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MASTER OF POLITICAL SCIENCE

**Comparative Study on the Role of the Military in Politics
Korea and Mauritania**

**The Graduate School of The University of Ulsan
Department of International Relation.
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**Comparative Study on the Role of the Military in Politics
Korea and Mauritania**

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TABLE OF CONTENT

Acknowledgement.....	v
Abstract.....	vi
 Chapter 1 Introduction and Theoretical Framework	
1.1 Introduction.....	1
1.2 Theoretical framework.....	2
1.2.1 Military intervention	2
1.2.2 Military withdrawal	5
 Chapter 2 The Military and Politics in Korea	
2.1 The establishment of the Korean army	10
2.2 The Korean military coup 1961	12
2.3 The Korean military coup 1979	17
 Chapter 3 The Military and Politics in Mauritania	
3.1 Introduction of Mauritania	23
3.2 Arab orientation.....	23
3.3 Geopolitical importance.....	23
3.4 Civilian president.....	24
3.5 Mauritanian army.....	26
3.6 The military coups in 1978, 1988, 1984, 2005.....	27

Chapter 4	Why military withdrawal was successful in Korea, but not in Mauritania?	
4.1	Korean military successful withdrawal from politics.....	34
4.2	Military division.....	37
4.3	Military interest	38
4.4	Limited and failed withdrawal in Mauritania	39
4.5	The failure of civilian elites	42
4.6	The pressure of foreign power	44
4.7	Weak civil society	45
4.8	Socioeconomic level.....	48
4.9	Summary.....	50
Chapter 5	Conclusion	53
Reference		56

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Abstract

The struggle in Korea to end the military regime provides insight and lessons for countries still struggling under authoritarian military regimes, particularly for an Arab country like Mauritania, which has been ruled by civilianized military generals since 1978. This research investigated military intervention and withdrawal in Korea and Mauritania, the factors behind the limited military withdrawal from politics in the Mauritanian case., in comparison with the Korean successful military withdrawal from politics, which resulted from the change in the balance of power between the military and civilian society. This shift in balance was missing in the Mauritanian experience with the military in politics because of the country's low socioeconomic level, which resulted in ineffective politicians and a fragmented and weak civil society.

Chapter 1 Introduction and theoretical framework

1-1 Introduction

From 1960 to 1987, South Korea was dominated by two military dictatorships. After the Korean people effectively engaged in the pro-democracy movement of 1987, the military was compelled to abandon power and return to its barracks. The inauguration of General Roh Tae Woo as president of South Korea in 1988 paved the way for the Korean Republic to take its first step toward ending the military dictatorship. This relinquishment came after a peaceful transition of power from the outgoing president, Chun, to his selected successor Roh Tae Woo. Similarly in 2019, two military coups mastermind and Mauritanian president General Aziz relinquished power to his peer general El Gazuani after securing more than 52% of the votes. The results instilled fear in the opposition that the election outcome could result in increased military dominance of the government (France 24, 2019). Mauritania is a North African Arab country with a Muslim majority. Since the toppling of Moktar Ould Daddah in 1978, the nation has witnessed five coups and attempted coups. The Mauritanian dictator Ould Taya, who governed Mauritania for over twenty years, was overthrown in 2005 by a military junta in a bloodless coup. However, on the sixth of August, the same generals attacked the palace, detained the president and his prime minister, and took things into their own hands once again (Aljazeera, 2008). Korea and Mauritania to some extent share similarities relating to the military intervention in politics. First, they share the same factors that pushed the military to leave their barracks and assume the levers of power. Second, both countries had experienced the three forms of military praetorianism stated by Perlmutter: autocracy, oligarchy, and authoritarian praetorianism. According to Perlmutter (1978) autocracy is a simple military tyranny, one man's military control and a system characterized by unrestrained personal authority. Personal authority is personified in the single supreme ruler. Perpetually this single ruler is a military man officer. Second, military oligarchy which is where few military officers are governing the state. The executive is composed primarily of military men. Third, the Authoritarian praetorianism which is a joint rule by military and civilians' Governmental authority (p.95). This is its biggest similarity with the Korean experience with military

dictatorship. The Mauritanian case is distinguished by a military overthrowing a military which was a reflection of the regional conflict surrounding the newly born weak state.

Despite these two similarities, the degree of civilian rule in Korea and Mauritania are very far away from being compared. This latter can be described as a praetorian state headed by former army generals which is its biggest similarity with Korean experience with military dictatorship. The Mauritanian case is distinguished by a military overthrowing a military which reflects regional conflicts surrounding the newly born weak state.

My objective in this research is to investigate the main factors that led to the start of the successful Korean military withdrawal from politics and the failing and limited withdrawal in Mauritania. The research examines internal and external factors and the roles that were played by these factors in the two cases of military intervention in politics. The main question of this research is to know to what extent the Korean experience with military withdrawal is applicable in the Mauritanian case.

1-2 Theoretical Framework:

1-2.1 Military Intervention

In every community politics entails the control of coercive power. As a result, interactions between the armed forces and other political actors, organizations, and institutions have significant implications for the stability and sustainability of all political regimes (Croissant and Kuehn, 2015). Both in democratic and totalitarian regimes military interventions in politics is considered very common phenomena. The military's national guard function provides it with a powerful and at times unchallenged position. For example, in Turkey, criticizing the military can be deemed as a crime and an assault of Turkish military identity. Although military leadership in developed countries is restricted to national defense and submission to civil authority, it still has tremendous influence on governmental policies (Onder, 2010). Halperin (1975) and Forney (1977) (as cited in Onder 2010) claim that in the United States, the military poses a unique set of problems for presidents. No one person can have a major impact on military spending. "The military has almost complete discretion in their specialization or professional area, and this is viewed as normal to a certain extent even in

developed countries” (Onder, 2010, para.1). In direct relation to this military intervention. Finer (2002) presented four levels of military interventions. First, the civil authorities' degree of influence in which civil authorities are persuaded by appealing to their logic or emotions. This is the legitimate and constitutional level. Pressure or blackmail is the second level. The military uses the threat of sanctions to persuade the civil authority. The military is working upon and through civil authorities on both the first and second levels. Its power is always used behind the scenes, even in its most full form. The third is displacement which entails replacing one cabinet or ruler for another. This is accomplished by use of violence or the threat of violence. The fourth's level overthrows the civilian government and replaces it with the military. This is the most complete degree of intervention(pp.86-87).

Edeh and Ikechukwu (2014) argue that if not correctly situated. Military intervention as a political notion may be highly confusing. Military intervention in politics, in this context, may be seen as an unlawful use of force by the armed forces to seize political authority from civilians. The army, navy, air force, secret police, and other sabotaging law enforcement agencies are among the armed forces here. It is unconstitutional since there are no clearly defined rules of participation stated anywhere as the established channels for citizens to alter their government. It can appropriately be called a coup d'état. A coup d'état is the military removal of an elected civilian government or an established monarchy by violence or other methods (p.2048). Perlmutter (1977) argues that in addition to the absence of relatively powerful opposition, and when the military is the most cohesive and politically best organized group, it can replace the existing political system. Usually, this military seizure of power was carried out by political activists in the military organization. Those military officers who carried out military coups are officers with present or future political ambitions. And do not consider the military as a life career.

In the cases of South Korea and Mauritania, the military intervention through coup d'état was the prevailing form of such military intervention into politics of the two countries. Explaining the phenomena of military intervention has been a subject of very complicated and tough debate. The scholars have come up with a few persuasive theories which to some extents have provided some explanations to this phenomenon. These are:

1) Socio-economic development, 2) Political development, 3) The centrality of military, 4) Conflict, and 5) Regional differences. Clearly each theory has played an important role in the countries' history with military intervention whether when the military seized power through coups or the successful military withdrawal from politics in Korea and the limited one in Mauritania. The latter's case is more characterized with a continued weak socio-economic factor that is still hindering the military withdrawal from politics.

1) Socio-economic development theory: Finer (1988) and Putnam (1967) (as cited in Onder, 2010) argue that with higher socio-economic development status, the density of military interventions is more likely to decline. Socio-economic development generates awareness of political events and the capacity for political engagement. To put it differently, it expands the number of possible political players and distributes more political resources to those willing and able to support civilian institutions. Industrialization, on the other side, reduces the likelihood of military involvement since greater socio-economic complexity places public administration beyond the skills of armed forces. The economy is more easily controlled by the armed forces when it is more original. Finer states that "The more primitive the economy, the easier it is for the armed forces to administer it by purely military men and measures. In primitive economies they may [armed forces] be even better technically equipped than the civil sector. Armies could - or do easily dominate such primitive societies. All they have is to provide law and order" (Finer, 1965, p.15).

2) Political development theory: the level of political culture of societies whose experienced military intervention has played an important role in deciding the levels to which the military press their interventions. The First category is countries with the highest political cultural level. In countries like the US and Britain, any military intervention will not gain the people's endorsements. The second group of countries is the countries that are characterized by having developed civilian institutions. The public is relatively large and well organized into powerful associations. civil procedures and well established. Public authorities are the third category consisting of nations with a relatively small and poorly organized population Here, opinion would not be a staunch opponent of military intervention; this opinion, being weak and self-divided, is in a fluid state. Finer placed countries like Turkey, Argentina and Spain at the top of

this category, while countries like Egypt, Syria, Pakistan, Iraq, Sudan, and South Korea were placed at the bottom deeming them countries of a low political culture (Finer,1965. p.123).

3) The centrality of the military: Acemoglu et al (2010) (as cited in Edeh& Ikechukwu,2014) argued that building a strong military is a double-edged sword for the elite. On the one hand, a stronger military is more effective in preventing democratic transition. On the other hand, it also necessitates further military concessions or increases the likelihood of a military takeover. Onder (2010) claimed that the stronger the military's resources are, either as a percentage of state resources or in relation to the national economy, the weaker the civil society institutions are and, as a result, the higher the likelihood of military involvement. In many studies, larger militaries and those with more claims to government resources have been shown to be more prone to coups (para.4).

4) Conflict theory and (5) regional differences theories: the two theories are very related to each other. Morrison and Stevenson (1972) (as cited Edeh& Ikechukwu,2014) argued that the greater the number of groups and their cultural variety, the greater the elite instability is. The more groups and potential cleavages there are, the less stable coalitions there are and hence the higher the chance of intervention (Onder, 2010). But this argument, according to Edeh and Ikechukwu (2014), could be deceiving because if military intervention is equivalent to social heterogeneity, the United States would have experienced the world's greatest level of military rule. The last theory is regional differences theory. This theory is closely related to the conflict theory since most conflicts (the kind that leads to military intervention) arise from geographical disparities and disagreements within the ruling class which is always looking for new ways to assert its authority.

1-2.2 Military withdrawal

Ulf Sundhaussen suggested three factors that could lead to a military withdrawal. The first is the endogenous factors which is the military's readiness to withdraw. The second is factors exogenous to the military, especially resistance to military authority or the military establishment. Third factors exogenous to the state. Pressure by foreign states, intervention, and even invasion may motivate or compel the military to relinquish authority to civilians

1-The endogenous factors usually happen within the military. The endogenous factors are deemed a prominent theoretical argument to explain the military withdrawal phenomena. The organizational structure of the military. As factors that cause the military to withdraw from politics consist of few variables itself. The first is the level of professionalism of the armed forces (Al-Hamdi, 2014). According to Huntington (1967) since the French Revolution professionalism is the key factor in keeping the soldier out of politics. To put it another way, the more professional the military is, the more civilian authority they accept. Huntington stated that “A highly professional officer corps stands ready to carry out the wishes of any civilian group which secures legitimate authority within the state” (Huntington, 1967, p.84). Janowitz (1960) (as cited in Al-Hamdi, 2014) has adopted the opposite view arguing that professionalism injects the ability and desire to intervene in politics and to protect its interests, institutional structure, and norms. This means that military professionalism empowers the military to stay in power once it intervenes. Military professionalization, according to Janowitz, is a dynamic process in which professional characteristics alter over time in response to societal changes. In the same direction Finer (2002) stated that in the political world, professionalized officer corps have interfered with the Japanese and German instances being among the most well-known. Finer strongly believes professionalism might lead to military intervention into politics as the military is already fully equipped with several advantages that enable them to seize power. “These advantages are Superiority in organization, highly emotionalized symbolic status and a monopoly of arms” (Finer,2002, p.12). The presence of a charismatic military commander is seen to have an impact on the decision to quit politics. Welch (1979) (as cited in Al-Hamdi) argued that leadership is a very important factor in determining the achievement and maintenance of civilian control of the military. According to this argument, the withdrawal is the outcome of the charismatic leader's or leaders' attempts to alter the military's role from intervention to participation. They achieve this purpose by instilling in the military a mentality of strengthening civil institutions which will enhance social community emotions. According to Welch (1987) Finer similarly emphasizes on the importance of the role played by the leader in issuing military withdrawal. This requires First, that the leader brought to power by the military intervention has a strong intention that his armed force exit from politics. Second, it also requires the ability of creating a regime able to operate in the absence of additional support. Third, the support provided by the military to the newly established regime is indispensable.

Lastly, the military's confidence must be gained by the individual leader who issued the order of military withdrawal from politics. Huntington (1956) and Welch (1974) (as cited in Al-Hamdi, 2014) respectively presented the role played by Ayub Khan in Pakistan, Kemal Ataturk in Turkey and Chung Hee Pak in Korea among others as an example. A charismatic leader can achieve his goal of shifting the role of the military in politics only when he takes into consideration the socioeconomic variables such as the different views of military factions and the changing environment of civil-military coalitions. The problem here is that there is no definition of a “charismatic leader” and it is unclear whether such a leader must come from a military institution. The awareness of the military interests is another endogenous factor in shaping the military's decision to leave politics. The military here believes that such a decision will benefit the military's corporate interests by avoiding a further erosion in their image and solving the problems associated with intervention in politics such as cohesiveness, hierarchical structure, and reputation. The type of the regime installed by the military after its seizure of power to some extent determines the likelihood of whether the military is disposed to withdraw from power or not. It is also considered a prominent factor in the process of withdrawal in this context. According to Perlmutter (1979) arbitrator military regime is characterized by:

A- Acceptance of the current social system. B- Willingness to return to the barracks after the power struggles have been resolved. C- No independent political organization and lack of willingness to increase army authority. D-limited time for army rule. E-Concern about improvement of professionalism. F- Tendency to work as a pressure group behind the scenes. G- Fear of civilian retaliation. The ruler military regime in contrast to the arbitrator military regime:

A-Rejects the current order and challenges its legitimacy. B-Has low faith in civilian governance and has no intentions to return to the barracks. C- Has a political organization and prefers to increase army rule. D- Is convinced [arbitrator military regime] that army rule is the only alternative to political chaos. E-Politicizes professionalism. F- Operates in the open G- Has little fear of civilian retaliation (p.105).

2-As for the exogenous factors which usually take place outside the military, the expert Danopoulos (1988) argues that the civilian factor is very essential in forcing the military to

relinquish power. He presented the Peruvian military's withdrawal which, according to him, was partially sparked by strikes and acts of civil disobedience or open revolution.

3-Factors exogenous to the state according to Danopoulos (1988) military regimes are persuaded to return to the barracks under the pressure of a strong foreign nation with whom they have close relations or on which they rely economically and politically. Professional military ties might be used as an avenue for an outside authority to exercise influence over praetorian military behavior. Several Latin American military regimes were compelled to withdraw in part as a result of U.S pressure, particularly during Jimmy Carter's presidency (1976-1980). Finer improved his thesis on military withdrawal thirteen years after *The Man on Horseback* was published. He merely "played back" the interaction of two factors of military involvement in his prior theory, namely "disposition" and "opportunity or social condition". The difficulty, as Ulf Sundhaussen pointed out, is that he did not consider the external events that may cause the troops to withdraw. Finer recognized.

“What applies to military intervention into politics can be “played back” to explicate its extrusion. This ought to have been perfectly obvious to me; but certainly, was not. It was left to Ulf Sundhausen to point out to me, with relatively minor modifications, from Sundhausen, and I want to make unequivocally clear my indebtedness to it” (Gunawan,2000, p.10).

The strong point for this argument is that it covered the external factors which could force the military to withdraw. These external factors were overlooked by Finer as Ulf Sundhaussen has argued. From the discussion among various scholars relating to military intervention and withdrawal from politics, we can argue that the argument introduced by Ulf Sundhaussen and based on Finer's *the Man on Horseback* consists of endogenous factors, exogenous-to-the-military factors, and exogenous-to-the-state factors. This covers almost all the necessary aspects of this phenomenon and seems more applicable to the cases of Korea and Mauritania.

To begin with the most recognizable is external to the military which is opposed to its continued authority. Such resistance may arise as a result of a protest, as a reaction to oppression and corruption, or because of the regime's inability to address any of the crises it pledged to address. Ulf Sundhaussen introduced The Sandinistas' armed conflict as the most extreme form of civilian dissent. According to him, completely different types of pressure on

a military government to cede power may come from social groupings or classes that the regime may have helped to create or at least enhance. The emerging middle classes and industrial proletariat will desire greater political participation, if not the right to rule. Second, there are reasons exogenous to the state. A military dictatorship that is heavily reliant on other countries in terms of economic, military, and logistical assistance may be jeopardized if other countries withhold their support. The Carter administration's human rights initiatives undoubtedly had an influence on Latin American client regimes. Sormoza could still be in power if the US government had not forsaken him. Military regimes can also be toppled by direct external invasion, as in the case of Bokassa in central Africa. Third group of reasons for military withdrawal from politics is endogenous. Leaders of regimes may be inclined to withdrawal because they view that a democratic system, which always involves the idea of civilian dominance over the military, is fundamentally necessary. For the military to carry political responsibilities may inject political and ideological divisions into the armed forces to such an extent that their unity and capacity as a fighting force is substantially jeopardized. The natural conclusion is to transfer power to political specialists before the military's image suffers too much harm (Ulf Sundhaussen, 1984, pp.546-548).

Chapter 2 The military and politics in Korea

2.1 The establishment of the Korean army:

In their Cairo Declaration on December 1, 1943, the leaders of the United States, the United Kingdom, and China declared that Korea would be free and independent in "due time". The US and the Soviet Union were supposed to help establish an independent and united republic. The Korean peninsula was temporarily split into two occupation zones by the United States and the Soviet Union after Japan surrendered to the US and its allies on August 15, 1945. The Red Army was present to accept the Japanese surrender North of the 38th parallel. A month later, American forces crossed the dividing line into Korea on the southern side of the Korean Peninsula. The subsequent political disagreement between the two occupying powers on the unification of Korea made the temporary military division into a long term political and ideological one (Lee, 2005). In relation to this, Danopoulos (1988) argues that the result of this partition has been catastrophic for one reason: There would have been no Korean War if Korea had remained one united country. The dispatched U.S. 24th corps to the Southern half of the Korean peninsula to accept the Japanese anticipated surrender were simultaneously given instructions to engage in an effective transfer of authority with the Japanese General governor in Seoul, a transfer that denied any legitimacy to the Koreans as legal successor of the Japanese colonial administration by excluding any participation from the Korean politicians or local civilian groups. According to the author, General Hodge commander of the dispatched corps intentionally ignored the people's republic created around Yu Hu-Yong, an anti-Japanese nationalist leader. Instead, Hodge established his own American military administration and subjugated South Korea to it. The creation of the South Korean armed forces occurred during this American occupation period (pp.122-123). Alagappa (2001) described the military as an inseparable component of the state's function as its coercive machinery; hence, understanding the military is difficult without first elucidating the state's genesis and evolutionary dynamics. Despite different views, a new consensus has evolved in recent years that defines South Korea as an "overlapped state". The Korean state structure during the Japanese colonial era was characterized by "oppressive policy and effective bureaucracy" which was advanced to enhance colonial domination. Even after the Japanese colonial came to an end, this state

structure remained the same. Moreover, this colonial legacy was fostered by the following Syngman's regime and its predecessor the American military government. The absorption of the Japanese colonial bureaucrats, the police and the military directly contributed to establishing this overdeveloped state. According to Alagappa (2001) the prevalent social and political disorder resulted from the national liberation, followed by the ideological confrontation contributed to the continuation of this legacy. Despite the author emphasizing on the Japanese colonial institutional inheritance, he asserted the role played by the old authoritarian ideologies and the value of the Chosun dynasty which, according to him, were deeply merged in the process of institutionalization and deeply influenced the existing centralized state power. "Confucianism as a political philosophy emphasizes the idea of discriminative social order and classification. Thus, centralized power and social hierarchy were regarded as universal laws of nature which in turn justified the dominance of the ruling elite over the rest of society" (Alagappa 2001, p.123). The Korean war, too, played a prominent role in the creation of the overdeveloped state in South Korea, forcing the Syngman Lee administration to strengthen its state apparatus not only to fight the communist North Korea neighbor, but also to use it as a tool for restoring the lost stability during and following the Korean war. This situation contributed to an exponential growth of the three components of the state: bureaucrats, the police, and the military while civil society was in disarray (Alagappa 2001, p.123). The origin of the Republic of Korea Armed Forces can be traced back to the Korean Independence Army which was founded by the Provisional Government of Korea in exile in Chongking, Republic of China in 1940 during the Japanese occupation of Korea. Later, many of its members joined the South Korean military forces. Additionally, several ethnic Korean Kuomintang and Manchukuo troops joined the army (Republic of Korea Armed Forces,2021). On November 30, 1948, the Republic of Korea's first armed forces organization legislation went into effect creating the office of the joint chiefs of staff which included the army and navy commanders at the time (the air force and marines were created later). By the time of the Korean War, Seoul had a force of roughly 100,000 soldiers. The former Korean officers who served for the Japanese colonial were favored by the American new administration due to their better training compared with the Korean independence army in addition to their "advanced training and modern-day combat experience". The anti-communist ideology played crucial role in these officer's favoritism by the Americans (Kil & Moon,2001, p.16). Despite

being found by the American authorities who detest military involvement in politics, Korean president Syngman Lee succeeded in using the military to suppress his political rivals through bribes and favoritism for high-ranking generals on the pretext of fighting communism. This political behavior paved the way for military factionalism and corruption to spread inside the Korean army which led the way later on to the occurrence of two major military coups that had a huge impact on the Korean world of politics. The first one was through a bloodless coup in 1961 by Park Chung Hee proving the failure of the United State to maintain the Korean army as a politically uninvolved army in politics. The second was characterized by gradual power accumulation that resulted in a military coup in 1981 led by Chun Doo Huan.

2.2 The military coup 1961

Lee was elected president for the third time in May 1956. Under a revised constitution, he was able to run for the presidency and win it for a fourth time. His fourth election sparked rioting and violence between students and the government over allegations of rigging the election. “Already under the first elected president, the civilian Syngman Lee 1948–1960, the military was crucial for suppressing political opposition and delivering electoral support. However, it was the military's refusal to suppress protests against the rigged 1960 presidential elections that forced Lee resign” (Croissant & Kuehn, 2017, p.152). On April 19, 1960, a massive crowd of at least 100.000 students and young people gathered at the presidential palace and demanded to meet Lee. Palace guards shot straight into the people creating chaos in the streets of Seoul. At least 115 young people died and almost 1,000 were wounded. The protests were led by the Korean War generation of students who were born at the end of Japan's colonial era. Before the evening of April 25 when 50.000 protesters broke into the house of Vice president Yi’s home tearing it down, at the very same day, several hundred professors were occupying the street of Seoul holding peaceful protest demanding the departure of Lee (Cumming, 2005). The time when the corrupted regime of Lee came to an end on the student's hands in April 1960, South Korea was among one of the poorest countries in the world. “Its 1960 gross domestic product per capita was lower than that of some sub-Saharan African and most Latin American countries as well as many of its Asian neighbors (Kim, Lim 2007). After the fall of Lee's regime, the country was run by a caretaker government led by Prime Minister Heo Jeong the US-style presidential system was replaced with a European-style parliamentary

democracy. The democratic party won 175 seats in the lower house and 31 in the upper house and Yun Po-Sun was elected as the new president. For the first time the opposition democratic party organized the government with Chang Myon as Prime Minister (cumings, p. 346). Chang had been selected by Lee years before being appointed as the country's ambassador to the United Nations and later to Washington. The newly formed cabinet under the Chang administration introduced a new exchange rate, strengthened power companies and established the national reconstruction program with hope of improving living conditions of the Korean citizens. Despite this achievement, the government failed to provide sustainable public security (Brazinsky,2007, p.108).The Chang government's history exemplifies a major issue that many newly developed nations confront today: the failure to preserve constitutional and democratic political institutions (Han,1974 p.1).But from the perspective of Chang and his cabinet regarding the fall of the government, rather than admitting the failing performance of the government as a main reason behind the early end of this civilian regime, they believe that the government failed only because “a handful of conspirators were successful in seizing power through naked forces” (Han,1974, p.2). “I regret that I did not have the time to put into action my plans for economic and social stability after having done all the preparatory work ...I would like to say that if we had a few more months, we could have built the basic framework for our country” [Chang's memory about being forced out by the May 16 coup] (Kil & moon,2001, p.164).According to Cummings, however, the second republic was South Korea's first democratic regime. On the economic front, the government found itself in a difficult position as it dealt with rising instability exacerbated by the impoverished population of Korea. Per capita income was \$80, putting Koreans on par with those in Sudan and Haiti. Professor Yung-Myung Kim presents that the high modernization level of the Korean army compared to the civilian society was one of the factors that incited the Korean military interventions. He argued in his book *한국의 정치 변동* stating that at that time, civilian groups such as students and bureaucrats who were paving their ways to modernization existed, but they were less organized and modernized compared to the military. He expressed that the lack of organization and popularity of these civilian groups limited them from political and economic participation. In addition, he noted that the military being more modernized and institutionally developed compared to civilian society was a general phenomenon in newly independent countries. This gap naturally created distrust among officers toward the civilian elite, inciting governing

consciousness among the officers, a kind of calling that the only force that can be in charge for an authentic development of the state are the military officers themselves. The Professor mentioned two kinds of dissatisfaction within the military which largely contributed to ushering in the long rule of the military in Korea starting from the 1961 military coup. The first was due to the corruption of high-ranking senior officers and their subsequent political exploitation by Syngman Rhee [the first president of South Korea. The second one was the professional dissatisfaction centered on the disappearance of promotion for the young Turks. These factors linked to the deep-rooted factionalism of the Korean military (pp.145-146). Moreover, jeopardizing the military's institutional interests in the form of the Chang Myon regime's sharp cut in the defense budget incited the young Turks led by general Chung to assume the levers of political power. The prevailing social and political conditions facilitated the military takeover of power. Due to the immature legislative system and factional conflicts within the governing coalition, political society was fragmented and chaotic (Alaggapa,2001, p.125). Professor Yung-Myung Kim (2006) explains that if we look at the socio-political factors from a more structural aspect, it can be expressed as “The crisis of imported democracy”. Western-style liberal democracy introduced with the establishment of the Syngman Lee regime became deprived as soon as it entered the country (Kim,2006,p.147). “Imposing liberal democracy upon an unprepared nation simply did not work. What it did was to provide the basis for the emergence of military rule, initiated by younger officers who denied the idea of liberal democracy entirely and instead sought single-mindedly the objectives of economic growth and effective leadership” (Kim 2004,p.121).

As mentioned above, the military officers gave few pretexts for their military coup in 1961. One of them was defending the country from the perceived North Korean communist threat which was hugely accepted among the South Koreans at that time and continued to be used by Park Chung Hee successors like Chun Doo Huan. The economic hardship that the South Korean citizens faced was one of the pretexts given by the military to justify their military coup d'état in 1961 with communist threats, which were articulated with the threat from North Korea by the civilian society as well the state apparatus.

The Korean protestants were deemed as one of the most active anti-communist organizations in Korean society. This was due to their failed cooperation with communists to build a new state, which resulted in their displacement from North Korea (Yoon, J.2017). The anti-

communist feeling that swept the South Koreans following the end of the Japanese colonial and the subsequent American occupation of the Korean peninsula were politicalized and used as a tool of oppression against political dissent and legitimized the authoritarian act during the civilian regime and the following military regimes (History of anti-communism,2015). And of course, the alleged inability of the Chang's government to deal with the state problems further contributed to the political unrest. However, “Korea's experiment with democracy thus foundered in an unfortunate combination that linked democracy with economic stagnation, dependency on the United States, political instability and the drift to the left” (Cummings, 1997, p.347). After the oust of Rhee from power by student revolution during the social and political instability, the army kept on denying its political ambitions, but with the suggested reduction in military expenditures by an appointed civilian head minister of defense, the rampant corruption and the civilian government failed to protect the nation from perceived communist threats, thus resulting in the bloodless military coup staged by general Park Chung Hee 1961-79 (Barany,2012, p.180). The constitution was suspended by coup leaders ruling the nation by decree for nearly two years until a split occurred among the junta leading to the resignation of General Chang. Then, Park took the reign of command, following an accusation by Park of his former co-leader for conspiring to assassinate him. “The younger officers who planned and executed the coup were more of a ‘ruler’ type and thus, intended to stay in power indefinitely. Senior officers, who were involved at later stages of the coup, were ‘moderators’ who wanted to return to the barracks after ‘cleaning’ the polity” (May, R. J., & Selochan, 2004).

To pressure General Park to return to the civilian rule in the period of 1961-1963, the Kennedy Administration threatened to suspend the development loans provided to the Korean government, thus forcing Park to run for election. Park won the 1963 presidential election after transforming himself into a civilian politician, creating the third republic and starting Korea's long journey under military rule. Park used three strategies to control the military, which constituted the backbone of his regime and penetrated all areas of society and politics. The first strategy was appeasement. The regime introduced career opportunities outside the military in which retired officers were granted posts in the administration and economy. This fundamentally decreased the danger of promotion bottlenecks that had been one of the main complaints of the coup plotters of 1961. The second strategy exercised counterbalancing, through which he created or enhanced the army security command, capital defense command,

and special warfare command (SWC), the latter of which controlled paratroopers, as the prime counter-coup units. These were the only military forces that the Korean President could use without the potential interference of the U.S. government and the U.S military's command in Korea. Third, in a move of ascriptive selection, Park systematically fostered followers within the officer corps by using his personal influence over military promotions (Croissant et al.,2017 p.114).

Between 1965 to 1971, Korea experienced one of its fastest economic growth periods, with a comparative political stability which was reflected in Park winning the election by more than a million votes thanks to the success of the export led program. But this rapid economic growth had its own side-effects on President Park's regime. As a result, it created a regional and social feeling of unfair sentiment among Koreans. Most of them complained about not being given a fair share of the economic benefits, especially in the southwestern part of Korea, since most of them were not included by the government for the investment plans. This grievance was reflected in the presidential election, when opposing candidate Kim Dae Jung of the southwestern Cholla region went against President Park in the 1971 presidential election. Due to accusations that President Park took advantage of the state resources at his disposal to finance his presidential campaign, he won the election by only a slight margin. This slight and narrow win created a fear among the military regime that they were going to lose if the democratic electoral process continued. This feeling contributed to the establishment of the Yushin system as Cummings and Myung argued. As a result, Park proclaimed a state of emergency immediately after taking office based on "the dangerous reality of the global situation". After suspending the existing constitution, Park dissolved the national assembly in October 1972 and introduced a new constitution. In November 1972, the new one was passed in a vote that was undoubtedly fraudulent (Second Republic, 2010). Despite his loss in the election against Park in 1971, which was never accepted by Kim, the latter emerged as Park's main political rival. During the May National Assembly campaign, Kim's car was hit by a truck in a mysterious accident that resulted in his injury and the death of his driver (Kim Dae-Jung's Role in the,2014). In the new approved constitution under the name of Yushin, was allowed to be a president for life-by removing the limitation on re-election and extending the term of office from four to six years. He officially put an end to the Korean democracy that was able to survive for more than ten years after the military coup. Many terror and human rights abuses cases

were reported during this time. The Yushin constitution was condemned in major US journals by famous intellectuals and members of Congress. Nonetheless, Park was congratulated on his reelection by President Richard M. Nixon. (Kim Dae-Jung's Role in the,2014). But from the other side, some Korean politicians like Kim Jong-Pil, who was a two-time prime minister for Park, asserted the need for the Yushin constitution at that time. During some of his interviews published by Joong Aang daily Newspaper in 2015, he advocated for the implementation of the Yushin constitution, claiming that the Yushin constitution, which was declared in 1972, gave Park “dictatorial rights”, these dictatorial rights merely originated from his revolutionary spirit, according to Kim Jong Pil, who claimed this with the increase of North Korea's power. As Kim Il Sung pledged to celebrate his 60th birthday in Seoul, the US announced its withdrawal of all soldiers from South Korea. (Park's sacrifices made in bid ,2005). To Kim Jong Pil, all of these justified the Yushin constitution, which was only temporary and wouldn't last forever, as he was personally told by President Park (Park's sacrifices made in bid ,2005). Aside from Kim Dae Jung's attempted assassination, another opposing figure, Kim Yong Sam, was dismissed from the national parliament for his persistent calls to repeal the Yushin constitution. In October 1979, Korea experienced a high level of violence after certain governmental facilities and police stations were destroyed by angry protesters in the city of Busan, the home of opposing figure Kim Yong-Sam. In response to this violence, Park declared martial law in Busan.

2.3 The military coup 1979:

After the assassination of President Park in 1979 by his own intelligence chief, South Korea entered a period of political vacuum triggering political struggle among different functions in the Korean society. And, of course, the military factionalism among old and new graduated generals intensified. Choi Kyu-Hah took over as president. He was a political lightweight who lacked the vision, power, and popularity to secure the historical moment for democracy. The real power in the country was Chung Seung-Hwa, the martial law commander. Meanwhile, citizens were enjoying a new freedom and taking to the streets in what was known as the “Seoul Spring”. And on the other side, the state was being mismanaged and the process of making a new constitution was going slow, worsened by a weak civilian president and a slow economy (General Chun Doo-Hwan,2011). By heading the Defense Security command, the intelligence agency that policed the military, Chun was able to accumulate huge political

influence that enabled him to take charge into the investigation of the late President Park's tragic death. Chun's investigators were occupied with figuring out answers for suspicions regarding the alleged relation of Chung Seung Hua [the martial law commander] with Park assassination. Despite his professionalism, Chung's presence at the Blue House when President Park was assassinated created suspicions about his complicity with the assassins. Before his alleged involvement in the assassination, Chung was anxious that certain politically ambitious commanders in the Korean military may obstruct the constitutional transition of power after the death of president Park (Wickham, 1999, p.12). Chung Seung Hua [the martial law commander] grew to realize the necessity of taking measures such as dispatching them into less influential positions and forcing the retirement of high officers who can be potential threats during the transition period (Wickham 1999, p.38). The aftermath of the successful arrest of his strongest rival martial law commander Chung Seung-Hwa on December 12, 1979, after an exchange of fire resulted in the death of several soldiers. This trading of gunfire, which according to the coup officers was triggered by the rejection of general Chung to accompany the interrogators sent by Chun, later became known as 12-12. General Chun was able to expand and enhance his domination over the Republic of Korea army (ROK Army). The coup officer justified their action at night to the Minister of Defense, by projecting the blame on General Chung and his suspicious actions on the night of Park's assassination.

“They [the coup plotters] were upset with liberal trends in the nation, which the government seemed to be tolerating if not encouraging” (Wickham ,1999 p.61).

Regarding the American reaction to the coup at that time recently, classified documents provided to South Korea by the U.S. State Department have revealed that shortly after then was General Chun Doo-Hwan's military takeover five months before. Chun talked with US Ambassador William Gleysteen and sought to persuade him that what he had done was not a military coup. Rather Chun said he was aiming to complete the investigation into President Park Chung Hee's assassination. (Arirang, 2020). By keeping the weak president Choi in his position as the head of the state and by not suspending the existing constitution, Chun was able to some extent to advocate his claims that what happened on 12-12 was not a military coup creating confusion among the American diplomats in Seoul of how to react to this murky situation. Ambassador Gleysteen, noted

“From a technical viewpoint the word “coup” really was not an accurate depiction of what had occurred. After all, Choi was allowed to remain as the president, even if only in a figurehead status, and the ROK constitution had not been suspended” (Wickham, 1999, p.67).

On the contrary, General John A. Wickham Commander in Chief of the United Nations Command and Commander of the United States Forces Korea and Eighth Army in South Korea, claimed that

“Chun and his co-conspirators pursued a full control of the power but had simply lacked a comprehensive plan for how to go about it. Perhaps they just had not yet had enough time to flesh out the details. But, once they decided to arrest General Chung and to occupy Seoul with loyal military units, there was no turning back” (Wickham,1999, p.68).

In April, Chun solidified his grip on power by appointing himself as the head of KCIA. Kim Jong Pil, a prominent figure from the Park’s regime era, joined the student’s protest demanding the annulment of martial law. Following this bold step toward making himself the head of state and through declaring martial law, closing universities, forbidding all political activities and arresting radical student leaders as well as those who instigate and support them, such as Kim Dae-Jung, Chun was able to make himself the strongest man in South Korea and avoid serious protests in the future (Wickham,1999 p.131).

In 1980 Chun triggered the most tragic incident in Korean modern history, the Gwangju Popular Uprising. On May 18, about 500 people took Gwangju's streets demanding the repeal of the martial law. “Elite paratroopers, widely thought to have been on drugs”, entered the city and started slaughtering students, women, and children indiscriminately (Cumming1997, p.377). According to opposition groups, this violent crackdown on civilian protesters resulted in the death of more than 2000 people. This number was denied by the Chun’s government reporting the death of 191 people; However, the Gwangju crackdown was marked as the most violent event since the end of the Korean war.

Following the Gwangju crackdown, the Chun regime continued its unrestrained repression, banning, and purging potential political dissents. More than 40,000 people were being held in purification camps where many of them lost their lives because of torture and cruel treatment. Also, many professors and journalists lost their jobs due to the new government’s rules that

forbade newspapers from hiring reporters in other cities, thus making the state-controlled news agency the only source for news. Before officially assuming the reign of power in 1980, the Chun power ambition suffered from a big lack of legitimacy, which was sullied by the Gwangju revolt that caused Chun's attempt to establish legitimacy home and abroad to his critics to fail. The former Army general was a man who had blood on his hands when he officially assumed the post of president in the summer of 1980 (Thousands Protest Rule,1986). However, “the Gwangju Popular Uprising has hugely contributed to the Korean democratization process by triggering another mass- democratization movement a few years later, joined by Koreans from all walks of society calling for a resume of a direct election system” (After 70 years of turbulent transition,2015). After the bloody crackdown on protesters, unofficial resources claimed that a U.S general has expressed the American government's intention to support Chun Doo Huan's presidential ambition adding that “I’m not sure democracy the way we understand it is ready for Korea or the Koreans ready for it. Korea seems to need a strong leader.” On August 27, Chun resigned from the army making himself the president of Korea under the Yushin constitution (Kim Dae-Jung's Role in the,2014). The president would be elected for a single, non-renewable term of seven years under the proposed constitution.

Considering Chun's repeated assurances that he would leave office on time, South Koreans started to see the end of Chun's presidential term as a possible transitional period. Despite earlier commitments to step down in an orderly and lawful procedure when his constitutionally mandated 7-year term ended in 1988, President Chun suspended negotiations with the opposition over the introduction of direct presidential elections in 1987. At this time, the Korean opposition suffered from internal division. The opposition NKDP was split when Kim Young-Sam announced, on April 8, his departure from the party to create a separate political party, the Reunification Democratic Party (RDP), following casting a vote of no confidence to party leader Lee Min-Woo’s continued discussion with the ruling DJP on the constitutional amendment. Encouraged by this news, President Chun made an announcement of suspending the dialogue with the opposition regarding the constitutional revision. And he nominated his co-conspirator in the 1979 coup, retired General Roh Tae-woo, as his party’s presidential candidate. Mr. Roh and other members of the governing party claimed that constitutional change was not dead, just postponed. “This does not mean that progress toward more democracy came to a sudden halt and we're going backward,” said Hyun Hong Choo, a

National Assemblyman and frequent party spokesman (South Korea crackdown,1987). This decision came with the brutal deaths and tortures against citizens committed by the regime security apparatus. In particular, the student activist of the pro-democracy Park Jong-chul's death during interrogation triggered a massive street protest that swept the nation for more than 20 days and later became known as the June Democratic Uprising. At the initial stages of the June uprising around three hundred thousand protestors in 22 regions across the nation took part in this rally. The number would reach its climax to attract 1.4 million Korean citizens at its final stage. The Chun regime was forced to approve fundamental democratic changes which contributed to the start of a new era of democratic opening between the regime and the protesting groups students, labor unions, churches, and the parliamentary opposition. To mollify and ease the tension, Chun released political prisoners and restored the civilian rights for the most prominent opposing figure Kim Dae Jung. The approval of the direct elections of the president which, were the core demands of the opposition, was deemed as a chance of a peaceful democratic transition of power in Korea at that time.

“Let us work another miracle by developing Korea into a model of political development deserving to be so recorded in world history, Mr. Chun said in a nationally broadcast address. "We must not be content with having newly become a model of economic development” (South Korea chief agrees,1987).

Soon later, on October 27, the country witnessed the constitutional referendum to accept the new amendments; Around 93.1 % of people said yes to the new constitution. The participation rate was very high, reaching 78.2% among the 26,6 million Korean eligible voters, the failure of the opposition to agree on one candidate prolonged the life of the military regime after Roh Tae Woo surprisingly won the election of 1987. Despite allegations of fraud, the opposition figures had no options but to accept the result of the election. At a time when was military withdrawal from politics was supposed to take place the absence of a united oppositions hugely contributed into delaying the withdrawal. Finer (1985) (as cited in Kim 2004) stated “Even when the military is willing to give up power, its withdrawal from politics cannot be completed unless there are political institutions, notably political parties, capable of assuming power”. Kim (2004) argued that in Korea, the division within the opposition party into two intransigent rival camps deprived them from this capacity.

	Rh Tae Woo	Kim Yong Sam	Kim Dae Jung
Gwangju	4.8%	0.5%	93.4%
North Cholla	13.7%	1.5%	80.9%
South Cholla	8.0%	1.1%	87.9%
North Kyong san	64.8%	27.5%	2.3%
South Kyong san	40.4%	50.3%	4.4%
Total\ All ROK	35.9%	27.5%	26.5%

Source: (Cummings Korea's place in the sun p.389)

Chapter 3 The military and politics in Mauritania

3-1 Introduction of Mauritania

Mauritania's population is estimated to be 4,623,187 people, there is diversity, with 40% of the population being mixed Moor/Black, 30% Moor, 29% Black. Almost all the Mauritanian people are Muslim, mostly Sunni. The official language is Arabic, namely the Hassaniya dialect. Black Africans and Arab-Berbers are the two primary ethnic groups. The Fulani, Soninke, and Bambara are black African subgroups. According to the national constitution, the national religion is Islam. However, unlike most of the Islamic countries, the state's institutions combine both Islamic and secular elements (originating from the French civil code). The constitution declares that Islamic teachings are the sole source of law, yet they are adaptive to the changing needs of society. However, main governmental institutions (the president, the National Assembly, and the Senate) are founded on popular sovereignty rather than religion, and Mauritania adheres to most international accord and norms, notably the (secular) Human Rights Charter.

3.2 Arab Orientation

Mauritania's relationship with the Arab world and its Maghreb neighbors are essential, yet they may be difficult to manage at times. In 1975, Mauritania became a founding member of the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS), which reflects relations formed during the colonial period, when it was part of French West Africa. Nonetheless, the Arab dimension of the nation's identity has big significance. Successive administrations have sought to affirm it through joining the Arab League in 1973, and the cultivation of ties with Saudi Arabia and the Gulf states, which are key sources of development aid. Most recently, the Arab League summit was hosted by Mauritania for the first time in 2016. Arab nationalist thinkers of the Ba'athist and Nasserist traditions were more prominent in influencing and shaping the ideology of President Maaouya Ould Taya's authoritarian dictatorship in the late 1980s. (Mauritania's Unfolding Landscape,2019).

3.3 Geopolitical Importance

During recent years, growing economic investments has contributed to Mauritania's growing regional importance, specifically in the oil sector. The geographical location of Mauritania on the African continent's edge, and, as the most westerly Arab led state in the MENA [middle east and north Africa] region distinguishes itself as a state of significance in ethno-religious and geopolitical terms. Mauritania has an important role as a geographical and cultural bridge between Northern and Sub-Saharan Africa, with abundant natural resources which ought to propel it to the top of the list of regional economies (Spain Helping Mauritania, 2009). At the time being, Mauritanian geopolitical importance to Spain and France and other western countries are more evident. The Mauritanian geo-political importance to Spain pushed the Spanish minister of foreign affairs to be the first European foreign minister to visit Mauritanian President General Mohammed Ould Abdel Aziz after his inauguration as the new president of the country. During his visit, the Spanish foreign affairs Moratinos announced plans to strengthen development assistance for health, fishing, and agriculture, as well as strategic cooperation on fighting illegal immigration (Spain Helping Mauritania,2009). Relating to the illegal immigration issue, the Prime Minister [of Mauritania] made the following statement in an interview published in El Pais: “What happened was unimaginable. In 2005, we arrested 3900 illegal immigrants who were about to enter the Canary Islands, [Spanish island 793 kilometers from Mauritania's commercial capital of Nouadhibou] and within the space of just two months since the beginning of 2006 we have arrested a further 1200” (Poutignat and Streiff-Fénart,2019). To combat illegal immigration, the Spanish and Mauritanian governments have increased patrols along the coast. Madrid is assisting Nouakchott with approximately \$750 million yearly funding and a small aircraft to monitor immigration routes (Spain Helping Mauritania,2009).

3.4 Civilian President

On November 28, 1960, Mauritania gained its independence from France. Assuming the presidency, Moktar Ould Daddah was one of only six Mauritanian university graduates, most of whom had schoolteacher’s degrees. Two-thirds of the 12,000 residents of its new capital Nouakchott lived in tents (Foster,2009, p,20). Mr. Daddah had strong ties to the French. He had served as a civil servant and Prime Minister under the French colonial authorities before emerging as the leader of an independent Mauritania. Unlike His predecessors, who "inherited"

nations that were more, or less territorially defined, Daddah had to practically "invent" Mauritania. He fought for its recognition by his strong neighbor, Morocco, and laid the foundation stone for Nouakchott the capital (Mokhtar Ould Daddah Mauritania's first president,2003). Ould Daddah followed the steps of the newly independent African country leaders by forming a single state party in the country's first state constitution in August 1960, which became the Mauritanian People's Party that dominated politics in the nation for the coming 14 years. The party provided Ould Daddah with implementation with which to consolidate his grip on power. The imposition of a single-party rule over a country like Mauritania, which is characterized by ethnic diversity, resulted in the emergence of underlying tensions. This was especially apparent among the southern black population, who feared Arab domination. The situation was exacerbated by the 1966 decision to make Arabic a compulsory subject in secondary schools and the decision in 1968 to make Arabic, as well as French, an official language. Differences over linguistic and racial issues evoked the students and trade union's strikes and demonstrations in 1968, 1969, and 1971. These protests were met with coercive, repressive measures taken by the government which had prohibited discussing racial issues in 1966 (Handloff 1987, p.25). The Moroccan claim of Mauritania as a part of what in Morocco was called " the grand Morocco " was a very threatening claim that, without the French support to gain international recognition for the newly established state, would have resulted in an early end to Mauritania. This was due to the fact that the Moroccan claim was received with much support among the Arab countries except Tunisia. These countries perceived French support for Mauritania's independence as a step to weaken any early future unity plan among the Arab world countries, more specifically North African countries which on the long run might surely jeopardize the interests of both old colonial masters Spain and France respectively. Mauritania had to wait over a decade to be granted Arab League membership, and it took until 1972 for Morocco to fully acknowledge it as an independent state. Ould Daddah's main goal between 1960 and 1978 was to build the Mauritanian nation, which is an essential foundation for the modern state. New ideological, political, and social orientations emerged as a result, with the goal of reorganizing "archaic" social patterns and individualistic solidarities (segmentary, ethnic) in favor of the state and advancing new notions of Mauritanian citizenship and nationality. The sedentarization of nomads and the colonization of arid lands for agriculture were major development goals for Arab States and Arab League

members (Cervello, 2006). The great plans by the Mauritanian leader were hindered by the Sahara conflict. Western Sahara Spain's last colony in Africa is geographically located between Mauritania and Morocco. It is home to rich Atlantic fishing grounds and abundant phosphate deposits. After the Spanish withdrawal, the two nations claimed sovereignty over this territory, and were involved in an armed conflict with the Polisario Front which declared the Arab Democratic Republic of Sahrawi. Many Polisario [Sahrawi people's liberation force] commanders had Mauritanian citizenship and had resided in the nation, while the region's population were Hassaniya-speaking Sahrawis who were strongly tied to Mauritania (Foster, p.25). Even among the Arab Mauritians, Ould Dadah's claims and resolution to recover Western Sahara has never evoked great enthusiasm, especially among “the black Afro Mauritians sedentary living along the Senegal River valley, who had no enthusiasm for fighting a war for more desert and more Moorish nomads” (Saharan Rebel Raids Force,1979).

President Ould Daddah refused to use funds from the country's natural wealth or to rely on the 1962 conscription legislation to establish a force that could match that of Mauritania's neighbors in terms of size and capabilities. Ould Daddah's planned goal of minimizing the military's involvement in society and subordinating it to the civilian administration resulted in an intentional decision to reduce the military's numbers and resources (Foster, 2010, p.65). Due to the conflict, President Ould Dadah had no choice but to nominate the chief of staff to the position of national defense, which had formerly been held by a civilian cabinet minister. As a result of the Mauritanian president's goal of reducing military capabilities, the Mauritanian army was ill-equipped and under-trained in comparison to the other parties taking part in the war, forcing the nation to rely on Moroccan air and ground assistance.

Many Mauritians were disturbed by this reality, as they remembered Morocco's previous claims to "Le Grand Maroc," which claimed all of Mauritania as well as Western Sahara.

3.5 Mauritanian army

The establishment of the Mauritanian army came late in comparison to the nation's independence. The first genuine seeds of an armed force came one year after independence. The previous defense minister, who graduated only from elementary school and was surrounded by elite professors (who later became his army officials), assumed the task of establishing it. The most prominent observation about the Mauritanian army at the time was

that it was neither an extension of the resistance and its revolutionary spirit, nor was it an extension of colonial French security agents, or "GOMYT". The newly born army devoted itself to the exploitation of social polarity. The Zawaya forces, the tribal groups who historically were preoccupied with culture and learning the sharia [Islamic law], remained in power. These tribal groups are known for their deep aversion to weaponry. Thus, the Beni Hassan tribes, the tribes who previously built their glory on war and military conflicts, alongside the Afro-Mauritian groups, found for themselves a very important opportunity for employment, in the newly established military institution (Ould Mohamedou,2003). Ahead of the military coup in 2008, the Mauritanian military has seen huge growth more than any national institute in the country. According to the IISS Armed Balance 2007, Mauritania's military forces consists of 15,870 troops, plus an extra 5,000 paramilitaries. With bases in Nouadhibou and Nouakchott, the Navy (Marine Mauritanienne) has 620 troops, 10 patrol and coastal combatants, and has a naval infantry, according to the CIA. The tiny Air Force (Force Aeriennne Islamique de Mauritanie, FAIM) comprises of 250 soldiers, two FTB-337 aircraft, 15 different kinds of transport aircraft, and four SF-260E trainers. The National Gendarmerie (3,000) and the National Guard (2,000) are the two paramilitary units that report to the Ministry of the Interior directly. The National Police, Presidential Guard, and other paramilitary services were reported by the CIA in 2001 (Military of Mauretania, n.d). In 2008, Mauritania had 21.000 enlisted officers, compared to 15.620 in neighboring Senegal and 15.150 in Mali, despite the country's small population. Mauritania spent 3.6 percent of its GDP on defense in 2006, according to figures from the Central Intelligence Agency, compared to 1.4 percent and 1.9 percent for Senegal and Mali, respectively (Akrimi and Barth 2019).

3.6 The military coups in 1978, 1988, 1984, 2005

The Mauritian constitution and the laws deriving from its state that the elected president is the Commander in Chief of the Army and President of the Supreme Council of the Judiciary, and the army is the protector of the borders of the nation. In contrast to this actual practice, the army accustomed itself to going beyond its articulated areas and indulged itself in politics, bringing confusion to the political scene. Military coups represented the fastest way to seize power. It should be noted that the practice of achieving power by force is an old Mauritanian tradition, even before the birth of the civilian state and the establishment of the army. Violence

and murder were the best ways to gain and retain power. Therefore, the old military coups were called (Al-gadera) which means getting rid of the Emir [head of tribe, ruler] through treacherous murder. The first military coup declared the army as the source of legitimacy and authority when the coup leader told the overthrown president, "Mr. President, the army has stripped you off its trust" (Ould Mohamedou,2003). They were to be the first of a succession of Mauritanian military juntas that came to power with the promise of resolving the country's inherent issues, but were unable to do so, much less those they had created. A move meant to prevent such an incident, Ould Daddah had selected Col. Ould Salek as the Armed Forces chief of staff. His unexpected nomination was attributed to his seniority (Foster,2010, p.59). According to a radio communique from Nouakchott, Mauritania capital. The nation's overthrown President, Moktar Ould Dadda, who has led the country since its independence from France in 1960, is being detained in his home. The fall of the civilian President Moktar Ould Dadda can be attributed to complicity of Mauritanian society and the influence of the tribes.

“Moktar came from a traditional society organized in tribes. He swept away the emirs.” In contrast “the military regime is the revenge of warrior tribes on modernity, against Moktar, against the state” (Foster, p.27).

The new military committee that seized power was made up of eight officers and eight civilians, led by the army chief of staff, a former teacher that transferred to the army and received his training in France, he was concerned that the previous government was not fighting the Polisario guerrillas effectively enough.

The main justification presented by the military for their seizure of power was to end the Mauritanian involvement in the Sahara war. The war wasn't received with much enthusiasm among the vast majority, especially the Arab who considered the Sahrawi people their brothers due to the same language and culture shared with them. The circle of coups continued, April 6, army General Bousseif staged a coup in which Colonel Salek's power was stripped from him, but he was kept as the state's leader. The main cause of the coup was the failure of the overthrown president to deal with the crisis resulting from the country's involvement in the Sahara conflict.

After recognizing the Sahrawi people right to self-determination and expressed his desire to reach a ceasefire agreement with Polisario, shortly later general Bousseif died in a mysterious plane crash, then, the reign of power was assumed by Ould Haidallah, a pro-Polisario leader who stayed in power till December, 1984. Ould Haidallah's political strategy was less chaotic than his predecessors:

First, he succeeded to reach a peace agreement with the Polisario Front on June 5, 1979 and announced the country would maintain neutrality from the ongoing conflict that was still unsolved. Second, the pace of the education reforms was slowed in his presidential tenure, characterized by the imposition of Arabic as the language of instruction (Cervello, 2006). In 1984 after 4 years since Ould Haidallah's seized power the chief of staff, Col. Ould Taya who was a Prime Minister in the Ould Haidallah's government and a member of the military junta that overthrew the first civilian president, conducted a military coup against Ould Haidallah's claiming that the objective of taking power is "to halt the growth of "personal power" to the detriment of the country" (Mauritania coup ousts president, 1984). The coup success can be attributed to both international and national factors ; the French and Moroccan position on Ould Haidallah, who is deemed socially and politically pro- Polisario front, and the two countries fear of Ould Haidallah's strong relations with Algeria, as well as his hostile tendencies to the international monetary institutions, which do not appeal to some Western financial circles, the internal state of tension which was caused by arbitrary arrest and detention of Arab nationalists. The regime's confrontation with its political and military opponents. The rise of internal and external opposition to the regime. The inability to manage the country, and the failure to achieve political and social consensus on public administration reform (Ould Mohamedou, 2013). He [Ould Taya] seized power with the promise of putting an end to the dictatorship, corruption, and tribalism that had crippled the nation. His power would gradually corrupt him, resulting in the largest plutocracy Mauritania had ever seen, which would finally lead to his regime's collapse (Foster, 2010). The experience of past juntas' power struggles taught Ould Taya one of his favorite maxims: power is indivisible that experience indeed equipped him to be better prepared to deal with counter coups attempts and civilian dissidents for his regime, this was proved by the fact that he survived several coups attempts during his 20-years rule (N'Diaye, 2017, p.54). The country witnessed some improvement on several different fronts in Ould Tayas early year in power, the head of the CMSN (Military Committee

for National Salvation) ordered the release of political dissidents imprisoned during the previous regime, asserting nation adherence to internationally accepted principles (Foster,2009).

The 1989 events were one of the most serious challenges that the Ould Taya regime had faced. when The Afro-Mauritanian officers in the army attempted a military coup to overthrow Ould Taya regime. During the late eighties of the last century, tension escalated, and the regime of President Ould Taya announced that it had thwarted coup attempts planned by Afro-Mauritanian officers and revealed a “broad scheme” that the Afro-Mauritanian officers were preparing against the Arab majority. Tension reached its peak and the situation exploded in 1989, triggering a military conflict between Mauritania and its neighbor Senegal, which turned into targeting the citizens of each country (Abu al-Ma'ali, 2010).

In which dozens of Afro-Mauritanians were killed, and thousands were expelled to Senegal, others fled to Mali. During the years 1990 and 1991, the authorities arrested hundreds of Afro Mauritanians officers on charges of planning a military coup and executed more than 500 of them according to some human rights organizations without trial and dismissed hundreds of their jobs (Abu al-Ma'ali, 2010). Afro-Mauritanian activists took advantage of the presence of different sub-Saharan heads of state in Nouakchott for the African Union summit in mid-2018 to encourage them to push the government to establish a truth and reconciliation commission to address past human rights atrocities (Melly,2019). And from the Mauritanian side dozens of Mauritanian organizations are calling for the opening of an international investigation to hold the Senegalese government accountable for the gross human rights violations, committed against many Mauritanians who were residing on Senegalese lands during the conflict. The Mauritanian lawyer "Mohamed Sedina Ould Cheikh," says that the world should remember the plight of the Mauritanian victims in 1989, whose death toll reached 10,000 and who were buried in mass graves that are still unknown, as well as 35,000 missing people (Ould l'khлива,2014). To appeal more to western powers and gain some legitimacy abroad, Ould Taya engaged in a diplomatic relationship with Israel, a step that was hugely condemned and refused by most Mauritanian people. In 1999, the Mauritanian government elevated its diplomatic relations with Israel to the ambassadorial level after signing an agreement in Washington. Making Mauritania one of three Arab countries to recognize and exchange ambassadors with

the state of Israel, which has been diplomatically and economically isolated and boycotted by Arab countries.

After the 9.11 attacks, Ould Taya presented himself to the United States as a reliable partner in the war against terrorism. In fact, as so many experts claim, the war against terrorism was used by authoritarian regimes like Ould Taya to oppress political rivals under the pretext of war against terrorism. “More ominously, he pursued purges of suspected Islamists and Arab nationalists within the military, sowing considerable disgruntlement within the ranks. These discontents, unlike their civilian counterparts, had means to assert their dissent that spoke more loudly than words” (Foster,2009, p.43).

These dissidents ushered a military coup attempt to overthrow the Ould Taya regime in 2003. The coup attempt leader was Major Saleh Ould Hannena, a dismissed former commander of the armored battalion from the western region. Which suffered from systematic marginalization as some regional leaders claimed. According to the media it appeared to be headed by officers who had just been expelled from the army and others who were outraged by the government's anti-Islamic policy. The authentic motivations of most junior officers who conducted the 2003 coup attempt were far more personal than ideological. Civilians were aware of this and despite the fact that many houses owned small guns, civilians were not involved in the conflict. They have always considered coups to be an entire military matter (Foster,2009, p.50). In the second of August 2005 the nation witnessed a new successful overtake of power through a military coup. The military council of justice and democracy headed by Colonel Ould Mohamed Vall declared the end of the Ould Tayas regime announcing a transition period of two year. The coup was executed smoothly and without any shed of blood, facilitated by the president's absence in Saudi Arabia attending the funeral of the late King Fahd. The army took control of certain strategic points and deployed some of its military units to prevent any possible actions by loyalists. As there were no signs of resistance, this deployment of units was found later to be unnecessary. The military junta promised a relinquishment of power to democratic rule within two years (Mauritania: a small country gives,2007). Despite this intention, the coup confronted African leaders and the United States quick condemnation, announcing that the days of authoritarianism and military domination across the continent must come to an end (World Briefing: Africa; Middle East; Asia; Europe,2005).

Ould Taya, who has partnered with the US in the fight against terror Shortly before being overthrown, he ruthlessly led an intensive crackdown on opponents he accused of being Islamic extremists, Taya, has survived several coups attempts during his 20-year rule. Only one attempt in 2003 made it past the planning stage, marked by several days of street fighting in the capital (Officers Seize Power in Mauritania, 2005). When he was [Ould Taya] ousted from power in August 3, 2005, it was believed that president Ould Taya have been planning his succession by his son who was an officers in the in the gendarmerie following the steps of some Arab and African leader, ironically, the two men he trusted the most, his director of national security colonel Ould Mohamed Vall and colonel Abdel Aziz, commander of the presidential security battalion (BASEP) ousted him from power (N'Ddiaye,2017,p.54). Unlike previous coups which were characterized by the appointment of military officers to cabinet and sub- cabinet level position this time praised technocrats were appointed to a civilian transnational period A former head of the ruling PRDS and then Mauritanian Ambassador to France, Sidi Mohamed Ould Boubacar was appointed as Prime Minister .During an interview with the Senegalese journal Wal Fadjri (Dakar), that took place on 14 March 2007, [the Head of Military Council for Justice and Democracy] Ould Vall noted:

It is critical to recognize that what has occurred throughout this time is not just political. In reality during the nine months between the coup and the presidential elections, significant changes were implemented in a variety of sectors, including political, economic, and judicial reforms. Even though petroleum production increased inflation, which harmed the poorer classes. Civil servants on the other hand, saw their pay increase President Ould Vall explained his political motivations for the decision: "Paying civil servants pitiful salaries invites corruption." We hope to eliminate this trend by doubling their salaries" (Mauritania: a small country gives,2007). The country held a presidential inauguration. In the presence of several African heads of states, France's Defense minister and American Deputy Secretary of State John Negroponte, who stated "The transition to a democratically elected government opens the way ... towards a significantly expanded cooperation between us". "Whatever government he forms, we look forward to collaborating with it closely and to deepening our relationship with this country" (Mauritania swears in new president, 2007). But what drew the attention more was that senior-level representatives from the Arab League didn't attend the presidential inauguration. Some Mauritanian journalists boasted about how successful their elections were,

claiming that it had “aroused anxiety among certain totalitarian regimes, which feared Mauritania’s contagious democracy” (Foster,2010, p.143).

Abdulah came to power after winning Mauritanian free and democratic elections on April 9, 2007, the newly elected president is an economist who occupied many governmental positions in the seventies and eighties of the last century, including the Minister of State in charge of the economy in the period between 1971-1978, and he also worked as an advisor to the Kuwait Fund for Development between 1982-1985. He was imprisoned twice during his political career; The first time was in 1978 with other members of the government of Ould Daddah after a coup that overthrew it that year and ended the rule of the country's first president. Then he was imprisoned again in 1986 alongside the Minister of Finance and the Governor of the Central Bank over suspicions of embezzlement and mismanagement while he was Minister of Economy and Fisheries.

The success of delivering free and fair elections that was hailed by some of Arab politics experts and international society which clearly appeared to herald a new era of democracy, raised the hope among the Mauritanian to believe that the totalitarian and military regime rule has come to an end. But the 2008 military coup led by Colonel Aziz proved them wrong.

Amal Mint Cheikh Abdallahi, the toppled president's daughter, told French radio that her father had been kidnapped by soldiers and transported to a battalion base. The coup was launched within an hour and 40 minutes after a presidential decision of sacking three prominent military personnel was issued, the dismissed generals established the supreme Council of State headed by General Ould Abdel Aziz, arresting the president and his prime minister. The overthrown President was charged with abuse of public position for personal gain and corruption. The military coup triggered international condemnation from the European Union, United States, and Arab countries, “Even Hosni Mubarak Egypt's president expressed its “consternation” and “extreme” worry for a “brother” nation, enjoining Mauritania to “respect the rules of democracy” (Foster, p.185). The African Union condemned the coup, urged a restoration to constitutional rule, and announced that an envoy would be sent to Nouakchott immediately.

Chapter 4 Why military withdrawal was successful in Korea, but not in Mauritania?

4.1 Korean military successful withdrawal from politics:

Once the military get involved in politics it become impossible to free itself from it. “In most cases the military that have intervened in politics are in a dilemma; they cannot withdraw from rulership, nor can they fully legitimize it. They can neither stay nor go” (Finer,1974, p.243). The military withdrawal from politics has occupied so many scholars during the last century where the world has witnessed a rise of cases when the military relinquished power and returned to its barracks.

According to Ulf Sundhauseen (1984) there are three sets of reasons accounting for military withdrawal from government responsibilities. The first is exogenous to the military, i.e., mounting civilian opposition to the continuing rule. Civilians who reject military rule engage in armed conflict or demonstrations. In South Korea's case we can argue that civilian society and civilian opposition has played an important role in forcing the military to relinquish power in 1987 and even before in 1956–61, students and urban intellectuals stood up against Syngman Lee's authoritarian regime's brutality and corruption. Later, this civil society made a significant contribution to the consolidation of civilian power over the military. Civil society organizations have repeatedly requested that individuals responsible for previous military coups be prosecuted and punished (Alagappa, 2004, p.148).

Economic growth, industrialization, and urbanization all contributed to the social activation of civil society, which established and reinforced interest groups and voluntary organizations. Individually, rising levels of education and wealth exposed the people to the benefits of democratic civilization. The growth of autonomous associations and persistent advances in mass cognitive mobilization have significantly weakened authoritarian rule's foundations (Lee ,1996, p.116). Professor Kim (2020) attributed the ruling military elite decision to abstain from using coercive measures against the pro-democracy movement and instead subject to democratizing the regime was due to the “characteristics of the pro-democracy movement” after 1987. The democratic movement was a broad-based and cross-class alliance that included middle-class people, workers, students, and religious leaders, and it mostly favored nonviolent

means. Nonviolent demonstrations have wide appeal across many social groups and tend to lower the cost of participation, alleviating the collective action issue. As a result, these less dangerous demonstrations are able to mobilize a greater number of citizens and are more likely to promote negotiations with authoritarian elites in comparison with violent protests. With the prevailing high level of political culture and socioeconomic conditions, the military interventions into politics in Korea came to an end.

The emergence of a strong middle class in Korea aiming for more democratic opening and social equality was clearly attributed to the strong economic and industrialization growth achieved by the previous military regimes in Korea at that time, which added more pressure on the military and pushed them to go back to their barracks. "Unless the country is democratized, you cannot expect free exchange of information, and without that, you can't expect a high degree of creativity," said Ro Chung Hyun, a public administration professor at Yonsei University. "For economic growth itself you need democracy." For their part, Government planners say it would be misleading to label South Korea as an example of an authoritarian society that has belatedly discovered the importance of a market economy. When we formulate a policy, we do it without regard to politics" (South Korea's Politics of Prosperity, 1987).

The second set of reasons is exogenous to the state: a foreign power exerts political, economic, and military pressure on the military to withdraw from government responsibility. In this set we argue that American pressure played a significant role in initiating the military withdrawal from politics.

The US has long had mixed feelings towards South Korea's internal politics. Despite its public declarations of support for democracy. The United States, reaction to the Korean military coup led by Park Chung Hee in 1961 and Chun's in 1980, prove these claims (Diamond & Plattner et al., 1997). "Washington intrinsic preference" for prioritizing stability over uncertainty contributed to limiting its interference with South Korea's domestic politics, but the United States adopted a new approach encouraging military withdrawal from politics. The Reagan administration publicly pressured the South Korean government to push for political reforms. "Recent concessions to the opposition in Seoul have been characterized as "modest signals of flexibility," with the clear recommendation of more tangible positive moves" (Diamond & Plattner et al., 1997).

Gaston Sigur, then assistant secretary of state for Asia-Pacific affairs, sent a cautionary warning to Seoul that the creation of improved bilateral ties was contingent on the Chun's government in creating "a more open and legitimate political system". He even emphasized the importance of "civilianizing" the government and called the Korean military to focus on its "primary mission" of national defense. Two primary reasons can attribute to the United States insistent on democratic reforms:

First, its support of democratic reforms was the most effective way to restore the American reputation and alleviate the widespread anti-American sentiments, which resulted from American alleged involvement in the bloody crackdown on civilian protesters in Kwang Ju and the bilateral trade friction (Diamond & Plattner et al., 1997, p.266).

Second, U.S. foreign policy was going through dramatic change after the American support of Philippines regime headed by Marcos brought catastrophic consequences to the American administration headed by Regan, "though he abused human rights and, with his wife, Imelda, plundered the country of billions of dollars, the United States coddled him for the sake of its Philippine bases" (Reagan and the Philippines: Setting Marcos Adrift,1989).

This experience taught the Americans a valuable lesson that providing support for the authoritarian and corrupted regimes to maintain the existing condition did not serve U.S. national interests. South Korea was a different case from the Philippines, but a similar strategy was adopted by the American administration toward the Korean case. Another reason can be the Olympic games in Korea 1988, Seoul's hosting of the 1988 Olympic Games further constrained the hard-liners' position. The Chun regime regarded hosting the Olympics as one of its greatest diplomatic achievements (Diamond & Plattner et al., 1997, p.277).

The hosting of the Olympic game came after a great cruelty was shown by Chun in a bloody crackdown committed by his regime against the protesters during the 1980 Kwang Ju democracy movement. However, Chun was to figure out soon that his willingness of maintaining harsh political control would be incompatible with what was required to host the 1988 Games. Indeed, even after the defeat of Nagoya by Seoul in Olympic bid in September 1981, Korean officials received cautionary warning by the International Olympic Committee President, that Seoul could be stripped off the honor of hosting the Olympic game if the widespread riots continued in Seoul. "That external pressure had a measurable effect on the

Chun regime, by restraining its willingness to use excessive force against peaceful demonstrators” (The 1988 Olympics in Seoul: A Triumph of Sport and Diplomacy,2010). Compromising and alleviating the domestic political scene must have been the logical choice, rather than risking the Olympics for short-term gains which could have jeopardized the regime's survival in the intermediate term (Diamond & Plattner et al., 1997, p.277).

Third set of reasons for withdrawal is internal to the military. According to Danopoulos (1988) “The military may be stimulated to disengage when they conclude that: their mission has been accomplished, the civilianization of the South Korea military regime in 1960s came after the military realized that they had succeed in regaining the nation social order and paved the way toward stable economic growth and development”. But even after achieving these goals. The Korean military didn't relinquish the reins of power and continued to rule the country after transforming themselves into a civilian politician, examined in Park Chung Hee rise to power and his subsequent Chun Doo Hwan. The reason can be attributed to two factors: the lack of professionalism and the lack of an acceptable alternative as the Korean military were suspicious about the civilian's ability to tackle the nation's daunting challenges. This distrust in civilian opposition to govern was more evident and common belief among all the different military factions after the assassination of President Park. General Wickham (1999) reported that Military leaders in South Korea disparaged Kim Dae-Jung, who had just been freed from house imprisonment. considered him, “untrustworthy and unprepared to do practically anything for political expediency, professional military officers regarded themselves as the faithful guardians of the nation, a fail-safe mechanism to keep the people from making mistakes” (Wickham 1999, p.48). Chun was strongly holding onto the belief that it would be a tragedy if elections were conducted in the next few months since neither Kim Young-Sam nor Kim Dae-Jung had any experience with government affairs (Wickham, 1999, p.113).

4.2 Military division:

Hanahoe, an elite faction of military officers, dominated the scene in Korea by occupying government and military positions during the two authoritarian regimes of former coup leader general Park 19961~1979 and his subsequent coup leader general Chun Doo Huan 1980~87. According to Albrecht and Croissant (2016) the intra-military conflict between privileged Hanahoe officers and the majority of marginalized officers played a major role in deciding the

Korean military disengaged from the ruling regime in 1987. It was clear that the regime failed to secure the loyalty of vast military officers, moreover those who were involved in the bloody crackdown on the opposition in 1980. This role was strengthened by the fact that the Korean military was not allowed to operate enterprises and own business assets unlike other military regimes in Pakistan and Indonesia. Because of the lack of benefits, the great majority of military officers who stayed in the barracks were not enthusiastically evoked to defend military rule in the face of massive protests (Kim,2020). The surge of popular uprising in 1987 gave many politically isolated and disadvantaged officers the opportunity to act against the regime by preventing the military government's attempt to repress the push for democratization. At the same time the massive extent that protests had reached, solidified the likelihood that mobilizing the units under Hanahoe against the mass movement would be a fruitless attempt. The significance of the inter-military split is highlighted by the fact that some Korean generals, even took the initiative to demand stricter surveillance of the armed forces (Albrecht, Holger, Croissant, et, al., 2016).

4-3 Military interest:

Military elites have enormous financial resources due to their engagement in business. These commanders can transfer funds obtained via such access to the military institution, as well as to their subordinates, sympathizers, and clique members. These funds enhance political power and influence, allowing for greater access to economic resources (Gunawan, 2000). In the Mauritanian's case the military interest of individual members of the military junta that overthrew the president Ould Taya in 2005 and the civilian president Abdullah in 2008, was more obvious. As the members of the junta have accumulated huge fortunes and wealth compared to the poorly paid soldiers for the Mauritanian Army.

Vall, the leader of the military junta is reported to have had considerable personal assets at the time of the coup [2005], most of which were centered in the burgeoning real estate and construction sectors after the discovery of oil. Three development sites and around twenty lots, largely excellent real estate in Nouakchott's Ilot C district, were among them. Vall was also credited with owning three marketplaces in Nouakchott, one of which had been acquired for over one million euros (approximately \$1.5 million at the time) (Foster ,2010, p.95).

The mastermind of two military coups in 2005 and 2008 and the nation's president for 10 years, General Mohamed Ould Abdel Aziz, was investigated for his activities throughout his ten years as president, from 2009 to 2019, “culminating in a year-long probe”. In March 2021 assets worth 114 million dollars were confiscated as a result of this. (News Mauritania's former president Aziz jailed).

According to Professor Kim (2020) expectation that the military ruling elite's positions and interests would not be jeopardized by the democratic rule, facilitated the regime's decision to yield to democratization. Their confidence was attributed to fact that the economic conditions were advantageous to governing elites. Reported economic growth rates at the time of democratic transition were 12.6% in 1986 and 12.3% in 1987. The successful economic records of past military regimes helped to convince the Chun regime that the military would be able to retain public support even in the case of democratization, as a result, an easy transition to democracy was facilitated.

4.4 Limited and failed withdrawal in Mauritania:

The lack of the existing conditions from the Korean model.

Professor N'Diaye (2017) argued that the presence of Ould Abdel Aziz as head of the state "democratically elected" president of Mauritania in 2009 and his "reelection" in 2014, represent the Mauritanian colonels' inability to fulfill the promise made by the generals following their seizure of power. The promise of putting the nation on the track toward democratization, which the regime they just overthrew supposedly was unwilling to do. According to the Professor (2017) the first military intervention leader, Colonel Ould Mohamed Saleck expressed a genuine intention to hand over power to a civilian leader, but the commander and his junta were unable to carry out this goal due to “Newly reawakened personal ambition and power addiction. The latter did not appreciate his various initiatives to implicate civilians early on in running the country to prepare transition to a civilian rule because they did not see themselves leaving the power soon” (N'Diaye,2017, p.75). In 1984, the new established government under Ould Taya who has the longest tenure among the Mauritanian military presidents [1984~2005] announced a plan to return the nation to the democratic rule, at the same year the municipal election took place followed by a presidential

election with universal suffrage in 1992. Alongside a restoration of press freedom and public liberties, but as the opposition against the government escalated the government found itself forced to restore censorship and crackdown measures. However, trying to install democracy by government decree rather than by popular initiative brought failure to this democratization attempt. The major factor that pushed the Mauritania military regimes to democratization was the change in the international arena imposed by the non-tolerance policy. It was adopted by the main superpowers of the United States and France against autocratic and authoritarian regimes. On June 20, 1990, French President François Mitterrand, who had long supported autocratic client nations, gravely proclaimed that France would reduce its help to "those that acted in an authoritarian manner" in favor of "those who, with bravery, would take the step towards democracy (Foster, 2010 p.41). This change followed by a wave of democratization swept the neighboring countries Algeria and Mali exacerbated by Iraq's defeat in the gulf war. The Mauritanian regime had so much financial and economic support that was provided by the gulf countries after showing support and sympathy to the Iraqi invasion of Kuwait, which resulted in aid being cut that were provided by these countries to Mauritanian.

N'Diaye (2017) explained that it was unimaginable that Ould Taya could bring himself to hand over power through the ballot box, especially since the process of writing a new constitution in 1991 was fully controlled and observed by him. Despite the fact that Ould Taya remained supported by the military, this did not mean that he was immune from the threat of being overthrown by some military officer inside the army. In this aspect the author mentioned an argument by Ould Mahmoud stating that President Ould Taya should lessen the possibility of coups forming against him. He deliberately attempted to weaken the army by diminishing its capabilities to the point that it forced certain soldiers to "sell their weapon's ammunition" thus enhancing and strengthening his praetorian guards. Ould Mahmoud disclosed that some army officers were directly involved in creating a military organization with a strong intention to topple Colonel Ould Taya's regime, an indication of the Mauritanian army's politicization (N'Diaye,2017, p.78). Under allegedly rigged elections. Ould Sidi Ahmed Taya was able to secure more than 63% of the votes followed by the opposing leader and the country's first president's younger brother Ahmed Ould Dadah. The outcome of the electoral process under the military civilianized regime of Ould Taya enabled him to present himself to the world, especially western powers, as the democratically elected civilianized president of the nation.

After the results were announced demonstrations erupted in the capital city resulting in the death of several Mauritanian protestors and the arrest of dozens. In another, pseudo-democratic electoral façade Taya won two-thirds of the votes poll while his opponent Ould Hidala, the man he overthrew from power in a bloodless military coup came second with 18.7% of the votes in 2003. During his campaign, Taya pledged to improve the living conditions of the Mauritanian citizens. Many people expected that offshore oil would provide wealth to a destitute desert country with a fragile human rights record. Some Mauritanian experts such as N'Diaye (2017) and Foster (2010) agreed that the military officers who overthrew the longest Mauritanian dictator Ould Taya in 2005 didn't have any authentic desire in establishing a democratic transition that would bring the military interventions in politics to an end, despite holding a worldwide hailed election that brought the first civilian elected president. However, the political maneuvering during the transitional period conducted by the two prominent leaders in the junta Ould Mohamed Vall and Ould Abdel Aziz has proved to some extent to be the military's true hidden intention. As the transitional period comes to an end, the military junta head colonel Vall urged people to vote "blank" if they were dissatisfied with any of the presidential candidates. An elaborate political maneuver started with the statement from Vall we are here to bring democracy and by not allowing any members of the junta including himself to run for the next planned election. The junta were able in a large extent to hide their true intention of the temporary relinquishment of power to an elected civilian president. The fact that an aged civilian candidate backed up by the military was not allowed to run for a second term because of his age limitation [69 years] facilitated their future plan. Imitating a similar scenario that took place in the neighboring country of Mali. When Alpha Omar Konare was overthrown by the Lt. Col. Amadou Toumani Toure. In a radio broadcast, coup leader Lt. Col. Amadou Toumani Toure promised that the army would no longer engage in politics and after achieving social justice and absolute democracy, the army will return to its barracks. Asserting that one of the primary goals of military involvement is to create multi-party politics and true democracy in the style of some other nations, Coup leader Lt. Col. Amadou Toumani Toure, succeeded in delivering his promise to relinquish power to a freely civilian selected president, pursued a hailed worldwide career as a peacemaker, and a retired military general ran and overwhelmingly won the presidential election in 2002.

4.5 The failure of civilian elites:

In many cases the military intervention in politics was triggered by the failure of civilian elites in managing political matters. Sundhaussen (as cited in Gunawan 2000) stated that “the army involved itself in politics, and potentially usurped power, because civilian elites had failed to set up workable political systems. Concluding that it must be said that civilians bear a considerable amount of responsibility for the army’s assuming power”. In the situation of Korea President Kim was able to successfully reduce the military's political influence through significant purging in the army, reforming the defense ministry, and replacing suspicious generals with others more committed to democracy.

According to Barany this huge success achieved by Kim in reforming Korean military relations. Facilitated by several factors. First, the president already has tremendous public support. Second, “moderate civil society groups that concentrated on institutional reform” strengthened Kim's reform drive which resulted in weak military resistance. Third, a more cohesive and professional military widely accepted greater civilian authority's surveillance. Fourth, a domestically stable security situation equipped Korea with a structural condition that indulged democratic reforms and military withdrawal from politics. This enabled South Korean politicians and activists to concentrate more on democratizations especially after North Korea became increasingly isolated in the wake of the cold war. Finally, the implementation period that these reforms were being executed at were characterized by powerful economic growth (Barany,2012, p.186). Huntington (1991) in his guidelines for Democratizers stated that “democratically elected leaders, should immediately purge or retire any possibly disloyal officers, including both senior supporters of the authoritarian regime and military reformers who may have assisted [the democratically elected leaders] in establishing the democratic regime. The latter [military reformers] are more likely to lose their appetite for democracy than for political intervention”. In similar direction, Professor N'Diaye (2017) asserted that within one week of the presidential inauguration, “total yet skillful” dismissal of all junta members and disbandment of the BASEB [presidential guard battalion], which the political opposition has now made a precondition for any resumed political dialogue, may have significantly reduced the likelihood of a reversal of the democratic process. According to the author a quick decision would have made it difficult for Colonel Aziz or any other commander planning future

coups to respond, adapt, or come up with a pretext to execute a coup. These steps would have deprived possible plotters of the beneficial capacity to profit from popular discontent. The civilian president was not up to the big task of paving the way to a more healthy and strong democratization, nor his electoral campaign commitments which raised citizens expectations for high and promising economic and social break through. Also, the eradication of corruption and restoration of the credibility of public administration during Abdallahi's first year in the office witnessed the most poor and unpopular performance record among all the presidents in the history of Mauritania in all aspects. In May, Abdallahi dismissed his own government of technocrats after being under much criticism triggered by their poor measures taken to tackle the rising food prices and security threats following two attacks executed by al-Qaeda in which French tourists and Mauritanian soldiers were killed. With limited choices available, Abdallahi resorted to include old Taya followers in the new cabinet, many of whom are suspected of corruption and mismanagement of government funds. Professor N'Diaye (2017) projected the blame of the failure in establishing authentic democratization process on the “inept civilian” a process that could have led to an absolute military withdrawal from politics criticizing the civilian opposition for “lacking political astuteness and acumen”. N'Diaye (2017) explained that the tactics adopted by the opposition leader to stand up against colonel Ould Taya even after he rigged the election 1992 proved it failure and brought negative result on the opposition , this strategic errors made by civilian leadership, made it possible for Ould Taya to regain control both domestically and with the foreign partners of Mauritania, enabled him to split the opposition, and tight his grip on power without any significant opposition during his term. After 2008, when a military coup was carried out against the country's first truly elected civilian president once again, Ahmed Ould Dadah, then the constitutional leader of the opposition allowed Colonel Ould Abdel Aziz to escape the serious political consequences for seizing power through military coup and afterwards contributed to strengthening his authority. N'Diaye (2017) asserted that before the coup was conducted, he [Ahmed Ould Dadah] had in secret meetings with would be coup leader, encouraging him to carry it out wishing that the planned election after the coup would lead him to the presidency office.

The Mauritanian law for the institutional opposition states that a meeting should take place every three months between the opposition leader and the country's president, but the opposing leader Ahmed Ould Dadah suspended this law last months before the overthrow of civilian

president by the military junta. By Suspending this channel of dialogue which could have led to a peaceful solution to political problems, the opposition leader provided the military with legitimacy to seize power again. Once again according to the author (2017) he [Ahmed Ould Dadah] was deceived by Ould Adel Aziz's acumen political maneuvers, misjudged colonel Ould Abdel Aziz intention to remain in power, while a sizable part of the radical opposition, headed by Messoud Ould Boulkheir, courageously opposed the coup, Ould Dadah and his party's miscalculations, as well as his personal involvement in the coup which may be held directly accountable for the eventual result: another military commander successfully staying in power while claiming to have democratized the political system and won a fair and free election (N'Diaye, 2017, pp.133-134). Other Mauritanian experts like Ould Mouhamedou (2013) have stated that if the Mauritanian army has crowded civilian forces in managing political affairs, it has, in turn, found a civil support in every period in which a military officer decides to take over. Military supporters are still powerfully active in the political front, and they believe in the army's right to uphold authority. The civilian elite were sometimes perpetrators of the military coups that took place in the country. Especially if they had a common political vision with the officers. This occurred in the 1978 military coup or common ideology as the case in some military coups.

4.6 The pressure of foreign power

The foreign pressure on the Mauritanian government was not significant since the interest was different from promoting and maintaining democracy. The foreign powers focused on stability and peace which was an important factor to ensure their long term political and economic strategies to handle the changing regimes in Mauritania. Therefore, the nation did not encounter any direct pressure from the United States and other foreign powers , except the announcement of the American and E.U aids postponement followed the military coup in 2008 the potential of the foreign pressure to push for military withdrawal from politics is hugely important and it was very evident when the military junta after they overthrew the civilian president were forced to accept and implement some of the twenty-four benchmarks, introduced by the European and the United States, in exchange for continued aid. But as the terrorist groups and organized crimes spread and expand in the Sahel region which constitutes of Mauritania, Chad, Mali, Burkina Faso, and Niger. European countries, especially France and Germany pushed the

region's Heads of State to establish the G5 Sahel organization headquartered in the Mauritanian capital of Nouakchott. Soon later, the G5 Sahel Joint Force was created by France, Germany, and the European Union. A total of €414 million was pledged, demonstrating the international community's support for the G5 Sahel group. With increasing security threats in the region, prioritizing democracy has fallen back on these foreign power's agendas. providing a continued endorsement for military regimes. Especially after the military had succeeded in restoring stability and security in Mali and Mauritania.

4.7 Weak civil society:

The expansion of civil society, particularly among the middle class, is critical in closing the gap between civilian and military institutions. Well-organized civil society might pose a threat to military institutions. In Mauritania, NGOs have flourished since the major constitutional changes of 1991, but most of these NGOs are either empty shells or controlled by individuals who travel in the circle of government elites. (Bertelsmann Stiftung, 2009).

The number of the civil organization registered by the Mauritanian government can be given as evidence for vibrancy of civil society in the country, but the repressive laws adopted by the civilianized regime of Ould Abdel Aziz restricted the rule of the civil society, some of the most active and prominent civil organizations are denied the right of legal exist from the government under some pretexts such as threatening national unity and inciting hatred among the citizens.

Not acquiring the state legal permission to operate excludes these organizations from receiving financial support from third-party government donors like the E.U, also it's preventing these organizations from holding events and activities as the hotels and public venues avoid dealing with them afraid of the consequences of dealing with state non-recognized organizations (Ethnicity, Discrimination, and Other Red Lines, 2018).

After the military coup in 2008 the number of registered civilian organizations have seen a huge decrease as proved by the following statistics provided by the ministry of interior in Mauritania.

Years of Registration	the Number of Registered Civil Organizations.
2008	1106
2009	449
2010	462
2011	371
2012	415
2013	248
2014	183
2015	236

The Mauritanian trade union is deemed the best organized civilian organization in Mauritania, but due to the tiny industrial sector as more than 75% of Mauritanians are not regularly paid workers; the organization was unable to grow or exert any much influence in the society, specially the political arena which, is mostly made up of informal interest groups, informal channels, and networks of people who have tribal, regional, professional, Sufi, or friendship ties, or any combination of these (Bertelsmann Stiftung, 2010).

Regarding the areas of intervention for these permitted civil organizations, statistics have shown that more than 50% of them interfere in social and charitable areas as well as some other areas such as development. Health and the environment remain secondary sectors for the intervention of these organizations. According to Stem-vcr (2016) The level of participation of civil society organizations in local governance at the municipal and state levels is somehow weak. The participation of civil society organizations appears to be “non-existent” for 34% of cases and weak for 19% of the organizations surveyed. Only 27% of organizations expressed an “average” opinion, while 20% of Civil Society Organizations rated their participation between "strong" and "very strong". The dialogue between civil society and national government authorities knows some weaknesses. 29% of the organizations said that there is no dialogue with local authority while 10% of the organizations expressed their full satisfactions

regarding the dialogue with national Government authorities. In regard to the governmental authorities with which, civil society has established some relations with. The 49% of the surveyed civil organizations reported an easy interaction with the ministries while only 10% have reported preferential relations with members of parliament. Which indicates the difficulty faced by civil society organizations to influence or have an impact on the introduction or the amendments of constitutional texts.

The Mauritanian civil society suffers from low organizational level and lack of adequate training and inter-coordination among its organizations and members and prioritizing of ethnic social justices over democratization. The ERA civil organization which formed of Haratines concentrate it effort on the problem of slavery and its vestige such as poverty and the sate poor approach toward putting an end to discrimination against Haratines.

Haratine or descent of former slaves, a community that has lived in Mauritania for hundreds of years They are integrated in Mauritanian Arab and Moors tribes former slaves owners and identify themselves as members of those tribes. They usually live in their small, isolated towns, "Adwabe." Many opinions have been brought on the table concerning their origins. These people have gone through many difficulties, from the old form of slavery to what is called modern slavery. After two decades, the government abolished slavery and labeled it a crime against humanity. Even though Haratine constitute most Mauritanian people but. still the leading ethnicity in poverty and illiteracy. They live in rural areas where there are no basic standards of living and they have no access to good education since it is payable. For the afro-Mauritanian civil society, similarly to the Haratins civil organizations, tend to focus more on what they consider as the state orchestrated violence conducted against some of its community members including violent purge of military generals, forced displacement of civilians, which followed a failed military coup attempt by some of Mauritanian afro- generals in 1988, and war against Senegal in 1989.

According to the human right watch report: "The Mauritanian authorities acknowledge in a vague and general fashion that state agents committed grave abuses against the afro-Mauritanians. However, they maintain that they have adequately delivered justice and reparations to the victims, pursuant to a 1993 amnesty law, measures taken since then to

compensate victims and survivors, and a gesture of healing performed by the Mauritanian president” (Ethnicity, Discrimination, and Other Red Lines,2018).

This racial and social fragmentation pushed active civil societies in Mauritania and unlike its Korean counterparts to not to consider the legitimacy question as the only and the most important political issue in the nation. Giving room for military regime manipulation over these issues for its own sake.

4.8 Socioeconomic level

From the socio-economic aspect, the economic development was evidenced by the fact that South Korean per capita income rose from 85 dollars in 1961 to 156 dollars in 1967. In 1976, the last year of the third plan, Korea's per capita GNP hit 700 dollars, representing a 15.5% increase in economic development. It also achieved rice (food) self-sufficiency for the first time in the country's history (H. Ro,1987, pp.261-262).

Im (1996) (as cited in Lee,1996) described that economic growth has facilitated the opening of democracy and smooth democratic transitions, the democratic transition in South Korea has been classified as "crises of success." The successful economic development programs of authoritarian regimes ultimately became a critical factor of their collapse. Argued that they [authoritarian regimes] “were historically obsolete after achieving significant economic growth and had to be replaced by democratic regimes to suit new historical needs such as more freedom and prosperity for the people” (Lee,1996, p.105). Similarly presented by Danopoulos (1988) the author claims that the high levels of socioeconomic growth and engagement put pressure on military governments to withdraw and hand over power to civilians, while low levels contribute to civilianization of the military regime and the establishment of civilian-military alliances. According to the author “Benin and Burkina Faso are examples of how poor socioeconomic development creates significant barriers to the creation of civilian governance. Economic stagnation, ethnic fragmentation, poverty, chronic budget deficits, illiteracy, and economic stagnation have not resulted in viable social and political groupings seeking involvement in the governmental system” (Danopoulos,1988). With its poor and low socioeconomic level Mauritania fits the bill to be categorized with Benin and Burkina Faso. Welch concludes transition from military to civilian democratic administration is complicated by economic challenges and social political fragmentation (Danopoulos,1988, p.13).

According to a government survey, 70% of rural Mauritians lived below the poverty line in 2000, meaning they made ends meet on less than a dollar a day. In certain regions, such as Guidimakha and the Hodho, the number reached as high as 80%. The percentage of city people living in poverty, which ranged between 20 and 30 percent, compared significantly to these astonishing numbers. Between 46 percent and 57 percent of the population was estimated to be living in dire poverty. The rising economic gaps were the most concerning aspect of these findings. The richest 20% of Mauritians held 44.1 percent of the country's wealth in 2003, while the lowest quintile had just 6.4 percent (Foster,2010, p.60).

The following economic indicators prove the fragility of the Mauritanian low socioeconomic level.

Key Indicators

Population mn. 3.1	HDI 0.52	GDP p.c. \$ 1927
Pop. growth % p.a. 2.5	HDI rank of 182 154	Gini Index 39.0
Life expectancy years 64	UN Education Index 0.54	Poverty2 % 44.1
Urban population % 40.8	Gender equality 1 0.51	Aid per capita \$ 116.6

Sources: UNDP, Human Development Report 2009 | The World Bank, World Development Indicators 2009. Footnotes: (1) Gender Empowerment Measure (GEM). (2) Percentage of population living on less than \$2 a day. (Cited in Bertelsmann Stiftung, BTI 2010 — Mauritania Country Report. Gütersloh: Bertelsmann Stiftung, 2009).

Economic indicators

	2004	2005	2006	2007
GDP \$ mn.	1547.9	1836.6	2662.6	2643.8
Growth of GDP %	5.2	5.4	11.7	1.9
Inflation (CPI) %	10.4	12.1	6.2	7.3

Unemployment %	33.0	-	-	-
Foreign direct investment % of GDP	25.3	44.3	5.8	5.8
Export growth %	9.1	6.2	117.9	4.9
Import growth %	42.5	45.3	-	-
Current account balance \$ mn.	-	-	-	-
Public debt \$ mn. 1437.0	2081.7	2079.3	1395.4	
External debt \$ mn. 1704.4	2332.7	2315.7	1624.0	
Total debt service % of GNI	3.5	3.5	3.5	4.5
Cash surplus or deficit % of GDP	-	-	-	-
Tax Revenue % of GDP	-	-	-	-
Government consumption % of GDP	21.9	22.7	19.9	20.1
Public expend. on Edu. % of GDP	3.1	2.3	2.9	-
Public expend. on health % of GDP	1.5	1.7	1.5	-
R&D expenditure % of GDP	-	-	-	-
Military expenditure % of GDP	4.7	3.6	3.1	-

Sources: The World Bank, World Development Indicators 2009 | UNESCO Institute for Statistics | International Labour Organization, Key Indicators of the Labour Market Database | Stockholm International Peace Research Institute (SIPRI), Yearbook: Armaments, Disarmament and International Security. (Cited in Bertelsmann Stiftung, BTI 2010 — Mauritania Country Report. Gütersloh: Bertelsmann Stiftung, 2009).

4.9 Summary

Ould Mohamedou (2013) named a few catastrophic results, caused by the military intervention in politics in Mauritania:

The atmosphere of coups and competition between aspiring officers created confusion in a development path that required stability.

This disorder was exacerbated in addition to the absence of strategic plans for development managed by qualified experts. Draining the army's resources and manpower through the military coups and liquidations, the military establishment lost hundreds of its sons, either through killing or arbitrary dismissal.

Fueling the military hierarchy through non-standard bonuses and promotions granted to the coup officers and their associates increased internal controversies and hatred in the army.

Financial corruption, caused by the overlapping of civil and political relations and the military interest in investments, led to a vicious competition with citizens. The decline of Mauritania's political strength and the focus on the internal affairs only added with each coup a new cycle of complexity. The author argued that even after the civilianization of General Ould Abdel Aziz's regime in 2013—and in his presidential bid for second term in office, the army's interference and control in politics was obvious and took two main tracks:

1) The path of nomination and coordination within the supporters of the majority:

Senior army leaders were active in political mobilization and intervention, in addition to direct coordination with tribal groups with the aim of coordinating political support for the ruling party. It has become known that the expected parliament members from the majority will be distributed to a limited group within the generals and senior commanders of the army and security institutions.

2) The influence on the voting process which happens through the transportation of military battalions to vote in places where the leading party does not have an effective presence that can guarantee dominance. According to media, it usually happens in Leksar province, Nouakchott, and interior provinces like Aleg, Kermasain, and Wadan.

One of the most important reasons that caused the failure of the last dialogue between the ruling majority and the opposition was the refusal of the opposition's request, which was for an

announcement to be made to the people confirming the military leading officers' pledge to maintain neutrality and remain at a distant point from all political forces.

The ROK Army's role has evolved over the previous three and a half decades before the successful military withdrawal from politics. Furthermore, it is obvious that the ROK Army performed certain responsibilities, with differing degrees of success at various periods of national development, showing both its potential abilities and "intrinsic limitation". In the 1950s, the army's primary role in national development was the building of nationhood. The effectiveness of the ROK Army's defensive role during the Korean War was largely credited for securing the country's survival. The army's active involvement in rehabilitation and rebuilding was also a key factor in the country's fast recovery from the Korean War's destruction. In terms of leadership, the civilian military technocracy conducted effective control and administration over the process of accelerated economic and industrial growth throughout this time. Nonetheless, the government enforces its policies and goals due to its strong centralized authority. During the 1970s and early 1980s, the army had a limited role in national development. The army's military responsibilities increased because of the termination of several programs and initiatives, but it demonstrated little ability in providing political leadership. These shifts were caused by several circumstances. The army's increased defensive responsibilities had a part in decreasing the army's involvement in domestic development. Korean expeditionary forces were evacuated from Vietnam in the early 1970s, while US army combat soldiers in Korea were drastically reduced as part of the detente strategy. From the late 1970s until 1981, the US continued to decrease its ground forces in Korea, forcing the ROK Army to not only replace the withdrawing US soldiers in defensive positions, but also to increase its deterrent capability. The fast economic growth and accompanying societal changes, which put severe pressure on the authoritarian political system, may have been the most important factor in reducing the ROK Army's role. This change in social structure with the newly formed opposition has put increased pressure on the military-led coalition government to widen political participation. South Korea has abolished the appointment of military officers in parliament and encouraged professionalism within the military. Moreover, it has succeeded in establishing civilian control over the military. (Chang, 1986, pp.64-65).

Chapter 5 Conclusion

Korea's democratic transition, which initiated the military withdrawal from politics, was completed after a long period of structural changes in the relationship between the military and civilian sectors. As a result of these changes, the military's influence in the society was diminished and replaced with a strong and cohesive civil society. This structural change in the long run facilitated the establishment of civilian control of the military.

In Mauritania, the lack of professionalism is deep rooted within the military institution, to the point where it is not possible to talk about a civilian control over the army or a military institution. Even in 2021, the appointment of military officers in the parliament is still practiced. Moreover, the president of the current parliament of 2022 is a retired military officer. The civilianized military regime under Ould Abdel Aziz failed to achieve any remarkable economic growth, nor to alleviate the low socioeconomic level for Mauritanian citizens. For the Mauritanian case, the military junta who overthrew dictator Ould Taya in 2008 were self-motivated officers with a strong lack of professionalism. The transition period announced by the military which supposedly was initiated to establish military withdrawal from politics failed due to the lack of required conditions in comparison to the Korean experience.

This lack can be attributed to the fact that, unlike the Korean case which hugely contributed to the change in social structure and the balance of power and influence between civil society and military led regimes, the Mauritanian's case was characterized by incapable civilian leadership and a backward civilian sector in comparison to the military. The toppling of the Mauritanian president was not initiated under similar conditions such as street protests or under strong pressure from united civilian society. There were no major parliamentary oppositions or outside pressure.

This situation was exacerbated by the weakness of the political elite and the inability of civil society to prioritize democratization and legitimacy, as the civil society failed to achieve effective political governance and manage their disagreement to avoid a military intervention. Also, the coup's plotters cunningly manipulated the civilian elite which successfully created a

sharp division among political players and split them into total staunching supporters for military intervention in politics. This influence resulted in creating a new condition for a new coup under the military leadership. This new military coup came less than one year after the first civilian president was installed. The situation where civilian elites advocated a military coup was clearly evident when a member of the parliament told the media that “Unfortunately, a military coup was needed, but I totally applaud the change that resulted ” (Reuters). Despite their failure in creating a strong economy, the Mauritanian general’s performance in security and the war against terrorism is considered a remarkably “successful case” that the neighbors should emulate as described by American ambassador. Mauritania is enjoying stable security and political conditions, unlike western African neighboring countries such as Mali. Moreover, the nation has not witnessed any terrorist attacks after the overthrow of the civilian president. Meanwhile during 2019, around 2,600 people were murdered on the hand of jihadist groups such as Al-Qaeda and ISIS in the Sahel region. Mali, Burkina Faso, Niger, and Chad are among the worst-affected countries by the terrorist attacks. Those conditions enabled Mauritania to headquarter the G5 organization and to play a prominent role in the G5 Sahel Joint Force created and sponsored by France, Germany, and the European Union. This role is expected to prolong the military intervention in politics in Mauritania, as the military led regime is immune from any foreign pressure that may force it to relinquish power to civilians due to the crucial role it plays in the war against terrorism and illegal immigrations. This is also especially due to the prevailing realism in the world of politics. Unlike the Korean case in which the foreign pressure applied from the U.S. has played an important role in the military withdrawal from politics, the military in Mauritania seems immune from such pressure. Thus, we can conclude that the Korean experience with military withdrawal from politics, in which the high level of socioeconomic and American pressure has played a crucial role in shaping its outcome, is hard to be applicable in Mauritania under the current prevailing low level of socioeconomic development and the absence of foreign powers [France, Germany, United States]. Military withdrawal of these powers, who prioritize security over uncertainty, could bring about a catastrophic outcome, especially after groups linked to Al-Qaida and ISIS penetrated the region and forced the French and German government to dispatch their forces to the Sahel region. Moreover, it is also evident in the neighboring country of Mali, in which the failure of the civilian government to provide security and stability triggered its toppling by a military coup

in 2020. The Malian military junta was supposed to hold an election in February 2022, but due to the continued insecurity the junta extended the democratic transition period from 18 months to 5 years. All of this increased the stability and geopolitical importance of Mauritania and equipped the regime with the leverage needed to secure itself from foreign pressure demanding military withdrawal from politics.

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