance, Lieutenant Colonel Joseph Garba was head of General Yakubu Gowon's guards and yet he was a leading figure in the 1975 military coup that removed Gowon from power. Garba was rewarded for his role after the coup, as he became one of the leading military figures in the country. Though this example is one of a military coup against a military government, it does show what can happen in a coup against a democratic government.

In the case of mercenaries, these may be foreigners who serve as presidential guards or a small squad of foreign military units that can be summoned to help fight back a military coup. For example, French armies are stationed in Gabon, the Ivory Coast, and Senegal and serve as deterrents to coup plotters. In other countries like the Democratic Republic of Congo (formerly Zaire), Belgian and French troops have been summoned on several occasions to help General Mobutu Sese Seko to maintain power.[1] When foreign soldiers or mercenaries are used as presidential guards, there is a better assurance of protection because mercenaries have one sole obligation, which is to protect or fight on the behalf of their paymaster who in this case is the president. They do not have other loyalties or interests such as personal greed for power or ethnic loyalties that affect a presidential guard unit that is made up of the citizens of that country. But the strength of mercenary forces is often doubtful because they form a small unit of military force, which puts them at a disadvantage against a large number of coup plotters. The May 1997 coup in Sierra Leone points to that fact when the Sierra Leone coup plotters quickly overran a small contingent of Nigerian troops that were stationed in Freetown to protect President Tejan Kabbah of Sierra Leone.

Another strategy is to co-opt the military into democratic governments. Kpundeh cites an African participant in a USAID-organized democracy workshop who noted that a good example was "in Brazil before Collor's election as president, where the military has given up power with the provision that everyone in the political system there accepts that the military can continue to have a kind of veto over all decisions" (1992, p. 54). This strategy has serious problems. First, one of the African participants at the USAID-organized conference pointed out that it was similar to bribing a robber "so that the robber will not rob your house" (Kpundeh, 1992, p. 54). Essentially, it is a payoff to the military to prevent violation of democratic rule. Such payoff should never be encouraged in democracies. Second, to provide the military with veto power or powers that create a special status is anathema to democracy itself. A key principle of democracy is equality and the granting of such veto powers explicitly violates this principle.

A fourth strategy is to reduce the size of the military and, thus, diminish the army's political importance. The USAID-sponsored workshop on democracy had in fact "questioned the necessity to maintain militaries in Africa" (Kpundeh, p. 53). It is likely that the political importance of the military will be reduced with a proportional reduction in the size of the military but even that assumption cannot be guaranteed. The political importance of a national army, unit, or agency does not always depend on size. Importance is more likely to be dependent on the degree of respect that is accorded to the unit regardless of the unit's size. The army can *buy* that very respect through the threat to use gunfire. Of course, the largely unarmed or underarmed citizens do not have answers to this threat.

Another strategy is to reduce the size of the military budget instead of the size of the army itself. This strategy was also discussed at the USAID workshop where participants acknowledged that past attempts to reduce military budgets have precipitated military coups. In fact, several African military coups have taken place in response to what the plotters perceived as monetary injustices they had experienced as individuals or as a group. Colonel Ignatius Acheampong's coup in Ghana, Captain Valentine Strasser's and then Major Johnny Koromah's coups in Sierra Leone were all linked to money squabbles. Kpundeh also points out that "because the military in Sierra Leone [as well as elsewhere in Africa] enjoys special privileges, such as buying goods at heavily subsidized prices, they would be likely to resist strongly if the economy is liberalized and their budget is slashed" (p. 53). *The Washington Post* confirmed this situation in a report on the May 1997 military coup in Sierra Leone when it cited a Sierra Leonian soldier as follows: "Soldiers could barely survive on our salaries . . . . paid $18 and four bags of rice a month. The family ate two bags of rice and sold one for other food . . . the last bag was sold to pay school fees . . . . When Kabbah halved the rice ration, Jalloh [Sierra Leone soldier] knew that there would be a coup and that he would join it, he said. 'If a soldier cannot feed his family, how can he sit in his barracks?' he asked" (Rupert, 1997, p. A29).

We conclude by noting that all the strategies that are mentioned in this section have been suggested in the past and some of them were used in various parts of Africa. The results have been humbling, to say the least, because none of them has been as successful as envisaged. Clearly, the key Achilles' heel that is common to all the strategies is that none of them has taken the guns from the hands of the soldiers or neutralized the effects of military ammunition. Perhaps it is time to think of alternative strategies that take away the guns or at least neutralize their effects. It is also important to note that the use of one strategy may not be enough to keep the soldiers in the barracks. What is needed is a combination of various strategies. In a later section, we will discuss various strategies that are more effective in sustaining African democracies by keeping the army in the barracks. We now focus on discussion of obstacles to preventing military takeovers.

OBSTACLES WHICH PREVENT THE DEMISE
OF MILITARY GOVERNANCE

Five key obstacles make it very difficult to prevent the military from taking over governance in African countries. These obstacles are as follows: control and willingness to use arms, declining military professionalism, an increasing perception of the military as a reasonable alternative to a political career, a lack of prolonged modern democratic culture, and the deplorable support for military coups from some quarters of the global community.

The first obstacle is easily observable. To put it simply: the army has access to ammunition while the citizens do not, or at least do not have the same quality of access. This, however, should be expected not only in Africa but elsewhere in the world. The army is primarily established to protect a country from external enemies; hence the army has to be specially and heavily armed in readiness. The armies of advanced or industrialized countries have access to tremendous firepower, which is well beyond any access to arms by the citizens of those countries. An imbalance in access to arms between the army and citizens is thus by design and should not ordinarily be a problem. However, it has become a problem in Africa but not in much of the rest of the world. For instance, there are few military coups in the industrialized world, which leads one to ask, "Why are there many military coups in Africa?" We address this question as follows: (a) scholars such as Luckham (1996) have pointed to the fact that colonial governments used African soldiers to quell internal rebellions and that African soldiers have, thus, seen themselves as a necessary part in resolving internal conflicts. A military coup is, therefore, perceived by the military as a continuing strategy for resolving internal conflicts and the military has the huge gunfire advantage over other interested social forces.[2] (b) Though there are aspirants to political power among the army and the civilian population, only the army has the tools (guns and organized units) to *quickly* make their dreams a

reality. Armies in the Western world have not harnessed this potential because they exhibit far more professionalism than their African counterparts (see Decalo, 1990).

Declining military professionalism is, thus, yet another obstacle. Professionalism in the African army is no longer what it used to be in the 1950s.[3] Decalo (1990) describes the African army as "seething with corporate, ethnic, and personal grievances that divide their loyalties, cleavages, these mutual-advancement loyalty pyramids are only *nominally* beholden to military discipline and hierarchical command" (p. 6). The breakdown in military discipline and hierarchical command was reflected in the junior officers' coups led by Sergeant Samuel Doe in Liberia, Flight Lieutenant Jerry Rawlings in Ghana, and the Sierra Leone coups, which were masterminded by Captain Valentine Strasser and then Captain Johnny Paul Koromah. A junior officers' coup is highly unlikely in a disciplined army where commands that are initiated for any appreciable armed conflict can only be made at the top level and access to heavy ammunition is generally not granted to lower ranking officers. In addition, indiscipline in the military can also be attributed to top-ranking officers who are showing an increasing lack of interest in military affairs. Most of these officers are involved in business or governmental activities and have little or no time for military affairs. This is increasingly eroding senior officer control over the junior officers and, thus, a general breakdown of discipline is not totally unexpected. It also follows that merely reaching a non-military intervention agreement with top-ranking military officers will not prevent coups because the senior officers have clearly lost an appreciable amount of control over the junior officers.

The third obstacle revolves around the social status of the military as a lifelong career. This status has risen rapidly over the last few decades and has coincided with the rise in military dominance of governance in Africa. Many brilliant young men in African universities are now choosing a military career as a quicker and surer way to reach a national leadership position. In the army, you get to a leadership position by simply participating in a coup while a politician needs enormous amounts of money and luck and hard work at the polls in order to get to the same position. These new soldiers are the men who have perpetuated the periodic return of the military to governance in Africa. They have planned to enter the army as an alternative way to get to leadership positions and they are committed to carrying out these career goals. This is a sharp contrast to the 1950s and early 1960s when many Africans looked down on a military career, which was perceived as primarily a career for the poor or the educationally barren. At that time, few university graduates chose the military as a career. Furthermore, few children of the African elite were interested in a military career. Instead, they chose to become doctors, engineers, and lawyers. But this has changed remarkably.

The difficulties in preventing military governance are not only inherent in military structure, professionalism, or career status. There is also a lack of a

prolonged modern democratic culture among the civilian population. This means that few African modern states have practiced democracy for an appreciable length of time; thus, the value of democracy for the citizens is predominantly latent. In fact, prolonged military or authoritarian regimes are responsible for this situation in many African countries and the result has been the stunting of any chance for the development of a democratic culture. But this is only partly true. Also, civilians have themselves been responsible for this situation. For instance, the political elite has not always been united against military governance and, thus, is also to blame for a lack of a democratic culture. In fact, several of the political elite have openly supported military governance in order to satisfy their own selfish needs. In Chapter 3, we discussed how the Northern political elite gave ethnic support to the countercoup that brought Lieutenant Colonel Yakubu Gowon to power in Nigeria in 1966. There have been other military coups that have received support from the political elite or business interests. Invariably, the lack of unified support for democracy from the citizenry, particularly the political and business elite, will continue to provide a window of undue support for military coups.

Finally, some of the nations in the global community have continued to show support for certain African military coups. Lieutenant Colonel Joseph Mobutu's military coup was directly backed by the United States Central Intelligence Agency (CIA). Decalo (1990) also lists Hissene Habre's military control of Chad Republic and Sergeant Samuel Doe's governance of Liberia as regimes that were principally propped by the CIA. In addition, the 1979 military coup in Central African Republic was led by the French military, which subsequently flew in David Dacko to take over. In other places where foreign powers have not been directly involved, they have quickly moved in to support any military regime that they believed would further their own (foreign) interest. This was the widespread situation during the cold war when capitalist interests were vociferously opposed to socialist interests. In Ethiopia, for example, the then Soviet Union moved in to support the military junta, which had overthrown the Emperor, and the United States shifted its support from Ethiopia to the neighboring Somalia, which was under Siad Barre.

It is only recently (after the cold war era) that the world community has exhibited some unity in reaction to undemocratic governments such as military regimes. For instance, there has been tremendous and unified pressure on Nigeria's military government to hand over power to a democratic government. But this is not always the case. In Burundi, for example, neighboring states imposed sanctions on Major Pierre Buyoya's government after Buyoya overthrew an elected government. But these sanctions have been selective and shortlived. Buyoya's government faced sanctions for only a few months before neighboring states met to lift the sanctions. But the recent overthrow of a democratically elected government in the Republic of Congo (Brazzaville) was different. In Congo's case, the French government moved quickly to support Denis Sassou-Nguesso and his Cobra militia. Of course, the French interest was to protect the

French dominance of Congo's oil economy. The ousted democratic government led by Dr. Paschal Lissouba had largely opened the oil market to American companies and the French were outraged. Sassou-Nguesso's coup was an opportunity that the French had calculated as beneficial to their interests.

The more worrisome trend is that African countries are increasingly involved in supporting military coups in neighboring countries. Sassou-Nguesso's coup in the Republic of Congo (Brazzaville) was openly supported by Angola whose soldiers fought alongside Nguesso's Cobras during the four-month coup, which forced the democratically elected President Paschal Lissouba into exile. It was alleged that Angola provided the support against Lissouba's government because Lissouba had previously supported Angolan rebels against the Angolan government. Thus, it was a tit-for-tat situation. These various interests portend a dangerous future for Africa. That future is one in which military coups are likely to take place if there is no concerted effort to oppose military governance.

The five key obstacles to prevent military governance were presented in this section to indicate how difficult it is to sustain democratic governments in Africa. In the next section we will discuss the most effective strategies that can be used to prevent military governance.

EFFECTIVE STRATEGIES FOR KEEPING THE MILITARY IN THE BARRACKS

In earlier chapters, we explored the importance of democracy in Africa by tracing the traditional African roots of democracy and noting the present status of modern democracy in Africa. In the end, those discussions pointed to the fact that modern democracy in Africa has yet to be consolidated and that its greatest threat remains the fear of military intervention. In fact, since the early wave of modern democracies in the 1980s and early 1990s, the military has returned both Burundi and Congo (Brazzaville) to authoritarian or military dictatorships. What is notable is that the reasons for military coups still remain, yet few new strategies are being employed to prevent military interventions.

In this chapter we looked at the difficulties in preventing military interventions in African politics and we also identified various unsuccessful strategies that have been employed in the attempt to stop these periodic military interventions. The question that is often ignored is whether armies are in fact necessary in Africa. In the next paragraph we will discuss this important issue before any subsequent discussions of the ways to prevent military coups.

There will be no military coups without armies. This seemingly simple and perhaps silly statement is one that is so important in Africa. After all, Africa's experience of military coups has reached disturbing proportions and it is presently threatening to turn back whatever gains have been made in democratization. Thus, to consider an Africa without armies is to consider the ultimate

solution to military coups. However, it may not turn out to be as simple as the statement portends.

We begin our discussions by noting that those who make a case for abolishing all armies point out that (a) African countries need to focus their attention on economic development; (b) few African countries are involved in crossborder disturbances, crises, or wars; and (c) most African armies are used for police action and, thus, both the armies and police carry out duplicative duties.

Today a sizable percentage of the national budget in African countries is spent paying for national defence or in simpler terms paying for "military needs." This amount of money could be better spent supporting the economic and educational needs of many of these nations. These nations are far more in need of economic or social development than keeping pace with military developments. It is simply a question of national priority.

In any case, Africa's military is rarely involved in international wars. Instead, most of Africa's crises are internal in nature and, thus, could be easily handled without a national army. The few crises in Africa that cut across national boundaries, such as the Bakassi dispute between Cameroon and Nigeria or the Cabinda dispute between Angola and the Democratic Republic of Congo (former Zaire), have not escalated to an all-out war that would necessitate the use of the type of large armies that are now kept by many African countries.

The rarity of crossborder wars in Africa has forced African countries to look for other ways to use their military resources. For instance, the military is now widely used for police activities such as curbing civilian riots, mounting roadblocks to check criminal activities (as is the case in Nigeria), or as anti-drug squads. These activities are traditionally police activities. Thus, the fact that the armies are now being widely used for these activities is a duplication of activities since the police in the African countries are carrying out the same activities. Furthermore, the use of the army for police activities has been widely identified as one of the reasons that drive the army into carrying out military coups. In essence, the soldiers interpret their police activity as an acknowledgment that "internal security" (usually one of the announced reasons for military coups) constitutes part of the military mandate to protect the nation's citizens.

The case for abolishing African armies is quite persuasive, but there are other reasons why armies would be needed. Armies are necessary because crossborder wars cannot be easily predicted. The fact that such wars are rare at present does not guarantee that they will not be plentiful in the future. It is better to be prepared than to be sorry. However, the army must be kept away from carrying out military coups.

In the subsequent pages we will suggest four strategies that should be used simultaneously in preventing or at least rendering military coups unsuccessful. These four strategies are: (a) decentralizing national armies, (b) using an opposing military force to counter military coups, (c) using international sanc-

tions against coup plotters, and (d) educating military personnel and citizens on the ills of military coups. We will now discuss each of these strategies.

The first strategy is to decentralize the national army in each country by having the army commanded at the provincial, district, or state level with the elected national president still retaining the right to call up the army at the time of war. In the event that the elected president and his vice-president or speaker of the house are ill disposed, then these rights will be temporarily transferred to the provincial governors.

This strategy achieves two goals. First, a national coup becomes difficult since no part of the provincial army is linked to the other and, hence, over-throwing the president cannot ensure the soldiers that they would have support from other provincial army units. In fact, if a coup is to occur in such a situation, the provincial armies that are not involved in the coup would be constitutionally bound to defend the presidency and the country against a band of coup plotters.

The second goal is that the army remains a standing army. Decentralization of the army means that there is no longer a standing national army but at the provincial level the army remains a standing or permanent one. This distinction is important in order to recognize the difference between this suggested strategy and the armies of traditional African democracies. The armies of traditional African democracies were not standing armies either at the national or provincial levels, except for armies of some of the old African kingdoms.

There are some concerns about this strategy and a list of those concerns will be presented and discussed in the following paragraphs. One of the concerns that has already been addressed is the fact that soldiers would still be armed, which could still precipitate a military coup. We have addressed this scenario earlier by indicating the likelihood that other provincial armies would easily oppose a coup since the army is no longer a single unit or a national army where the overthrow of the president will suddenly give the coup plotters control over the national army. Other concerns are: (a) the probable use of the army to solve intra and interprovincial squabbles, (b) army training will not be standardized if the army were to become provincial, and (c) the probability that provincial armies are synonymous with a weak national military particularly at the time of war.

The first concern is based on the fact that intense ethnic rivalries exist in several African countries. Several military coups, as we have mentioned, have resulted from these ethnic rivalries. For example, the coup that eventually brought the then Lieutenant Colonel Yakubu Gowon to power in Nigeria in 1966 was an ethnic revenge coup that was staged by Northern Nigeria officers against an earlier Igbo coup led by Major Chukwuma Nzeogwu. The Northern coup eventually pushed Nigeria into a civil war as its national army broke into ethnic armies. Major Dimka's and then Major Gideon Orkar's attempted coups in Nigeria in 1976 and 1990, respectively, were also ethnically inspired. The 1997 Sierra Leone military coup led by Major John Koromah also had an ethnic

undertone when Koromah claimed that the coup was partly to redress the marginalization of the North that he said had begun after Tejan Kabbah was elected president. It is important to point out that coups are by no means the only examples of ethnic rivalries. There are several other examples of other major ethnic crises, including the mass massacres between the Hutus and the Tutsis in the 1990s in both Burundi and Rwanda, the eventual breakaway by Eritrea from Ethiopia, and the continued wrangle between Southern Sudan (predominantly black) and Northern Sudan (predominantly Amharic stock).

The major question is whether the provinces will use provincial armies to wage war against their neighbors.[4] Or whether provincial armies will be involved in intra-provincial crisis. We will begin by addressing the second part of the question. It is unlikely that a provincial army will be involved in an intra-provincial clash because such an army is commanded by the president and not by any of diverse groups that constitute a province. In addition, such an army is designed to fight for the country despite the fact that it is provincially based. The second reason is also why the likelihood of a provincial army being used for inter-provincial conflict is not great. Furthermore, an elected president is the only one who can order the provincial army to war. In the event that a provincial army becomes recalcitrant by discretionarily attacking another province, the elected national president will call up other provincial armies to quell the attack and mete out adequate punishment for the recalcitrant army. Such punishment could include a long period of disarmament, reduction of troop size, court marshaling, capital punishment for the leaders, and so on.

The second concern is that military training will suffer and become nonstandardized when a national military is decentralized. This is hardly a worthy concern because training is designed from a universally accepted military curriculum. Therefore, it is reasonable to expect the provincial armies to be similarly prepared for combat. In essence, the standardization of military training is more dependent on training curriculum than on the centralization of an army.

The most important concern is that a provincial army will weaken a nation's military strength in times of war. The assumption is that a decentralized or provincial army is so fragmented that it will be difficult to use it in a war that demands quick decisions and quick movement of men into critical positions. But is this necessarily true? One would think not because the president or his appointed temporary commandant of the army will provide the centralized control that is necessary to ensure that quick decisions and quick movement of men can be made at the time of war.[5] In fact, the suggested provincial army will not fare worse than today's national army at a time of war.

We have attempted to make the case that a provincial or decentralized military would go a long way in reducing the potential for military coups. But several concerns could be raised about provincial armies. Most of these concerns question the readiness for wars and the likely participation in intra-national squabbles. These concerns are, however, not necessarily valid. We have

pointed out that even when situations like intra-national crises arise, it is very likely that unwarranted military participation in such crises can be handled by mechanisms that accompany the decentralization of the military.

The second strategy for preventing military coups is the use of a counter-military force to discourage coup plotters. This strategy has come to the fore in the last few years and Onwumechili has written in support of this as far back as 1991. Ideas from the 1991 article as well as new ideas and other related literature will be used here to explain this strategy.

The use of a counter-military force is novel in Africa but there is sufficient precedence to account for its success. Decalo (1990) points out that French armies located in Gabon, the Ivory Coast, and Senegal have deterred would-be coup plotters in those countries. A multinational force made up of largely United States armed forces was called in to forcefully remove the Haitian military coup leaders in 1994 and reinstate the duly elected President Jean-Bertrand Aristide.[6] That Haitian experience will be discussed in more detail later in this chapter but it provides an example that the use of a counter-military force can be successful in sustaining democracy.

The use of an African continental force to solve crises has been increasingly advocated in recent years. But crises have been described as the usual civil wars and international wars that occur frequently in Africa. The continental force is simply a peacekeeping or peacemaking military unit that is in the line of the widely known peacekeeping units of the United Nations (UN). The United States most recently supported the idea of an African Crisis Response Force (ACRF) of about 10,000 troops and President Bill Clinton's government was reportedly willing to fund 50 percent of the cost of such a force (Lippman, 1996). Others such as Mazrui (1996) and Libya's military head of state, Colonel Muamar Kadhafi (cited by Dellali, 1997), have also supported the idea of an ACRF but Kadhafi has specifically urged Africans to reject the United States initiative in establishing such a military force. Instead, Kadhafi says that such a force must be initiated and implemented by Africans.

Ideas such as the establishment of an ACRF are reactions to problems rather than a search for proactive solutions. Military coups or similar upheavals sometimes precipitate the wars that the ACRF is designed to address. Hence, it is far more important to use a continental military force to counter military coups rather than allow the festering of crises to the point that a peacekeeping force like the ACRF becomes necessary.

The counter-military force that is necessary in Africa is, therefore, a continental force that is specifically designed to prevent military coups and is loyal to and commanded by the Organization for African Unity (OAU). This force will not have any allegiance to any of the African national governments and, thus, the soldiers who serve under this force are completely committed to the service of Africa until their retirement. This arrangement will prevent any tampering from the various African national governments. However, several questions remain especially in the areas of the force's compatibility with democ-

racy, sovereignty, and strength. In the next few paragraphs we shall address the questions that have just been raised about the continental force.

Luckham (1996) argues that "not all the techniques of civilian control they [scholars] enumerate—such as . . . the use of parallel security structures to counterbalance the regular forces—can be considered conducive to *democracy*" (p. 12). Luckham's argument is that the establishment of a counter-security structure often perpetuates authoritarian control and thus does not help democracy in any way. But let us be aware that Luckham writes specifically on spy and internal counter-security. He was not concerned with a continental force, which is new and is designed specifically to counter military coups. Although Luckham's points are well taken, those who stretch Luckham's argument by stating that democracy is sustained only by rationalization, morality, and debates are mistaken. They argue, for example, that war itself or the tools of war are anathema to democracy. Thus, a continental military force is incompatible to democracy. But the great wars of the twentieth century were primarily fought to sustain democracy and the great silent war, better known as the cold war, was also a war between democracy and anti-democratic forces.[7] Thus, wars and the tools of war are not unfamiliar or incompatible with democracy, nor can we disassociate them from the sustenance of democracy. Instead, we must be willing to use whichever tools are necessary in order to protect democracy.

The argument against the use of external force has also revolved against the meaning of sovereignty. Onwumechili (1991–92) alludes to concerns about national sovereignty when he argues that "a call for external solutions has often aroused cries of sovereign rape and the stampede of unprotected citizens" (p. 16). Jonah (1994) also points out that the OAU has a charter that precludes it from being involved in an internal affair of an African country. Military coups are often considered as internal affairs and, hence, the OAU or a continental force would be seen as a meddling force that threatens a nation's sovereignty and security.

But what does *sovereignty* mean? Onwumechili provides a unique way to understand the meaning of sovereignty as follows:

> Is *sovereignty* a military coup where one (military leader) determines the meaning of self-government and every other citizen is stomped by military decrees? Is *sovereignty* a cloak for dehumanization of citizens and the trampling of their basic and reasonable rights? No. One must carefully examine what *sovereignty* means to all Africans. *Sovereignty* must first and above all represent self government and intrinsic independence of government and ruler choice. It must be seen from the eyes and perspective of the very citizens whom it seeks to protect. *Sovereignty* or self government must mean inalienable choice for citizens . . . not have leaders forced upon them. Military coups negate that very choice. (p. 17)

It becomes easy to justify the use of force after one describes sovereignty as has been done above. The description clearly links sovereignty to citizens' rights to independence of thought and voting. It does not arrogate sovereignty rights to largely immeasurable rights of an inanimate object such as the nation. President Alpha Oumar Konare of Mali had reportedly told American Congressmen, during a visit to the United States, that "those who enjoy democracy had a duty to help others whose freedom is threatened" (US-African Peacekeeping . . . ," 4 March, 1998). Onwumechili (1991–92), Kpundeh (1992), and El Ayouty (1994) have all documented various rationales to support the use of force in protecting the rights of African citizens to choose their own leaders.

Others have questioned the strength of a continental force primarily because such a force will have to rely on countries to fund its budget, to contribute troops, and so on. Presently, African nations have shown a high rate of delinquency in paying their dues in support of the OAU. Funding is, therefore, a major concern and perhaps one that has to be resolved if a continental force is to be successful. In the next chapter on the OAU's role we will provide suggestions on how to improve funding at the continental level. These suggestions are meant to ensure that the continental force, if established, will become viable.

But funding addresses only one aspect of the fighting strength of the continental force. Another aspect is the fighting strength of such a force against coup plotters in such countries as Ghana, Egypt, Libya, and South Africa where the national armies are perceived as strong. First, the use of a continental African force to counter military coups is not an isolated strategy, and we have said as much in the earlier parts of this chapter. If the various African nations, including those with strong armies, were to adopt the decentralization or provincialization of the national army, then some of those provincial army units will provide the internal help that is needed to forestall military coups. In such cases, the continental force will also retain the rights to call up additional forces from other African national armies. These rights should strengthen the continental force against the African national armies. In addition, citizens who are the victims of a military coup are more likely to provide all kinds of support including moral, intelligence, and otherwise, to a continental force.

International sanction is the third strategy that should be used in discouraging military coups. We do not recommend that international sanctions be used in isolation because such a strategy has been found to be weak. Instead, it should always be used in conjunction with other strategies that have been mentioned in this chapter.

Sanctions are often economic and may include banning all imports and trade with the offending country. This is designed to create economic crises, which will force the nation's leaders to resign. In recent times, sanctions have been expanded to include travel embargo on members of the military regimes and their family, military training, freezing of overseas accounts, bans on participating in international meetings, restrictions on the sale of military hardware, and so on. The problem, however, is that sanctions tend to have far more impact

on the country's poor citizens than on the military rulers. In fact, in some cases, the military rulers remain unperturbed because they feel that they have not acquired rulership through public opinion and should not feel any remorse for public suffering that follows international sanctions.

The earliest known sanctions against an African military government was in 1963 after the Togolese army removed President Sylvanus Olimpio from power. African governments immediately ostracized the Togolese military government and called on it to hold national elections. These sanctions failed even though they were supposed to scare off future coup plotters, because they did not last and the military rulers were unperturbed. Since then, sanctions have been implemented against military regimes in Burundi, Gambia, Nigeria, and Sierra Leone without much success. In the case of Burundi, the neighboring states called off the sanctions after only a few months. The only successful sanction occurred against the military regime in Lesotho.

But international sanctions can have the desired effect when they are applied in conjunction with other measures such as the use of a continental counterforce. Sanctions can also be narrowly designed to impact the military rulers and their immediate families. In this way, the poor citizens will not suffer. Sanctions that affect military training, overseas travel for government officials, arms trade, and freezing of overseas accounts are designed to hurt the military rulers and not the citizens.

The final strategy is to educate both the military personnel and African citizens on the ills of military coups. This strategy has been rarely used in Africa but it was one of the strategies that were suggested by the 1992 USAID workshop participants on democracy (Kpundeh, 1992). This strategy assumes that educating both the military and civilian citizens of a country on the ills of military coups will ensure that military coup plotters receive little or no support after coups. Building such an opposition to military coups through education is crucial to consolidation of democracy itself because ideas like the use of a counterforce and international sanctions will need substantial internal support from the various African nations in order for them to be effective. The ultimate goal is also to convince soldiers that military coups are unacceptable and counterproductive.

Again, the four strategies discussed in this section should be used in conjunction with each other. The long-term effect will be to prevent military coups in Africa. In the next chapter we will discuss how those strategies have been used effectively to defeat military coups in Central African Republic, Lesotho, Sierra Leone, and in a non-African country (Haiti). The four strategies that we have described in the earlier section were not employed in Lesotho and Haiti. However, to ensure a successful defeat of military coup it remains advisable that all strategies are employed.

SUMMARY

This chapter has concentrated on finding solutions to military coups in Africa. It began by discussing previous attempts made by Africans to prevent military coups. Those attempts can be classified into five major categories: explicitly banning military coups through constitutional provisions; using two types of special units such as presidential guards and foreign troops or mercenaries to counter coup plotters; co-opting the military in some form into prominent positions in a democratically elected government; reducing the size of the army; and reducing the military budget. But none of those attempts has been successful because none of them ensures that guns are taken away from the military or that the gun power of the military is neutralized.

In addition, the chapter reviewed various obstacles that prevent the demise of military governance. These obstacles include the following: the military's control and willingness to use arms against citizens whom the soldiers are expected to protect; an increasing perception of the military as a reasonable alternative to a political career exhibited by an increasing number of bright university graduates choosing a military career; declining professionalism in the military, which has been exhibited in increasing indiscipline among the ranks and increasing disinterest in military activities shown by the top military officers; the lack of a long history of democratic culture in most African countries, which has resulted in some of the political elite providing opportunistic support to military coup leaders; and the global community's support of some of the military coups in Africa and its failures to be strongly united in condemning other coups or helping to prevent them.

The final part of the chapter focused on (a) whether armies are needed in Africa or not, and (b) several strategies that would be effective in preventing military coups. It was advised that the strategies be used in conjunction with each other. Those strategies are as follows: decentralizing or provincializing the national armies, using a continental military force to counter military coups, employing specially targeted international sanctions against coup plotters, and educating military personnel and citizens on the ills of military coups.

NOTES

1. Formerly Joseph Mobutu.
2. Please see Chapter 3, which details various reasons for military coups.
3. "Professionalism" means a total devotion to high standards of military practices that are held together by discipline, hierarchical command, and unshaken patriotism.
4. Provinces are often designed to represent a nation's ethnic diversity and, thus, they are more likely to be ethnic based in their composition.
5. This commandant will only be appointed at the time of war. The president shall have complete control of the army at peace times.

6. The Multinational Force (MNF) was not involved in combat with the Haitian army. Instead, the mere presence of the MNF on the shores of Haiti was enough to force the Haitian military coup leaders to negotiate and abdicate power to the duly elected government of President Jean-Bertrand Aristide.

7. The cold war was largely a series of proxy wars that were fought between the ideological forces of capitalism and socialism, but the underlying political struggle was one between Western democracy and socialist dictatorship.

6

Case Studies and the OAU's Role

This final chapter focuses on the implementation of some of the strategies that we have discussed in Chapter 5 and enumerates several roles that the Organization of African Unity (OAU) could play in ensuring that military coup is extinguished. Four countries, three in Africa (Central African Republic, Lesotho, and Sierra Leone) and the fourth outside Africa (Haiti), are used as case studies of how coup prevention strategies may work. Sierra Leone is also used to describe how a military regime could entrench itself when there is no concerted effort to oust such a regime.

CASE STUDIES OF HOW TO DEFEAT MILITARY COUPS

Haiti is used as a case study in this section because it is a country where a counterforce has been successfully employed. Though it is not an African country, it does remain a very good example of how a similar counterforce can be applied on African soil. The Lesotho case focuses on successful application of international sanctions. We now provide detailed discussions of all the cases. We begin with the two African countries—the Central African Republic and Sierra Leone—where force was used to defeat a military coup.

Central African Republic

An external force was used in the Central African Republic (CAR) to prevent the military from overthrowing a democratically elected government. We will analyze the immediate and remote causes of the military uprisings in the CAR and the successful use of a counterforce to quell the uprising.

CAR had been under military rule for several years. First, under military head of state, Jean-Bedel Bokassa and then under another military ruler, Andre Kolingba. In 1993, Kolingba was defeated in a democratic election by Ange Felix Patasse who won 53 percent of the votes.[1] The victory gave President Patasse a six-year term scheduled to expire in 1999.

Patasse's term began innocuously with France's 50 percent devaluation of the currencies of fourteen Francophone African nations, including the CAR, in January 1994. CAR's inflation immediately rose by 45 percent and the government fell behind in paying salaries of its employees, including the army. This led to mass demonstrations against Patasse's government and the country became unstable.

In 1996, the army mutinied several times. The most disturbing mutiny began on 18 May 1996 when a group of soldiers, numbering about 200 and led by Sergeant Cyriaque Souke, engaged the presidential guards in a battle. The mutineers claimed that the government owed them backpay. They arrested six government officials including the Army Chief of Staff, Colonel Maurice Regonessa. France used its 1,400 soldiers stationed in the country and other French troops from neighboring Gabon and Chad to counter the mutineers in a nine-day gun battle.

French intervention forced the mutineers to the negotiation table. Patasse remained president but he had to agree to an amnesty from prosecution for all the mutineers. This inability to prosecute eventually strengthened the hands of the mutineers.

In December 1996, the army mutinied for the fourth time ("Rebels attack . . . ," 2 December, 1996). Several people, including civilians, were killed. French troops defended key government positions and prevented a military takeover of power. The rebel troops were mainly from the Yakoma ethnic group that opposes the presidency of Ange Felix Patasse.[2]

France and several African countries stepped in and negotiated several agreements with the various parties—the government, opposition parties, the army, and several non-governmental organizations. Agreements include the establishment of a unity government, convening a national reconciliation conference, amnesty for offenses committed during the mutiny, adoption of a law providing pension and other benefits for former presidents of CAR, disarmament, dissolution of special security services, reduction of the size of the presidential guard, and stoppage of parliamentary audit of persons presumed to have embezzled public funds.

As part of the agreement, an Inter-African Mission to Monitor the Implementation of the Bangui Agreements (MISAB) was set up. Burkina Faso, Chad, Gabon, Mali, Senegal, and Togo contributed troops to MISAB.

In April of 1998, the United Nations sent a 14,000-soldier peacekeeping force to CAR under the command of Nigerian diplomat, Oluyemi Adeniji. Later on, several African countries provided troops to the United Nations force

that took over from MISAB. Canada and France also provided troops as well as logistical support.

Implementation of the peace agreements have been rocky. Several opposition parties declined to participate in the national reconciliation conference that ended with agreements by the participants not to attain power by any other means but through national elections. Initially, nine opposition parties quit the national unity government in protest against the domination of the president's Movement for the Liberation of Central African People (MLPC) and allied parties in the unity government. However, opposition party representatives returned to the unity government in August 1997 after assurances from the president.

CAR would have been under military control or embroiled in a civil war without the intervention of French forces and later MISAB and United Nations forces. Though the problems in CAR have not been fully solved, a semblance of a democratic government has been maintained through the successful use of an external counter force. Democratic presidential elections were still on schedule for 1999.

Sierra Leone

Sierra Leone is an example of an African country where a counterforce successfully removed an entrenched group of military coup makers and returned the elected president, Tejan Kabbah, to power. We will focus our attention on the success of this counterforce. In a subsequent section of this chapter we revisit the Sierra Leone case to point out how a lack of concerted effort, in the early days of the military coup, had entrenched the coup makers.

Sierra Leone is one of those African countries where military coups have been frequent (see Chapter 3). In 1996, Sierra Leone had just returned to democratic rule after the military rulership of Captain Valentine Strasser. There seemed to be peace after years of terrorism from the Revolutionary United Front (RUF). That peace, however, was achieved at some cost. Not only were armed RUF forces driven into the bushes, but new groups of individuals began to bear arms. The new groups were a loosely knit militia (Kamajors), which was formed when several hunters armed themselves and banded together under the encouragement of the newly elected President Tejan Kabbah to curtail the terrorism of the RUF. The regular Sierra Leone army had been largely ineffective against the RUF. These soldiers were upset by the government's support of the militia which the army considered a rival force. The result was several attempts to overthrow Kabbah; Major Johny Paul Koromah was imprisoned after one of those attempts.

On 25 May 1997, the military attempts became successful and President Kabbah fled from Sierra Leone. Many Sierra Leonians subsequently lost their lives. Major Johny Paul Koromah was released from prison on the day of the coup and was named president.

The international community condemned the coup and so did many Sierra Leonians including the nation's legislators. Koromah, finding himself and his clique isolated, invited the RUF to join the army to form a pariah government. This was to create intractable problems in the future but Koromah was fishing desperately for support, which he could not get from any country.

Soon after the coup, the coup makers begun to entrench themselves at the helm of government affairs. They had set up an administrative structure and had begun to stockpile arms that were supplied by some East European nations. In addition, there were rumors of support from both Burkina Faso and Liberia. Large number of Sierra Leonians fled the country, while others held off support for the coup makers by refusing to go to work. However, the effects of international sanctions had begun to wane. It was a matter of time before the coup makers' public relations efforts begin to payoff and the Sierra Leonians return to work. In a subsequent section we will learn how this situation almost entrenched the coup makers in power.

Fortunately, the West African military force (ECOMOG) decided to launch an offensive against the coup makers on 5 February 1998. ECOMOG had mostly defended the few positions it occupied during the early days after the coup. ECOMOG presented three major reasons for the wait before the February offensive. First, ECOMOG wanted to give the agreement a chance to be implemented.[3] Second, an offensive required agreement among the Committee representing the West African states. Third, the ECOMOG was expanding its forces. We will address these reasons in order to show that they were not enough to prevent an offensive from being launched. In addition, some of those reasons were eventually ignored when the ECOMOG offensive was launched.

The coup makers were not interested in meeting their own end of the six-point agreement that they had signed in Conakry, Guinea with the representatives of the Economic Community for West African States (ECOWAS) in October 1997. None of the points of the agreement had been fully implemented. Two major points—cessation of hostilities and disarmament of combatants—were ignored. These will be discussed in more detail in a later section of this chapter.

Secondly, some ECOWAS countries that were involved in the peace negotiations were adamant against the use of force. For example, Ghana was publicly against the use of force against the coup makers. This position remained unchanged even after the coup makers refused to implement the provisions of the six-point agreement.

Finally, ECOMOG had long built up enough force to forcibly remove the coup makers from power. This force was in place within a few weeks after the military coup when a large number of Nigerian troops and ammunition were shipped into Freetown. In any case, the Sierra Leone coup makers were lightly armed and their Revolutionary United Front (RUF) counterpart could best be regarded as a ragtag army. Thus, the claim that the wait was necessary to build up a huge counterforce was not accurate.

Apparently, all these reasons were ignored in February 1998 when the ECOMOG troops began an offensive against the coup makers. At this time, the sanctions were not as effective as predicted and the coup makers were not implementing the six-point agreement. Ghana had not yet publicly supported the use of force.

The ECOMOG military, which was largely the Nigerian army, began the February 5 offensive by claiming that they were defending their positions against unprovoked attacks by the coup makers. But brief gun battles between the ECOMOG troops and the coup makers had been frequent after the coup. Thus, the 5 February battle did not raise eyebrows. However, ECOMOG did not just ward off attacks; they went on the offensive. Ultimately, the justification that ECOMOG was defending its position prevented criticisms from the anti-force countries such as Ghana.

The offensive routed the poorly organized and lightly armed coup makers. After a one-week battle, the coup makers were driven out of Freetown and many of them were arrested. About twenty top officials of the military junta were arrested as they attempted to land at Liberia's Roberts International Airport in two helicopters. Several other coup sympathisers were arrested by ECOMOG soldiers and the Sierra Leonian Militia, Kamajors, during the liberation of other Sierra Leonian cities and villages.

The coup makers killed, raped, and burnt as they fled from one city or village to the other. These atrocities that had first surfaced during the May 1997 coup was the reason why many observers opposed immunities that had been granted to the coup makers in the six-point agreement. Fortunately, the reinstalled President Tejan Kabbah indicated that the agreement was not enforceable because the coup makers had initially disregarded agreement provisions.[4]

There are several lessons from the success of the ECOMOG counterforce: (a) military coups are best countered with an overwhelming force, (b) widespread internal opposition to a military coup is helpful, and (c) quick reactions to military coups lead to a more peaceful and stable nation.

The reason for unsuccessful coups in Africa is because coup makers fail to outgun the presidential guard or the loyal national army. Rarely have coups failed because of other reasons. The failure of the Sierra Leone coup supports this theory because the coup makers were outgunned from power. However, an external force was needed in Sierra Leone's case. More importantly, the success of ECOMOG is assuring because very often the national army carries out the coup making and, thus, there is no armed group to defend the country's democracy. Hence, external forces become the only alternative counterforce against the coup makers.

Citizen opposition of the coup makers in Sierra Leone was crucial to the return of democracy. Many Sierra Leonians refused to return to work and others fled the country rather than serve under the coup makers.[5] This lack of support made the coup makers uncomfortable and it frustrated them into violent acts against the citizens. This led to the widespread dislike of the coup makers.

This was the perfect environment that ECOMOG needed for the routing of the coup makers. If this was not the case, incidental deaths of Sierra Leonians during ECOMOG offensive could easily have pitted the people against ECOMOG. Instead, the Sierra Leonians accepted incidental deaths as a necessary price for the return to democracy.

It took almost eight months to defeat the coup makers and this time should be considered long. Comment on this delay is in the next section of this chapter. However, it is important to point out that the defeat was swift as soon as the ECOMOG troops embarked on the offensive. Swiftness is critical because there are many examples where slow reaction by the OAU or the UN has created longlasting crises in Africa. Liberia and Somalia represent cases where armed uprisings, similar to the usual African military coups, were left to fester. In Liberia's case, it took thousands of dead Liberians and seven years before peace was achieved. Somalia remained contested as of 1998 or seven years after the crisis of leadership began following the fall of late military leader Siad Barre's government. Sierra Leone was headed toward the same type of crises because the coup makers and the RUF were strongly opposed by the Kamajors. The result would have been an enduring civil war with many more Sierra Leonians killed.

Lesotho

Lesotho is a small kingdom located north east of South Africa. It has been independent from British rule since 1966 when it became a constitutional monarchy with an elected parliament. We have chosen to discuss the defeat of a military coup in Lesotho because it remains one of the few such defeat of an internally successful coup in Africa. Our discussion will not only focus on events immediately surrounding the coup as we had done in our discussion of the Sierra Leone coup. Instead, we will delve into Lesotho's history of governance and military interventions to help us better understand the context of the 1994 military coup, which was defeated through external help.

Lesotho has a recent history of military coups despite its long history of monarchical rule, which began in 1818 under Moshoeshoe I. The first king after independence was King Moshoeshoe II, who was an Oxford University–trained lawyer. Leabua Jonathan of the Basutoland National Party (BNP) was the first prime minister. The military was not involved in Lesotho politics till 1970 when a bloody coup reinstated Jonathan whose BNP had lost the general election to the Basutoland Congress Party (BCP). King Moshoeshoe II briefly fled to the Netherlands after refusing to endorse a state of emergency that was ordered by Jonathan. Then in 1986, apartheid South Africa established a twelve-day economic blockade of Lesotho and then backed the overthrow of Jonathan's government by Major General Justin Metsing Lekhanya (Morna, 1991).[6]

Lekhanya was later charged with corruption when in 1988 he paid an equivalence of only $75 for 20 percent share of a Taiwanese business that was actually worth about $87,000. The reasons for the absurd deal became apparent when Lekhanya fired an Italian company at a national stone quarry for trumped-up charges and replaced the company with the same Taiwanese business in which he had bought the 20 percent shares. He promptly issued a quarry license to the Taiwanese business. The Italian owner of the fired company sued, but Lekhanya's government responded by asking the owner to leave Lesotho within three weeks even though the Italian owner had lived in Lesotho for fourteen years and was married to a Lesotho woman. In addition to this apparent corruption and high-handedness, Lekhanya had admittedly murdered a student.[7] The king, Moshoeshoe II, pressured Lekhanya to resign but, instead, Lekhanya exiled the king to London in February of 1990 and dismissed four senior military officials (two were related to the king) who were also considered unfriendly to Lekhanya. The king was replaced reluctantly by his son, David Bereng Seeiso Mohato, who became King Letsie III. A year later, Lekhanya was himself replaced in a coup (*Time*, 1991) by Colonel Elias Remaema who handed over power in April of 1993 to a democratically elected government of Prime Minister Ntsu Mokhehle (BCP).[8]

A year later, in 1994, Letsie III engineered a military coup hoping to oust Mokhehle's government in an attempt to force his father's return and reinstatement. Military officer Hae Phoofolo became chair of the military council under Letsie III. The military coup was widely denounced, especially by the neighboring Southern African states and the OAU. There was an impasse and South Africa led negotiations to urge the military to step down. Eventually, a deal was peacefully brokered but economic sanctions and the threat of external military force were used. The deal enabled King Moshoeshoe II to return to power and Ntsu Mokhehle to retain his prime minister position while Phoofolo and his military council stepped down.[9] Pope (1995) describes the situation as follows "[South African President] Mandela played a key role in forcing Lesotho's factions to compromise instead of a fight . . . political analysts believe the enforcement of a smooth transfer of power by a mix of diplomacy and military threats was the first sign of Mandela's government acting as a visible force for good on the Southern tip of the African continent" (p. H2).

The reinstatement of Mokhehle's BCP government and the defeat of Phoofolo's military coup in 1994 have gone a long way in consolidating Lesotho's democracy. In 1996, *Africa Demos* rated Lesotho at seven out of eight possible points in its efforts to achieve democratic government. This means, "the legitimacy of the (Lesotho) government as well as the constitutional democratic systems generally is accepted. Challenges to particular policies, such as economic reforms and wage policies, do not automatically indicate a rejection of the democratic systems" (*Africa Demos*, 1996, p. 27).

Haiti

Haiti remains a shining example of how military intervention can be used to successfully restore a democratic government and remove an illegal military government. We have not used Paraguay as an example because military intervention was not actually used in Paraguay to prevent a looming 1996 coup, which was eventually stopped in a peaceful negotiation between the government of President Juan Carlos Wasmosy and the recalcitrant army commander, Lino Cesar Oviedo.[10] In Haiti's case, an intervention from an outside military force was already underway when the coup leaders agreed to relinquish power and move into exile.

Haiti had been a politically troubled country since the end of Duvalier family dictatorship in 1986. In December of 1990, Haiti democratically elected Reverend Jean-Bertrand Aristide president who began his governance in February of the following year. Seven months later the military, led by General Raoul Cedras, overthrew Aristide in a military coup. The military refused to return power to the democratically elected government of Aristide despite international condemnation of the coup. Over 3,000 Haitians were estimated to have been murdered by the army or its agents during the three years of military dictatorship that followed. Several thousands of Haitians also fled from Haiti during the repressive military rule.

The United Nations (UN) and the Organization of American States (OAS) put pressure on the army to hand over power to the democratically elected government but this was not successful. Instead, the army went ahead to announce a plan to hold new Haitian elections. The OAS imposed a diplomatic and economic isolation of the Haitian military government in late 1991. These sanctions later included the freezing of Haitian financial assets. None of these sanctions brought the military to the negotiating table until June of 1993 when the OAS added an oil and arms embargo against Haiti. The United States provided ships that formed a tight condon around Haiti to prevent any violations of the imposed embargo.

In July of 1993 both President Aristide and General Raoul Cedras signed a New York City agreement that focused on steps to return Aristide to power in October of 1994. It turned out that Cedras and his men had used the agreement to broker relaxation of international sanctions. The United Nations envoy found that the army had continued repression and had not shown any good-faith plan to abide by the New York agreement. For example, the army generated disturbances to prevent the deployment of United Nations Mission in Haiti (UNMIH), which was one of the key agreements. All these acts led to the re-imposition and tightening of international sanctions.

The sanctions, however, proved ineffective. A tighter condon of United States ships was imposed and steps were taken to improve enforcement along the border between Haiti and the Dominican Republic. Tension mounted in Haiti and the number of killings rose. In July of 1994, the UN ordered the es-

tablishment of a Multinational Force (MNF) to restore Haitian democratic rule by all necessary means. The United States took the lead and formed an MNF to carry out the UN mandate.[11] Simultaneously, President Bill Clinton of the United States sent former United States President Jimmy Carter to broker last-minute negotiations with the Haitian military. Carter's negotiations began on 17 September. MNF troops waited offshore while the Haitian negotiations were going on. The threat of MNF troops persuaded Cedras and other top military leaders to leave Haiti and President Aristide resumed his functions as President on 15 October.[12] The MNF troops entered Haiti on 19 September and went ahead to search and seize weapons caches to protect the citizens. The MNF was eventually replaced by a highly streamlined UN peacekeeping mission with only 600 troops under Canadian command by the end of 1996.

Sierra Leone: Entrenching the Military Through a Lack of Concerted Efforts

The discussion of military entrenchment in Sierra Leone will focus on the first few months of the 1997 military coup. This focus is designed to demon-strate how a lack of concerted efforts against a military regime could lead to entrenching of the regime. It is important that this be discussed because some analysts have already pointed to the Sierra Leone coup to support a thesis of why force may not be successful in preventing military coups. We clearly be-lieve the contrary, which is that force serves as an effective solution to military coups. It is in this light that we will discuss the Sierra Leone case in detail and point to ways in which the early use of force against the coup leaders differed from the suggested and effective ways this book proposes.

In the first few days of the coup, the Nigerian forces under the flag of the West African military forces (ECOMOG) began to bombard the coup lead-ers in an attempt to dislodge them. These early attempts failed for two primary reasons: (a) the use of force was half-hearted, and (b) the West African leaders openly disagreed on their approach to the crisis.

It was clear from the start that the Nigerians did not have the over-whelming firepower, atleast a few weeks after the Koromah coup. Furthermore, they proceeded without the persistence that was necessary to dislodge the coup leaders. Instead, varying numbers of Nigerian troops and equipment were shipped into Sierra Leone from time to time to intimidate the coup leaders. To make things worse, the Nigerian aggression was not pursued with any consis-tency as the coup leaders further entrenched themselves. It is surprising that something as important as the control of the Sierra Leone broadcasting media was not approached at this early stage by the Nigerians. Instead, the coup lead-ers used the media to disseminate messages with the sole intent of building up hatred against the Nigerians.

Furthermore, the West African leaders disagreed on the early approach to the Sierra Leone crisis. While Nigeria pushed forward with the use of force to resolve the crisis, Ghana openly called for negotiations and denounced Nigeria's actions. This disagreement was partly responsible for Nigeria's early shelling of the coup leaders and then abruptly calling off their actions when Ghana opened negotiations with the military junta.

Ghana's approach won in those early weeks. A Committee of Four on Sierra Leone—Ghana, Guinea, the Ivory Coast, and Nigeria—was quickly formed.[13] They met along with twelve of Koroma's delegates as well as with representatives of the OAU and ECOWAS secretariats. Shockingly, Koromah announced that his regime would stay in power till 2001 as the committee was meeting in Abidjan. Thus, the negotiations failed and the West African community was forced to announce an economic blockade of Sierra Leone. The UN announced a parallel economic sanction against the regime.

The coup leaders endured the blockade for a while and would not have been forced to resume negotiations if the ECOMOG forces had not embarked on a few days of persistent air raids in early October. After all, the coup leaders and the RUF were desperately recruiting youths (some of them under age) to shore up their positions in Freetown. The ECOMOG air raids forced the coup leaders to negotiate and sign a six-point agreement on 23 October 1997 in Conakry, Guinea. The agreement included full immunities for the coup leaders.

The first point on the agreement, which called for the immediate cessation of hostilities, was respected up till the second week of November when the Kamajors clashed with the army in eastern Sierra Leone. Meanwhile, the coup leaders refused to abide by the second point of the agreement, which called for the disarmament of the combatants. Instead, the coup leaders began to make further demands including: (a) the Nigerian troops had to be disarmed, (b) the national army of Sierra Leone could not be disarmed, (c) the RUF leader Foday Sankoh must be released immediately from Nigeria, and (d) the army would not leave power unless fresh elections were held. All these demands were in clear violation of the six-point agreement to which all the parties had signed on 23 October in Guinea.

The intransigence of the coup leaders could be linked to the following points: (a) the failure of economic sanctions, and (b) the weak agreement that was signed with the coup leaders. The democratic forces had, however, made progress in one front. That is to educate the citizens of Sierra Leone on the ills of military rule and the need to restore democracy by all necessary means. They did this by finally establishing a pro-democracy radio station, 98.1, from which Sierra Leonians could be reached.

The failure of economic sanctions was not totally unexpected if one considers that sanctions often take a long time to take effect. The West African forces diligently enforced the blockade but whatever food came in was commandeered by the coup leaders.

The chances of a quick solution to the crisis were not helped by the negotiated agreement. First, there were virtually no consequences for the coup leaders who had killed hundreds of Sierra Leone citizens, raped, and looted the city. Instead, they received absolute immunities, which meant that they could walk away scot-free. To make matters worse, the agreement did not make any provisions for the use of force in the event that the agreement collapsed. Without this precaution, the agreement collapsed without any immediate consequence for the coup leaders.

SUMMARIZING THE CASES

The above cases have provided us with detailed analyses of how coup prevention strategies have both succeeded and failed. Success was achieved with force in both the Central African Republic and Sierra Leone and with the threat of force in Haiti and Lesotho. The threat was real and immediate in both Haiti and Lesotho; particularly in Haiti. The strategies that were used in the early days of the Sierra Leone crisis failed because the external forces lacked a unified vision on how best to solve the problem and the subsequent agreement signed by the combatants was weak. In the next section, we will discuss the OAU's role in preventing military coups.

THE ROLE OF THE OAU

The Organization of African Unity (OAU) has to play a major role in consolidating democracy on the African continent. After all, the OAU is the most powerful political organization that affects all of Africa, and it has much at stake in protecting the new democracies of Africa or else it will remain a toothless bulldog that continues to bark for democracy but does little else to protect democracy.

In the following paragraphs, we shall begin to discuss how the OAU should proceed in asserting itself on the continent. Thus, our main focus from hereon is to (a) identify the main obstacles for the OAU as it plans to assert itself, (b) point out what the OAU is already doing to help consolidate democracy on the continent, and (c) what the OAU should add to its agenda to be sure that African democracies are consolidated.

Obstacles

The OAU has various obstacles that will impede any efforts to consolidate democracy on the continent. We will focus on four such obstacles in the following paragraphs.

The organization's own non-interference clause is the first and perhaps the most often mentioned obstacle.[14] The non-interference clause was intended to prevent countries from interfering in the internal affairs of other countries, especially at the time when most of the countries were just emerging from independence and were fledgling. Thus, it was very important that each country was not only politically independent from the erstwhile colonial master but also independent from the machinations of neighboring countries that might harbor intents to redraw colonial boundaries. Jonah (1994) has added that the clause was also justified because: "prior to the establishment of the OAU in 1963, there were a number of allegations by the African states that the neighbors of African states were involved in the sponsorship of various coups d'etat" (p. 9).

But the clause has done little to prevent African states from interfering in neighboring countries. Recently, the Angolan military helped military strongman Denis Sassou-Nguesso to overthrow the democratically elected President Pascal Lissuoba in the Republic of Congo (Brazzaville). The Angolans justified their actions by pointing to Lissuoba's help for the rebel National Union for the Total Independence of Angola (UNITA). Discussions of the clause have now gone beyond its effectiveness or ineffectiveness. People have gone further to shroud the clause with the myth of it being the OAU itself and have attributed OAU's survival to the clause. It is not argued here that the clause has not been somewhat effective. But it has served its purpose and it is time to do without it, at least in certain respects such as protecting people's rights to electoral choices. OAU's often lethargic reaction to military coups and crises in Africa can be immediately solved with the removal of the non-interference clause. It will suddenly free the OAU to the point that it can militarily or otherwise back its own words in support of democracies all over the continent.

Moreover, the presence of the clause has helped to create additional obstacles for the OAU. One such obstacle is the periodic interference from foreign governments, that is, those outside Africa. This situation is more of a reminder of the colonial days than would be the case with any interference from an African country. France, particularly, has used its forces to intervene in various crises that have arisen in its former colonies. We have listed this situation as an obstacle because countries such as France are essentially doing what the OAU should be doing and these non-African countries have taken these initiatives without OAU's permission. Invariably, this limits OAU's powers or its clout among member countries and, thus, presents an obstacle to OAU's vision of maintaining the position of the continent's primary political arbiter.

A third obstacle is that certain African countries are increasingly perceived as wielding political power that is equivalent to if not greater than those of the OAU. These countries include Egypt, Libya, Nigeria, and South Africa. These countries have enormous political influence on what goes on in the continent. South Africa, particularly, has the resources to challenge the rest of Africa as well as the OAU. One must, however, point out that OAU's linkages with

international organizations such as the United Nations is enough to bring any of the four countries under OAU's control.

OAU's biggest obstacle is the perennial lack of funds. Many member countries are in perpetual debt and Gaye (1997) has reported that such debts have starved the OAU of a possible $54 million and $47 million in 1996 and 1997, respectively. Many OAU projects are left on the drawing table because of this deplorable situation and unfortunately, this looms as a major obstacle to the organization's ability to prevent or defeat military coups on the continent. Fortunately, the OAU has the ability to attract funds from outside Africa if it makes a genuine commitment to an effective control of military coups and crises. We know, for instance, that the United States has provided a large part of the funds used in sponsoring West African military forces who were in Liberia to quell the long-lasting crises that arose among several warring armies.

OAU's Present Initiatives

The OAU has made significant progress despite the obstacles we had outlined in the previous section. The only problem is that the OAU has made this progress by relying on ad hoc decisions rather than on more permanent policies. We will only list a few of those areas where the OAU has made progress. These areas include: explicit support for democratic governments, condemnation of military coups, use of conflict management mechanisms, barring of unrecognized governments from attending its summit, and the imposition of economic sanctions. We will now discuss each of these areas in more detail.

First, the OAU has, in various ways, explicitly supported democracy on the continent. This was not always the case. *Democracy* was not a choice word in OAU's chambers when autocratic and military governments dominated its membership. But the organization has provided leadership and encouragement as more of its member countries have turned toward democracy. For instance, OAU now participates in observing and monitoring elections all over the continent.

In addition, the OAU now openly condemns military coups in various African countries. For example, OAU members unanimously condemned the May 1997 military coup in Sierra Leone and several members went further by expressing support for using force to restore the country's democracy. A Cable News Network (CNN) story on the Internet ("African leaders pledge . . . ," 1997) points out that: "The 53-nation OAU has had limited success in the past in trying to influence continental politics. But its condemnation of the [Sierra Leone] coup as a power tool is part of a broader push by African countries to resolve problems without outside influence." OAU's decision to openly condemn military coups is a significant change and demonstrates a strong commitment to democracy in the continent. The next step is to take effective actions against military coups.

In the interim, the organization has set up a conflict management unit to deal with various types of crises on the continent, including military coups.[15] The unit, known as the Central Organ for the OAU Mechanism on Conflict Prevention, Management, and Resolution, comprises of some African ambassadors who represent their countries at the OAU in Ethiopia. In addition, the United Nations, working with the OAU, has established a Conflict Resolution Center in Africa (i.e., the UN Regional Center for Peace and Disarmament in Africa), which is based in Togo. The Center in Togo, is however, largely ineffective because of the perennial lack of funds, which goes as far back as 1986 when the center was established. The Central Organ, however, has achieved various successes in Angola, Liberia, and the Great Lakes region and it recently received funding from the United Nations Development Fund (UNDP) to help the Organ to establish an effective early warning system.

The OAU has also barred representatives of unrecognized governments from attending its summit. This is a tactics that is increasingly used by international groups. The Commonwealth states meeting in 1997, for example, announced that it would henceforth bar military regimes from its council. The OAU, therefore, has a lot of support in this regard, as demonstrated when it barred representatives of the Sierra Leone military government from attending the 1997 OAU summit, which was held in Harare, Zimbabwe. Members of the OAU unanimously and unequivocally announced that the ousted democratic Sierra Leone government of President Ahmed Tejan Kabbah would be the only one that could send representatives to the summit.

Furthermore, the OAU has used economic sanctions as another means of stopping military coups. This strategy has, however, yielded mixed results according to the *Panafrican News Agency* ("OAU draws measures . . . ," 1997) which wrote that, "Previous efforts to isolate the [military] regimes, institute sanctions and economic embargoes to force restoration of democracy have only been successful in Lesotho. Similar efforts flopped in Burundi, Gambia, and Nigeria."

The lack of consequences for members who violate the terms of the sanctions is one of the reasons for failure in this area. What the OAU needs to do is to strengthen its implementation strategies for imposing sanctions by backing sanctions with consequences that will earn the respect of member states. In the next section, we will outline various strategies that the OAU will do well to apply in order to quell the threat of military coups in the continent and to consolidate democracy.

TOWARDS CONSOLIDATING AFRICAN DEMOCRACIES

Already, we have noted the efforts that are made by the OAU to consolidate fledgling democracies in the continent. Most of those efforts have been admirable, but it is clear that additional effort and strategies should be applied to

extinguish all threats to democracy in the continent, with particular attention to the continuing threat of military coups. In the previous section we noted the failures of economic sanctions and suggested ways to improve the effects of sanctions particularly in the area of implementation. In addition, there would be very few violations if the OAU would establish a force that could patrol the borders and air space around a sanctioned country. This has been the case in Sierra Leone where Nigerian troops under the umbrella of the West African military force (otherwise known as ECOMOG) effectively shut down all economic entrance into Sierra Leone and frustrated the isolated military regime of Johny Paul Koromah of Sierra Leone.

In addition, however, the OAU needs to make it an explicit policy to ban military regimes from its membership, establish a military coup-quelling force, raise funds and support for this military program, and embark on a massive education of Africans on the issues of democracy and OAU's role in ensuring it.

Presently, the OAU does not have an official policy that bars leaders of military regimes from attending the OAU summit for African leaders. The recent successful barring of Sierra Leone military leaders from the summit was an ad hoc decision. Other military regimes, for example Nigeria, under General Sanni Abacha, continue to attend the OAU summit. The OAU needs to make it a policy that all military regimes become exempt from attending the organization's summit. This will go a long way in crystallizing OAU's commitment toward democratic governance all over the continent. It also sends the message that the OAU and its member countries will not recognize military governance in Africa. This will be a giant step and one that will go a long way in discouraging military coups in the continent.

The most important task for the OAU is to establish a military force that will have the capability to prevent or extinguish military coups in any part of the continent. This is different from the African peacekeeping force consisting of subregional brigades that has been recommended by the OAU ("OAU wants subregional brigades . . . ," 1998). What is recommended here goes beyond mere peacekeeping. We recommend an armed force for the maintenance of democracy. The use of military force to restore democracy is often scoffed at because to mention the concept of force in the same breadth as democracy seems at variance or an anathema. It is instructive, however, to learn that at times unusual means become necessary to maintain or to restore democracy and to restore the inalienable rights of citizens. One such time is when a military junta decides to override the rights of its own citizens. Surely, unarmed citizens are no match for the heavily armed military and, thus, are essentially helpless in any attempt to restore democracy. This is where the OAU's role begins. The OAU should make it a role to protect the democratic rights of such citizens even if it means having to use an armed force.

Fortunately, the concept of a continental armed force is not as alien as it could have been a decade ago. El-Ayouty reminds us that armed intervention is now widely acceptable. He writes:

> First, there is the sanctity of domestic jurisdiction.[16] It draws its historic roots from the long and arduous struggle for independence. But domestic jurisdiction is progressively losing ground to the exigencies of intranational ethnic strife. . . . The doctrine of humanitarian intervention has in fact become integrated into international customary law, as attested to by the *use of armed force* to protect human rights and save humans in Bosnia Herzegovina, northern and southern Iraq, Somalia, and Macedonia. (p. 186)

The United States of America recently proposed an African Crisis Reaction Force (ACRF), to serve peacekeeping duties in various crisis sites in the continent (Onuora, 1997). Several African countries have signified their interests in participating in a future continental force. Already, several countries participate in joint military maneuvers such as the type conducted among Benin Republic, Burkina Faso, and Togo in March of 1997. Those maneuvers included France, with both Ghana and Nigeria sending observers. Williams (1997) also reports that 1000 troops from eight African countries—Lesotho, Malawi, Mozambique, Namibia, South Africa, Swaziland, Tanzania, and Zimbabwe—participated in a peacekeeping training exercise under British and United Nations assistance. In the summer of 1997, the United States sent military instructors to train forces from Ethiopia, Ghana, Malawi, Mali, Senegal, Tunisia, and Uganda for a period of two months. France sponsored another training exercise, which will involve hundreds of troops from Mali, Mauritania, and Senegal in early 1998. All these forces would be part of the U.S.-proposed African peacekeeping force or ACRF. An African force had been advocated by the late Kwame Nkrumah of Ghana, who had called for a pan-African High Command that would be used to confront various emergencies all over the continent. Today, many Africans including Libya's Colonel Moammar Khadafi and celebrated African scholar, Professor Ali Mazrui, support such a force but they do not want the force to be controlled by non-Africans. But the modality of who controls the force is only a question of process, which does not deny the need for a continent-wide force.

A focus on establishing a military force that will be used only to counter crisis does not deal with the major governance problem in the continent. In fact, such a proposal denies the problems of military coups in the continent. Preventing military coups will legitimize democracies and this will create a climate that would largely prevent the types of crises that are now widespread in Africa. Therefore, the essential task for a continent-wide military force should include the prevention and extinction of military coups.

An African force that is established, at least partly, to quell military coups should have its central command under the offices of the OAU secretary-general. It should also be a permanent standing force that owes its allegiance to the OAU rather than to the various OAU member states. The various divisions of such a force should be strategically located at various points in Africa in such a way as to enable the force to move swiftly. In addition, the OAU should reserve the right to raise additional support (both men and equipment) from member countries when it is desired.

The maintenance of such a huge force would require substantial funds. We already indicated that the OAU has had perennial problems with raising funds. However, there are reasons to believe that substantial funds can be raised for a viable continental force. First, there are various sources of funds from outside the continent. The United Nations currently spends a huge amount of money to maintain peacekeeping forces in Africa. They did this recently in Somalia. The United Nations will gladly fund an African-initiated force rather than assume the burden of raising such a force on its own. The United States of America has stated its willingness to provide a large part of funds that would be needed to create an African force. Furthermore, France provided $1 million to the OAU's Central Organ for conflict prevention and management in 1997 and planned to give at least an additional $30 million in 1998 to train and equip African peacekeeping troops (Hagos, 1997).

Multinational companies that do business in Africa may also be asked to contribute funds. These companies are interested in African markets, which are largely untapped compared to the nearly saturated business markets in North America and Western Europe. The companies will be more than willing to contribute funds in support of African democracies because the state of instability, particularly as caused by military coups, often diminishes the level of business practiced by these multinationals in Africa. For example, military regimes often rule by decrees, which encourage sudden and draconian decisions that adversely affect business. In contrast, democratic governments are guided by a stable constitution, which encourages a stable business climate. Thus, multinational companies would support effective strategies that are used to consolidate democracies and ensure a stable business climate.

Ideally, therefore, Africa will have a substantial amount of the funds it needs to maintain a continent-wide army. Internally, OAU's member countries could also be required to help out with funds and needed military equipment.

Some may argue that these suggestions violate national sovereignty in Africa. It is important to respond to such an argument by considering two points. One, "sovereignty" refers to an independent state that makes independent decisions. In a democratic state this would refer to the citizens having the independence to make their own governing decisions. A military coup denies the sovereign rights of the citizens and, therefore, one has to see an OAU intervention as a necessary move to restore those sovereign rights. Two, the OAU has a mandate to protect the rights of all Africans. Africa cannot continue to rely

on non-African international groups and agencies to send foreign armies to protect Africans. Hence, the OAU should be far more aggressive in protecting African rights than it has been in the past. The suggestions we have outlined are ways of making the OAU far more aggressive and effective.

Furthermore, it will be necessary for the OAU to launch a massive education of Africans on the virtues of democracy as well as the OAU's role in ensuring democracy. This should precede the establishment of a continent-wide force. The education of Africans is critical in order to pave the way for the acceptance of OAU's use of military force when it becomes necessary. Military leaders who force their way to national governance may easily misinform citizens about the role of an impending use of the OAU force to remove them (the military) but this will only be successful when the people are unaware of OAU's role in ensuring democracy. Therefore, it is important that citizens are widely educated on OAU's role.

The African mass media has a major role here. These media houses could spearhead the mass education of the citizens. This is not a new charge for a democratic institution such as the mass media. After all, the African mass media undertook such leadership role as a vanguard in the fight for independence. The fight for democratic consolidation is very similar. In the earlier chapters, we identified the mass media as one of the democratic institutions that need to be free in order to help the consolidation of democracy in Africa. Thus, the mass media's participation in educating Africans on democracy and OAU's role in consolidating democracies will not only help the OAU, it will also help the African mass media's constant struggle to achieve a semblance of freedom.

In this section, we have made various suggestions to help the OAU in its efforts to consolidate African democracies. We will now summarize the most important points.

SUMMARY

This chapter began by analyzing four cases—in the Central African Republic, Lesotho, Sierra Leone, and Haiti—where military coup leaders were forced to quit and an elected democracy was restored. The Haitian case was discussed (even though Haiti is not an African country) because it provides a good example of where an impending multinational military force had encouraged the military coup leaders to quit. The Lesotho case illustrated the successful effects of economic sanctions and an implied military force. Force was successfully used in both the Central African Republic and Sierra Leone. These cases serve as baseline for predicting the viability of the suggestions that were presented in the later sections of the chapter. The discussion of the early period of the Sierra Leone crisis demonstrated the weaknesses of some strategies.

The later sections of the chapter focused on OAU's role in consolidating African democracies. These sections were divided into three: obstacles to

OAU's role, present OAU initiatives, and suggestions on how the OAU can help to consolidate African democracies.

The obstacles include OAU's own non-interference clause, interference from foreign forces and governments, the perennial lack of operating funds, and the fear that some African countries may be too powerful for OAU's control. The chapter went on to discuss OAU's present initiatives in the area of continental crisis. Those initiatives include the establishment of a conflict-management organ, condemnation of military coups, ad hoc barring of military regimes from OAU's meetings, economic sanctions, and allout support of African democratization. The last section focused on suggestions for the OAU in its attempt to consolidate African democracies. These suggestions are as follows: making it a policy to bar military membership of the OAU, establishing a continental military force, raising funds for the military force, and launching a massive media education of Africans on democracy and OAU's role in consolidating democracy.

NOTES

1. Kolingba had ruled for twelve years before the 1993 presidential election.

2. Kolingba, the former military leader of CAR and President Patasse's political rival, is from the Yakoma ethnic group.

3. A six-point agreement was reached among the coup makers, Sierra Leone government, and representatives of the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS).

4. President Tejan Kabbah was reinstated on 10 March 1998.

5. Several others fled for safety reasons. Ninety thousand Sierra Leonians were estimated by the United Nations to have fled the country to Guinea or Liberia.

6. South Africa believed that Lesotho was being used as a planning ground for the African National Congress (ANC) attacks on South African apartheid government. Major General Lekhanya was a known ally of the South African apartheid government. In addition, 95 percent of Lesotho's imports were from South Africa and a huge majority of Lesotho's adult population was employed in South Africa. Hence, the blockade put enormous pressure on Lesotho's economy and people.

7. Lekhanya first had his bodyguard take the rap and then as pressure mounted he admitted his guilt, but he then claimed he had caught the student raping a lady.

8. Mokhehle was denied the prime minister position in 1970 following a bloody coup that reinstated Leboua Jonathan.

9. King Moshoeshoe II died in a car crash in January 1996. In February 1996 his son, Letsie III, once again became Lesotho's king.

10. Paraguay's neighbors and trading partners offered President Wasmosy military help to counter Oviedo's coup attempt.

11. This MNF of 23,000 soldiers included more than twenty eight countries that provided a varied number of troops and logistics help.

12. Cedras and Brigadier-General Biamby left for Panama under an agreement between President Aristide and the Panamanian government. Colonel Michel Francois left on his own accord for the Dominican Republic.

13. The committee was formed in Conakry, Guinea, on 29 June 1997. Liberia later joined the committee.

14. At the time of this writing, OAU's Assistant Secretary-General Ahmed Haggag was quoted as saying that the clause was being reexamined by the organization. He also acknowledged that the clause now appears to be narrowly defined (see Nyika, 1997).

15. The OAU conflict-management unit was set up in Cairo, Egypt, in 1993. Its functions include organizing workshops and training for government officials, the army, police, and so on. In addition, it is greatly involved in seeking peaceful solutions to various crises in the continent. Most recently, this organ has begun to emphasize democratic reforms and some military interventions as part of its guidelines for peace.

16. The OAU bases its non-interference clause on the theoretical foundation of the sanctity of domestic jurisdiction.

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