

POLITICAL INSTABILITY IN AFRICA; AN ACCOUNT OF THE 2023 NIGER COUP

Ige Kehinde Moses
East Stroudsburg University (Graduate)
kige@live.esu.edu
amazingkheni@gmail.com

Ige, Taiwo Samuel
Northeastern Illinois University (Graduate)
tsige@neiu.edu

ABSTRACT

Political instability is principally defined as a state of volatility, violence, and social unrest due to a series of numerous factors such as corruption, weak bureaucratic institutions, and a lack of consensus by political actors or the leadership of a sovereign state. Africa has suffered from numerous waves of instability as a result of frequent and recurring disruptions in its political systems much of which are a result of its colonial legacy, weak institutions, economic factors, and corruption to mention a few. Niger is a landlocked country predominantly covered by the Sahara Desert. During the colonial era, this West African country was part of the French colony. Niger's diverse ethnic formation is made up of people groups ranging from the Hausa, Zarma Songhai, Taurey, Fulani, and Kanuri to mention a few. On the 26th of July 2023, President Mohamed Bazoum of Niger was ousted and detained by the country's presidential guard. The commander general of the presidential guard went on to proclaim himself the leader of the new military junta. Hence, this article will establish contemporary perspectives of political instability in Africa as well as give an account of the 2023 Niger coup with evaluations of its implications in Africa.

Keywords: Coup, Niger, Political, Instability, ECOWAS, President, Military, Mohamed Bazoum.

INTRODUCTION

Political instability has never been a hard term to define or conceptualize. If there ever was a dilemma in its interpretation, the term “political: and “instability” are without a shadow of a

doubt, self-explanatory. The risk factors associated with political instability have the potential for catastrophe (Ward, 2015).

Political instability can cause social fractionalization as it isolates conflict between the lines of division and the parties involved (Anthony Annett, 2001).

It is safe to say that political instability is an outcome of the lack of a state political culture and orderly political procedures (Anyanwu, K.C., 1982).

AN ACCOUNT OF NIGER'S 2023 COUP

The Nigerian coup of 2023 was executed by the country's presidential guard sequel to the arrest of President Mohamed Bazoum and his entire family. The principal actor of the coup, General Abdourahamane Tchiani has served as the head of the Presidential guard as well as defended different administrations from numerous attempted coups during the tenure of former President Mohamadou Issoufou and his successor Bazoum. The president of the governing party "The PN de estaria".

The president of Chad, Idris Derby visited Niger for a meeting detailing the demands of ECOWAS alongside a proposal to the military rulers in Niger. His numerous diplomatic engagements were with the military high command as well as the self-appointed leader of Niger "General Abdourahamane Tchiani". He also met with President Mohamed Bazoum and former president of Niger; President Muhammad Yusufu as well as respective senior officials of the government. While the details of the meeting are classified, President Idris Derby was tasked with briefing the current president of Nigeria (H.E. Bola Ahmed Tinubu) who is also the current Chairman of the economic community of West African states. A failure to adhere to the demands of ECOWAS will by implication have some repercussions as ECOWAS Heads of State and its leadership ordered that the military be on standby for possible intervention. The military High

commands of the respective member states of Ecowas have met and currently continue to dialogue to reach a consensus on the modalities of a military engagement in Niger should the need arise.

ECOWAS agitations are not limited to the undemocratic realities of the coup in Niger but also the tendencies and proclivities for a ripple effect in other African countries. There are also numerous claims, positions, and conspiracy theories on French military engagement in the country much of which lacks evidence or proof. With regards to ECOWAS intervention, US Secretary of State, Anthony Blinken expressed that the work that ECOWAS is doing and the statements it has made are important, strong, and supported by the United States. There are however numerous perspectives and interpretations as regards ECOWAS intervention. ECOWAS is a product of the post-colonial West African states. The primary aim of ECOWAS is the economic integration of the independent states in the sub-region. ECOWAS is also a West African machinery used to interrogate external conspiracies inherent in the international states in the sub-region. ECOWAS is also a West African machinery used to interrogate external conspiracies inherent in the international capitalist system. Hence, ECOWAS seeks to prioritize the interest of all West African member states from internal crisis, subversion, and external conspiracies (Arinze, Eke, Temitope, Moses, 2021).

Another perspective claims that the crisis in Niger is an outcome of imperialist and capitalist endeavors in the country where religion and ethnic polarization are instruments devised to distort the progressive polity of African States (Dhiakhate; Ige, Ige, 2023).

The uncertainties and fears associated with Niger are an outcome of imperialist and capitalist endeavors in the country where religion and ethnic polarization are instruments devised to distort the progressive polity of African States (Dhiakhate; Ige, Ige, 2023).

The uncertainties and fears associated with the Niger coup are its implications on African politics. Does this mean that decades after independence, some African States if not all lack the capacity for self-rule, and if so, what is the way forward? The distinctions and variations in African politics must be considered. The historical specificities and the political tensions, conflicts, and wars in the developmental processes of nation-building must also be considered. These distinctions allow for us to allocate across all spectrums the indications for progress and instability in these states. The autonomous republic of Niger was officially created under the leadership of Hamani Diori in 1958. Up until now, Niger has been faced with numerous political, socio-economic, and social challenges. The country of Niger is often mistaken as the Federal Republic of Nigeria. While both countries share a similarity in their names, it is pertinent to understand that they are different. Be that as it may, Niger and Nigeria share current and historical relationships, both states are members of ECOWAS, and their relationship is also largely based on a long-shared border as well as common cultural and historical interactions. The role of ECOWAS in managing political crisis and conflict in West Africa is on that is immeasurably valuable. Nigeria has always been and remains a key player in this regard. The president of the Federal Republic of Nigeria in person of H.E Asiwaju Bola Ahmed Tinubu currently serves as chairman of ECOWAS (Yabi, 2010).

Nigeria's military and Economic contributions to ECOWAS are one of the many reasons why the country plays a pivotal role in the decision-making, diplomacy, deliberations, conflict management, and de-escalation endeavors of this regional organization. It is imperative to state that there remain challenges as well as prospects with peacemaking in the ECOWAS region. The numerous peacemaking organizations of the economic community of West African states address the economic, political, and military fragility of its member states (Afolabi, 2009).

CONCLUSION

This account of the Niger coup is progressive and evolving as such the limitation of the study would be that this account of the 2023 Niger coup, however valid is merely a representation of the current state of affairs in Niger and not a representation of its totality. Hence, it is merely a framework for future study, assessment, and investigation.

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