

## **Coups d'état and Democratic Backsliding in Africa: Legitimizing Unconstitutional Power Grabs and Implications for Continental Political Stability**

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### **Abstract**

This chapter examines the sudden allure of a coup in twenty-first-century Africa resulting from external interference in the continent's economic affairs. Benefits accruing from coups include power and unbridled access to state resources, whereas the downsides such as failure and ultimate imprisonment are less likely particularly if the incumbent administration is civilian. The plethora of coups in Africa comes against the backdrop of the Organization of African Union's policy of noninterference, which makes coup plotters forget about external costs to be incurred. This chapter, through discourse analysis and related literature, underscores the central role foreign-trained officers play in the successful execution of coups and how the institutionalization of Western-style democracy is stifled as citizens conceptualize coups as a liberating force from civilian bondage. Through discourse analysis and available literature on the coup phenomenon in Africa, this chapter critiques the role of international players in sustaining coup plots that stand to undermine the democratic gains of yesteryears and recommends that people should shift from their outright condemnation to taking bold and proactive political measures that are in synch with African political and economic realities in order to curb their recurrence.