



THE SHADOW OF COLONIALISM IN A SERIES OF CONFLICTS UNTIL WORLD WAR IN AFRICA

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Abstract : *This research discusses the impact of Western colonialism on the dynamics of conflict and crisis in African regions from the 19th century to post-World War II. Using a historical-qualitative approach supported by JA Hobson's liberal imperialism theory, this study examines how competition between colonial powers such as Britain, France, and Germany not only divided the African region but also strengthened the structure of political and economic domination that led to a series of international crises, such as the Fashoda Crisis, Morocco Crisis I and II, and the prolonged conflict in Ethiopia. Besides being a target for military and economic expansion, Africa was also used as a stage for global power struggles during the World Wars, making it a logistical and resource base for war. The findings show that colonialism not only created structural inequalities but also queathed patterns of ongoing conflict into the contemporary era. Therefore, strengthening local historical narratives and revitalizing the role of regional institutions such as the African Union are crucial to building identity and political independence amid complex colonial legacies. This research is expected to contribute to the understanding of the history of global conflict and become a reflective basis for peaceful resolution efforts in contemporary Africa.*

Keywords : *Africa; Colonialism, Conflicts; Crisis*

BACKGROUND

In essence, colonialism is a multidimensional concept that reflects the domination of one country over another for its own interests. Like Africa, which was one of the European colonies, this caused social tension and prolonged conflict that was difficult to eliminate in the region. Within the framework of colonialism, the relationship between colonial rulers and local residents was trapped in an asymmetrical situation that gave rise to various forms of resistance, social segregation, and political instability. The inequality brought by western colonialism to the African region also perpetuated the division of territory based on the interests of western nations, thus triggering various conflicts and crises. Riyadi (2016) emphasized that colonization in Africa had resulted in clashes between ethnicities and politics, which were rooted in the pattern of arbitrary division of territory by colonial rulers. The impact of the division of territory and the social order deliberately built by colonialism encouraged the consolidation of local forces in the form of rebellion against the colonial regime. Rahman (2015) showed that the nationalist movement that emerged in response to colonial oppression further intensified rivalries and exacerbated conflicts in a number of regions in Africa. The accumulation of conflict dynamics based on colonialism is what then formed the character of vulnerability in Africa in the run-up to major events, including the two world wars that hit the region.

The conflicts and crises that occurred in Africa from before to during World War I and II cannot be separated from the vortex of the dominant influence of western colonialism. Arifian (2020) explained that the involvement of colonial countries in the World Wars directly worsened political stability in Africa, this was because they made Africa a battlefield and logistics base, thus making local people victims. Soeratman

(2012), stated that colonialism had strengthened internal divisions between communities in Africa which then became a trigger for a series of conflicts. Anshari Hardikusumo (2019) highlighted the existence of foreign intervention in regional competition in the Horn of Africa, where western countries also controlled the dynamics of local conflicts for their geopolitical interests until after World War. Erlina (2019) also added that competition between colonial countries increased political intensity, both through pitting local groups against each other and strengthening weapons against certain parties. This phenomenon shows that western colonialism not only left a legacy of economic and political exploitation, but also created a cycle of conflict and crisis that contributed to the outbreak of global-scale wars in Africa. All these facts and dynamics confirm that western colonialism played a central role in shaping conflict patterns and creating vulnerabilities in Africa, which eventually escalated into a major crisis that colored the course of World War in the region.

Researchers have conducted a search of a number of previous literature and studies regarding the influence of western colonialism on the dynamics of conflict and war escalation in Africa. The results of the search show that colonialism not only acts as an external factor, but also systematically triggers social fragmentation and prolonged conflict. Sudibjo (1979) specifically examines the recurring conflicts in the Horn of Africa region, highlighting that the penetration of foreign powers through a divide and rule strategy only deepens the rift between community groups. On the other hand, Sani (2021) highlights the dimension of the humanitarian crisis in the Tigray case which is the latest manifestation of unresolved colonial conflict patterns. Darmawan & Nashir (2023), also enrich the discussion by highlighting regional connectivity in Africa and the Middle East in the realm of conflict and peace, showing a continuous line from colonial history to modern geopolitics, while Rahman (2015) focuses more on the dynamics of Moroccan nationalist resistance to France, which shows that community resistance is also a crucial part of the colonialism narrative. Although several previous studies were found that discussed similar themes, there are differences in perspective and scope of analysis between these studies and this study,

where this research will integrate all of these findings in a cross-period analysis to reveal the relationship between the influence of western colonialism on a series of conflicts up to the World Wars that occurred in Africa. Thus, this research is expected to be able to provide a holistic understanding and can fill the gaps in the study, especially in explaining the recursive patterns of conflict as a legacy of western colonialism in Africa.

With the aim of presenting a comprehensive understanding of the integration of the legacy of Western colonialism into the recursive pattern of conflict and the dynamics of global-scale warfare in Africa, this study is specifically directed at unraveling the direct relationship between the process of colonization, social division, and the escalation of conflict that culminated in World War in several regions of Africa. The significance of this study lies in the effort to fill the gap in cross-period analysis that has so far been overlooked in previous studies, by offering a substantial explanation of how the manifestation of colonialism not only shapes political and social structures, but also

reproduces tensions between long-standing rivalries that have had a systemic impact on African history. Through this exploration, this study contributes to the enrichment of academic literature on colonialism and conflict, while providing a more solid theoretical foundation for mapping the roots of violence and identity crises that continue to this day. The urgency of this study is increasingly clear when considering the dynamics of unresolved conflict, where the colonial legacy including divide-and-rule politics to resource exploitation can still be traced in various contemporary clashes in the region. Thus, this study becomes a critical reflection on the latest socio-political developments in Africa that continue to be overshadowed by the influence of colonialism. The actuality and relevance of this research are increasing along with the high needs of the scientific community and policy makers in understanding the historical context as a foundation for solutions to multidimensional conflicts in Africa. The entire narrative built in this research is expected to be able to provide a complete analytical synthesis of the relationship between colonialism, conflict, and socio-political transformation in Africa so as to broaden the horizon of the study and become a reference for further research.

THEORETICAL STUDY

The theory used in this study is the Theory of Liberal Imperialism developed by J.A. Hobson in his book, *Imperialism: A Study* (1902). Hobson stated that imperialism is a direct result of the inequality of wealth distribution in capitalist countries, which then creates the need for new markets and investments abroad, one of which is Africa which was made a colony because it has abundant resources (Hobson, 1902). This theory has concrete relevance in explaining the process of African colonization, especially during the Scramble for Africa, where European countries competed for African territories in order to gain economic benefits and so on.

Another relevance of his theory is reflected in his critique of the political and social consequences of imperialism. According to him, instead of creating stability, colonialism actually triggered prolonged conflict, both in the colonial territories and in the center of the empire (Cain & Hopkins, 2001). This is also experienced by Africa in World War, where many of its territories were used as logistics locations and strategic resource exploitation fields during the war. Thus, this theory of liberal imperialism is not only relevant in understanding the economic background of colonialism, but also provides a basis for criticizing unequal global relations and the legacy of conflict that still haunts post-colonial Africa.

RESEARCH METHODS

The method used in this study is a historical method with a qualitative approach, where this method is used to explain the causal relationship in history based on written and oral sources that are scientifically verified in accordance with the flow of historical research. In the context of historical research, historical methods are used to reveal the meaning behind past facts, while a qualitative approach is used because the focus of the

research does not lie in numbers or statistics, but rather in in-depth interpretation of the processes, structures, and socio-political dynamics that occur in a certain period.

As for the data that used in this study are secondary data in the form of written documents, such as books to scientific journals supported by expert opinions. All data and documents are then collected and analyzed in more depth using literature study and interpretation techniques that refer to the historical research flow by Kuntowijoyo (2018).

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Ethiopian Conflict and Crisis

Ethiopia is one of the largest countries in Africa, located in the tropical latitudes, East Africa, with its capital city Addis Ababa. There are quite a lot of problems and conflicts that occurred in this country as a result of the presence of European colonialism in Africa in the period 1800 to 1960s. Hardikusumo (2019) explains that Italy became the European nation that dominated the Ethiopian region, followed by others. The unification process that occurred on the Italian peninsula, made it try to seek support from large countries in the west, this was done by creating colonies in the East and North Africa. Therefore, before World War I, Italy already had several colonies, such as Libya, Eritrea, and Somaliland, which then continued the expansion process until there was resistance to Italy by an Islamic leader named Sayyid Idris As-Sanusi in 1931, just some time after Mussolini intensified his brutal repressive campaign against several areas in the region (Ahmida, 1994).

Italy's efforts to continue expanding its African territory were clearly visible when Britain offered Italy to join the allies in World War I. In 1882, Italy joined the Triple Alliance, then in 1902, Italy signed the Franco-Italian agreement in London as a secret agreement with the allies. The agreement contained an offer that if Italy took part in the war, Italy would add the territories of Africa, Austria, and Turkey. However, when Italy won the war in 1915, it was disappointed because it only obtained a small area, namely the Kufra Oasis which became the center of the Sanusi movement (Vandewalle, 2006).

As a country that often experiences drought, the presence of western colonialism and imperialism in the region certainly caused more problems for the local community, such as hunger and poverty. The Washington Post even noted that in 1888 to the second half of the 20th century, there was a major famine in the region as a result of the existence of western colonialism-imperialism in Africa (Koestanto, 2021).

Fashoda Conflict and Crisis

The Fashoda Crisis was an international event that became the peak of the imperialist territorial dispute between Britain and France in East Africa in 1898. The Fashoda Crisis began with the ambitions of Britain and France to connect their respective colonial territories in Africa. In the late 19th century, Britain attempted to build a territorial route from Cape Town to Cairo, and included Sudan as its dominant territory. Likewise, France wanted to connect Senegal to Djibouti. The plans of both were rumored

to be met in a small town in Southern Sudan, namely Fashoda (Pakenham, 1991). In an effort to expand its influence along the Nile River Valley, Britain entered into a series of agreements, namely with Italy in 1891, then with Germany in 1893, and with the Congo Free State in 1894. These agreements strengthened British power along the Nile River Valley (Soeratman, 2012).

However, in 1894 France also entered into cooperation with Germany, and stated that the boundary of the Congo Free State in the north would not go beyond Mbomu. Meanwhile, the German-controlled Cameroon region would not pass through the Sahara. Therefore, this situation provided an opportunity for the French Congo to expand its influence into the interior of Central Africa. With 213 Africans and 21 French, French troops under the command of Major Jean-Baptiste Marchand moved eastward to establish French rule in the upper Nile River valley. Although not military, Marchand was asked to fly the Tricolore flag in the Sudan region. Instead, Lord Kitchener as the commander of the British troops was sent to the South to lead the Anglo-Egyptian expedition in February 1896. This expedition reached Dongola safely in September 1896. In 1898, Kitchener and his 20,000 troops defeated the Dervish at Atbara. The attack continued to Omdurman, one of the Mahdist strongholds. When the British army took control of Omdurman, the road to Khartoum was wide open so that it could be taken over. The British then left Khartoum and moved south towards Fashoda. Upon arriving in Fashoda, Major Marchand sent congratulations on the British victory in Omdurman and informed that the French had occupied Bahr el Ghazal, Meshra' er Req, the area connecting the Bahr el Jebel River and the White Nile, Shilluk on the left bank of the White Nile until conquering Fashoda by overcoming the attacks of the Mahdists since July 10, 1898.

Knowing this, the British government instructed Kitchener to expel the French from Fashoda (Louis, 1965). France considered the British presence in Fashoda as an attempt to seize the region. Kitchener then made threats to France and proved it through an attack by their navy on the Nile River which finally made both parties remain restrained to await further instructions from London and Paris (Carter, 2020). Théophile Delcassé as the new French Foreign Minister, aware of the international impact of the incident, his desire to gain British support in fighting Germany then made him choose to ignore the public's angry reaction. On November 4, 1898, Delcassé instructed Marchand to withdraw troops from Fashoda, while maintaining France's claim to a number of small posts that would open a French corridor to the Nile River (Brown & Louis, 1999).

Although the proposal was initially rejected by Lord Salisbury as the British Prime Minister and Foreign Minister, the two managed to reach an agreement on March 21, 1899, and determined that the Nile and Congo River basins would be the boundary between French and British influence. Furthermore, France consolidated all their gains west of the river basin, while Britain's position in Egypt was recognized. The resolution of this crisis finally led to the birth of a dual alliance agreement called the Anglo-French Entente Cordiale in 1904 (Britannica, 2023). This agreement consists of 3 (three) agreements, but the most important is the one that provides security guarantees for the Anglo-Egyptian and Moroccan regions, and stipulates that France is committed not to

interfere in British affairs in Egypt, and France is also given the freedom to control Morocco (Arifian, 2020).

Morocco Conflict and Crisis

a) Moroccan Crisis I

Also known as the Tangier Crisis, it was an international crisis over the status of Morocco that occurred between 1905 and 1906. Its strategic location supported by abundant natural resources made it a target for various European countries. Spain, which was located nearby, began sending its military in 1859-1860, but this was blocked by England, which had already been in Morocco. England was worried that an international crisis would occur in Morocco if there was a western power in Morocco. In addition, France also wanted Morocco to expand its empire, Germany also had representatives in the sultan's palace. The many western nations that wanted Morocco made none of them want anyone to control it.

In 1878, France established its military base in Fez, which made the western countries demand a convention. The convention was then held in Madrid, in 1880 which was attended by 14 European countries and the United States which decided that the status que Sultan of Morocco should be maintained and Morocco should implement an open door policy. In 1900, France which wanted to control Morocco made an agreement with Italy which contained an agreement between the two countries, where Italy would not hinder French interests in Morocco, and France would not hinder Italian interests in Tripoli and Cyrenaica. In addition, France also made an agreement with Spain which contained the division of areas in Morocco, with Spain getting the northern coastal area including Tangier and Fez and part of the south and France getting the rest.

Britain considered that French rule in Morocco would reduce its territory. However, this was overcome through the Entente Cordiale agreement in 1904 (Clayton, 1988). In the same year, France also entered into a Cooperation with Spain, with Spain receiving the area along the coast and the rest belonging to France, Spain was also required to promise that its rights in Morocco would not be handed over to a third country. Furthermore, Delcassé began to protect his interests in Morocco through “peaceful penetration” and a renewal program under French supervision, to the establishment of a state bank to improve finances and development using state money.

What France did in Morocco apparently sparked opposition from Germany who felt that Morocco should remain a field of European investment. This made the German Minister, Baron Von Holstein, invite Emperor Wilhelm II to visit Tangier. The Emperor then delivered a speech containing recognition of Morocco's independence and sovereignty and made Morocco remain open to all forms of trade from all nations. Through this speech, Germany tried to break the Entente Cordiale so that France could side with Germany. Germany demanded a

conference that required France to determine its choice, but this was firmly rejected by Delcassé. Furthermore, Russia, which was an ally of France, was defeated by Japan in May 1905, so that France had to accept Germany's demands to hold a conference on the fate of Morocco.

The conference was held in Algierias in January 1906. Britain, France, Russia and Spain united against Germany and caused Germany to suffer defeat. This marked the resolution of the First Moroccan Crisis and resulted in a victory over Britain and the strengthening of the Entente Cordiale.

b) Moroccan Crisis II

After the Algericas conference, there was a conflict between France and the Moroccans and Spain with the mountain people in Melilla. The security of France's status in Morocco after the agreement was not immediately followed by economic conditions in Morocco, this then triggered a rebellion in 1911. One of the rebellions occurred in Fez, which was then exploited by Germany by accusing France of wanting a protectorate over Morocco. In July 1911, Germany announced its decision to protect German interests by sending its warships and gunboats, "Phanter" to the Port of Agadir area in the Atlantic Ocean.

The emergence of "Phanter" was considered a challenge by France and England, which resulted in the Second Moroccan Crisis. England accused Germany of establishing a naval base in the Atlantic Ocean and was considered a threat to world peace. The readiness of the three to go to war was then overcome by an agreement stating that Germany had to leave Agadir and recognize the French protectorate over Morocco, as compensation, Germany obtained the northwestern part of the French Congo, this marked the end of the Second Moroccan Crisis and the expansion of French power.

Conflict in Africa During World War

a) World War I and Aftermath

The war that occurred in the period 1914-1918 involved many countries in the world, including countries in the African Continent. This happened due to the efforts of Britain and its allies who wanted to seize German colonies in the African Continent. Britain together with Belgium, France, assisted by the Union of South Africa invaded the German colonies, and in the near future, Togo was taken over by the joint British-French army. Furthermore, the South African Union army under General Smuts together with the Belgian army helped Britain fight Germany in East Africa. Other troops under the leadership of General Botha also succeeded in occupying German Southwest Africa. The British-French army also succeeded in controlling Cameroon from Germany.

In early 1916, Britain and France agreed to divide up the former German colonies in Africa, but it was stated that there was an attempt to internationalize the territory under the western powers. The peace treaty decided that Germany

would relinquish all of its colonies, but not to be annexed by the victors (Norman, 2011). To overcome these problems, General Smuts proposed a mandate system, whereby the advanced nation would be responsible for everything in the relevant region (Smuts, 1918). Then, in 1919, a meeting was held in London attended by a select committee of all mandate areas. The Union of South Africa was appointed as the mandatary of the C classification areas, namely South West Africa in 1920, then in mid-1922, Britain for German East Africa or Tanganyika, Belgium for Rwanda-Burundi, and Anglo-French for Togo and Cameroon, each of which fell into the B classification areas (League of Nations, 1919).

Of all these countries, England was the most fortunate with the largest territory, and allowed it to form a Transcontinental Empire. As much as 11.1 per 11.5 million square miles of African territory including the Union of South Africa were successfully controlled by western nations. Thus, World War I made the African region a source of wealth to obtain resources and raw materials, a place to invest capital, a place to accommodate people for war purposes, and a national pride for each western nation for their great power in extraterritorial areas.

b) World War II and Aftermath

World War II occurred in the period 1939-1945, where Africa was used by western nations for war and economic interests. This was because Italy decided to join the axis block which was considered to be able to threaten England and France from the Mediterranean to the Middle East. The situation became worse when Nazi Germany succeeded in occupying France, so that the French colonies could not send aid. Various military installations and air bases were successfully controlled by Vichy France which resulted in the British Air Force base in West Africa being able to occupy a crucial place on the African Continent's communication route. Various ports such as Freetown to Mombasa were also able to organize and send war supplies to Egypt and the Persian Gulf.

In general, the majority of British colonies in Africa chose to remain loyal to Britain. This was because the local native leaders did not sympathize with Hitler's racism. In August 1940, the African-French population was forced to accept the new government of the Vichy Regime, Felix Ebou as the native African governor of Chad then declared his support for the independent French government, led by De Gaulle. After the end of the war, various mandate areas made it a trusted area under the supervision of the United Nations. This change was caused by the Permanent Mandate Commission which routinely held joint meetings in Geneva to discuss mandates that did not have the right to regulate the population of their respective mandate areas.

Thus, it can be concluded that the mandate has greater power than the Commission of the United Nations. In order to minimize similar things, the UN charter was created containing the "Colonial Magna Carta" which requires every colonial country to accept the principle that the interests of the residents of the

trusted territory must be prioritized in order to advance and prosper the area, in addition to that the rulers of the trusted territory must send reports related to their government data regularly to the Trusteeship Council.

CONCLUSION AND SUGGESTIONS

The presence of colonialism and western imperialism in Africa shows the dynamics of the struggle for influence between European powers that exploited local socio-political conditions for the interests of imperialism. Cases such as the Italian invasion of Ethiopia (1935), the Fashoda Crisis (1898) between England and France, and the Moroccan Crisis (1905 and 1911) between Germany and France, show how Africa was used as an arena for global rivalry. In addition to being a battlefield, Africa was also used as an area of economic and human resource exploitation during the World Wars. Afterwards, the League of Nations and UN mandate systems tended to continue the domination of colonial countries in new, more covert forms.

Therefore, it is important for the study of history and international relations to re-elevate the African perspective to see its colonial life and past. Strengthening regional institutions, such as the African Union, and building historical narratives based on local experiences are needed to build an independent political and economic identity. In addition, international cooperation needs to be directed to support sustainable development that is fair and free from exploitative external domination.

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