On Military Culture

About this Publication:

African armed forces face many challenges with regard to military professionalism, as the latest coups in Mali and Niger, and the poor performance of the DRC’s armed forces, illustrate. And military professionalism is linked to military culture, which is about the collective activities of armed forces, particularly their distinctive practices and collective understanding of shared goals and how to achieve them.

A major challenge for the African Union as well as AFRICOM is to understand and reconcile its different military cultures, which are at a formative stage. But discussion of military culture largely occurs around North American and Western European armies. Nor are there many contributions from African scholars on the subject.

This book offers a contemporary perspective on military culture within Africa, with contributions from scholars and practitioners from Africa as well as North America, Europe and Australia. The underlying argument is that African armed forces need to come to terms with the elements of military culture if they want to become more professional. To this end the book first focuses on the theory of military culture, its implications for civil-military relations, and the role of the armed forces in society. It then examines a number of cases, from Canada, Australia, Ethiopia, Kenya and Namibia. Thirdly, the book moves into a detailed discussion of the South African military, with a retrospective view of its military culture and an examination of its post-apartheid vision.

In a post-colonial world, discussions about the role of the military are regarded with suspicion, but if the role of soldiers today is to serve society as well as to fight war, then scholarship is needed around this subject matter to determine the military culture of the 21st century.

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Of Interest and Benefit to:
Military personnel, scholars, country experts, post-graduate students in the field of security studies, policy-makers in the defence and security setting.