The Re-Emergence of Military Coup in the Republic of Niger: Impacts on Security and Stability in Nigeria

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Abstract

West Africa has long struggled with political instability, violence, and frequent coups d'état. The Republic of Niger exemplifies this trend, having experienced multiple coups since its independence from France in 1960. The most recent coup was on July 26, 2023, which was led by General Abdourahmane Tchiani under the National Committee for the Restoration of Democracy and State (CNRDS), resulting in the suspension of the constitution and the detention of democratically elected President Mohamed Bazoum. This development destabilised Niger and posed significant threats to Nigeria's security and stability. Despite these challenges, the implications of Niger's political instability on Nigeria's security and stability remain underexplored. This study fills this gap by evaluating the interconnectedness of Niger's instability with Nigeria's security concerns, examining the impact of Niger's coup on Nigeria's leadership role, diplomatic influence, and economic stability. Hence, by employing the descriptive qualitative method, this study uses secondary sources from high-ranking journal articles and books, with data thematically analysed. It also applies regional security complex theory to aid in the analysis. The findings show that the coup has exacerbated Nigeria's cross-border security threats, disrupted diplomatic and trade relations, and caused economic challenges due to sanctions, even though it was later lifted. Consequently, this study recommends political and diplomatic solutions, along with efforts to facilitate Niger's successful return to democratic rule. This research will benefit scholars in political science, sociology, security, international studies, and policymakers while highlighting the need to explore further the recent coups in Mali and Burkina Faso and their implications for Nigeria's stability.

Keywords: Coup d'etat, Military, Niger, Nigeria, Security

1.1 Introduction

The Republic of the Niger is a landlocked country in West Africa.Countries like Libya border it to the northeast, Chad to the east, Nigeria to the south, Benin and Burkina Faso to the southwest, Mali to the west, and Algeria to the northwest. At present, the Republic of Niger has a population of approximately 27,452,529 (Worldometer, 2024). Both Niger and Nigeria are among the sixteen countries in the West African sub-region that have been particularly inclined to military coups d'état. The region has struggled to establish and consolidate democratic institutions and practices(Akinfenwa, 2021). However, between

1950 and 2023, the region accounted for 65% of all African coups, with 109 successful or attempted coups, according to the African Centre for the Constructive Resolution of Disputes (ACCORD).As such,in the region, Niger is one of the most coup-prone countries (Oluropo et al., 2024).Ayoola et al. (2024) noted thatsince the period that Niger gained its independence from France in 1960, the country has experienced several coups or attempted coups, leading to four government changes. According to Oluropo et al. (2024), The most recent coup occurred on July 26, 2023, when soldiers from the presidential guard stormed the presidential palace, detained President Mohamed Bazoum, and announced the suspension of the constitution. The coup leaders formed a military junta called the National Committee for the Restoration of Democracy and State (CNRDS), led by General Abdourahmane Tchiani.

However, this coup was widely condemned by the international community and regional organisations such as the African Union (AU) and the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS), which demanded the immediate release of President Bazoum and the restoration of constitutional order (Akinyemi et al., 2024). Relatedly, Nwachukwu(2024) stated that, regardless of the motivation, reasons, or otherwise justifiable excuses or causes of a military coup, the process of seizing/taking state power and using them unlawfully will not be accepted as defensible as the adverse effects of such outweigh its benefits, this notion spurred the intolerable reactions of neighbouring States of Niger Republic and the Economic Community of West Africa to blatant frown at the Niger coup and came up with diverse measures (including sanctions and consideration to use force) to restore democracy to Niger not only for the good sake of Niger Republic but one of its immediate neighbour Nigeria and rest of the sub-region.

Furthermore, both Nigeria and the Niger Republic are southern neighbours and most significant trading partners, usually converging in the northern regions of both countries. Also, there are multiple border crossings and a reasonably wide border between Nigeria and the Niger Republic (Olorufo, 2024).The border crossings at Jibiya, Nigeria, and Magaria, Niger, are particularly notable. This crossing is one of several locations where the two nations share a border and is located in northwest Nigeria. The two countries share a long border of about 1,500 km, which is porous and poorly secured. High cross-border mobility, trade, migration, and cultural exchange characterise the border region. However, it is also a hotspot for various forms of transnational organised crime, such as smuggling of goods and people, trafficking of drugs and weapons, illegal exploitation of natural resources, and terrorism (Ojewale, 2024). Hence The re-emergence of a military coup in the Niger Republic in 2023 has significant implications for the security and stability of Nigeria and the West African region. Niger coup would not only influence the domestic affairs of Niger Republic, ranging from socio-cultural tensions, security issues, political instability, and economic doldrums impacted negatively to security and stability of Nigeria on Border insecurity, increased armed violence, disruption in trade and socio-economic activities and also challenge Nigeria's active role in ECOWAS, and their Diplomacy(Smith,2023).

Given the above problems, this study tends to ask, what are the impacts of the re-emergence of military coup in Niger on security and stability in Nigeria? Also, this study, by its objectives, generally centres on examining the effects of a military coup in Niger on Nigeria's security and regional stability. Relatedly, despite the challenges above, various scholars have written regarding West African security, political instabilities and coup d'etat, including the scholarly works of Ojewale (2024), Olurofa et el (2024), Akinyemi et al. (2024), Sowale (2024) and Ayoola et al. (2024), however, none of the scholars

reviewed from the extant literature found to have addressed this perspective regarding the Re-Emergence of Military Coup in the Republic of Niger: Impacts on Security and Stability in Nigeria. Hence, this study fills the gaps and contributes to the knowledge body.

1.2 Research methodology

This study utilises a descriptive qualitative method to analyse the re-emergence of military coup in the Republic of Niger and their impacts on the security and stability of Nigeria. The descriptive approach comprehensively explains the political dynamics(Cresswell, 2007).Hence this study, by employing the aforementioned research method, examined Niger and the subsequent regional effects, particularly on Nigeria. The methodfocuses on providing a detailed account of the events, exploring the causes, processes, and consequences of a military coup in Niger and how these developments affect Nigeria's national security and regional stability. Data for the study is mainly sourced from high-ranking secondary resources, including scholarly articles, books, seminars and conference papers, ensuring the inclusion of reputable and authoritative materials from high-ranking databases, including Proquest, Google Scholar,and Taylor and Francis. These resources offer a deep and wide-ranging perspective on the subject, allowing for the extraction of better insights. Hence, the gathered data is subjected to rigorous thematic analysis, a descriptive qualitative technique that identifies, organises, and interprets patterns and themes within the data to ascertain the sources' authenticity, reliability, and relevance. This approach enables the researcher to draw meaningful conclusions. Additionally, Regional Security Complex Theory (RSCT) is incorporated as the theoretical framework to help contextualise the findings, providing a lens through which the interconnected security dynamics between Niger and Nigeria can be better understood and the broader regional implications can be assessed.

1.3 Theoretical frameworks:

This study utilizesRegional Security Complex Theory (RSCT) to appraisethe re-emergence of Military coup in the Republic of Niger: impacts on security and stability in Nigeria. This theorywas developed by Barry Buzan in 1991 as part of his broader work on international security and regionalism (Farzayee, 2023). As stated by Farzayee, Buzan, along with Ole Wæver and Jaap de Wilde, expanded on the concept of security by proposing that security issues are often regionally shared and that the dynamics of one country's security are heavily influenced by the security dynamics of its neighbouring countries. As emphasised by Haughton to Buzan, security is not solely determined by global or national actors. Still, it is also shaped by the interactions between neighbouring states that form a "regional security complex. Consequently, a key premise of RSCT is that the security concerns of states within a particular region are intertwined, meaning that the actions of one state can have ripple effects on the others. Moreover, Buzan's RSCT departs from traditional approaches that often view security threats in isolation, focusing instead on how regional actors' security concerns, whether military, economic, or political, shape the broader regional environment (Haughton, 2023). Given the above, this perspective allows for a better understanding of conflicts and security concerns in regions like West Africa, where the effects of instability in one state can quickly spread to its neighbours.

In the context of the Republic of Niger, RSCT offers a compelling framework for understanding the re-emergence of the military coup and its broader impact on regional stability, which can be akin to Niger's political instability, exemplified by the repeated military interventions, does not exist in a vacuum.

According to RSCT, the security is intricately tied to the security concerns of neighbouring states, just like the same scenario of Niger and Nigeria. The resurgence of a military coup in Niger could be seen as a destabilising factor that threatens regional security, with potential spillover effects on Nigeria. Using RSCT, one can argue that Niger's political instability directly influences Nigeria, especially in areas such as border security, economic stability, and the fight against insurgent groups. Niger's military coup may prompt concerns in Nigeria about the potential for similar instability, thus affecting Nigeria's security strategies. Furthermore, RSCT highlights how the interconnections between states in a region shape their security policies, meaning that Nigeria's response to Niger's military coup could impact broader regional relations, including cooperation on security initiatives and economic development. The theory emphasises the necessity of understanding regional security dynamics, demonstrating how a disturbance in one part of the security complex (in this case, Niger) can directly impact the stability of neighbouring states (like Nigeria).

The scientific contributions of Regional Security Complex Theory (RSCT) lie in its ability to frame security as a collective phenomenon within a particular region, offering a significant departure from traditional, state-centric security studies. The key assumptions of RSCT are that geographical proximity shared political, economic, and cultural ties, and the actions of neighbouring states shape regional security. RSCT assumes that the security concerns of one state are rarely isolated but are instead influenced by the security situations in surrounding countries. This theory also assumes that global or superpower interests do not necessarily govern regional security but are driven by local and regional dynamics. In the context of the re-emergence of a military coup in Niger, RSCT helps explain why the instability caused by such a coup does not just affect Niger but also has repercussions for Nigeria. This theory assumes that because Niger and Nigeria are geographically close and share similar security challenges, such as insurgencies and political instability, the security concerns in one country inevitably affect the other. By understanding the security interdependencies within the regional security complex, policymakers in Nigeria can better anticipate the impact of events in Niger on their national security. RSCT thus provides a robust framework for understanding how regional dynamics, such as military coups in neighbouring states, can influence the broader regional security environment and help shape the responses of countries within that region.

Additionally, the RSCT's contributionlies in its ability to challenge traditional security paradigms by offering a regionally focused approach that underscores the importance of neighbouring states' security concerns. The theory has been applied in various contexts, including studying conflict and cooperation in Sub-Saharan Africa, the Middle East, and South Asia. In the context of Niger's military coup, RSCT provides insight into how security concerns in one state (Niger) directly impact the security policies of neighbouring states (Nigeria). It suggests that Nigeria's response to a military coup in Niger must consider the broader regional security environment, as instability in Niger could affect Nigeria's stability. By emphasising the interconnectedness of regional security, RSCT offers policymakers a comprehensive tool for understanding how local conflicts can transcend borders and require coordinated regional solutions. This application is particularly relevant in the context of West Africa, where military coups and political instability are recurrent challenges that necessitate regional cooperation and collective security arrangements

1.4 Literature review

1.4.1 The Niger Military Coup and Its Impact on Border Security in Nigeria

Niger Republic shares a long and porous border with Nigeria, a factor that has historically contributed to the country's security challenges. As noted by Olurofo et al. (2024), Since 2010, Nigeria has experienced a marked rise in security threats, particularly from the northern regions, including insurgency, banditry, and kidnapping. These threats have been exacerbated by the porous nature of the Nigeria-Niger border, which facilitates the illegal movement of people, weapons, and fighters across the two nations. Concerning the above, the coup in Niger, which resulted in the ousting of the democratically elected government, has created a volatile situation with the potential to spill over into Nigeria. As highlighted by Sowale (2024), his political instability in Niger is further complicating Nigeria's already precarious security landscape, as criminal networks and militant groups exploit the vacuum left by the collapse of governmental authority in Niger.

Furthermore, the porous border between Nigeria and Niger has long been a critical security concern. According to studies on border insecurity carried out by Olurofa (2024), the movement of people and goods across these poorly controlled areas has facilitated the flow of illicit trade, weapons, and insurgents into Nigeria). As maintained By Aliyu (2023), Criminal networks and armed groups have taken advantage of the porous border, exacerbating security issues in the northern parts of Nigeria. The insurgency in the northeastern states, particularly by Boko Haram and the Islamic State's West Africa Province (ISWAP), has had significant cross-border implications, with militants using the border as a passage for attacks in both Niger and Nigeria. Abdullahi (2023) observed that these armed groups have formed alliances across national borders, taking advantage of the lack of security along the shared border to plan and execute joint operations. Given the above, scholars including Olurofa (2024) and Sowale (2024) pine emphatically that the situation has become even more dire following the coup in Niger, as the collapse of state authority has intensified the activities of these militants and insurgent groups, further destabilising both countries.

Additionally, the political crisis in Niger, caused by the coup that ousted President Mohamed Bazoum in 2023, has created a power vacuum, further heightening the security risks for Nigeria. The interference with political stability in Niger has created an environment of uncertainty and chaos that militant groups and criminal organisations are quick to exploit. According to Ismail and Mohammed (2023),the power vacuum in Niger has made it easier for armed groups to operate unchecked, taking advantage of the lack of cooperation between the government of the two countries. This has worsened the security situation in Nigeria, where groups like Boko Haram and ISWAP have continued their insurgency. At the same time, bandits and kidnappers have targeted civilians and travellers in the northern regions. The lack of unity between the two countries allowed these groups to use the region as a base for launching attacks, particularly in Nigeria.

Moreover, the implications of the coup in Niger have triggered a significant humanitarian crisis, as thousands of people have been forced to flee the violence and seek refuge in Nigeria. According to the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (2024), the coup has caused massive displacement, with civilians fleeing across the border to escape the violence and the breakdown of law and order in Niger. This movement of refugees into Nigeria has placed immense strain on the resources and security

infrastructure of border states, further complicating Nigeria's efforts to manage both the influx of displaced people and the armed groups operating along its borders. As noted by Agu, and Ugada, (2024). Refugees pour into Nigeria, and there is an increased risk of armed insurgents infiltrating the displaced population, using the chaos of displacement as a cover to smuggle in fighters and weapons. The UNHCR has also raised concerns about the potential for further radicalisation and recruitment of displaced persons by extremist groups, as they become vulnerable to manipulation in the face of their displacement (UNHCR, 2024). This mass migration has exacerbated the security situation in Nigeria, complicating both humanitarian and security responses to the crisis.

Also, The presence of these displaced people and the resulting increase in the movement of armed militants and fighters have further intensified Nigeria's security issues. The increasing number of refugees crossing the border has added another layer to the already complex situation, as some of the displaced individuals are known to have connections with insurgent groups, further destabilising the region. According to a report by Adebayo (2022), the movement of refugees across borders can often create an environment ripe for the recruitment of fighters, especially in regions with weak governance and porous borders. The growing population of displaced persons in Nigeria, combined with the ongoing activities of criminal and militant groups, has created a volatile situation that is difficult to contain.

Besides that, scholars, includingOjewale(2024) and Olurofa et al. (2024),maintained that the coup in Niger has led to increased cooperation among militant groups across the region, particularly Boko Haram and ISWAP. These groups have historically operated in both Niger and Nigeria, using the shared border to launch cross-border attacks and recruit fighters. The weakening of state control in Niger has allowed these insurgent groups to entrench themselves along the border further, operating with greater freedom and expanding their influence into new territories. Bandit groups, which have plagued Nigeria's northern regions for years, have also found new opportunities for expansion in Niger, taking advantage of the instability in both countries to increase their criminal activities. As the power vacuum in Niger deepens, criminal and militant groups have consolidated their positions, further escalating the insecurity that already plagues the region.

1.4.2 The Economic Ramifications of the Coup and its Implications for Nigeria and the Region

The political turmoil in Niger, marked by the military coup, has significantly disrupted trade and socio-economic activities between Niger and Nigeria, two closely interconnected nations with strong economic ties. The coup's impact on trade relations has been profound, leading to cascading effects on both countries' economies (Hansen, 2024). As Niger is an essential economic partner for Nigeria, any political tension or instability in Niger has direct implications for the trade and development prospects of both nations. The coup has created conditions that undermine trade relations between Niger and Nigeria which are vital for both countries' economies. As stated by World Bank (2020) that as of 2019, Nigeria accounted for approximately 80% of Niger's exports, underscoring the significance of this bilateral economic partnership and trade dynamics between the two nations encompass a diverse array of goods, including petroleum products, agricultural produce, livestock, manufactured goods, and services (Shola, & Olanrewaju,2020). These exchanges are critical to the economic well-being of both countries, particularly in border regions where cross-border trade has historically supported livelihoods and promoted socio-economic integration. However, the military coup in Niger has disrupted this essential

trade relationship, resulting in significant economic losses and a deterioration in regional economic stability.

One of the most immediate consequences of the coup has been the disruption of cross-border trade flows. Increased insecurity and the closure of borders, coupled with sanctions imposed by regional and international actors, have led to a sharp decline in the movement of goods and people between Niger and Nigeria (Oduoye et, el 2024).This has particularly affected Niger, which is heavily reliant on Nigeria for its energy supply and foreign exchange earnings. As observed byObasi (2023) that, the cessation of energy exports from Nigeria to Niger has caused severe disruptions in Niger's energy sector, affecting industries and households alike. Niger's dependence on imported energy from Nigeria has made the country vulnerable to external shocks, and the current political instability has only amplified these vulnerabilities. Furthermore, the restricted flow of goods has led to shortages of essential commodities in both countries, pushing prices higher and placing additional economic burdens on already struggling populations (Olurofa, 2024)

Correspondingly, the coup has also disrupted agricultural trade, a critical component of the Niger-Nigeria economic partnership. Niger's agricultural exports to Nigeria, including livestock and grains, have been significantly affected (Obasi, 2023). As further noted by Obasi, this disruption has had a domino effect, impacting food security in both countries. In Niger, the inability to export agricultural products has resulted in surplus stockpiles that cannot reach their intended markets, leading to income losses for farmers and traders. Meanwhile, in Nigeria, the reduced availability of agricultural imports from Niger has contributed to food price inflation, compounding the economic challenges faced by households. These disruptions underscore the profound interdependence of the two nations' agricultural sectors and highlight the broader implications of political instability on regional food security.

About the above, the informal economy, which constitutes a substantial portion of cross-border trade between Niger and Nigeria, has also been severely affected by the coup. Informal traders, who rely on the free movement of goods and people across borders, have faced significant challenges due to increased security measures and border closures. These traders, many of whom operate in subsistence economies, have lost access to their primary sources of income (Oduoye et, el 2024). The situation is particularly dire for border communities, where cross-border trade has historically been a lifeline for economic survival. The loss of income for these communities has exacerbated poverty levels and heightened social tensions, creating a volatile socio-economic environment that could further destabilise the region.

Moreover, the economic implications of the coup extend beyond trade disruptions to include broader socio-economic consequences. The uncertainty created by the coup has eroded investor confidence in both Niger and Nigeria, leading to a decline in foreign direct investment (FDI) flows into the region. Businesses operating in Niger, including Nigerian companies with cross-border operations, have been forced to suspend or scale back their activities due to the heightened security risks and economic uncertainty. This decline in business activity has a ripple effect on employment and income generation, further exacerbating the economic challenges both nations face. According to recent reports by the International Crisis Group (2023), the coup has created an environment of economic stagnation, with little prospect for recovery without political stability and effective governance.

Also, the sanctions imposed on Niger by the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) contributed to the economic disruption. While these sanctions are intended to pressure the military junta to restore democratic governance, they have exacerbated ordinary citizens' economic hardships as reported by Aljazeera (2024) that on February 24 2024, The West African regional bloc lifted most sanctions imposed on Niger over last year's coup in a new push for dialogue following a series of political crises that have rocked the region in recent months. A no-fly zone and border closures were among the sanctions being lifted "with immediate effect", the president of the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) Commission, Omar Alieu Touray, said:

> *"The lifting of the sanctions is "on purely humanitarian grounds" to ease the suffering caused as a result, Touray told reporters after the bloc's summit in the Nigerian capital, Abuja."*

The summit aimed to address existential threats facing the region as well as implore three military-led nations that have quit the bloc – Niger, Mali and Burkina Faso – to rescind their decision. However, the restrictions on trade and financial transactions have further strained Niger's already fragile economy, making it difficult for the country to access essential goods and services. These sanctions have also affected Nigeria, which has seen a decline in its export revenues from trade with Niger. The economic strain caused by these sanctions highlights the complex interplay between the region's political decisions and economic outcomes.

1.4.3 The Niger Coup and Its Impacts on Nigeria's Role in ECOWAS

The military coup in Niger in 2023 has had significant implications for Nigeria, directly and indirectly, and has posed challenges to its role within the Economic Community of West African States (Obasi, 2023 and Braimah, (2023)). As the political turmoil in Niger unfolded, it diverted the attention of Nigeria's government away from pressing domestic political and economic challenges, which were already deteriorating at the time. Rather than focusing on its internal issues, Nigeria found itself compelled to take on the role of a regional stabiliser, seeking to restore political stability and democracy in Niger. As elaborated by Yusuf (2023), this involvement is critical to Nigeria's security interests and aimed at preventing the spread of further political instability and threats to democratic governance in the West African region. As elucidated by Ukpere and Frank (2024) and Avoulete (2023), Nigeria's commitments underscore its dual obligation to its domestic constituents and broader regional responsibilities, highlighting the complex interplay between national and regional politics.

Likewise, the coup directly undermined regional security, cooperation, and integration in West Africa, which had already faced challenges from recurring conflicts and governance issues. ECOWAS, as a sub-regional organisation, has been at the forefront of promoting peace, democracy, and development in its member states. Its zero-tolerance policy for unconstitutional government changes has been a cornerstone of its governance framework.(Adedeji,2019).Over the years, ECOWAS has imposed sanctions on countries that experienced coups, using these measures to deter political instability. (Obasi, 2023). The coup in Niger, however, has tested the limits of ECOWAS's enforcement capacity. The sanctions and diplomatic efforts aimed at restoring civilian governance in Niger have faced resistance, both internally within Niger and from external actors, thereby complicating the organisation's ability to uphold its principles.

Relatedly, the implications of the coup in 2023 extend beyond immediate political instability, as it has jeopardised Niger's participation in ECOWAS institutions and initiatives. Niger's membership in ECOWAS entails active involvement in critical projects and institutions such as the ECOWAS Parliament, the ECOWAS Court of Justice, the ECOWAS Single Currency Project, and the ECOWAS Peace and Security Architecture(Avoulete, 2023; Braimah, 2023; and Akinyemi et el 2024). The disruption caused by the coup has not only sidelined Niger from these initiatives but has also eroded the collective progress of the sub-region. For instance, the ECOWAS Single Currency Project, a long-standing goal for economic integration, is contingent on political stability and policy coordination among member states, creating hurdles for such ambitious projects, delaying their implementation and undermining the broader vision of regional integration.

Besides, Obasi, 2023 and Akinyemi et al. (2024) agree that the coup has cast a shadow on Nigeria's role as a sub-regional leader and mediator in West Africa. Nigeria has historically played a pivotal role in conflict resolution and peacebuilding within ECOWAS, contributing resources and personnel to stabilise countries such as Liberia, Sierra Leone, Guinea-Bissau, Mali, and Burkina Faso. This leadership role has been instrumental in upholding the region's peace and security framework. Nevertheless,Ukpere and Frank (2024) asserted that the coup in Niger has complicated Nigeria's efforts to maintain its leadership position. The diversion of attention and resources to address the crisis in Niger has strained Nigeria's capacity to manage its other regional and domestic commitments effectively.

Similarly, the broader implications of the coup also extend to Nigeria's domestic political landscape. The government's preoccupation with restoring stability in Niger has diverted resources and focus from pressing internal issues, including economic challenges, rising insecurity, and social unrest at a time when Nigeria was grappling with economic hardship exacerbated by inflation, unemployment, and a depreciating currency, the need to redirect resources to regional stability efforts has placed additional strain on an already overburdened system (Yusuf, 2023). Also, scholars such as Avoulete (2023) and Braimah (2023) believe the above scenario exposed vulnerabilities in regional governance and cooperation mechanisms. While ECOWAS has made significant strides in promoting regional stability, the crisis in Niger underscores the need for more robust mechanisms to address political instability and unconstitutional changes of government. Scholars argue that the effectiveness of ECOWAS's response mechanisms is often limited by member states' differing political priorities and the lack of enforceable measures to compel compliance with its resolutions (Akindele & Akinyemi, 2022). The case of Niger demonstrates that while sanctions and diplomatic efforts are essential, they need to be complemented by broader strategies that address the root causes of instability, such as poverty, corruption, and weak governance structures.

The role of external actors in the Niger crisis further complicates the dynamics of regional stability. The strategic importance of Niger, particularly in terms of its natural resources and geopolitical positioning, has attracted the attention of global powers. This external involvement has the potential to either support or undermine ECOWAS's efforts, depending on the alignment of interests. Nigeria, as a key player in ECOWAS, faces the challenge of navigating these external influences while striving to maintain its leadership role and uphold the region's principles of democratic governance.

1.4.4 Diplomatic Challenges Arising from the Coup

Diplomatic relations between Niger and Nigeria and their neighbours have long been central to the political and economic stability of the West African region(Braimah, 2023). However, the recent coup in Niger has underscored how fragile diplomatic ties can become when political crises emerge. For example, historically, the two countries have shared amicable relations rooted in cultural, economic, and geographical proximity. Both nations have worked collaboratively through bilateral agreements and regional organisations, such as the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS), to address shared challenges like security, economic development, and cross-border trade (Olurofa, 2024). However, the coup in Niger has disrupted this harmony, revealing the inherent tensions in their diplomatic ties and sparking a chain of events with significant implications for both countries and the broader region.

The aftermath of the coup in Niger has placed Nigeria's foreign policy and diplomatic priorities under considerable strain(Dawam and Arin, 2023). Also, Mabogunje(2023)further expounded that under President Bola Ahmed Tinubu, Nigeria responded swiftly to the coup, reflecting its vested interest in the political stability of its northern neighbour. As the current chair of ECOWAS, President Tinubu took a leadership role in coordinating the regional bloc's response to the crisis, emphasising the restoration of constitutional order in Niger(Tinubu,2023). Scholars such as this stance align with ECOWAS's zero-tolerance policy for unconstitutional government changes, a principle consistently upheld to promote democratic governance in the region. However, Yusuf (2023) noted that this approach has also raised questions about its effectiveness and the potential long-term repercussions for Nigeria's diplomatic relations with Niger.

Given the above, the suspension of Niger from ECOWAS following the coup highlights the complexities of maintaining regional unity amidst political upheaval. While ECOWAS has imposed sanctions on Niger, the military government's resistance to international pressure has strained Nigeria's diplomatic efforts. Scholars argue that the imposition of economic and political sanctions, while a standard response to a coup, often leads to unintended consequences, such as worsening economic conditions and fostering anti-Nigerian sentiments among the population of the affected country (Aning & Bah, 2021). In the case of Niger, the sanctions have not only deepened its political isolation but have also complicated Nigeria's efforts to maintain its leadership role within ECOWAS. However, despite the lifting of sanctions on February 24, 2024. the situation remains the same.

Relatedly, this coup has reignited debates about the efficacy of Nigeria's diplomatic strategies in managing regional crises. Nigeria's decision to lead a robust ECOWAS response, including the threat of military intervention, has been met with mixed reactions. Some critics argue that this approach risks further destabilising the region, particularly given Niger's strategic importance in the Sahel's fight against terrorism and transnational crime (Zounmenou & Loua, 2022). Others contend that Nigeria's assertive stance underscores its commitment to upholding democratic norms in the region, even at the risk of straining bilateral relations with Niger. This dual perspective reflects Nigeria's broader challenges in balancing domestic political and economic concerns with its regional leadership responsibilities.

Consequently. the political implications of Nigeria's response to the coup extend beyond its bilateral relations with Niger. As a regional power, other ECOWAS member states and the international community closely watch Nigeria's actions. Some scholars argue that Nigeria's leadership in addressing the Niger crisis could set a precedent for future responses to coups in the region, particularly in terms of

balancing the principles of non-interference and the promotion of democratic governance (Kalu & Eze, 2020). However, others caution that Nigeria's assertive approach could exacerbate regional divisions, particularly if it is perceived as prioritising its national interests over collective regional goals. Scholars Dawam and Arin (2023). Olurofa (2024) and Oduoye (2024) stated that the scenario has brought to light Nigeria's challenges in maintaining its role as a sub-regional leader and mediator. Nigeria's diplomatic efforts in the wake of the Niger coup have been complicated by its domestic challenges, including economic instability, political tensions, and security concerns. Critics argue that Nigeria's focus on resolving the Niger crisis has diverted attention and resources away from addressing these pressing domestic issues, thereby weakening its ability to project leadership on the regional stage (Onapajo & Uzodike, 2022). This dynamic reflects the broader tensions between Nigeria's domestic and regional priorities, which have become increasingly intertwined in the context of the Niger crisis.

1.5 Findings and Discussions

1.5.1 Border Security

This study found that the re-emergence of the military coup in Niger, notably the 2023 overthrow of President Mohamed Bazoum, has significantly exacerbated security challenges in Nigeria, primarily due to the porous border shared by both countries. The findings indicate that the instability in Niger has intensified cross-border security threats in Nigeria, including insurgency, banditry, and criminal activities. As noted by scholars such as Olurofo et al. (2024) and Aliyu (2023), the lack of control over the Nigeria-Niger border has facilitated the illegal movement of people, weapons, and insurgents, allowing groups like Boko Haram and ISWAP to operate freely. In line with the above statement, this study found in the scholarly works ofSowale (2024), and Abdullahi (2023) that militant groups have taken advantage of the situation, using the border to launch attacks and recruit fighters, which has worsened Nigeria's security conditions. The coup's power vacuum in Niger has allowed criminal and militant groups to expand their influence, exacerbating the already fragile security environment in Nigeria.

Additionally, the findings of this study reveal that the coup has led to a significant humanitarian crisis, with thousands of displaced people fleeing Niger into Nigeria, further straining the country's security and resources. According to the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (2024), this mass displacement has created new challenges, as refugees often become vulnerable to radicalisation, with insurgent groups exploiting the chaos to infiltrate the displaced population.In line with the works of Ismail and Mohammed (2023),Ojewale, O. (2024) and Olurofa et al. (2024), the findings of this study highlighted that the influx of refugees has made it easier for armed groups to smuggle fighters and weapons into Nigeria emanated from the aftermath of the coup by capitalising on the weak governance and porous borders which have led the militants infiltrating into the refugee populations, thereby complicating Nigeria's security situation. This study underscores the need for stronger regional cooperation and improved border security to address these growing threats effectively.

1.5.2 The Impact of the Coup on Niger-Nigeria Trade Relations

In line with the scholarly works of Hansen (2024), Oduoye et el (2024), Olurofa (2024) and Obasi (2023), this study founds that the 2023 military coup in Niger has significantly disrupted trade relations

between Niger and Nigeria, which have long been crucial to the economies of both nations. Furtherfindings indicate that Niger, heavily reliant on Nigeria for energy supplies and foreign exchange, has faced severe economic disruptions due to the coup. The closure of borders and the imposition of sanctions have curtailed the flow of goods, causing shortages of essential commodities, including petroleum, agricultural products, and livestock. As noted by the World Bank (2020), Nigeria accounts for 80% of Niger's exports, and the coup's impact on this trade has resulted in economic losses for both countries. The disruption of agricultural trade has worsened food security, contributing to higher prices and income losses for farmers in both nations. The informal economy, which thrives on cross-border trade, has also been deeply affected, exacerbating poverty in border regions and increasing social tensions.

Furthermore, this study findings highlights that the coup has triggered a broader humanitarian crisis, with thousands of displaced people fleeing Niger into Nigeria. This influx has strained Nigeria's resources and posed new security risks as insurgent groups exploit the chaos. The study demonstrates that the coup's impact on trade and human displacement has undermined regional economic stability, compounded by the imposition of sanctions by ECOWAS. Aljazeera (2024) reported that while some sanctions were lifted in 2024, the damage to economic activity in both countries remains significant. The study underscores the urgent need for improved governance and regional cooperation to restore stability, enhance border security, and mitigate the economic fallout from the ongoing political crisis.

1.5.3 Impact of the Niger Coup on Nigeria's ECOWAS influence

This study reveals that the 2023 military coup in Niger has significantly disrupted Nigeria's role in the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) (Olurofa, 2024; Dawam and Arin, 2023). The findings indicate that the political instability in Niger diverted Nigeria's focus from its domestic challenges, compelling the government to assume a regional stabilising role. This involvement was vital for Nigeria's security and aimed at maintaining regional political stability and preventing further democratic erosion in West Africa. As scholars such as Braimah (2023) and Dawam and Arin, 2023) note, Nigeria's dual obligation to domestic and regional responsibilities highlights the complex intersection of national and regional politics.

Moreover, the coup undermined ECOWAS's regional security and integration efforts, as the organisation's zero-tolerance policy for unconstitutional government changes faced significant challenges. Similarly, this study finding stresses that Niger's exclusion from key ECOWAS initiatives, such as the Single Currency Project and the Peace and Security Architecture, has delayed the integration agenda and eroded collective progress. The findings also emphasise the impact on Nigeria's leadership role within ECOWAS, as its resources were redirected to addressing the crisis in Niger, limiting its capacity to manage other regional conflicts effectively. This study discovered that scholars likeAvoulete (2023) and Braimah (2023) argue that the coup exposed vulnerabilities in ECOWAS's governance mechanisms, underscoring the need for more potent strategies to address the root causes of instability, such as poverty and corruption. They equally affirmed that external actors' involvement further complicates the crisis, with global powers influencing the dynamics of regional stability. Ultimately, this study demonstrates that while sanctions and diplomatic efforts are crucial, they must be paired with broader strategies to restore regional stability and support ECOWAS's objectives.

1.5.4 Diplomatic problems between Niger and Nigeria

This study reveals that the coup in Niger has significantly disrupted diplomatic relations between Niger and Nigeria, underscoring the fragility of their ties. Historically, both nations have enjoyed amicable relations, working together through bilateral agreements and regional organisations like ECOWAS to address shared challenges.However, the coup has strained these relations, with Nigeria's foreign policy coming under pressure. The findings indicate that Nigeria, under President Bola Ahmed Tinubu, swiftly responded to the crisis, emphasising the restoration of constitutional order in Niger, aligning with ECOWAS's stance against unconstitutional government changes. This position, while consistent with democratic principles, has raised concerns about its long-term impact on Nigeria's diplomatic relations with Niger (Olurofa, 2024).

Furthermore, this study highlights the complexities of maintaining regional unity, as evidenced by ECOWAS's suspension of Niger. The imposition of sanctions, although a typical response to coups, has exacerbated Niger's political isolation and strained Nigeria's diplomatic efforts. Scholars argue that such measures often worsen economic conditions and foster anti-Nigerian sentiment (Aning & Bah, 2021). The study demonstrates that Nigeria's leadership in ECOWAS, including the threat of military intervention, has been met with mixed reactions. Following Dawam and Arin (2023), Olurofa (2024) and Oduoye (2024), this study found that While some critics warn of destabilisation, others commend Nigeria's commitment to democratic governance.Findings underscore the challenge Nigeria faces in balancing its regional leadership role with domestic issues, as its focus on the Niger crisis risks diverting attention from pressing internal concerns, potentially weakening its position in the region.

1.6 Conclusion

This study critically analysed the re-emergence of Military coupin the Republic of Niger: impacts on security and stability in Nigeria. Hence, the first part of this study deals with the historical context of a military coup in West Africa, specifically focusing on Niger and its re-emergence of military rule. It provides an overview of the political landscape in Niger, detailing how past coups have shaped the nation's governance and regional relations. The article examines how Niger's military coups disrupt both domestic stability and regional security, highlighting the significance of these political shifts in the broader West African context. The study explains how the coup in Niger not only impacted the internal political structure but also led to heightened security concerns in neighbouring Nigeria, emphasising the cross-border implications of political instability. The first section underscores the importance of understanding the role of military coups in undermining democratic governance and regional cooperation in the Sahel and West Africa.

The other parts of this study highlight the security and diplomatic challenges faced by Nigeria in the wake of the coup in Niger. It explores the diplomatic strains between the two countries, particularly in the context of ECOWAS's response to the coup and the subsequent sanctions imposed on Niger. The findings demonstrate that while Nigeria, under President Bola Ahmed Tinubu, has played a pivotal role in ECOWAS's efforts to address the crisis, this approach has raised questions about the long-term consequences for Nigeria's relations with Niger. The study delves into the tension between Nigeria's role as a regional leader and its internal security concerns, particularly in the context of rising terrorism and transnational crime in the Sahel. Furthermore, the article examines the potential risks to Nigeria's

political stability and security as the regional response to the coup unfolds, noting that the ongoing instability in Niger may exacerbate existing security challenges in Nigeria, particularly along their shared borders.

Another part of the study emphasises the broader implications of Niger's political instability on the region, including the impact on ECOWAS and the international community. The study illustrates the challenges faced by ECOWAS in maintaining unity and responding to the coup in Niger, particularly given the varied interests of its member states. The research highlights the complexity of balancing non-interference principles with promoting democratic governance and regional stability. The article also delves into the potential long-term effects on Nigeria's regional leadership role, with scholars suggesting that Nigeria's handling of the crisis could set a precedent for future responses to coups in West Africa. The study concludes by emphasising the need for a more comprehensive approach to regional security that addresses both immediate threats and long-term stability in the Sahel and West Africa, noting that diplomatic, military, and economic tools must be integrated to address the root causes of instability.

This study used descriptive qualitative methods to analyse the re-emergence of military coups in Niger and their impact on security and stability in Nigeria. The study employed the Regional Security Complex Theory (RSCT) to help frame the analysis of regional dynamics and the interconnectedness of security concerns between Niger and Nigeria. By applying RSCT, the study provides valuable insights into how the political instability in Niger affects Nigeria's security framework, illustrating the interdependencies between the two countries and the broader regional context. The study also benefits policymakers, security analysts, and regional organisations by offering a deeper understanding of military coups' complexities and their impact on national and regional stability. It underscores the importance of a coordinated, multi-layered response to security challenges. Finally, this study contributes to the growing works of literature on West African political crises and their implications for regional security governance. The findings of this study serve as a foundation for future research on the effectiveness of regional security frameworks in addressing political instability and its broader effects.

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