

## **Political Economy Of Military Intervention In Politics And Political Development In Nigeria**

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### **Abstract**

Ever since the attainment of self-governance more than three decades ago, Nigeria's journey toward a stable democracy has been continually interjected with a recurring spate of military coups d'état. Review of the political programmes of different military administrations in Nigeria shows, though a causal relationship between military rule and political development is hard to demonstrate, after twenty-seven years, the military has yet to demonstrate, that it has the panacea for Nigeria's political problems. The paper examines the political economy of the Nigerian military and political development in Nigeria. Exploratory research design, documentary sources and qualitative descriptive methods of data gathering and analysis were adopted. Findings amongst others revealed that military rule in Nigeria tended to be characterized by cynical disregard of democratic principles in both making and implementation of policies. The paper also recommends amongst others that there is need to educate the military to willingly accept the reality of being subjected to control by the civil order.

**Keywords:** Political Economy; Political Development; Military; Intervention; Military Coups

### **1. Introduction**

Ever since the attainment of self-governance more than three decades ago, Nigeria's journey toward a stable democracy has been continually interjected with a recurring spate of military coups d'état. The intervention of military in the political scene of Nigeria did not come as a total surprise to most political observers and thinkers; this was because nearly all the pre-colonial ethnic groups in the country were ruled by traditional rulers who were more or less dictators (Yesufu, 1982). When a group of army officers announced the first military seizure of political power on January 15, 1966, Nigerians were persuaded to accept the forceful change of government as a revolutionary crusade aimed principally at forestalling an imminent descent into anarchy and subsequent demise of the new nation-state (Emenyeonu, 1997). According to Major Chukwuma Nzeogwu, leader of the Supreme Council of the Revolution of the Nigeria Armed Forces which executed the plot,

The targets of the revolution were...The political profiteers, the swindlers, the men in high and low places that seek bribes and demand ten percent, those that seek to keep the country divided permanently so that they can remain in office as ministers..., (the tribalists, the nepotists) ...those that have corrupted our society and put the Nigerian political calendar back by their words and deeds (Newswatch, Jan. 20, 1986, p.25).

In a more philosophical explanation of that coup 15 years later, one of the surviving brains behind it, Ademoyega who in his expository book published in 1981, maintained that the revolution was informed by their burning desire to introduce an ideological change in a First Republic whose endemic political, economic and social crises have been attributed to an 'ideological lacuna' (Okigbo, 1992, p.39). The ideological novelty which was expected to revolutionise Nigeria's politics, economy, educational system as well as social and foreign affairs was dubbed 'democratic socialism'.

After gaining independence from the United Kingdom on the 1<sup>st</sup> of October, 1960, Nigeria's parliamentary Westminster-style democracy collapsed on January 15, 1966, when a group of radical young army majors staged a military coup and overthrew the civilian government of Prime Minister Abubakar Tafawa Balewa. Although the coup leaders did not manage to seize power for themselves, the coup's violent nature, and assassination of key government personnel such as Prime Minister Balewa, Alhaji Sir Ahmadu Bello (Premier of the Northern Region), Samuel Akintola (Premier of the Western Region), and Festus Okotie-Eboh (Finance Minister) was enough to topple the government and persuade the rump cabinet to cede power to the General Officer Commanding (GOC) the army, Major-General Johnson Aguiyi-Ironsi (Siollun, 2013).

Although Ironsi had suppressed the coup and was not among its planners, he was unable to escape the stigma attached to it. Northern soldiers were aggrieved at the coup's lopsided nature and became suspicious of it, and of Ironsi's motives. Since most of the coup's planners were Igbo, their victims were non-Igbo, and its outcome was a military government led by an Igbo army officer, northerners suspected that the coup was an orchestrated conspiracy to wrest power away from the northern-led civilian government. These tensions and suspicions led to another coup by northern officers in July 1966, during which Ironsi was assassinated and replaced by Lt-Colonel Yakubu Gowon (Siollun, 2013).

Gowon governed until July 1975 when he was deposed by the same soldiers who had staged the coup that brought him to power in 1966. The new military leader was Brigadier Murtala Muhammed, the leader of the July 1966 coup. After Muhammed was assassinated during an abortive attempted coup in February 1976, he was replaced by his deputy, Lt-General Olusegun Obasanjo. Obasanjo remained in power for almost four years, leading the country back to civilian democracy before stepping down in October 1979 after multi-party elections were won by Alhaji Shehu Shagari of the National Party of Nigeria (NPN). The voluntary surrender of power was a source of great pride and prestige to the military, but it amplified its political ambitions by giving it a self-righteous air of being the nation's political custodian and moral conscience (Siollun, 2013).

Furthermore, in justifying the mission of the January 1966 coup, Ademoyega (1981) made references to the revolutionary potentials of some armies across the globe. These included the Ghengis Khan Army of the 13th century which unified the factionalised Mongolian tribes of Central Asia, the Cromwellian Army of the 17th century which dethroned monarchy and developed the parliamentary system in Britain, the Napoleonic Army of the early 19th century which saved France from anarchy and nurtured its unity under the principles of liberty, equality and fraternity, the Bolshevik Army of Russia which some sources claimed to have put the proletariat in power, and the Mao Tse Tung Army which was said to have not only unified

the Chinese peoples into a formidable country but also liberated and empowered the peasants and other low-ranking citizens. The Cuban Army under Fidel Castro, as well as the Angolan and Mozambican Liberation Armies are among modern armies which were also cited as having played similar roles (Emenyeonu, 1997).

However, as the brief review of the political programmes of different military administrations in Nigeria shows, though a causal relationship between military rule and political development is hard to demonstrate, the military failed to demonstrate, after about thirty years, that it has the panacea for Nigeria's political problems. While it can neither be wished away nor dismissed as a complete fiasco, military intervention in Nigerian politics has so far demonstrated the existence of a wide gap between the visionary promises of coup makers and actual performance. Regardless of the circumstances under which it has occurred in Nigeria, military intervention has merely lived with if not exacerbated the political, economic and social problems of the nation. This is not to talk about dismal performances in other spheres of administration such as economic husbandry and the provision of moral leadership. Anim (1990, p. 3), observes that since the first coup that introduced military intervention in politics, "the armed forces have manifested all the weaknesses of the other sections of the society: corruption, graft, indiscipline, ethnicity, disrespect for law and order". In most cases, the impact of military rule has been most glaring in the areas of civil liberties in general and press freedom in particular.

Deriving from the above, the paper examines the political economy of the Nigerian military and political development in Nigeria. However, the paper is divided into nine sections namely; introduction, conceptual clarification and review of related literature, theories of military intervention in politics, Nigerian military: historical overview, military intervention in politics, military intervention in Nigerian politics, articulated reason for military intervention in Nigeria's political system, Nigerian military and political development in Nigeria, and conclusion and recommendations.

## **2. Conceptual Clarification and Review of Related Literature**

### **a) The Military**

This is one of the institutions of the state assigned with the responsibility of defending the territorial integrity of the state to ward off aggression from other independent state.

### **b) Military Rule**

The concept of military rule has often been mistaken with military government or military regime. However, there are significant differences between and among the three interrelated concepts. Igwe (2005), sees military rule as,

Governance by the armed forces and the consequent reversal from civil to military super ordinancy, usually through an unconstitutional takeover of power in a coup d'état that ousted the legitimate civil authority, with the pretext of either restoring law and order, re-instituting legality within the system or eradicating any other social ills affecting the state(Igwe, 2005, p. 268).

### **c) Military Government**

A government is that agency of the ruling class that is charged with the responsibility of exercising state power on behalf of the whole classes (Nnoli, 2003). It can also be referred to as the institutionalized agency for the legitimate administration of the class society, in effect, translating into a structured organization of power for the realization of the objectives of the ruling class, and the major instrument of its practical exercise by its governing elites within the state (Igwe, 2005). Military government therefore, refers to the administrative agency managed by the Armed Forces and charged with the responsibility of exercising state power on behalf of the whole social classes in a given polity. It is therefore an institution of governance that is derived unconstitutionally.

#### **d) Military Regime**

Many scholars have continued to use the term “regime” to mean a form of government or even a set of rules and basically the time or period a person rules (Wikipedia, 2013). Interestingly, a regime is synonymous with both the form of government and a set of rules. But in politics, a regime is a framework of social organization based on rules designed to regulate the operation of government and its interactions with the rest of the societies. By implication therefore, a military regime is a coercive framework of social organization that is based on regimented rules designed to compel obedience from the rest of the civil societies via the promulgation of Decrees.

#### **e) Military Intervention in Politics**

The concept of military intervention appears to be clearer when compared to military rule, military government and military regime. Unfortunately, it is the most ambiguous among the rest. For the sake of clarity, the use of military intervention in this work is strictly as it affects the seizure and use of state power by the armed forces. This is because there are many forms of military intervention.

Lahm (1993), understands military intervention as the conscious act of displacing and supplanting an existing political order, a government, by soldiers with the objective either of governing or influencing the political affairs of the country in particular direction determined largely by the interventionists themselves. It is directed at the political system of a state so as to accomplish certain predetermined objectives which may be political, economic, social or even military.

There is need to understand the different dimension which the military can use to be involved in politics, this can be through military rule usually in the form of a coup, as a military government where the administrative agency is managed by the armed forces and charged with the responsibility of exercising state power on behalf of the whole social classes in a given polity. It is therefore an institution of governance that is derived unconstitutionally. The concept of military intervention appears to be clearer when compared to military rule, military government and military regime. Military intervention in politics, in this context involves the exertion of influence on the political system either through direct or indirect participation in political issues. Moreover it can be seen as the unconstitutional takeover of political power from the civilians by the armed forces by brute force. Armed forces here include the army, the navy, the air force, the secret police and other sabotaging law enforcement agencies (Acemoglu et al., 2010).

Kunle (1986), posits that while there cannot be military rule without military intervention, there can be military intervention without military rule. This implies that a dissatisfied military might intervene to correct a societal anomie and install a new government not necessarily controlled by them. This is when the military intervenes in politics only to stabilise the political system by returning the rule of law as can be noted by the ouster of Jammeh in Gambia by ECOWAS.

### **3. Theories of Military Intervention in Politics**

There are five theories of military intervention in politics as identified by Onder (2010), which are; socioeconomic development theory, political development theory, the centrality of military theory, the conflict theory and regional differences theory.

Finer (1975), argues that military intervention in politics can be explained through the personalist model. According to this model the military intervenes in politics for three reasons which are personal power enhancement, poor socio economic and also the personal interest of the military’s top office holders. This is mainly common in developing countries where democracy is still at infant stage and also the exchange of power between governments is over shadowed by accusations of vote rigging, political assassinations and vote buying.

Welch (1987), is of the view that the military under the corporatist model sees itself as a corporate entity divorced from civilian life and sharing a collective interest, such as the maintenance of high military budget, the protection of military status, the protection of military rules, procedures, and norms. Thus any change to the status core can invite the military into the political system. This is also supported by the manifest destiny model coined by Finner (1988), which sees the military as the saviour of the nation. Furthermore under this model the military justifies its intervention on the bases that civilian regimes suffer from mal administration and need hand holding by the military.

According Huntington (1968) the sources of military interventions in politics have not only the keen interest of the military itself, but it is also the result in weak political institutions and low political culture of the developing countries.

Leite et al., (2002), argues that a justified reason why the military intervenes in politics is to act in defense of human rights and also the constitution. Thus it intervenes in politics only to stabilize the political system by returning the rule of law as can be noted by the ouster of Jammeh in Gambia by ECOWAS.

Finer (1988), argues that one of the theories which can help to explain military intervention in politics is through the socio economic development theory. According to this theory, the density of military interventions is more likely to decrease with increased socio-economic development status. This can help to explain why in Nigeria General Babangida removed Buhari from power in 1985 as he accused his administration of failing to revamp the nation's economy that had declined during his rule. Babangida also complained of massive fraud in the issuance of import licenses and counter trade agreements. Huntington stressed and justified that the military will intervene when civilian governments lack legitimacy due to inadequate economic performance and an ineffective executive (Huntington, 1968).

In this study, we adopt the socioeconomic development theory which argues that the military intervenes in politics for three reasons which are personal power enhancement, poor socio-economic conditions and also the personal interest of the military's high command.

#### **4. Nigerian Military: Historical Overview**

The history of the Nigerian Armed Forces could be traced to 1863, when the Governor of Lagos – Lt Glover of the Royal Navy- put together 18 Northern Nigerians who were expected to protect the lives and properties of the British residents in and around Lagos (Miners, 1971). They were also expected to protect the British traders, the Christian missionaries and to protect the British Trade routes around Lagos (Ukpabi, 1989). These small troops formed the nucleus of the Hausa Constabulary with a nucleus from the Royal Niger Company Constabulary- these were the troops of the Royal Niger Company raised in 1886 to form the West African Field Force (Ukpabi, 1966). The first Battalion was formed on 26 August 1896 while the second Battalion was formed in 1898 and the third Battalion was added later in 1898 (Butts & Metz, 1996; Ukpabi, 1966; Olusoji, Shadare&Owoyemi, 2012).

The West African Field Force and the Northern Nigeria Regiment were amalgamated in May 1900 (Killingray, 1986). In 1914, the Southern Nigeria Regiment and the Northern Nigeria Regiment were amalgamated to form the Nigeria Regiment of the West African Frontier Force (Miners, 1971). In 1956, at the visit of Queen Elizabeth II the remaining troops, not part of the West African Frontier Force from the North and South Regiments, was renamed the Queen's Own Nigerian Regiment (QONR). Later that same year, Britain granted military autonomy to her dependencies and the QONR was renamed Nigerian Military Force (NMF) (Lukham, 1971). In 1960 at independence the name changed again to become the Royal Nigerian Army. As soon as Nigeria became a Republic in 1963, the name was changed to the Nigerian Army and with the other two forces - Navy and Air Force- were designated the Nigerian Armed Forces, the name it bears till today (Adekson & Adekanye, 1981; Olusoji, Shadare&Owoyemi, 2012).

The armed forces of Nigeria were up till 15 January 1966 seen in public only on ceremonial occasions especially during the annual Independence Day anniversary – 1 of October- when they make ceremonial parades and the Air Force engages in the usual colourful air display (Janowitz & van Doom, 1971). This changed immediately after the coup of 15 January 1966; the military took over the managements of Federal, States and to some extent Local Council Affairs. Since Nigeria's independence in 1960, the country has experienced almost thirty years of military dictatorial rule (Hargreaves, 2002, cited in Olusoji, Shadare&Owoyemi, 2012).With the demise of the First Republic in January 1966, the dictatorial and authoritarian military rule was only interrupted by a brief civilian and democratic rule of the Second Republic from 1979 to 1983 (Lewis, 1994).

Between 1983 and 1999, four different military regimes had their taste of power starting with General Muhammadu Buhari who overthrew Shehu Shagari, a democratically elected civilian president on the 31<sup>st</sup> of December, 1983. Buhari was overthrown two year later by General Ibrahim Babangida his Chief of Army Staff, on August 1985 who held on to power till 1993 when his was force to step aside and allowed an interim government headed by Chief Ernest Shonekan. The interim government lasted for only three months before being swept aside by General Sani Abacha who unfortunately, died in office five years later and was replaced by General Abdulsalam Abubarkar in 1998. General Abubarkar kept to his word by organising a general elections and handing over power to Obasanjo, a civilian elected president who funny enough has a military background.

#### **The Role of the Military in a Polity**

Section 197(1) of the 1999 constitution of the federal republic of Nigeria talks elaborately on the functions of the Military. According to that section, the functions of the Army as observed by Olorungbemi (2015, p. 196),are to:

- (a) Defend Nigeria from external aggression;
- (b) Maintain its territorial and security borders from violation,
- (c) Suppressing insurrection and acting in aid of civil authorities to restore order when called upon to do so by the president and
- (d) Perfecting such other functions as may be prescribed by an Act of the National Assembly.

Ikelegbe, (1995) as cited in Olorungbemi (2015, p. 196), noted that the military has been instituted for defence needs to perfect and defend the sovereignty and territorial integrity of a state. To him, "Nations build and invest in their men, technology, and resources to equip the military to defend the state against the ambitions, interventions and aggressions of other states. The military is to protect, project and be instrumental to the pursuance of the interests of the state. Military organization is the chief instrument in interstate relations in furtherance of state interests. States from time to time, deploy the military strategy to cow, over-awe, threaten, and coerce other states to submission in defence or projection of their interests.

From the early periods of the evolution of the state, the military has been captured, deployed to foreign bases or countries and threatened or carried out warfare to protect state interests. The organization of the military has been the ultimate or internal last resort, to maintain law, peace and order in the state. The army could be deployed by governmental authorities, in serious cases of breakdown of law and order, intense riots, internal insurrection, civil rebellion and secession. Thus the army also plays a role in the protection of the state from within or maintenance of internal stability.

In all these, the military are not trained to rule but to defend the territorial integrity of a nation. But when they take over the reins of government by coercive means through coup d'état, it becomes an aberration (Olorungbemi,2015).

## **5. Military Intervention in Politics**

Military intervention in politics is an unconstitutional takeover of political power from the civilians by the armed forces by brute force. Armed forces here include: the army, the navy, the air force, the secret police and other sabotaging law enforcement agencies (Acemoglu et al, 2010). It is unconstitutional because there are no defined rules of engagement stated anywhere as the established mechanisms on how the people can change their government. It is known as coup d'état, which implies violent (or by whatever means) military overthrow of an elected civilian government or a constituted monarchy (Edeh & Ugwueze, 2014).

The constant clashes for political advantages gave rise, first to the fictionalisation of the polity through the politicisation of ethnicity. And when that failed to yield comfortable political supremacy over rival groups, the urge for political profit gave birth to superficial and incompatible political alliances which were clearly aimed at forming governments and sharing political offices rather than bringing about a gradual unification of the country and nationalisation of its political process. The proof of verisimilitude of Huntington's hypothesis (that military intervention in the political process is a manifestation of a regime's inability to institutionalise its political organisations and processes) in the Nigerian situation can be argued in the country's failure to attain political stability after more than three decades of independence and experiments with both parliamentary and presidential systems of government (Emenyeonu, 1997).

The non-institutionalisation of an orderly and coherent political process translates to the adoption of an imperially designed bureaucratic structure based on capitalist development which has been blamed for "standing in direct contradiction to the aspirations of a majority of Nigerians for rational economic independence and socioeconomic progress" (Ibeanu, 1986, p. 9). Writers such as Taiwo (1995), Nzimiro (1983), Riggs (1993) and Ake (1985) have traced the incurable culture of corruption among the political class and highly placed bureaucrats to this kind of political economy. And in the true praetorian fashion, the intense display of disenchantment by the Nigerian masses, as shown in the demonstrations that precede, or the jubilations that greet most coups, has provided coup groups with justifications for intervention.

After independence, the administration of the political superstructures put in place, for the most part, by the departing colonial bureaucrats became the responsibility of an indigenous political class and bureaucracy, politically known as the petty bourgeois. As stated earlier, bureaucracy in this context refers to appointed public officials charged with responsibilities such as enforcing the law, implementing public policies, and carrying out administrative duties, but keeping off political roles. It also applies to the institutions through which these officials operate (Riggs, 1993). Political roles as in leadership, formulation of policies and control of the entire State machinery were exclusively assigned to a constitutionally elected political class. The political systems adopted by new States in Africa for the discharge of such roles were patterned after three foreign regime types, namely, the European parliamentary system, the American presidentialist model and the Soviet style of one-party authoritarian regimes. A few new States retained or adopted varying forms of monarchical rule (Emenyeonu, 1997).

Ibeanu (1986) has observed that, reasons usually adduced for military intervention in government almost encompass all that could be said to be wrong with the society and body politics. As rightly remarked by Ibeanu, an understanding of the historical development of the socio-economic setting in which the phenomenon occurs, appears to be the most reliable point of departure. Another reason why the military is involved in politics is when there is a fear and high probability of national disintegration. This view is emphasised by the belief that military intervention in politics is at times a necessary evil because civilian governments are often characterised by corruption and incapable of governing a country and as a result the country is plagued by widespread political, economic and social disorders. Finer (1975) argues that in such a situation military intervention becomes easy in the presence of a

corrupt and incapable government governing a country and as a result the country is plagued by widespread political, economic and social disorders.

One can note that militaries promise to hand over power but once in control they device ways of staying put in power as many examples have shown, General Yakubu Gowon and Ibrahim Babangida stayed for long and had to be overthrown or pressured to quit. In Egypt, General Sisi went on to contest in the presidential election which he easily won. Thus one can argue that the military get involved in politics so as to maintain power within their influence and also to maintain the status quo. Intervention in politics by the military is made possible by the argument of protecting the national security of the country if and when threatened by insecurities challenges. The military is not only interested in devising military techniques and doctrine for confronting domestic security challenges, but they are also interested in political and social reasons for the security challenges. Graeff (2003) argues that this becomes possible when governments is dominated by the civilians who are only interested in gaining power but are not responsive to the yearning of the people or have failed to meet the security demands of the polity.

## **6. Military Intervention in Nigerian Politics**

The transfers of power from one military regime to another are not random. Each coup and government had substantial continuity of personnel. The same people have controlled Nigerian political and military life since 1966. The group of officers that brought Gowon to power in August 1966 formed the foundation of all succeeding military regimes until 1998. Although leadership of the regimes changed, the personalities behind the coups and regimes did not. The 1966 cadre created successive dynastic military regimes for the next 32 years. The young non-commissioned officers (NCOs) and lieutenants who blasted Major-General Aguiyi-Ironsi from power in 1966 became the colonels who ousted his successor General Gowon in 1975, and they became the Brigadiers and Major Generals who overthrew President Shagari in 1983. These officers included Ibrahim Babangida, Sani Abacha, Muhammadu Buhari, Shehu Musa Yar'Adua, Aliyu Mohammed, Joshua Dogonyaro, Jerry Useni and Ibrahim Bako (Siollun, 2013).

The 1980s Nigerian army was a legacy of the civil war during which mass military recruitment swelled the military's manpower from 10,000 in 1966 to approximately 250,000 by the end of the war in 1970. A swollen military became a drain on government finances, and an internal security risk. Nigeria faced no external military threat from a foreign power, thus the army's role was largely devoted to the suppression of communal riots and international peacekeeping missions. With no external enemies to fight, military heroism tended to be sought in the political arena rather than on the battlefield. The nature of military governance changed greatly during the 1980s. Coups became motivated by a desire for personal gain, rather than by altruism or ideology. Public optimism about military rule dissipated when the public realized that only the leaders had changed, but the underlying problems which were cited as justifications for military governance continued despite the change of personnel. Soldiers were corrupted by politics as quickly and absolutely as civilians had been. Although the military claimed to bring law and order, communal, criminal and religious violence increased under its watch. It continually promised to eradicate corruption, yet military officers were indicted for corruption (Siollun, 2013).

As the military became more politicised, ethnic and religious cleavages in civil society replicated in the officer corps. Ultimately, the military became overburdened by its workload of governance, political reform, and transitioning back to democracy, while simultaneously trying to keep its own house in order and protect itself against coups from within. Military rule became more toxic than incompetent civilian rule, because soldiers can get away with much more in



government since they control the state's instruments of violence, and do not have to worry about becoming unpopular enough to lose elections.

### 7. **Articulated reason for Military intervention in Nigeria's Political System**

Wilson (2012) and Fabiyi, Thotteh and Borisade (2012) posits that the following are some of the reasons for the intervention into the polity.

1. To restore sanity and development of the economy
2. Inability or failure of previous government to completely and effectively oversee and control the affairs of the nation.
3. Regular allegations of corruption, nepotism and tribalism among politicians and the political class which results in production decline, abandonment of infrastructural development etc.
4. Underdevelopment of the country caused by the failure of the political leaders to initiate and implement development programmes.

### **Military Coups in Nigeria**

According to David Jemibewon as cited in Olorungbemi (2015, p. 198), a Nigerian retired military officer; there are five reasons for military intervention in politics in Africa and the third world countries. These include:

- Inability of the civilians to govern;
- Corruption of political leaders;
- Absence of peaceful change of government;
- Tendency on the part of army officers to emulate their colleagues who had staged coup in other countries;
- Personal ambition on the part of officer corps.

Olorungbemi (2015, p.197), outlined the various coups, attempted coups, conspiracies to stage coups and allegations to carry out coups in Nigeria. They are listed in table 1;

**Table 1. History of Coups Nigeria**

S/N	Coups	Year	Individuals Involved
1	Successful Coup d'état in Nigeria	January 1966	General Aguiyi Ironsi
		July 1966	General Yakubu Gowon
		July 1975	General Muhammed Murtala
		December 1983	General Muhammed Buhari
		August 1985	General Ibrahim Babangida
2	Attempted Coups d'état in Nigeria	November 1993	General Sani Abacha
		January 1966	Major Nzeogwu
		February 1976	Lt. Col. Dimka
3	Conspiracies to stage a coup as alleged	April 1990	Major Gideon Orkah
		October 1962	Chief Obafemi Awolowo
		September 1967	Colonel Ifeajuna, Biafra
		December 1985	General Mamman Vasta
		March 1995	No clear leader
4	Political allegation of Coup plans include	December 1997	General Diya Oladipo
		January 1965	No clear leader
		June 1998	No clear leader.

Source: Olorungbemi (2015) and modified by the Authors.

Military coup d'état has always ushered in a military regime, which always had far reaching socio-economic consequences. The very existence of a group of military rulers affects the social climate of a country. Social priorities are altered and the economy is re-oriented, ostensibly for the better. The social status of the military is enhanced and the military becomes an attractive profession owing to the opportunities offered for the exercise of power and

influence in the polity, leading to the emergence of a new group of comfortable upper class with a military background, a situation that has promoted mass discontent (Olorungbemi,2015).

**Table 2. Military Regimes in Nigeria (1966-1999)**

S/No	Date of Coup	The Head of State	Duration of Regime
1.	Jan. 15th 1966	Major Gen. J.T.U. Aguiyi Ironsi	Jan. 15th –July 29 <sup>th</sup> 1966
2.	July 29th 1966	Gen. Yakubu Gowon	July 29th 1966-July29th 1975
3.	July 29th 1975	Gen. Murtala Mohammed	July 29th 1975-Feb 13 <sup>th</sup> 1976
4.	14TH Feb. 1976	Gen. Olusegun Obasanjo	14th Feb. 1976-1 <sup>st</sup> Oct. 1979
5.	Dec. 31st 1983	Major Gen. M. Buhari	Dec. 31st 1983-Aug27th 1995
6.	Aug. 27th 1985	Gen. Ibrahim B. Babangida	Aug. 27th 1985-Aug 25th 1993.
7.	Nov. 17th 1993`	Gen. Sani Abacha	Nov. 17th 1993-June 9th 1998
8.	June 9th	Gen. Abdusalami Abubakar	June 9th 1998- May 29th 1999.

Source: Okeke& Ugwu (2013).

### 8. Nigerian Military and Political Development in Nigeria

Two decade of military rule in Nigeria left very strong authoritarian imprint on civil life and civil society that conscious effort has to be made to engineer the cultivation of civic virtue to advance democracy. This is very important to remove violence that continuous to characterize electoral competition, itself crucial to the effort to crystallize civilian of the military so long as authoritarian practices continue to pervade society, democracy will remain fragile, and the threat of military incursion into politics real (Osabiya, 2015).

The military as we know made substantial efforts at revolutionizing the minds and lives of Nigerians through different programmes of social mobilization which they introduced in the country. Some of these are listed in table 3:

**Table 3. List of Social Programme Initiated by the Military Regimes in Nigeria**

S/N	Regime	Programme Initiated
1	General Yakubu Gowon	Reconciliation, Reconstruction and Rehabilitation (3Rs)
2	General Murtala Mohammed	unlabeled social revolution
3	General Olusegun Obasanjo	Operation Feed the Nation
4	General Muhammadu Buhari	War Against Indiscipline (WAI)
5	General Ibrahim Babangida	National Orientation Movement (NOM) later changed to Directorate for Social Mobilization, Economic Recovery and Self-Reliance (MAMSER)
6	General Sani Abacha	National Orientation Agency (NOA)

Source: Nwankwo, Ocheni& Atakpa(2012) and modified by the Authors

The above are the different social mobilization programmes pursued by the past military administrations aimed at finding solutions to the socio-political, economic and religious problems confronting the country. The under listed are some of the achievement of the various military regimes in Nigeria over the years.

1. Infrastructural development: Such as construction of roads, airports, bridges, establishment of institutions, etc.
2. Breaking into units: The military prevented the country from breaking into units, e.g., civil war.
3. States creation: The military succeeded in the creation of states and local government councils.
4. Nigerian foreign policy: The military brought about a positive change in the Nigerian foreign policy.

5. Local government reforms: This was done in 1976 and 1990 making it a one-tier local government structure.
6. Promotion of national integration: The National Youth Service Corp (NYSC), federal government schools, etc were established to promote national integration.
7. Mass oriented programmes: Programmes like DEFRI, National Directorate of Employment (NDE), Operation Feed the Nation (OFN), were massively initiated.
8. Education: Education took a giant stride during the military rule. Many federal and state universities and polytechnics were set up.

On the issue of social integration, the Nigerian experience had shown that the military rulers soon identified themselves with one social group or the other. Rather than promoting inter-ethnic harmony, they encourage cleavages and compound the problem more than their civilian counter parts.

As succinctly put by Olorungbemi (2015, p. 200):

In fact, the army in many cases began to mirror the very social maladies such as tribalism, nepotism, and class privilege found in the larger society. This in itself slows down very considerably political development in Nigeria. Economic depression is usually one of the orchestrated reasons for military coup d'état in most African countries. In this context, they often present economic blueprints for development. The structural adjustment programme (SAP) of the Babangida regime in Nigeria is a case study. As a result of the corrupt nature of the military rulers coupled with a corrupt bureaucracy, such economic policies usually leave the people worse than they were before the military intervention. Military coup d'état has led to increased expenditure on military related projects and welfare to the detriment of development of other economic indicators.

The political consequences of military coup d'état which result partly from role expansion and partly from the basic ethos of post-colonial military in most developing countries include the following. They include regimented governance, limitation of the opportunities available for the individual voluntary and effective participants in the affairs of the state, alienation and anxiety on the part of the political class. Other factors are the emergence of authoritarian culture which compels people to believe in a particular manner, more out of fear than as a result of genuine interest; selective elites cooperation which limits the masses opportunities of self-development and self-actualization through participation in policy decision-making. The military in Nigeria had neither provided effective and exemplary leadership nor mass mobilization of the people (Olorungbemi, 2015).

The military class is corrupt. This is a major impact of military coup d'état on political development in Nigeria. The military had always claimed that they want to eradicate corruption, but under the military, corruption has been institutionalized. During military regimes, corruption flourished very prominently. Coup d'état has provided a platform for the military to institutionalise corruption. Nordlinger (1977) as cited in Olorungbemi (2015), noted that, the military in many countries have been found with some ills and performance failures, ineptness and corruption which they charged their predecessors of. According to him, military governments in Africa and Latin America have even been found to be more corrupted compared to civilian governments. Thus, the problem of indiscipline, corruption, ethnic cleavages etc have remained endemic in many societies in spite of military regime made possible by coup d'états.

Military coup d'état has eroded our political culture and has substituted democracy with dictatorial tendencies. It is instructive to note that Nigeria has spent 29 years of the 55 years since the nation obtained her independence fighting the effects of coups d'état. The problem created by the military is so enormous. There is therefore an urgent need for a total review of the 1999 constitution to allow for some punitive measures for any coup plotters. Coups d'état

are anti-political development, they are anti-democratic. Both coup against the state and coups by the state must be eliminated and discouraged to further our political development. In his inaugural lecture in 1993, Adekanye, a professor of political science, and the then Head of the Department of Political Science, University of Ibadan, as cited in Olorungbemi (2015, p. 200), submitted that;

In Nigeria, the legacy of military rule-to-date has resulted in distortion of old parties or equivalences, even while deepening income inequalities, between given occupational groups. A succession of coup regimes has also elevated the military above not just their peers e.g. the police, but even such other professional or occupational groups as the civil servants, doctors, judges, and academics until now ranked much higher in income and status.

Coup d'état has brought about a harvest of military rulers who carted away democratic principles and replaced them with dictatorial tendencies. Thus, "the military has placed very heavy demands on the financial resources of the country, in addition to being sheltered by all sorts of special privileges and economic advantages. Above all, there is the rise to new prominence of the Gowons, the Obasanjos, the Yar'Aduas, and the Danjumas, by which we mean the emergence of increasingly large numbers of top retired military officers as dominant figures in the national economy, including banking and finance, trade and commerce, shipping, petroleum business, large-scale farming as well as various agro-allied ventures, not to add the world of politics and diplomacy (Olorungbemi, 2015).

Thus, the full involvement of the military in the overall governance of Nigeria is in itself an aberration both against the professional principle of the military institution itself and against the constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria prior to the 1966 coup and other subsequent years. Although the trend of the involvement of retired soldiers in politics became noticeable under the Babangida political transition program (1986 – 1993), it seemed to have reached an unprecedented and worrisome dimension, under the Abubakar political transition program (1998 – 1999). It is estimated that no less than 130 rich and influential retired military officers were and are still members of the Peoples Democratic Party (PDP), the former ruling party and All People Congress (APC), the current ruling party in Nigeria at the Federal level. Amongst them, at least 30 are of the rank of Major General and above, while the others comprise mostly of colonels and other ranks (Nmodu, 1999; Okeke & Ugwu, 2013). Currently, this social category constitutes the most powerful force in the political and economic arenas in Nigeria. Indeed, the pre-eminence of the "retired soldier" in Nigerian politics is best attested to by the fact that Nigeria's former president, Olusegun Obasanjo is a retired military general, his former minister of defence, T. Y. Danjuma is a retired general, the former Senate President, David Mark is a retired general and the current President Muhammadu Buhari is also a retired military general (Okeke & Ugwu, 2013).

Military regimes are essentially dictatorial and by their modus operandi incompatible with constitutional democracy. Two dominant factors shape military administrations in Africa: (1) the need to dominate the civil society, and (2) the desire to secure its power base. These factors engender a strong dictatorial mind set. In governing the nation, the military is omnipresent, unchecked by any constitutional restraints. Military regimes have a disturbing contempt for law and legal rules; they care only about achieving their stated objectives. Military regimes, which perceive themselves as above the laws that govern society, have systematically erased society's lines of authority that promote accountability and respect for citizens' rights. Laws promulgated by the military government are called decrees. Under a military regime, decrees are enacted by the highest legislative organ of the military administration and they have been given different names as shown in the table below;

**Table 4. Names of Highest Legislative Organ of the Military Regimes in Nigeria**

S/N	Regime	Programme Initiated	Year
1	General Yakubu Gowon	Supreme Military Council	1966-1975
2	General Murtala Mohammed	Supreme Military Council	1975-1976
3	General Olusegun Obasanjo	Supreme Military Council	1976-1979
4	General Muhammadu Buhari	Supreme Military Council	1983-1985
5	General Ibrahim Babangida	Armed Forces Ruling Council	1985-1993
6	General Sani Abacha	Provisional Ruling Council	1993-1998
7	General Abdulsalami Abubakar	Provisional Ruling Council	1998-1999

Source: Okeke & Ugwu (2013) and modified by the Authors

To further bolster its domination of civil society and to achieve stated objectives, military regimes typically exhibit contempt for constitutional democratic order. The military decree which is the first law that virtually all military regimes in Nigeria promulgate, illustrates the military's contempt for the rule of law.

### **8. Conclusion and Recommendations**

The military is usually politically untrained and naive and its personnel therefore unable to undertake long term political management. This lack of political sophistication is attributed to peculiar organizational characteristics, command structures and pattern of socialization and training in the military. This put severe limitations on the ability of the military to produce those skills in bargaining and political communication that are required for sustaining political leadership countries such as Nigeria, where the intensity of political conflicts is great and new political forces unleashed by the processes of socio-economic change are agitating for an enhanced role in the political system.

Military rule in Nigeria was characterized by a cynical disregard for democratic principles both in making and implementation of public policies. The military rulers viewed democratic process which subjects governmental policies to scrutiny, debate and negotiation as an unnecessary cog in the wheel of rapid development. Consequently, law and order being the clarion call of the military rulers, and their obsession with this makes them impatient of the due process of law when dealing with people. They seemed to prefer administrative justice to normal legal system with its long and windy litigations and appeals. Therefore the military ruled by decrees which are not bound by or subject to legal or judicial constraints, and this in essence has wreaked havoc within the Nigerian political system which has in the long run continue to retard political development in Nigeria many years after the country has transited into civilian rule with many general elections conducted and some constitutional amendments taken place. The society remains militarized as can be seen within the Nigerian political culture.

Deriving from the above, the paper put forward the following recommends.

1. Develop professional ethos among the military in a way that strengthens their faith and confidence in democracy.
2. Establish institutional mechanisms which have the capacity to address the genuine fears and concerns of the military.
3. Educate the military to willingly accept the reality of being subjected to control by the civil order.
4. Encourage a culture of constitutionalism, rule of law and dialogue, which makes for rational democratic politics of accommodation, inclusion and tolerance.

5. The military should be properly paid and cared for. They should be paid highly due to the risks involved in their job.
6. There should be a compulsory annual in-service training for every military personnel. This training will be geared towards educating and socializing them on their expected roles and responsibilities.
7. In order to sustain a true democratic process, the constitution should frown at corrupt practices at all levels. People should be made to pay for the crimes they commit not minding their socio-political status.

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