

Tanzania and Uganda: Contrasting Similarities

Daniel G. Zirker

Tanzania, Uganda and Kenya provide striking institutional comparisons and contrasts in both ethno-political dynamics and civil-military relations, although both Tanzania and Uganda, in what were arguably their most formative periods at least, displayed what Ali Mazrui described as “the most acute manifestation[s] of the crisis of identity,” while employing ethno-politics to resist the remnants of their colonial dependency.¹ Both manifested forms of invented military ethnic identities, or quasi-ethnicities, at one or another junctures, although under very different circumstances, and for very different purposes. After the infamous 1971 Idi Amin coup, Uganda reverted to government by an ethnic, or quasi-ethnic, “Muslim club,”² the Nubian “martial race,” or “warrior class,” that had originally assisted in the establishment of the British colony of Uganda, prompting Mazrui to comment in 1975 that “tribalism in Africa is unlikely to disappear within a single lifetime.”³ And yet tribalism seems largely to have done precisely this in neighboring Tanzania except, perhaps, for the emergence of religious differences in the 1990s as potentially divisive and even catastrophic factors.

A fundamental tipping point was the unsuccessful East African mutiny in Tanganyika in 1964, which triggered the creation of a new military establishment there, framed primarily ideologically, but with an ethnic African *lingua franca*, Kiswahili, a unified mission, national ethnic integration and development, and, ultimately, a national outcome, the concretization of an incipient quasi-ethnicity within the military. This was subsequently dispersed throughout the new country of Tanzania to become, with surprising rapidity, the national ethnic identity. Tanzania is arguably a case where the invention of a military quasi-ethnic identity was quickly and intentionally spread via the

military to become *the* single national identity. The military, in this case, did not, and was never intended to achieve a measure of independence or autonomy through the invention of this quasi-ethnic identity, but rather, was designed to be the vanguard for a wholly new and stable national identity.⁴

The three East African countries thus form a kind of ethno-political continuum, then, with Uganda and Tanzania occupying opposite ends. Tanganyika, Rwanda and Burundi, German East Africa until WWI, had been controlled by German military units heavily staffed with German officers and multi-ethnic African soldiers. Uganda evinced a British-directed and Sudanese-enlisted military establishment from its earliest colonial period on the basis of what Cynthia Enloe has described in wider terms as a "martial race,"⁵ in this case a loose ethnic association of Muslim tribesmen from the Sudan, what Mazrui specifically referred to as associated "Nilotic and Sudanic Tribesmen,"⁶ and what subsequent and more careful ethnographic studies have characterized as a single, if weakly construed, ethnic, or ethno-linguistic group, the Nubians, or Nubi.⁷ Discussed in greater detail below, this was a Sudanic military group of various tribes led southward by British Captain Frederick Lugard in the aftermath of the defeat of Charles Gordon in Khartoum in the late nineteenth century and represented an attempt to secure the key tactical headwaters of the Nile River for the British Empire.

Tanganyika, the mainland part of today's Tanzania, had clearly benefited politically from its multiplicity of ethnic groups, more than 120, in which there were no dominant identities, and hence no politically hegemonic groups. The largest ethno-linguistic group in Tanzania today, the Sukuma, make up about 13 percent of the population, although have never been very organized as an interest group. No other group comprises, or has comprised in the past, more than five percent of the population, and none of these can be said to be politically or militarily dominant. In fact, Tanganyika has never had a dominant ethnic group, and hence, in Ali Mazrui's analysis, was "spared the deeply divisive potentialities of ethnic cleavages." Its founding national leader, Julius Nyerere, came from a small and insignificant ethnic group, the Zanki. Although he was a captivating speaker with a compelling nationalist vision, Mazrui stressed Nyerere's "warmth" as his primary political asset, which was said to have "captivated the public. Such personal qualities can be seen to be effective in a society like that of Tanzania, which is not particularly divided by ethnic considerations."⁸

In sharp contrast with Tanzania, five ethnic groups in Kenya make up nearly three-fourths of the country's population, with the powerful Kikuyu at 22 percent the dominant political force, and four others—the Luhya, Luo, Kalenjin and Kamba—all vying for second place in the 11–14 percent range. Although the longest-serving Kenyan president, Daniel arap Moi, is a Kalenjin, the other three post-independence presidents have all been Kikuyu, and it is this ethnic group that has dominated independent Kenya, often with the use

of violent ethno-political means. As is clear in Thomas Stubbs's chapter, while the military establishment has experienced careful ethnic "balancing" in favor of the dominant groups, it has been largely exempt from internal security duties, and thus uninvolved in internal ethnic violence and not in need of special bargaining power or autonomy for political or budgetary purposes. The politically dominant ethnic identity in the country, either the Kikuyu or, during Daniel arap Moi's long term in power, the Kalenjin, typically dominated top military appointments.

Uganda is both similar and contrasting in this regard: Although politically dominant ethnic minorities of the day have dominated key military appointments, the military has frequently been used to preserve political dominance, has sought and achieved autonomy, and has even ruled the country in support of authoritarian leaders during lengthy periods. Nine ethnic groups make up two-thirds of Uganda's population, with the largest and historically most powerful, the Baganda, organized in the Kingdom of Buganda, at 17.3 per cent. The first prime minister and then president of independent Uganda, Milton Obote, from the much smaller and less prestigious northern Langi group, made a point of dominating the Baganda during his first period of executive leadership (1962–1971), to the point of using his Langi-dominated military to attack the Kabaka's (Sir Edward Mutese II, the Buganda king and, at the time, the executive president of the country) palace in 1966, driving him into exile and rendering that most influential ethnic group organizationally incapacitated and effectively subservient.⁹ The infamous military dictator, Idi Amin, who followed Obote's first government after his *coup d'état* in 1971, reversed many of Obote's most demeaning anti-Baganda policies while nevertheless preventing a return to power of the Kabaka¹⁰ and Baganda dominance. His ethnic targets were initially directed elsewhere, however, were frankly ethno-political and numerous beyond reason. Despite accounts to the contrary, Milton Obote's second term as president, 1980–1986, was in effect very similar to Amin's, with drastic ethnic warfare and between 500,000 and 750,000 deaths, this time with other groups of northerners, Acholi (for the very first time) and Langi, elevated to the highest military positions.

Since assuming power in 1986, current president Yoweri Museveni, of the second most, though far less numerous, ethnic group, the Banyankole,¹¹ has apparently continued this domination of the Baganda via an ethnically packed military establishment, although in recent years he has evinced far greater ethnic inclusivity. History and tribal connections have always been important, however. The Ugandan military prior to 1979 had often been staffed by a "martial race," and as Mazrui put it, with "an ethnic division of labor . . . Baganda for administrators and Nilotes as soldiers."¹²

The "Nilotes," or "Nubians," had been the dominant backbone of the colonial military at its formation, and became dominant again under the

ruthless dictator, General Idi Amin. They had been fashioned from several traditional Sudanic ethnicities in the nineteenth century, and by the early twentieth century represented a loose ethnic identity, what some have called an "open community," or a "Muslim club," with qualifications including the ability to speak Kinubi (the Nubi language), although Kiswahili became the *lingua franca* of the Ugandan army after independence,¹³ and the fulfillment of light cultural and religious requirements.¹⁴ They fit to some extent what we have called a "quasi-ethnic identity," and this appears to have allowed the Nubians to preserve a claim to a special association with the Ugandan military for nearly a century, and for that military to have maintained a high degree of autonomy between 1971 and 1979 when they were again in charge. The use of ethnic "balancing" in the Ugandan military has apparently continued into the present, although the Nubians lost power, perhaps forever, with the defeat of Idi Amin in 1979.

A central element in the creation of an ethnic identity, and even more so in a national identity, is the effective use of a *lingua franca*. As noted above, both Kenya and Uganda used English as a national, elite, *lingua franca*,¹⁵ and English, in turn, required formal education. Tanzania, under Julius "Mwali-mu"¹⁶ Nyerere, turned to the newly formed Tanzanian People's Defence Force (TPDF) as a vanguard to implant Swahili, or Kiswahili as it is called in its own lexicon, as the primary *lingua franca*, first in the military and then, by diffusion, in the new nation. While this formerly casually, if widely, spoken coastal (and principally commercial) language became universal in Kenya and Uganda as well, it rapidly became *the lingua franca* in Tanzania and, as traditional tribal languages fade, the only language of many Tanzanians today. History, the "gentleness of Tanganyika's political culture,"¹⁷ and its multi-ethnic character all helped in this, although Nyerere's concerted strategy, policies and will were crucial elements as well.

While all three East African countries experienced the 1964 tri-country military mutiny, Tanzania's experience was the closest to an ideological and political putsch, where students and trade unions threatened to join the mutineers. Nyerere went into hiding, and the foreign and defence minister, Oscar Kambona, negotiated with the mutineers and put down the uprising, much to the president's embarrassment. The political response from Nyerere was to disestablish the Tanganyikan African Rifles and transform the post-mutiny army into a vanguard for the creation of a new national ethnic identity. The new Tanzanian military would lead the way. It continued, periodically, to threaten intervention, as in 1982, but its primary and original purpose almost precluded institutional autonomy, special consideration in an ethno-political competition, or an ethno-political alliance. Thanks to the vanguard military culture, Tanzania had been largely free of ethno-politics, at least until the 1990s and the entry of Muslim fundamentalism. The Ugandan military, on the other hand, like that of Kenya, was dominated at times by so-called

“martial races,” and gradually developed a “lumpen militariat,” to use Ali Mazrui’s words.¹⁸

Uganda’s Military: Ethno-Politics and Intervention

The 1964 East African mutiny was easily stopped in Uganda with the help of British forces, although Obote’s government made few changes in the organization and offered liberal concessions to the military. Uganda had relatively few ethnic groups, four “kingdoms,” and thus dominant minorities, as did Kenya, although unlike in Kenya, it was burdened with one very small and specialized military minority, a “fossilized community,” or “anachronism of history,”¹⁹ an amalgam of the relegated “martial races” who traced their lineage back to Sudan and considered themselves to be privileged foreigners, the Nilotes, or Nubians. In 1971, although well under 5 percent of the population, they made up a sizeable percentage of the enlisted ranks, and ultimately seized power under the leadership of a ruthless dictator, transforming, but not unifying, the national power structure and ethnic composition of the country over a nightmarish seven-year period.

After the death of Governor-General Charles George Gordon in the Mahdist uprising in Khartoum in 1885, fragments of the remaining British colonial military were brought together under Emin Pasha, in effect a “Sudanization” of the British colonial military, and by 1891 a new ethnic identity was said to have been formed among these various Sudanic tribes, including the Kakwa, that constituted it. This “Nubian,” or “Nubi” identity, characterized by dress (white robes), religion (a distinct brand of Islam) and an accepted nationality (Sudanese), was regarded by the British as a kind of martial race, a “semi-civilized” fighting force that was moved southward in 1892 for tactical reasons under the command of Captain Frederick Lugard. Their goal was the strategic Nile headwaters region and what is today Uganda. This group became emblematic of Ugandan military culture, and later captured independent Uganda, the “Pearl of Africa,” under the dictatorship of Nubian/Kakwa Idi Amin Dada.

The Nubians were, in a sense, a forerunner of the very tentative and incipient military quasi-ethnicities that seem to be emerging in some countries today, although they predated even the colony of Uganda by becoming the foot soldiers of its pre-colonial structure. Regarded from the first as an invented ethnicity, an open community, or even a “Muslim club” that could be easily joined, and was laden with ethnic ambiguity,²⁰ the Nubians regarded their move to the South over the next century as a “deliberate invitation from the colonial authorities,” one that came with an ongoing debt owed to them of privileges. Lugard had, in fact, signed an agreement in which nine hundred soldiers and nine thousand dependents were enrolled under his command in a “guided migration.”²¹ When they reached what is today Uganda,

they were organized into garrisons and spread throughout the territory. This "semi-civilized" group subsequently proceeded to enter into a wide variety of political alliances, including one with dissatisfied Muslims in Buganda, engaged in various political machinations, including several failed mutinies *against* British rule, and, ultimately, were re-pacified and incorporated by 1901 into a formal military unit, the King's African Rifles. By 1908, Nubians were said to comprise 595 of the 774 soldiers in the Ugandan contingent of that military force.²²

The Nubians would continue to resist classification as a "tribe," in part because they were in no way agrarian, and failed to resemble a "tribe" in other respects. "Tribes" in the Ugandan context were associated with homelands and relegated primarily to a subsistence farming, or peasant, existence. Aside from their primary role as soldiers, the Nubians saw themselves as a loose collection of Sudanese, as temporary immigrants in Uganda with special privileges and, if forced out of these roles, as traders, merchants and petty bureaucrats. They had no background in agriculture, and *no* desire or ability to become peasants. Nevertheless, over the next thirty years the colonial authorities attempted, mostly with little success, and through various unsuccessful plans, to award the Nubians land (a "homeland"), to regularize them as an agrarian Ugandan tribe and to break their ties with Sudan. They tended not to consult the Nubians regarding most of these plans, however, and the plans were typically ignored when (and if) they came to light.

After WWI, and military demobilization, most of the Nubians retired from military service and returned to their dependents. Their primary community, or *mulki*, in Uganda had been established in Buganda in the town of Bombo, just north of Kampala. Most of them settled into a relatively impoverished urban existence there as petty traders, unskilled workers and minor bureaucrats, still reliant on diminishing military salaries and pensions. When they were finally asked for their input into yet another new and comprehensive "tribalization" plan by then-Governor-General Sir Philip Mitchell in 1936, they responded with a series of their own demands. They reminded him of past promises based upon their "valiant" military service, of their desire to remain in Bombo, but not under the administration of the Kingdom of Buganda (as others in that region were), and of their continuing insistence that they were a military reserve force. They argued that they remained, and should remain, a privileged immigrant community (and demanded to be treated as such), that the land deal that he was proposing was simply not acceptable,²³ and that, in the absence of a mutually acceptable alternative, the colonial authorities were obliged at the very least to maintain the *status quo*.

The Ugandan colonial authorities responded by marginalizing the Nubians in the next (1938) plan. While privileges of ex-servicemen were guaranteed for life, and existing individual land titles were honored, no other categories of Nubians were recognized, and the privileged immigrant status

that they had insisted upon over the previous fifty years was now formally denied.²⁴ The immigration of South Asian merchants and traders was now facilitated, cutting off the only, albeit feeble, source of upward mobility for the Nubians, and they were said to have rapidly become “an introverted, almost fossilized community,” and “an anachronism of history.”²⁵ When, in the 1959 census (just three years before independence), they had disappeared as a separate category, the assumption was incorrectly made that they had been absorbed by the other ethnic groups in Uganda. They were certainly no longer apparent as a recognized indigenous ethnic group. This gave them no protection in President Milton Obote’s 1967 coup; moreover, when he expelled the Kenyan Luos as illegal immigrants, the Nubians’ apparent continuing insistence that they were Sudanese immigrants, “privileged” or not, recognized as an independent group or not, rendered them vulnerable to the xenophobia that was rife at this difficult moment, and thus to deportation. Their soon-to-emerge leader, Idi Amin, would take this lesson to heart five years later in his deportation of the Ugandan Asians.

Milton Obote, the prime minister (1962–1966) and then president (1966–1971; 1980–1985) of Uganda, like his friend Julius Nyerere of Tanzania, was obsessed with the prospect of a military coup.²⁶ The Obote regime had packed the military, and particularly the officer corps, with northerners from his marginalized home tribe, the Langi, as well as with largely incompatible Acholi and Nubians, also northerners, replacing the Bagandan officers that the later colonial authorities had favored. Initially supporting the Kabaka (king) of Buganda, Sir Edward Mutese, in the largely ceremonial role as executive president of the country, he soon broke with him when the Kabaka refused to sign documents alienating some of the Buganda Kingdom’s lands,²⁷ and, as noted above, attacked his royal palace and drove him into exile, assuming the presidency for himself. Obote’s declining party support and accusations of corruption shook his faith in the dominance of the intelligentsia and the viability of institutionalized ethnic pluralism in Uganda. His *coup d’état* of 1966, after which he was said to have maintained marginal freedom of the press and some degree of other basic human rights,²⁸ helped military politics to spin out of control with what Ali Mazrui called the emergence of a “lumpen militariat” and, somewhat inaccurately, a “military-agrarian complex.”²⁹

At this point, educated Langi and Acholi officers were gradually assuming some military command positions in what Mazrui characterized as a loose coalition between the intelligentsia and the military high command.³⁰ Their *lingua franca* was English,³¹ and their collective culture was decidedly neo-colonial. Senior Nubian officers in command positions were wary, however, as they were increasingly shunted into potentially less threatening positions, and although the military had formalized Kiswahili as its *lingua franca*, and a Nubian officer from Bombo, General Idi Amin Dada, had been

promoted to commander of the army, it was clear that a narrowing, what Donald Horowitz referred to as an "attritional process," was now in play. A December 1969 assassination attempt on Obote apparently initiated a chain of events that led to military intervention by Amin.³²

Idi Amin is regarded by many observers as the most infamous of African dictators, responsible for the murders of perhaps as many as half a million people. The exact numbers are contested. What is not contested, however, is that Idi Amin engaged in wholesale murder, and this was immediately apparent in the army, where he almost straightaway purged non-Northern officers, and then proceeded to kill perhaps five thousand northern Acholi and Langi soldiers, followed by non-West Nilers, then by non-Muslim Nubians,³³ eventually creating a loyal cohort that included Muslim Kakwa (his Nubian tribe), Muslim Nubians, imported southern Sudanese, and even a special presidential guard of four hundred Palestinians, what Tony Avirgan and Martha Honey called a "non-national mercenary force."³⁴ In 1972 he deported eighty thousand South Asians and a few Europeans to Britain, Canada, India and a variety of other countries. They were mostly traders and commercial families, and this opened wide economic opportunities for Nubians and other Amin supporters. Nubians became the vital, indeed, the only source of economic opportunities for Ugandans, and their open ethnic boundaries meant that they experienced a halcyon era of patronage, recruitment and well-being.³⁵

Nubians, then, celebrated their return to privilege and prominence in Uganda. The military quickly adopted, or re-adopted, a largely Nubian ethnic identity, with dictator Idi Amin's blessing and encouragement. As he engaged in progressively intensive ethnic "attrition," their ethnic competitors were removed in civil society.³⁶ Eventually, a tiny percentage of the population was put in charge of the military, the economy and the political system, and the concept of "top-heaviness" increasingly came to apply. As his number of ethnically based supporters and followers was continually winnowed and reduced, the stability of his regime decreased. In 1979 a series of high profile assassinations and assassination attempts against prominent Bagandans and other non-Nubians pushed the Amin regime to the brink of collapse, and the dictator lashed out at Tanzania, probably in part as a diversionary tactic. He suddenly annexed the Tanzanian Kagera District (in northeast Tanzania), and President Julius Nyerere, a close friend of Obote, was only too happy to mobilize the Tanzania People's Defence Force, along with groups of disaffected Ugandans in exile funded by a wide range of sources and countries,³⁷ to strike back.

After years of purges, ethnic "attrition" and regime narrowing, Amin's political and military base was so narrow that it collapsed quickly and virtually disappeared in several weeks of limited warfare in 1979. Obote was soon reinstated following a snap election, although as Avirgan and Honey note in

the postscript to their 1982 book, his reinstatement did not restore order to the country. Key anti-Amin fighters, including formerly exiled guerrilla Yoweri Museveni, went into the bush in 1980 after the election to continue their war against the “old order,” with which they included Milton Obote.³⁸ Obote, perhaps predictably, quickly moved to control the ethnic composition of the Ugandan army, establishing a new organization, the Uganda National Liberation Army, placing Langi and Acholi officers in major military positions,³⁹ and otherwise failing to take an analytical and self-critical view of the new, post-Amin Uganda.

Obote’s first major challenges came from other northern tribes. In the face of low legitimacy and recent loss of status, these went into open revolt. Museveni’s National Resistance Movement (NRM), based on western tribes, including his own Banyankole, was also making major tactical gains. In 1983 Obote launched Operation Bonanza, a major military offensive that included moving northern populations into controlled villages. It is said to have cost hundreds of thousands of lives, and his own carefully winnowed military establishment ultimately revolted. Two of Obote’s hand-picked Acholi generals overthrew him in 1985 after what had perhaps been five hundred thousand deaths in Obote’s military operations.⁴⁰ They in turn were overthrown the next year by Museveni’s NRM. Obote’s bloody legacy was comparable to Amin’s in the end, and for similar reasons, although this is rarely recalled as such.

Museveni pledged from the first to enact fundamental change, including ethnic power sharing, to include top command positions in the newly re-named National Resistance Army (NRA), which was now the Ugandan military. Nevertheless, from the first the NRA was said to have a strong ethnic bias for officers from the west and central Uganda, and from Museveni’s ethnic group, the Banyankole, and from one of the four traditional Ugandan kingdoms, the Ankole Kingdom in southwestern Uganda. He also formed alliances with other westerners—the Bakiga, the Banyoro and the Batoro—and, secondly, with the Baganda.⁴¹ Westerners became entrenched at the top of the officer corps, occupying over 60 percent of the top positions, with 44 percent of those positions going to members of Museveni’s own Banyankole group, although junior officers were more evenly distributed.⁴² The most marginalized group was the formerly prominent Acholi, although northerners were mostly excluded from major civilian and military power positions.⁴³

Stefan Lindemann identifies ethnic exclusion as the single factor, indeed the primary cause, of the seven major civil wars that Museveni confronted between 1986 and 2011, when Lindemann’s study was completed.⁴⁴ Although there have been far fewer outbreaks of civil unrest in the past four years, and Museveni has maintained a pattern of broadening ethnic participation in Uganda, by most accounts the Uganda People’s Defence Force (UPDF), renamed as such in 1995, remains ethnically balanced and exclu-

sionary. The closeness of the Banyankole and the Rwandan Tutsi, and the participation of Rwandan Tutsi exiles, including Paul Kagame, in Museveni's National Resistance Movement and later in the NRA, largely explain Museveni's significant support of the overthrow of the Rwandan Hutu regime in 1994 and his support of Kagame's Rwandan government initiatives thereafter. The forging of these inter-ethnic and international ties have given the Ugandan military a particular identity. One can only speculate as to how this independent identity may ultimately proceed in stabilizing a perennially unstable situation.

Tanzania: A Quasi-Ethnic Vanguard Army

The 1964 East African mutiny had a particularly profound effect on Tanganyika. As a German colony after the Berlin Conference of 1884–1885, it had been a locus of inter-ethnic violence, forced agricultural production for export, and a major popular rebellion in which as many as a hundred thousand people had died between 1905 and 1907. With Germany's defeat in WWI, Tanganyika became a British protectorate, although the divide-and-rule and forced agricultural production-for-export policies continued. The islands of Zanzibar and Pemba, just off the coast of Tanganyika, and part of the Omani Empire in the 1700s and 1800s, fell under British domination in the late nineteenth century and remained protectorates well into the twentieth. In 1961 and 1963, respectively, Tanganyika and Zanzibar received their independence. Tanganyika became a republic in 1962, and Zanzibar, goaded into an outburst of anti-Arab hatred by a Tanganyikan mainlander, John Okello, in late 1963, had a brief, violent revolution and killed or drove into exile its remaining Arab population.

The January 1964 mutiny, which affected all three East African countries, was thought to have originated in Tanganyika over a pay dispute, and remained a minor pay dispute in Uganda and Kenya, although it seems to have been primarily a rejection in Tanganyika of the Africanization of the officer corps.⁴⁵ It appeared in this sense to represent an incipient solidarity, a class-like behavior among enlisted men who had placed their immediate interests in a wider social context, constituting themselves perhaps in what Ali Mazrui would call a "lumpen militariat."⁴⁶ Henry Bienen noted that the mutiny in Tanganyika was "intimately related to the Zanzibar Revolution and developed with such suddenness and surprise that it seemed at first to be not indigenous to Tanganyika's political system."⁴⁷ The embarrassment that Nyerere suffered, disappearing into hiding and relying upon Foreign and Defence Minister Kambona to settle the crisis, who in turn called most embarrassingly upon British troops to back up his talks, led to a formal presidential apology⁴⁸ and a consequent insistence on fundamental change. Nyerere made it clear that from that point on that he would undertake fundamen-

tal change in the military and that the task would be a challenging one that would nevertheless be undertaken energetically. As he put it in his apology, "It is not easy to disarm an army, especially one that is already intoxicated with the poison of disloyalty and disobedience."⁴⁹

The dismissal of the entire Tanganyikan military was followed somewhat dramatically by the national merger of Zanzibar and Tanganyika, the renaming of this new confederal system in April of that same year, and the complete restaffing and reorganization of the newly dubbed Tanzanian People's Defence Force (TPDF) in September. All officers and enlisted men were required to have been party cadres in one of the two (now semi-merged) official "single parties"—Tanganyika African National Union (TANU) or the Zanzibari Afro-Shirazi Party. Party commissars were given formal military appointments, as were liaison representatives. As in Uganda, Kiswahili first became *the official military language*, but in this case, unlike in Uganda, this was part of a strategy for it to become the primary, and really the only national language as well.⁵⁰

There is little doubt that Nyerere had intended to use Kiswahili as one of the keys to assist in binding Tanganyika, and then Tanzania, into a single ethnicity, a single national identity. He was greatly aided in this by the multiplicity of small and relatively weak traditional ethnic groups in Tanganyika. There were simply no dominant groups to threaten this policy with their tribal languages, as had been the case in Kenya and Uganda. Moreover, the post-colonial military did not have a "martial race," although there had been warlike tribes, the Hehe and the Kuria.⁵¹ With the complete reestablishment of the army as the TPDF, a strict formula for ethnic quotas was combined with the elimination from the senior ranks of those groups that had a proclivity for military adventurism.⁵²

Nyerere had stressed Kiswahili as a natural cultural unifier after his return to Tanganyika in the early 1950s from his studies in Scotland.⁵³ It was already widely, if very inaccurately, spoken as a commercial language, had been identified by the German colonizers prior to WWI as a useful administrative language, and had already been rendered into Latin script with Kiswahili-English and Kiswahili-German dictionaries.⁵⁴ Nyerere soon translated a number of classics from English into Kiswahili, including, perhaps significantly, Shakespeare's *Julius Caesar*, an account, significantly, of an ancient and failed *coup d'état*, and the *Merchant of Venice*, said to have obliquely characterized the South Asian merchants in Tanganyika, a large, relatively wealthy and potentially ethnically destabilizing force, as the Jews of Venice. Was the former, as Ali Mazrui would later ask, related to Julius Nyerere's later introduction of the "Preventive Detention Act in order to forestall a possible assassination of an African Julius?"⁵⁵ Was the latter Nyerere's prescient anticipation of dictator Idi Amin's expulsion of the Ugandan South Asians in 1972 and his own social isolation of them in Tanzania?

Kiswahili became the language of primary and secondary education, and is listed today as the first official national language, with English as the second. This ordering of Tanzania's official languages was not a small matter. Both Kenya and Uganda, where Kiswahili is also widely, and even universally, spoken, list English as the first official language, with Kiswahili second. Kiswahili is indisputably the primary language in Tanzania and is widely supported as such. The Institute of Kiswahili Studies at the University of Dar es Salaam became a central focal point of this policy. Nevertheless, it was the TPDF that pioneered this policy, that created this new ethnic identity, and that added to linguistic unity a focus upon national loyalty, commitment to nation-building projects (i.e., *Ujamaa*), education and technical competency, each of which became bywords of the socio-economic revolution that Nyerere hoped to spread *via* the TPDF.

The creation of a formal and multifaceted Tanzanian military mission abroad became an important conditioning agent in the establishment of a vanguard military quasi-ethnicity. This militarization of Tanzanian foreign policy directly involved the TPDF, and belied a fundamental ambiguity in national outlook, what Ali Mazrui referred to as "the marked distrust of men under arms at home combined with a faith in military or quasi-military solutions to some of the remaining colonial problems in Africa."⁵⁶ The TPDF was said to have participated in military struggles abroad, including reportedly assisting FRELIMO (the Mozambique Liberation Front) in its war against Portugal for the independence of Mozambique.⁵⁷ Nevertheless, the TPDF remained only marginally militarized, while civil society took a greater than perhaps expected military lesson from this vanguard organization. It was what one of my colleagues in the Department of Political Science and Public Administration at the University of Dar es Salaam in 1990 called the simultaneous "politicization of the military and the militarization of civil society."

It should not be surprising, in this context, that the TPDF's response to Idi Amin's annexation of Kagera District in 1979 was said "not [to be] disciplined and professional."⁵⁸ It was, after all, primarily a move to overthrow Amin, rather than to repulse a foreign invasion, and hence it represented the use of the military as an instrument in national (and partisan) political policy. It was dramatic in that regard, for as *Newsweek Magazine* reported, it was "the first time in Africa's post-colonial history that one country has successfully invaded another, occupied its capital and overthrown its ruler."⁵⁹ Moreover, it transformed the cultural identity of the TPDF, and soon thereafter of wider Tanzanian society: The experience of very poor soldiers who were suddenly exposed to looting, and voluntary and coerced sexual relations (rape), followed by rapid demobilization, had an immediate impact. A peaceful society, Tanzania, was soon exposed to violent robberies and other incidents of violent crime perpetrated by returned servicemen. The military itself was said to have engaged in acts of revenge-taking against the Bagandans

during occupation,⁶⁰ and after the war, police in Tanzania discovered that they were arresting frequently armed demobilized militiamen for 60 percent of the thefts and violent crimes in Dar es Salaam.⁶¹ Nevertheless, that vanguard quasi-ethnic identity that had been injected into the TPDF at its origins in 1964 had “taken,” had been disseminated. Tanzania was now a single ethnic entity in most respects. In 1990, several Somali poachers were arrested at the Dar es Salaam airport with forged Tanzanian passports. I remember colleagues chuckling at their plight: They claimed to be Tanzanians, but could not speak Kiswahili! They were not . . . Tanzanians!

CONCLUSION

With the advent of multiparty democracy in Tanzania in the mid-1990s, the rapid growth of neo-liberalism and European capital investment, and the arrival of Muslim fundamentalism after the first U.S. Gulf War in 1991, Tanzania has experienced dramatic tensions and heterogeneous forces that threaten to undermine its national ethnic identity. Formerly peaceful inter-religious relations were shattered in the early 1990s with school burnings and in the late 1990s with the bombing of the U.S. Embassy in Dar es Salaam. Somali attacks in Kenya in 2015 have led to panics at the University of Dar es Salaam following the appearance there of a Somali student. Growing Muslim-Christian mistrust is said to be problematic. All of this points to the fragility of transforming national identities, but even more to the concept of quasi-ethnicity. The TPDF remains solidly Tanzanian in the sense that its quasi-ethnic identity is firm, even if it does not bring with it the benefit of institutional autonomy and bargaining power that would pertain in an ethnopolitical setting. Museveni's Uganda, on the other hand, has had to establish an increasingly accommodating social order, and a more widely inclusive power base, and this implies that his military establishment may ultimately follow this same pattern. The development of an independent quasi-ethnic military identity, in this case, will bring with it both advantages and disadvantages to a new nation seeking stability after a century of flux.

NOTES

1. Ali A. Mazrui, *Soldiers and Kinsmen in Uganda: The Making of a Military Ethnocracy* (Beverly Hills, CA, and London: Sage Publications, 1975). 280, 278.

2. Holger Bernt Hansen, “Pre-Colonial Immigrants and Colonial Servants. The Nubians in Uganda Revisited.” *African Affairs* 90, 361 (October 1991): 559.

3. Mazrui. *Soldiers and Kinsmen*, 23.

4. The introduction of Muslim fundamentalism in the early 1990s represents a serious caveat to this argument, in view of the subsequent conflict and violence that followed, and given that approximately a third of the Tanzanian population is Muslim, although religious

differences have not figured as divisive elements in the past, and much of the violence was foreign planned.

5. Cynthia Enloe, *Ethnic Soldiers: State Security in Divided Societies* (Athens: The University of Georgia Press, 1980). Enloe notes that in most cases, the appointment by colonial authorities of a tribe with "warrior" traditions is an invention based upon myth, and usually involves the selection of a group that is too organizationally weak to resist selection for the least preferable duties in a colony, internal security on behalf of colonial authorities.

6. Mazrui, *Soldiers and Kinsmen*, 30.

7. E.g., Hansen, "Pre-Colonial Immigrants," 559.

8. Mazrui, *Soldiers and Kinsmen*, 9.

9. Ali A. Mazrui, "The Lumpen Proletariat and the Lumpen Militariat: African Soldiers as a New Political Class," *Political Studies* XXI, 1 (February 1973): 9; Donald L. Horowitz, *Ethnic Groups in Conflict* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1985), 488.

10. Mutese died in 1969 and was not replaced as Kabaka until 1993.

11. The Banyankole comprise roughly 10 percent of the Ugandan population.

12. Mazrui, *Soldiers and Kinsmen*, 66. The Nilotes, or Nubians, were a collection of recently formed Muslim groups, one *faction* of which (hardly a "traditional" tribe) seized power under Major General Idi Amin in 1971.

13. Mazrui, *Soldiers and Kinsmen*, 132. Mazrui observes that the Ugandan *lingua franca* among the educated elites at the time was English.

14. Hansen, "Pre-Colonial Immigrants," 560.

15. Mazrui emphasized that the *lingua franca* in Uganda, at least among elites, and for purposes of higher education and governing, was English. In fact, the only place that this did not pertain was the military, where Swahili was the *lingua franca*. Mazrui, *Soldiers and Kinsmen*, 132–33. This ostensibly aided Amin in his ethnic takeover of the military after the coup.

16. Literally "teacher" in Kiswahili.

17. Mazrui, *Soldiers and Kinsmen*, 9.

18. Mazrui, "Lumpen Militariat," 1–12.

19. Hansen, "Pre-Colonial Immigrants," 577.

20. Hansen, "Pre-Colonial Immigrants," 560.

21. Hansen, "Pre-Colonial Immigrants," 564.

22. Hansen, "Pre-Colonial Immigrants," 566.

23. Hansen, "Pre-Colonial Immigrants," 574. Mitchell had offered yet another homeland to transform the Nubians into an agrarian peasant tribe in line with the other Ugandan tribes.

24. Hansen, "Pre-Colonial Immigrants," 575–76. At this point Nubian leaders were said to have sent frantic messages to King Farouk of Egypt and to Buckingham Palace pleading to be sent back to their "own country," and some even went up to southern Sudan on the pretext of holidays, and reportedly found it unacceptable as a resettlement destination. All of Bombo came under Bugandan administrative jurisdiction, and although a Nubian became the local tax collector, a number of Nubians were arrested for tax protests, and the Nubians refused to establish a homeland.

25. Hansen, "Pre-Colonial Immigrants," 577.

26. And like Nyerere, he focused in his Western studies on the play *Julius Caesar*, by William Shakespeare. He played the role of Caesar in that play as an undergraduate when it was staged at Makerere University. Mazrui, *Soldiers and Kinsmen*, 182. Nyerere chose that play as one of the first major Western works that he translated into Kiswahili.

27. Mazrui, *Soldiers and Kinsmen*, 13.

28. As Mazrui cites a well-known quote of the time. "Obote the man was, on balance, to the left of Obote the leader." Mazrui, *Soldiers and Kinsmen*, 20–21.

29. Mazrui, *Soldiers and Kinsmen*, 31.

30. Mazrui, *Soldiers and Kinsmen*, 31.

31. Mazrui, *Soldiers and Kinsmen*, 132.

32. After a failed assassination attempt on Obote, a delegation of senior officers went to Amin's house in Bombo in the middle of the night to report on the incident. Thinking that they were there to assassinate him, he slipped out the back and went into hiding. Brigadier Pierino Okoyo, a close colleague of Amin, stepped in, organized security for the wounded president,

was reportedly embarrassed by the surprising absence of General Amin. and said as much at a subsequent Defence Council meeting. He and his wife were murdered shortly thereafter, and Amin was implicated. Samuel Oduny, "The Death of Brigadier Pierino Okoyo," *The Monitor* (East Africa), 22 November 2012, <http://www.monitor.co.ug/SpecialReports/The-death-of-Brigadier-Pierino-Okoya/-/688342/1626260/-/item/0/-/84jyycz/-/index.html>, accessed April 10, 2015. Amin apparently took umbrage at this, and at subsequent sarcasm about the event by Okoyo. He is a strong suspect in the murders of Okoyo and his wife the following month. Oduny, "The Death of Brigadier"; Mazrui, *Soldiers and Kinsmen*, 152.

33. Horowitz, *Ethnic Groups in Conflict*, 490.

34. Tony Avirgan and Martha Honey, *War in Uganda: The Legacy of Idi Amin* (Dar es Salaam: Tanzania Publishing House, 1982), 6.

35. Hansen, "Pre-Colonial Immigrants," 579.

36. Horowitz, *Ethnic Groups in Conflict*, 492.

37. Avirgan and Honey, *War in Uganda*, 74.

38. Avirgan and Honey, *War in Uganda*, 231.

39. For the Acholi, this was the first time that members of their group had been appointed to senior command positions.

40. Stefan Lindemann, "Just Another Change of Guard? Broad-Based Politics and Civil War in Museveni's Uganda," *African Affairs* 110, 440 (2011): 387–88.

41. Lindemann, "Just Another Change," 396.

42. Lindemann, "Just Another Change," 404.

43. Lindemann, "Just Another Change," 408. Lindemann notes that for a brief moment in 1985, for the first time in Ugandan history, the supreme military positions in Uganda were held by Acholi. Six months later they were excluded.

44. Lindemann identifies: a first Acholi uprising, in August 1986, the Uganda People's Democratic Army, led by ousted generals attempting to regain power; a second Acholi uprising, beginning in late 1986, the Holy Spirit Movement under the "leadership" of Alice Auma, who claimed to be "channeling" the spirit Lakwena; a third Acholi uprising, beginning in June 1987, Joseph Kony's Lord's Resistance Army, largely routed by 2012, although scattered outbreaks of violence in neighboring countries are still evident and there are reports that Kony may have died; a fourth uprising, the West Nile Bank Front, 1995–1997, a Nubian and Kakwa uprising led by a former officer under Idi Amin; a fifth major uprising and second West Nile insurgency, the Uganda National Rescue Front (1998–2002), another Muslim rebellion based on claims that Museveni did not honor an ethnic/religious balancing agreement in the military hierarchy; and so on. Lindemann, "Just Another Change," 408–12.

45. Henry S. Bienen, "National Security in Tanganyika After the Mutiny," in *Socialism in Tanzania*, ed. Lionel Cliff and John S. Saul (Nairobi: East African Publishing House, 1972), 218; Ruth First, *The Barrel of a Gun: Political Power in Africa and the Coup d'Etat* (London: Penguin, 1970), 205–6.

46. Mazrui, "Lumpen Militariat," 8.

47. Bienen, "National Security," 217.

48. Bienen, "National Security," 220.

49. Ali A. Mazrui, "Anti-Militarism and Political Militancy in Tanzania," in *Journal of Conflict Resolution*, ed. Jacques Van Doorn (The Hague: Mouton, 1968), 225.

50. In 1990, when I was in Tanzania, two Somali poachers were apprehended at the Dar es Salaam Airport with forged Tanzanian passports. I heard a good deal of laughter and jokes about the incident because the two Somalis, who apparently spoke English, could not speak Kiswahili. "Imagine that," one of my Tanzanian friends said, "pretending to be Tanzanian and yet unable to speak Kiswahili!"

51. First, *The Barrel*, 78.

52. Although such groups were later encouraged to join the TPDF during the war with Uganda, according to a confidential personal interview with a member of the Tanzanian Parliament, June 22, 1990, Dar es Salaam.

53. He received a masters in economics and history from the University of Edinburgh in 1952.

54. Centuries earlier there had been Arabic script versions for the Omani traders.

55. Ali A. Mazrui, *The Anglo-African Commonwealth: Political Friction and Cultural Fusion* (Oxford: Pergamon Press, 1967), 132.
56. Ali A. Mazrui, "Anti-Militarism and Political Militancy in Tanzania," *Journal of Conflict Resolution* 12, 3 (September 1968): 234.
57. Horace Campbell, "Tanzania and the Liberation Process in Southern Africa," *The African Review* 14 (1987): 18-19.
58. Henry Bienen, *Armed Forces, Conflict and Change in Africa* (Boulder, CO: Westview Press, 1989), 25. This is disputed by Avirgan and Honey.
59. *Newsweek*, 23 April 1979, 9.
60. Avirgan and Honey, *War in Uganda*, 211-212; Campbell, "Tanzania and the Liberation Process," 21.
61. Avirgan and Honey, *War in Uganda*, 236.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

- Avirgan, Tony, and Martha Honey. *War in Uganda; The Legacy of Idi Amin*. Dar es Salaam: Tanzania Publishing House, 1982.
- Bienen, Henry S. "National Security in Tanganyika after the Mutiny." In *Socialism in Tanzania*, Lionel Cliff and John S. Saul eds., 216-225. Nairobi: East African Publishing House, 1972.
- Bienen, Henry S. *Armed Forces, Conflict and Change in Africa*. Boulder: Westview Press, 1989.
- Campbell, Horace. "Tanzania and the Liberation Process in Southern Africa." *The African Review*, 14 (1987), 13-26.
- Enloe, Cynthia. *Ethnic Soldiers; State Security in Divided Societies*. Athens, Georgia: the University of Georgia Press, 1980.
- First, Ruth. *The Barrel of a Gun; Political Power in Africa and the Coup d'Etat*. London: Penguin, 1970.
- Hansen, Holger Bernt. "Pre-Colonial Immigrants and Colonial Servants. The Nubians in Uganda Revisited." *African Affairs*, 90, No. 361 (October, 1991), 559-580.
- Horowitz, Donald L. *Ethnic Groups in Conflict*. Berkeley, California: University of California Press, 1985.
- Lindemann, Stefan. "Just Another Change of Guard? Broad-Based Politics and Civil War in Museveni's Uganda." *African Affairs* 110, no. 440 (2011), 387-416.
- Mazrui, Ali A. *The Anglo-African Commonwealth; Political Friction and Cultural Fusion*. Oxford: Pergamon Press, 1967.
- Mazrui, Ali A. "Anti-Militarism and Political Militancy in Tanzania." *Journal of Conflict Resolution*, 12, No. 3 (September 1968), 269-284.
- Mazrui, Ali A. "The Lumpen Proletariat and the Lumpen Militariat: African Soldiers as a New Political Class." *Political Studies*, XXI, No. 1 (February 1973), 1-12.
- Mazrui, Ali A. *Soldiers and Kinsmen in Uganda; The Making of a Military Ethnocracy*. Beverly Hills and London: Sage Publications, 1975.
- Oduny, Samuel. "The Death of Brigadier Pierino Okoyo." *The Monitor* (East Africa), November 22, 2012: <http://www.monitor.co.ug/SpecialReports/The-death-of-Brigadier-Pierino-Okoyo/-/688342/1626260/-/item/0/-/84jjycz/-/index.html>, accessed April 10, 2015.