The Ethnic Bias Of Armies In Sub-Saharan Africa And Its Implications On The Cultural Security of Countries

الانحياز الاثني للجيوش في إفريقيا جنوب الصحراء وتداعياته على الأمن الثقافي للدول

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Abstract:

The independence of African countries has led to the creation of modern states devoid of ethnic homogeneity, which had a negative impact on the overall political, economic, and social environments, which manifested itself in the composition of their establishments, such as the military, which is characterized by an unbalanced ethnic composition, whether based on linguistic elements. Religious, racial, or geographical differences. Due to the fact it was unable to move beyond the frameworks of ethnic groups in favor of establishing a homogeneous national institution, it served as fuel for coups and counter-coups for long periods. This had a negative impact on national identity and, as a result, the accomplishment of cultural security in these countries.

Keywords:

Africa, Cultural Security, Ethnicity, Civil- Military Relations.

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Introduction

The issue of ethnic diversity in Sub-Saharan Africa is one of the most controversial issues, encompassing all the crises that these countries have been facing since gaining independence in the 1960's, such as ethnic conflicts, political instability, and military coups.

Ethnicity is considered as an important entry point for analyzing power dynamics in African countries and the problems associated with them, such as military coups, which are one of the most prominent manifestations of ethnic polarization in Africa.

Although there are many reasons that drive the military institution to become directly or indirectly involved in the political process in African countries, statistics indicate that military coups are one of the most prominent phenomena of ethnic polarization, especially the coups that followed the post-independence era.

This is because the armies in these countries are characterized by an unbalanced ethnic composition, unable to transcend the frameworks of ethnic groups in favor of building a homogeneous national institution, and have been fueling coups and counter-coups for long periods, negatively affecting national identity and cultural security in these countries

Therefore, this research will investigate the impact of African militaries' ethnic composition on establishing cultural security. This will be accomplished by posing the question that follows:

How does the problem of ethnic bias in African armies pose a threat to the cultural security of their countries?

This topic raises a number of sub-questions, the most notable of which are:

- What are the factors that make the ethnic differences within the army a major source of threat to the cultural security in Africa?

- How does an imbalanced military structure affect the political process in sub-Saharan Africa?

- How does the political performance of armies in Africa play a role in achieving or threatening the cultural security of countries?

Study Hypotheses: The study seeks to verify the following hypotheses:

- Unbalanced ethnic structure of army in many African countries increase military coups.

- Military coups represent a strategy to achieve the demands of ethnic groups in sub-Saharan Africa.

- The direct and indirect interference of the army based on ethnic grounds in setting the state's general policies posing a threat to cultural security.

Study axes:

First: the concept of cultural security

1- Defining cultural security

2- Threats to cultural security

Second: the ethnic issue and armies in Sub-Saharan Africa

1- The ethnic composition of the armies in Sub-Saharan Africa

2- Military coups as a strategy to achieve ethnic demands in Sub-Saharan Africa

Third: the ethnic bias of armies as a threat to cultural security in Africa

Study curricula and approaches:

In this study, we relied on the most widely accepted theoretical framework in the field of studying the relationship between the military institution and the political institutions of the state in terms of their dimensions, levels, and reasons for their emergence. This framework is civil-military relations, which centers around one of its intellectual schools, headed by Janowitz, who explains military coups and intervention in politics by referring to the internal structure of the military institution, by studying the social origins of officers, the degree of professionalism, and the level of internal social division and cohesion within the military institution.

We also used a range of methodologies, such as: the descriptive-analytical approach, which requires describing the ethnic phenomenon and military coups in sub-Saharan African countries and other phenomena that require description. And the historical approach, which provides us with historical material that reveals the relationships and factors that contributed to the formation of the ethnic phenomenon, through tracing the historical stages of African countries, and the role of successive colonial and political systems in them, and knowing how all of this affected the structure of African armies and their intervention in the political process. As well as the comparative approach, where we will examine, in a comparative manner, all the countries in sub-Saharan Africa that have witnessed military coups. And despite each country having its own unique characteristics, the political development in Africa reveals many common themes, which provide a sufficient basis for adopting a broad comparative approach.

Firstly: the concept of cultural security:

1. Defining cultural security:

Cultural security is defined as "the psychological state of an individual or a group being reassured about their identity, and their sense of safety over it from danger, attack, threat, erasure, and distortion". [1] It represents "the ability to preserve the civilized elements of society and the cultural specificities that distinguish it from others, while being open to other cultures within the framework of mutual intellectual dialogue and peaceful, objective culture".[2]

Religious and linguistic security, history and tradition, belonging and citizenship are all components of cultural security.

2. Threats to cultural security:

1/ The state as a threat to cultural security:

The state alongside its institutions are the guardian of the community's cultural security given its protective regulations, which have been founded on instilling pride in culture, connecting future generations to their past and everything that makes them unique, and enhancing a sense of community among them. [3]Contrarily, the nature of political power, whether civil or military and the actual and anticipated consequences

of acquiring and retaining power in many countries pose a significant threat to cultural security, particularly in multiethnic nations that have adopted certain trends in terms of public policies that have heightened tensions and conflicts.

Similar to this, any political system's failure to adequately address the cultural needs of its citizens in light of their temporal and spatial contexts, as well as its failure to effectively inform and promote the cultural, national, and religious foundations of society, will allow for the establishment of foreign cultures that run counter to its system of values and endanger its national security. Considering its consistency and the persistence of its political system .[4]

2/ Globalization as a Threat to Cultural Security :

The tendency of globalization, which aims to make the globe a tiny village, has sparked international contact and cultural exchange. The cultural identity and accompanying morals and standards, which are based on religion and language, have been threatened by this communication. Furthermore, according to d. Muhammad Abed Al-Jabri, globalization entails "the negation of the other and the establishment of cultural penetration and domination, as well as the imposition of a single pattern of consumption and behavior."[5]

Culture globalization, or the enforced adoption of one nation's culture on all other nations, or the strong nation's culture that prevails over the weak and conquered nations, or, as competitors of globalization see it, the imposition of American culture on the entire world, is the most perilous and far-reaching form of globalization. The methods employed to accomplish this goal are powerful tools and short-lived mechanisms. the written, aural, and visual word in audio and video, direct broadcasting, international information networks (the Internet), and others across continents and oceans through media devices and influencing the written, audio and visual word in audio and video, direct broadcasting, global information networks (the Internet), and others.[6]

Secondly : The ethnic issue and armies in Sub-Saharan Africa:

1-   The ethnic composition of armies in Sub-Saharan Africa:

By addressing the query presented by "Janowitz" regarding the qualities enjoyed by the military establishment in the modern state that permits its meddling in domestic politics, the elements that drive direct military participation in politics can be discovered. The internal organization of the military institution can primarily be used to explain the military's involvement in politics. In other words, significant characteristics that aid in our understanding of the military's overt involvement in political life are the officers' social backgrounds, professionalism, level of dissent, internal social cohesion, and political ideologies within the military institution. [7]

In African nations, the military institution reflected the ethnic reality in its makeup, consisting not of all the peoples or groups that reside in the nation, but rather of particular groups in accordance with a carefully considered balance to secure their allegiance to the ruling class. [8]The problem of the ethnic bias of the African armies dates back to the colonial era, and that behavior represented a strategy followed by

the colonizer in order to curtail the influential ethnic groups, especially those that represented a threat to colonial rule. [9] For example, the Tutsi minority in Burundi and Rwanda and the pastoralist minorities from the northern parts of Ghana, Nigeria, and Togo were dominant in the French and British colonial forces before independence. This initial ethnic bias had a significant impact on the formation of post-independence armies .[10]

Shabati Eric's research revealed that just ten of the thirty African military institutions are socially and ethnically balanced. [11] In Nigeria, for example, before the first military coup (January 15, 1966), more than half of the Nigerian army officers (27 out of 53 officers of the rank of major and above) were from Igbo (Eastern Province), while the majority of the soldiers were from the Northern Province. This numerical majority of Igbo officers in the army constituted an additional factor for the tension between the regions, which had repercussions in the first military coup and in the civil war.[12]

The military forces in Chad are not ethnically representative of the entire nation. Since driving Hissène Habré from power in 1990, the Zaghawa, the ethnic group to whom President Idriss Deby belongs, has ruled over the army and significant military installations. Another example comes from the Togolese Armed Forces, where 42% of the military members are from the village of Biya, which the President is from. 77% of the military members are from the north of the country, and 70% of them are Kabyen, the same ethnic group. The Kabi ethnic group makes up only 10-12% of Togo's population . [13] In Sudan, members of the ruling military elite have always come from a single Arab-Muslim region in the north around Khartoum, the capital.[14]

2. Military coups as a strategy to achieve ethnic demands in Sub-Saharan Africa

Africa represents a unique model in the field of ethnic diversity and ethnic conflicts, which are the result of the accumulation of political, economic, and cultural practices over a long period of time. Colonial administrations were behind "freezing people, strengthening ethnic affiliations, and increasing the strictness of social definitions," while sub-Saharan Africa before colonization did not have a "defined tribal identity, as most Africans moved between multiple identities." Ranger explicitly refers to the "invention of traditions in colonial Africa," indicating that some of the distinctive features of African societies in the post-colonial period, such as the importance of ethnic or tribal affiliations, were not inherited from the pre-colonial period, but rather emerged - or were significantly entrenched - during the colonial era. Moreover, the majority of African elites and successive political systems in these countries since their independence have adopted certain policies that have increased tensions, divisions, and ethnic conflicts in African societies.[15]

As a result, Africa has become home to hundreds of ethnic groups and tribes, each with their own languages and religions, differing in size and social and cultural structure.

Based on this, the political power of African nations, following independence, was monopolized by a select few, and the participation of the African masses was severely constrained. This resulted in the majority of power struggles being violent, taking the shape of military takeovers and civil wars. On February 13, 1963, Togo experienced the first military coup in sub-Saharan Africa. Several more coups, particularly in French-speaking Africa, followed [16] The period from 1966 to 1969 constituted a period of the collapse of civil systems at the hands of the military, and a country dubbed "a country addicted to coups" emerged, such as Nigeria. [17] In many African governments, the initial coup served as a springboard for subsequent coup attempts, internal discontent, and even successful countercoups. Nigeria, Ghana, Togo, Benin, and Sierra Leone provide excellent examples. As soon as the first coup occurs, the likelihood of subsequent countercoups—or at the very least, repeated coup attempts—increases.[18]

According to Thomas Johnson, 52 successful coups occurred in 45 countries in sub-Saharan Africa between 1960 and 1982, compared to 102 failed and attempted coups (based on the premise that a successful coup is one in which the ruler at the top was replaced and remained in power for more than a week, and the failure did not last this period or was unable to change, and it was the attempt that initially exposed the threads of the coup). and that thirty-eight of these countries, i.e. 84%, witnessed other forms of military intervention [19].

More than 200 similar efforts have been made in Africa since the late 1950s, according to a study by two American researchers, Jonathan Powell and Clayton Thain. Success was defined as lasting more than seven days, and around half of those were. The most successful coups were in Burkina Faso, a country in West Africa, where only one of seven attempts failed [20]

In reality, there are numerous justifications for Enterprise paying the military to participate in operations both directly and indirectly. When attempting to explain military interventions, there is debate over how much influence each of these factors actually has. Certain ethnic groups' control over the political system of the state caused a tense formulation of social relations in the modern African state, which found its echo within the military institution, and then many of the military intervention movements in politics as a response to these tribal and ethnic conflicts, ethnic factors represent an important motive in the emergence of many military coups as well as counter-coups.

Shabati Eric's research established that 27% of military coups in Africa were motivated by the masterminds' sense of tribal oppression, and Shabati's research established that ethnic tendencies were evident in 12 of the 32 attempted coup cases he researched in Africa. While it appeared in more than six cases to a lesser extent. [21]

Nigeria serves as a potent illustration of the significance of social and ethnic tribal tendencies in attempts to militarily meddle in societal matters. Young Igbo officers took control of the first coup in mid-January 1966 and handed General Ironzi the reins. [22] The absence of northern officers from this rebellion led to criticism that it

was factional and ethnically motivated, and the northern officers did not participate in this scheme, as they were reasonably comfortable in the army, because most of them were benefiting from the protection of their political relatives in the government, and most importantly From all this, the army was part of Nigerian society, and in a situation where ethnic groups and national resources competed and where the north dominated in this competition, the northern officers were obliged to support their political elite in exchange for their favoritism. subsequently, in July 1966, a counter-coup was carried out to retake control of Nigerian political life and exact revenge on the northerners for the deaths of their civil and military leadership. The crisis that followed this coup resulted in a civil war between the eastern region and the rest of the Nigerian Federation.[23]

Having undergone Siad Barre's socialist rhetoric, the 1969 coup in Somalia was supported by a formal alliance between three clans: the Darod clan, President Siad's Marehan clan, the Ogaden clan on his mother's side, and the Dulbahante clan, which includes his son-in-law, the head of the National Security Service and a man many people fear. Between 1969 and 1978, this tribal trio—often referred to as MOD—was a latent force.[24]

Rawlings established the Forces Reserve Battalion in Ghana. The Ewe people made up the majority of this battalion's personnel. These forces were in a better position than the regular army because their formation was meant to prevent the army from again intervening in politics through a coup.[25]

The Achuli and Langa tribes, the two Obote tribes, also lost power and influence after Idi Amin's coup against Milton Obote in Uganda (1971), as General Amin appointed members of the Kakwa tribe and a number of other small tribes loyal to him to important positions in the army and government. [26]

Similarly, the bloody military coup attempt in Cameroon (April 1984), was - albeit in part - a reaction to President Paul Biya's decision to remove northern tribesmen from the Republican Guard forces.[27]

In Sudan, the members of the ruling military elite have always come from one Arab Muslim region in the north around the capital Khartoum, where the three military coups, in 1958, 1969, and 1989, were carried out by Arab officers from the north, and there was not a single officer among them at the beginning who belonged to the south other than Muslim.[28]

Thirdly: Ethnic armies as a threat to cultural security in Sub-Saharan Africa :

Some studies measured the political performance of military regimes, and one of those studies concluded that the performance of military governments is significantly weaker and poorer than the performance of civilian governments according to four indicators: the level of legitimacy of the regime, the absence of coercive rule, the reduction of violence, and response to popular desires. Others have attempted to quantify the degree to which military rule and tyranny are related through applied studies, such as the 1991 Finer study, which relied on Freedom House data and found

that 34 of the 36 military governments, or 94% of them, are categorized as tyrannical regimes lacking even the most basic civil liberties.[29]

The manifestations of the failure of African military governments that have affected the preservation of national identity and the achievement of cultural security are as follows:

First: concentrating power in the hands of military leaders, suspending political freedoms, outlawing political parties, unions, and other institutions, placing severe restrictions on political activity, and shutting down or censoring newspapers are all examples of such measures.[30] Additionally, different cleaning techniques are used, whether in the military or in society. There is now widespread public unrest and dissatisfaction as a result of the government's use of all available means of repression, including the creation of special death squads to physically eliminate opponents and political opponents. As a result, opposition groups have turned to using illegal channels to voice their demands for the ruling regime.[31]

Zaire under the Mobutu regime presents the best example of the concentration of power in the hands of the military elite and the elimination of the opposition. The state is under his direct supervision.[32] In Nigeria, one of the features of the extended period of military rule is first the increasing concentration of power in the federal government and then gradually the identification of power in the military ruler.[33] In Uganda, Aidi Amin concentrated all power in his hands using the means of physical force and purges in the army and police, which led to a state of instability and chaos in Uganda.[34]

Second: Due to the fact that the military's successful economic and social initiatives were confined to a small number of oil-producing nations, the military's rule failed in national construction and development initiatives.

Although the worsening economic conditions in Africa were one of the initial justifications for the military's involvement in politics and the installation of military regimes, these economic conditions only got worse under military rule, which spread an atmosphere of unrest and instability and led to the involvement of many African nations in a series of coups and coup-related activities.[35]

Third: enlisting the aid of civilians the military has turned against or transferring power to them when they are unable to run the government. The military in Africa has experience that resembles that of Kemal Ataturk in that it must give civilians more room within the authority while maintaining its position at the top of the pyramid.[36] The cause of this is that some coup planners lack a comprehensive plan for running the nation after seizing control, which has left them almost entirely dependent on bureaucrats and technocrats who previously handled many aspects of government management and planning.[37] This caused the change to take place at the top rather than in the government's institutions or policies. The situation in Uganda in 1985, when President Tito Okello relied on Abbottian regime ministers who later turned against him as the ousted vice president assumed control of the new ministry,[38] may serve as a witness in this case. Additionally, some political figures from all

military and civilian governments, including Ble Buba Migri in Cameroon and Dr. Abu Saleh in Sudan, participate in this framework.[39]

Fourth: The perpetuation of ethnic and tribal divisions, where tribal or ethnic factors have played an important role in the occurrence of many military coups and counter-coups. That is the domination of certain ethnic groups over power and government, has led to a tense formulation of the pattern of social relations in African countries, which affected the military institution, and then many military interventions in politics have been carried out as a reaction to these tribal and ethnic conflicts.

Conclusion

In this paper, we attempted to investigate how ethnicity and the ethnic structure of militaries affected cultural security in Sub-Saharan Africa :

- African nations' independence led to the creation of contemporary states devoid of aspects of ethnic homogeneity. There are groups of various origins that do not even remotely have a common understanding of overarching objectives, which has resulted in ethnic groups continuing to compete with one another for dominance and influence.

- Ethnic relations in Sub-Saharan Africa are based on inequality. When a group succeeds in imposing its political, economic, and social control over other groups, the groups that control it with the passage of time and their sense of persecution work to change the situation imposed on them through military coups as the most effective means among the other available means.

- Ethnic plurality appears to be an obvious cause of military coups in Sub-Saharan Africa, as most militaries are characterized by an imbalanced ethnic structure, whether based on linguistic and religious factors or ethnic and regional specificities. And, because it was unable to move beyond the frameworks of ethnic groups in favor of establishing a homogeneous national institution, it served as fuel for coups and counter-coups for long periods.

- It can be said that tension and ethnic conflicts are an important motive for military coups, in addition to many other political, social, and economic factors.. and none of them can be reduced or eliminated in any way. Indeed, reality only indicates the predominance of one of these factors in a military coup and the predominance of other factors in a coup or other military coups.

even though there is disagreement about the extent to which direct and indirect military interference affects the issue of cultural security and achieving national integration.

- In broad terms, the experience of African military regimes reveals that these regimes have failed to bring about meaningful progress or to lead the people to a stage of national construction and national integration. The achievement of the military systems in facing and addressing challenges, most notably the problem of creating cultural security, was not significantly better than that of the civil systems.

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