FORGING MILITARY IDENTITY IN CULTURALLY PLURALISTIC SOCIETIES

QUASI-ETHNICITY

EDITED BY DANIEL G. ZIRKER

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For Carolyn
Minha companheira
and
for the late Bobby McKown and Elwood Murray
Professors, Colleagues and Friends

> And when one day our human kind becomes full grown, it will not define itself as the sum total of the whole world's inhabitants, but as
> the infinite unity of their mutual needs.
>
> - *Jean-Paul Sartre*

Foreword

Daniel G. Zirker

Multi-ethnic societies have long created a fundamental dilemma for their military establishments. The inevitable inter-ethnic strife that besets them undermines national security, their putative central mission. In post-independence West Africa, for example, virtually all of the newly independent countries have experienced massive human rights violations, often committed by their own armies, and most of the new nations have suffered from deep and traditional ethnic cleavages, with dominant “martial races,” often embedded from colonial times in the military establishments, sometimes triggering civil wars. Nevertheless, one West African country, Guinea, strangely has not experienced civil war, while another, with far more military expertise and professionalism than its West African neighbors, Nigeria, is the victim of a civil war of incomparable severity and deep and continuing ethnic divisions. Why has this been the case?

In former British East Africa, three countries with similarly deep ethnic cleavages have manifested profoundly different civil-military outcomes, from unexpectedly peaceful relations (Tanzania), violent ethnically dominated military dictatorship followed by internal ethnic civil wars (Uganda), and civilian ethno-political conflicts with little or no military involvement (Kenya). Again, why the contrast?

In one North African country, comparable in many respects to others in the region, Algeria, a nominally revolutionary military establishment eventually fully directed by foreign-trained officers, a full stop was made by the military to a well-developed democratization process in the late 1980s, and military-directed violence was then turned on the Algerian people with catastrophic results. In Suriname, in South America, the most recently independent of the seven former European colonies discussed in this book, the only non-African case and by far the smallest of the countries, a bloody military dictatorship vaguely following a Dutch military institutional culture, and with the full backing of the Suriname

military *as an institution*, violently confronted a multi-ethnic society, leaving a lasting imprint on ethno-politics and urban-rural relations in this tiny country. Each of these patterns was apparently contingent, at least to some extent, on the way in which the national military establishment adjusted its own identity and mission in the context of a multi-ethnic society. In some of the cases, the military appears to have forged a unique quasi-ethnic identity of its own. In others, it seems to have attempted to do so and patently failed. In each case, success or failure seems to have had profound implications for subsequent civil-military relations.

The many manifestations of *identity*, and the intensification of *institutionalization*, have become the two mutually defining political features of our age. Individual identity, group identity, ethnic and religious attachments, tribalism, and a massive resurgence of xenophobia, these are *leitmotifs* of the post-Cold War period. The unprecedented, if often unnoticed, growth and strengthening of often almost anonymous institutions, of which military establishments are paradigms, serve as a powerful counterbalance, a kind of postmodern anti-matter. Both public and private institutions have taken on lives of their own, have competed with religious and ethnic groups for resources and power, have established separate identities, have adapted to changing circumstances and have found ways to survive, just as Herbert Kaufman and others predicted that they would decades ago.[1]

Militarism and the spread of the use of weaponry are likewise omnipresent in our post-Cold War era. When combined with the global obsession with individual, group, ethnic and religious identities, and the relentless march of institutionalization, the logical results point to tribal warfare among violent factions, desperate struggles for resources and power, a breakdown of civility and, perhaps not surprisingly, a gradual *loss* of identity. Military establishments, as paradigmatic institutions, cannot be exempt. Particularly in the deeply plural societies of many developing countries, military establishments are increasingly confronting ethno-political, institutional and regional struggles for resources and power, are tasked with fundamental missions of maintaining law and order

in this “new world order,” and must, for their very institutional survival, respond in kind.

The army, “the nation writ small,” as Alfred de Vigny famously referred to it, must be stronger than a mere representation of the traditional ethnic divisions of society[2] if it is to survive, to serve as a guarantor of national security and a mediator among contending, and sometimes murderous, groups. It must increasingly be the ultimate source of political order in an ethnically contentious society. Typically the military cannot both consist of, *and* represent, an existing traditional ethnic group while at the same time undertaking an effective and balanced intervention in the ethno-political contest. When it fills this latter task, which it often does in many plural societies, it is easily victimized as one of the many competing institutions in the inevitable ethno-political struggle for power and resources, even when its primary traditional ethnic group membership is hegemonic in the wider society.

If, on the other hand, the national army includes at least a sample of most of the nation’s ethnic groups—that is, if it is not subject to the remnants of the common colonial pattern of relying upon a dependable (and dependent) “martial race” to populate most of its enlisted ranks,[3] or a dominant ethnic group—then it must deal with those deep societal ethnic divisions internally, as well as those divisions and the complications that internal ethnic conflict causes for its internal security missions. Again, the ethno-political contest undermines the army’s institutional health. Coups and countercoups, or institutional marginalization, are common outcomes.

At the very least, then, the military in these circumstances becomes a poor bargaining agent, a weakened institution, in the ethno-political institutional struggle for power and resources, particularly within a democratizing or semi-democratic framework, except for one important factor: The military has weaponry, the terrible ability to threaten and ultimately to press with force its institutional demands, if it is able to frame those with a single purpose. In a chaotic setting, a poor civil bargaining position coupled with a powerful authoritarian fallback position and a tendency toward internal confusion and inconsistency, however, is not an auspicious situation, and this is doubly the case in a developing country. Military

establishments, after all, make notoriously poor national rulers, and they quickly become aware of this once they find themselves in office. As dozens of examples in Africa and Asia have repeatedly shown, internal divisions within the officer corps, and we are primarily referring to the officer corps here,[4] represent the breakdown of military solidarity. Inevitable resultant interventions lead to further interventions.

Why would any “rationally led” military establishment in a deeply divided society intervene in the first place? The list of commonly proffered reasons is a long one. Military cadres intervene to gain resources; to prevent civilians from exploiting divisions within their ranks, on behalf of civilian politicians who think they can call on the tiger for their own purposes, and assume that they can somehow dismount and facilely re-cage it; to insist on the resources and leadership in order to win unwinnable wars, or to be allowed to surrender;[5] or because individual officers have personal political aspirations (this last one often alienates the military establishment), to name only a few.

It would, perhaps, be comforting to think that Samuel P. Huntington’s argument, that “professionalization” of the officer corps serves as a kind of inoculation against military intervention, even in deeply divided societies, is a truism. Although Morris Janowitz seemed to have won his debate with Huntington on this matter in the 1970s, having demonstrated that professionalization of the officer corps often has a diametrically opposing effect in developing countries,[6] like Cynthia Enloe, Janowitz seemed unaware of the possibility that military officers in developing countries might evolve with the times, that they might move beyond “common ideological themes” based on “a strong sense of nationalism and national identity, with pervasive tones of xenophobia,”[7] to the eventual creation of an institution-wide quasi-ethnic institutional identity capable of competing on level terms with other ethnic identities in the ethno-political power struggle. While he recognized in another work that the common backgrounds of officers aided them in developing “intimate personal relations” across traditional ethnic boundaries, and that their common military experience likewise led to a kind of

common identity,[8] as in Enloe's analysis, Janowitz did not connect this with the possibility that the military *qua* institution might be able to develop a quasi-ethnic identity for itself. The most sensitive and acute observers and theorists in the past, for whatever reason, have simply failed to recognize this logical and necessary evolutionary step.

Interventionist military establishments in Africa and Asia, however, where deep ethnic divisions have tended to pertain, seem increasingly to have been driven more by the politics of identity than by class, as was earlier the case in Latin America. Nevertheless, their own internal ethnic divisions have rendered them vulnerable. Cliques of officers, often of the same ethnic identity and rank, have often seized power. While professionalization may have intensified the violence of such coups and showed little signs of subjugating the military to civilian control, it has not, at least in these cases, created the kind of corporate unity *across ranks* that might have vitiated deep ethnic and religious divisions. The corporate unity that has allowed Latin American and southern European military establishments to intervene successfully as institutions, and then to withdraw from politics later, assuming (not always correctly, it turns out) a position of reasonable institutional competitiveness in the budgeting process, has not been an option in developing countries in Africa and Asia, apparently *because of* their deep traditional and internally divisive ethnic and religious divisions.

Two factors have begun to intervene in the twenty-first century. The first, based on information technology and the rapid spread of education and technical competence, is a worldwide "learning curve" as regards institutional engineering. Military officers, even in small African countries, are increasingly recruited and promoted by expertise, including organizational expertise, based upon training abroad. Moreover, international assistance provides not only this training and education, but also expertise in information technology, which allows for facile contact with other, often interventionist, military establishments. Ibikunle Adeakin's field research for his chapter on Nigeria revealed a frank statement by a senior Nigerian officer: "We keep learning by watching what is happening in the international community and [also] events occurring." That modern

military establishment is struggling with profound national ethnic divisions, an ethno-religious terrorist organization in its north, and a profoundly complex ethno-political budgeting process that has only recently come under civilian control. It is no wonder that military establishments in countries as diverse as Nigeria and Suriname have been able to jump over entire stages of institutional development while attempting to address their societies' deep ethnic divisions *and* provide for their own institutional needs.

The second factor, the central subject of this volume, is only just now developing in some of those countries with deep ethnic divisions, fundamental centrifugal forces, severe internal security needs, challenges to inchoate or regressive democratization, and chronic budgetary crises; in other words, some of the African and Asian less developed countries (LDCs) and struggling developed countries (DCs). That factor, the perennial attempts of military institutions to deal with national ethno-political competition for resources while filling near-impossible demands for internal security and defense against the chaos induced by neighboring failing states has become the tentative and gradual adoption, within some military institutions, of what we have chosen to call "quasi-ethnic" identities.

The invention of a new ethnic identity by challenged military establishments, especially within deeply divided societies, is not an entirely new concept. Now classic works, like Eric Hobsbawm and Terence Ranger's 1983 edited volume, *The Invention of Tradition*, and Roy Wagner's 1975 book, *The Invention of Culture*, both pointed to the common practice of manipulating bedrock social constructs to overcome fundamental challenges to the acquisition of power and resources. Cynthia Enloe's careful analysis of "martial races," like the Gurkhas, a common colonial solution to the problem of unreliable native military forces, demonstrated that these ethnic identities originally tended to be the *more vulnerable ethnic groups*, unable to refuse their harsh military assignments, and too socially weak to be anything but loyal to their colonial masters. They were, in effect, *invented warriors*, guaranteed in a sense to remain reliable. While Enloe's book, *Ethnic Soldiers*, comes the closest of any of the major studies of the past four decades to the concept of an internal, invented military identity, it stops well short of recognizing the

possibility of purposive re-socialization in the creation of a quasi-ethnic identity within a military establishment.

What might such a development mean? Three possible components would likely be central: consciously and systematically divorcing soldiers from previous ethnic attachments; creating or adopting elements of a new ethnic, or quasi-ethnic, attachment; and denigrating or even demonizing existing, and ostensibly now competing, ethnic groups. Of the first of these, we can imagine the Turkish military in the early 1920s under Mustafa Kemal Atatürk, where extraordinary social measures were taken to break Turkish soldiers' ties to Islam, *especially and immediately within the military*, as a central route to modernization. Open manifestations of religious beliefs were forbidden. The fez was outlawed throughout Turkey. Ethnic differences were suppressed, albeit with the help of prior Ottoman history,[9] and this was seen as "modernization." Atatürk's Turkey appears to have been a preliminary attempt to construct a quasi-ethnic identity within a vanguard modernizing military, apparently with the view to "exporting" it to the rest of the country, much as we will interpret Julius Nyerere's strategy in Tanzania in the 1960s.

In the development of a quasi-ethnic military identity, the military would have to reject open manifestations of countervailing (traditional) ethnic ties within its ranks. Adoption of a single language, one with special military nuances, as the military *lingua franca*, would have to be "hardened," along with the establishment of an official, if revisionist, history, special ceremonies (days of remembrance, promotion days, dress protocols, parades, etc.), and quasi-religious devotional expectations, unique behavioral expectations and entrance exams that would allow non-members to prepare for, establish, declare and prove their commitment and loyalty. As for the third component, belittling and ultimately denigrating and even demonizing competing groups as the last step in assuring the loyalty of the new members, this would have to become quietly ritualized in some form. As most students of ethno-politics observe, the ultimate strength of an ethnic identity is in its reactionary appeal, "us *versus* them," especially when the others are thoroughly belittled, and "we have the guns."

Daniel G. Zirker
Hamilton, New Zealand
May 2015

NOTES

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1. Herbert Kaufman, *Are Government Organizations Immortal*? (Washington, DC: Brookings Institutions, 1976).
2. As Cynthia Enloe relegated it in her defining 1980 book, *Ethnic Soldiers*, because the military “concerns the fundamental ordering of public authority structures in a polity.” Cynthia Enloe, *Ethnic Soldiers: State Security in Divided Societies* (Athens: The University of Georgia Press, 1980), 22.
3. This colonial pattern seldom applied to the officer corps, however; rather, favored bureaucratic ethnicities were typically placed in the lower officer ranks, with the higher ranks occupied by colonial nationals, and this had important ramifications after independence: Enlisted soldiers in the “martial races” typically overthrew and replaced the “softer” bureaucrats in the officer corps after the colonials withdrew.

4. As M. J. V. Bell rather obviously put it in his key article, “The Military in the New States of Africa,” in *Armed Forces and Society: Sociological Essays,* ed. Jacques van Doorn (The Hague: Mouton, 1968), 261, “in any army, the attitude of the officer corps will be decisive.”
5. The former, an insistence on resources and leadership, was the rationale of the 1958 French military intervention, which began in Algeria; the latter, a demand to end the African wars of independence, the rationale of the 1974 Portuguese “Revolution of Carnations.”
6. Tending to cause interventions because it builds corporate solidarity and in-group/out-group paranoia.
7. Morris Janowitz, *Military Institutions and Coercion in the Developing Nations* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1977), 139.
8. Morris Janowitz, *Sociology and the Military Establishment* (New York: Sage, 1965), 80.
9. The massacre of perhaps over a million Armenians *because they were Armenian*, largely carried out by the military at the end of the Ottoman Empire, set the stage for the denial of even the existence of different ethnic groups within Turkey until relatively recently.

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Chapter 1
Introduction

Daniel G. Zirker

The “Third Wave of Democracy” has had a decidedly mixed impact on the world’s military establishments. An increasing appearance of “tribal behavior” and social isolation of military institutions in a post-conscription era, wars of attrition fought conservatively by volunteer forces against ethnic armies, religious tradition versus various versions of modernity, these patterns are rapidly becoming the hallmarks of our age. The end of the Cold War, and of ideology as a driving force of conflict has had profound impacts upon our understanding of socio-political development in virtually all parts of the world. In an important sense, identities—ethnic, religious, linguistic and even historic—have replaced the dichotomous ideological divide that characterized the Cold War. Social science axioms of that now almost-forgotten period have collapsed, along with the major “East Bloc” political systems, while pre-WWI obsessions with conceptualizations of culture, identity, religion and ethnicity have increasingly come to dominate political behavior.

These, in turn, are extraordinarily complex and slippery concepts[1] and are all part of a new period of nationalism and national secession[2] that has overtaken international politics. “Ethno-politics,” with its dynamics and “rules,” have increasingly dominated the politics of democratizing nations. National identities are challenged, secession has become the norm, and most governmental institutions now routinely struggle for fiscal and political autonomy as part of their survival strategies in an increasingly privatized world.

Military establishments are inevitably drawn into this struggle for institutional autonomy and, in culturally plural societies, into ethno-politics. The resultant growing insularity and advanced competencies naturally combine with their uniformly central mission to protect and preserve the nation, even when that nation, because of profound ethnic pluralism, is difficult to identify as a single entity. The military must, in a sense, *become* the nation in order to preserve it, even if it does not, or cannot, reflect it accurately from a demographic

perspective. As Alfred de Vigny observed in his nineteenth-century classic *Servitude et grandeur militaires*, “An army is a nation within a nation.”[3] Morris Janowitz made the same point in more technical terms: “The military profession is more than an occupation; it is a complete style of life. The officer is a member of a community whose claims over his daily existence extend well beyond his official duties.”[4] Those claims begin and end with the preservation of the nation . . . in one form or another.

Culture and its frozen counterpart, ethnicity, are profoundly enigmatic: They are at one and the same time difficult to define precisely in most cases, and yet all too static to those who must struggle against them in others. In attempting to understand the complex nexus of explanatory variables in general ethno-political terms, many observers have argued that *ethnicity* is either a *primordial sentiment*, a fundamental and irreducible cause of behavior, or, conversely, that it is yet another, albeit very effective, *instrument* to be manipulated in the interests of power. Conceptually, *primordialism* and *instrumentalism* represent mutually exclusive perspectives, or approaches, although in application they are typically indistinguishable and virtually always *combined* to some extent. That ethnicity is a significant—indeed, increasingly significant—explanatory variable in world politics is, at any rate, beyond dispute.

Decades ago Anthony D. Smith argued that the world was being engulfed by a growing emphasis upon ethnicity, that the ideological divide was fading, and that “nationalism . . . endows [this] ethnic revival with a scope and intensity which have no parallel in previous ages.”[5] Developing countries have manifested particularly intense forms of ethnically based politics. The late Clifford Geertz, one of the best known “primordialists,” observed that “a primordially based ‘corporate feeling of oneness’ remains for many . . . the meaning of the term ‘self’ in ‘self-rule’ . . . [and] is not easily . . . insulated from the web of primordial attachments.”[6]

It appears to be increasingly relevant and useful to apply our growing understanding of the dynamics of ethnic politics, their tendency to relate back to close (perhaps primordial) personal

attachments, to at least one institution—one of the most enigmatic—that exists within most democratizing countries: the *military*. Military institutions, particularly in new or newly revitalized democracies after the end of the Cold War, have just begun in some cases to evince their own, autonomous ethnic, or quasi-ethnic, identities. These involve a distinctive and separate ethos, often a separate or distinctive (frequently a colonial) language, and a separate technical terminology; a distinctive, if revisionist, "social" history, a separate mythology, a distinctive interpretation of nationalism, clear (and, for officers, often *ascriptive*, that is, based on parental lineage, relatively unchangeable, or even almost compulsory) membership boundaries, and so on. We might even argue that this kind of autonomous institutional development will be necessary in the future to compete effectively for political power and resources in a new world of privatized budgets, declining "orthodox military missions"[7] and ethno-politics.

The following chapters explore military establishments as competitive institutions in seven democratizing countries. Some of these have, of necessity, begun to model themselves, either consciously or unconsciously, as "quasi-ethnic" entities, in some senses "nations within nations," in order to establish institutional autonomy and competitiveness, secure budgets, achieve and retain political power, or, in at least one case, to serve as a vanguard nationalizing example. We have chosen to use the thoughts of several classic writers of the 1950s and 1960s on ethnicity (e.g., Clifford Geertz, Paul Brass and Cynthia Enloe) and on the military and politics (e.g., Ruth First, Cynthia Enloe, Samuel Huntington and Morris Janowitz) to draw some of our conclusions regarding military behavior in this largely uncharted area. Understanding the ethnic tendencies of military institutions in deeply divided, multi-ethnic societies may well shed light on future patterns of civil-military relations in democratizing countries.

Ethnicity

Why begin to examine military institutions in the context of ethnic behavior? The central thesis of this study is that the

fundamental behavior patterns associated with ethnicity in the post-Cold War era may well relate directly to the problems—and promise—of military establishments in their inevitable competition for power and resources in new, and newly revitalized, democracies. The dynamics and "rules" of ethno-politics increasingly predominate in multi-ethnic democratizing countries in the post-Cold War era. Military institutional identity, reinforced by technical and technological competency, along with the narrow code of military discipline, and with uniforms and guns, easily becomes pervasive and fixed. Legitimacy, often based on tradition, is obviously enhanced when traditions have quickly and efficiently been fit to purpose, "invented"[8] as it were.

By *ethnicity* we mean *a sense of shared common descent and/or history*,[9] largely a perception. While ethnicity, then, may seem less than concrete in this interpretation, it is important to reiterate that ethnic identity, indeed, all identity, is first and foremost a *perception*, and as Professor Paul Brass has observed, it invariably involves a *claim* to status.[10] Another observer has stressed that identity has been a "fundamental source of meaning and recognition throughout human history . . . . a founding structure of social differentiation, and social recognition, as well as of discrimination, in many contemporary societies, from the United States to Sub-Saharan Africa."[11]

There is one relevant aspect to identity that must be added to an understanding of ethnicity in the context of this study, and that is *territory*. Linda Bishai noted in this regard that while "the boundaries of identity can be constituted through language, religion, race, and culture, the modern state has confirmed territory as the key boundary."[12] It was the state, then, that came to define the security perspective, the borders, of national, and all-too-often *ethnic*, identity. This emphasis upon territory guaranteed, and continues to guarantee, the role of the state as a gatekeeper—or even progenitor[13]—of the ethnic identity or identities of the "nation," broadly defined.[14] The "orthodox" role of the military, protecting the nationals within their borders from invasion by a foreign country, is easily confused with another, very different "national" mission,

irredentism, invading neighboring territory containing one's own nationals (ostensibly to "re-unite" them), as Hitler and the *Wehrmacht* graphically demonstrated at the outbreak of WWII. Moreover, national military establishments, as the monopolies within their societies over the legitimate use of force, are implicitly involved in these elements of state politics.

The primordial nature of ethnicity as a causal variable is at the heart of these observations. *Primordialism* is the condition in which ethnic identity is a taken as a necessary and sufficient causal variable in social and political interactions, a complete cause.[15] Moreover it can be, and often is,[16] a corrosive and destructive force as regards civil society: "It . . . gives to the problem variously called tribalism, parochialism, communalism, and so on, a more ominous and deeply threatening quality than most of the other, also very serious and intractable problems the new states face."[17] Primordialists argue that ethnic identity simply *is*, that its practical and pernicious ramifications are basic to the human psyche, as pernicious and destructive as they may be.

While a primordial interpretation of ethnic attachments may predict behavior accurately, it should, in our view, be qualified by two other understandings of the causal, and therefore political, nature of ethnicity. As per the Heisenberg Uncertainty Principle, when one observes ethnic identity from *situational* and *instrumental* perspectives, it is difficult, perhaps even impossible, to regard it as the fundamental cause of behavior. A *situational ethnic identity* is perhaps best explained in the highly multi-ethnic environment of Africa. A person living in an African country is, at one and the same time, the member of a family, a clan, a dialect-speaking group, a specific religious group, a broader religious grouping, a larger language group, a citizen of a country, a person from a region of Africa (e.g., British West Africa), a specific "racial" and ethnic type (Ibo, for example, as opposed to Hausa-Fulani), a person from Nigeria, from Africa (e.g., when in Europe), a "black," and so on. Each of these possible identities can be very strong, depending of course on the context. The "primordial" nature of each of these ties simply evaporates in an unfavorable situational context. Ethnic

identity is simply not primordial in this example, except, perhaps, in very limited contexts.

The *instrumentalist* perspective is also fraught with inconsistencies. From an instrumentalist perspective, “ethnicity is a plastic, variegated, and originally ascriptive trait that, in certain historical and socioeconomic circumstances, is readily politicized.” Natural ethnic attachments, seen in this light, “generate many political entrepreneurs with a conscious and realistic interest in mobilizing ethnicity . . . into political leverage for the purpose of altering or reinforcing such systems of structured inequality between and among ethnic categories.”[18] Put simply, there is profit to be made when people make use of this natural weakness for ethnic attachments. The instrumental interpretations leave one key, unanswered question, however: Why, if ethnic identity is so malleable and easily manipulated, is it sufficiently compelling repeatedly to support selfish and blatantly instrumental purposes?

It is clear that ethnic identity “causes” political and social behavior, which in turn yields political outcomes. Furthermore, virtually all observers agree that ethnic identity is, to a large—but not exclusive—extent, *ascriptive* in nature.[19] It has deeply psychological elements, a tendency toward primordialism, and yet, in specific contexts can be seen to be primarily situational, and/or readily subject to instrumental manipulation. As American political scientist and communications theorist Harold Lasswell once wrote, politics is “who gets what, when and how.” Ethnicity is easily politicized, and an ideal vehicle to determine who gets what, when and how.

The Military as a Potential Quasi-Ethnic Group

It is important to reemphasize that *culture* and *ethnicity* are extraordinarily slippery concepts[20] and are all too easily reified. In examining what we have chosen to call *quasi-ethnicity* for purposes of understanding the separate and frequently antagonistic worldviews of military establishments in new and newly revitalized democracies, qualified and flexible definitions would seem to be

most appropriate. By *quasi-ethnicity*, we mean to say *behavior that mirrors* or *replicates* in some important ways *a sense of shared common descent and/or history*. Perceptions are extraordinarily important in this regard. Examples abound of groups of shared biological and historical descent who nonetheless regard themselves as alien and apart. Major ethno-religious groups in Bosnia would fit this category. On the other hand, there are cases of dozens of groups that evince very different cultural and historical backgrounds but, for recent historical or linguistic reasons, regard themselves as part of a single ethnic grouping. Tanzania would be a good example of this. A sense of "otherness," so much a part of the human psyche, goes to the heart of forging the sense of "sameness" in ethnic and, I propose, quasi-ethnic identity. An ethnic group, it seems, almost has to feel embattled to forge its identity.[21]

Quasi-ethnicity, as we suggest the use of the term, represents a common identity that might be located on a relational continuum somewhere between culture, broadly construed, and fixed ethnicity. Brass argues that there are "three ways of defining ethnic groups—in terms of objective attributes, with reference to subjective feelings, and in relation to behavior."[22] A cursory view of military establishments in new democracies would point to some extent to the possible presence of all of these, at least in some cases. A sense of a shared and necessary worldview, common institutional and national cultures, a common enemy or enemies, a sanctified group mission, and even a special language along with a jargon verging on a *patois*, are all part of this.[23] Strict controls over entry and departure from group membership, the *ascriptive* element, reinforce the sense of separate identity, as do a sometimes revisionist or even invented institutional history, in some cases a common struggle, myths and preferred ideology or mindset. All of these elements are available to a military establishment.

In the post-Cold War setting, developing countries have tended to respond to ethnic attachments with ethno-political competition, even among national institutions, as a central political *leitmotif*. Geertz noted in the 1960s that in developing countries "primordial attachments tend, as Nehru observed, to be repeatedly, in some cases almost continually, proposed and widely acclaimed as

preferred bases for the demarcation of autonomous political units."[24] It is the invention, or creation, of separate identities of military institutions that is the nub of the argument in this volume. Military establishments, particularly in newly democratizing, multi-ethnic systems, increasingly compete for power and resources *via* specific strategies, sometimes conscious, sometimes apparently unconscious, reverting to an almost atavistic form of tribalism, establishing quasi-ethnic membership bases, and using that unity, institutional autonomy and renewed sense of purpose to compete effectively, calling on their discipline, technical competency and guns, for institutional power and resources.

Military institutions already manifest many of the characteristics of ethnic groups, although these factors are occasionally modified through "professionalism" in developed countries, hence the suggested designation of "quasi-ethnicity." The frankly ascriptive elements in military membership, including the common insistence in less developed countries upon family, clan and ethnic group background, along with seniority in promotion and assignment in the all-important officer corps, further reinforce this, while potentially alienating other status groups in civilian society.[25] In most new and newly revitalized democracies, the general characteristics of the military organization stands out in stark contrast to civilian society.[26] This may be true in developed societies as well. As Janowitz noted in his study of the United States, "The military community is a relatively closed community where professional and residential life has been completely intermingled."[27] This separateness, even isolation, of military personnel, and particularly the military officers, can become an instrument of force modernization, but it comes at a cost.

Military establishments in new and revitalized democracies also tend to evince a monopoly of technical expertise in their countries, and their relative isolation includes the isolation of skills and competencies. They also evince separate symbols, not the least striking of which are *uniforms*, a distinctive ideological orthodoxy, or at least mindset, and, in many cases, remnants within the ranks of a distinctive military-associated customs, often a holdover from

colonial times, such as the preference for a “martial race.”[28] Technical expertise, the relative institutional stability of most military organizations, their likely history of foreign military training, and frequent contributions to civic action projects may tend to “justify” their feelings of superiority and separateness *vis-à-vis* civil society.

Separate military symbols can also be very powerful. Equipment, and continual use of even very basic equipment, such as military boots, if unavailable to average citizens, may temporarily “brand” soldiers, even soldiers in mufti.[29] Moreover, an ideological orthodoxy, which does not preclude the existence of strident—even bitter—ideological factions within the officer corps, stems largely from such factors as the army’s relatively weak institutional *raison d’être* in the first place, the typically weak position of the newly democratizing nation within the global economic system, and an often embarrassing institutional dependence upon foreign military assistance.[30]

Military organizational patterns may also contribute to the quasi-ethnic character of military institutions, particularly in their emphasis upon *primary groups*. In Janowitz’s interpretation, these have received, and should have received, the most attention as keys to organizational effectiveness.[31] Military establishments in new democracies must have, through actual history or myth, a special bond of danger and heroism that brings them together.[32] Moreover, the common background and environment of soldiers should only reinforce this.[33] While the instrumentality of such bonds may be transparent, their cultural or proto-cultural effects may be the same. Thus, under embattled circumstances, military establishments do achieve at least some of the characteristics of *ethnic movements*, creating an intensified separateness from their larger national political system and society. When coupled with their monopoly over the means of coercion, such circumstances would seem to lend themselves readily to military intervention, an ultimate form of military autonomy, at least in the short term.

What do we really know about identity formation and ethnic competition, however, and how might this relate to a greater understanding of civil-military relations if, indeed, military

organizations in new and newly revitalized democracies can increasingly be seen as quasi-ethnic entities?

Quasi-Ethnicity and Civil-Military Relations in New Nations

The “New World Order” has emphasized a global departure from ideological identities and a return to many of the concerns and conditions of the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Ideological struggles have thus given way to the establishment and assertion of ethnic and religious identities, renewing cultural and ethnic attachments. In discussing contemporary Europe, Bishai argues, moreover, that identity and security have become inextricably linked, adding that “it is essential to recognize the mutual impact that security and identity have on the nature of both states and societies.”[34] Military establishments necessarily play a key role in both of these areas. In this rapid and transparent creation of tribal identities, use is made of “building materials from history, from geography, from biology, from productive and reproductive institutions, from collective memory and from personal fantasies, from power apparatuses and religious revelations.” Nevertheless, “individuals, social groups, and societies process all these materials, and rearrange their meaning, according to social determinations and cultural projects that are rooted in their social structure, and in their space/time framework.”[35]

The mixture of security and identity concerns, moreover, represents a potentially troubling formula. As Bishai observes, “When group identity and security [are] created by the state, the result is a system which privileges the identities which exert the most political power.”[36] The electoral machinery of new democracies, in other words, must expect almost immediately to begin receiving challenges from military establishments. The struggle over missions and budgets typically initiates this political contestation.

The quasi-ethnic identity of a military establishment might well feed upon class interests. Military officers (and even recruits) in new democracies have come in the past from middle and lower-middle

class backgrounds, from rural areas, and from geographically remote regions.[37] There are numerous social and economic reasons for this. One result relates directly to the use of the military as a political force: it establishes a separateness that is openly conducive to social control. An alternative explanation is that the adoption of a quasi-ethnic identity within an army should directly address a significant institutional vulnerability: the development of ethnic divisions among military ranks. If an organization comes to be dominated by such schisms, its ability to function effectively and within unified policy objectives would seem to be compromised. The struggle for power and resources in newly democratizing multi-ethnic countries, and those engaged in democratic renewal, is usually intense. The trump cards in most instances of ethno-politics are unity and commitment. Military establishments manifest these traits in spades.

Cases

West Africa represents a study in contrasts. West African countries have a multitude of ethnic groups, and military establishments have typically fought bloody civil wars with ethnic bases. This was the case in Nigeria, where the secession of Biafra led to a bloody, multi-year conflict and the deaths of millions of people. The Nigerian military today struggles to defend the country against Boko Haram, a northern Islamist extremist group, in part because of a preponderance of ethnic northerners in its officer corps and enlisted ranks. It has obviously been unable to develop a separate military identity, although Ibikunle Adeakin argues in his chapter that it seems to be approaching the point of developing one. Guinea, as Mamadou Diouma Bah's chapter explains, while dominated by traditional ethnic groups and a tradition of inter-ethnic violence, has apparently successfully established a separate military identity. Unlike virtually all of its West African neighbors, it has not had a civil war, has maintained a high level of military effectiveness, and although not noted for its respect for human rights, has had, relatively speaking, a degree of civil peace, mostly under a unified military dictatorship.

East Africa presents the most varied and interesting cases of post-independence military adaptation regarding quasi-ethnicity and the challenges of civil-military relations. Kenya, Uganda and Tanzania experienced simultaneously the East African military mutiny of 1964, mostly over pay disputes and rumors that British officers would be retained indefinitely in what was then a single (albeit, lightly partitioned) unit, the East African Rifles. Although the mutiny was quickly settled in three different ways, over the next thirty years each of the three new military establishments responded very differently, as chapters in this volume illustrate. In Tanzania, where the mutiny was arguably the worst, and students and workers threatened to join in a revolt to overthrow the young Tanganyikan government, the Tanganyikan Rifles were completely disestablished once British troops were brought in to quell the revolt. The colonial military was replaced with a wholly new institution, the Tanzanian People's Defence Force (TPDF), comprised entirely of highly ideological and nationalistic officers and enlisted men, all of whom were recruited exclusively from the Tanganyika African National Union, the revolutionary party founded by the nation's first leader, Julius Nyerere, who had been deeply embarrassed by the mutiny. Kiswahili was established as the sole institutional language of the TPDF, national and technological development through education became its primary institutional focus, and the export of these values to the nation became its long-term strategy. Thus, although the TPDF had adopted by invention a quasi-ethnic identity, it was not adopted for purposes of creating institutional autonomy for the military. Rather, as the chapter explains, the military was conceived as a vanguard agency focused on creating a culture and identity that could, and ultimately was, spread to and adopted by all Tanzanians. The TPDF apparently used its quasi-ethnic identity as a *vanguard force* for change.

Uganda's response to the 1964 mutiny was to concede completely to the pay demands of the mutineers, to retain the preexisting military structures, soldiers and officers, and in effect to set the stage for the 1971 military coup of General Idi Amin and his Nubian ethnic group. Britain, the colonial power, had staffed the enlisted ranks of the Ugandan Rifles with these Nilotes, or Nubians,

a group of Nilotic and Sudanic peoples originally from the north, regarded in their relatively new tribal affinities as a “martial race,” who had come from tribes in Sudan and Somalia and had reinvented their identities around a religion (Islam), distinctive dress and loose and relatively recent “tribal” customs. Most Ugandans were of sub-Saharan African, or Bantu, origins. The Nubians, Nilotic peoples, had been dominated after WWI in Uganda by the much larger and more powerful Bantu-origin Baganda and Banyankole ethnic groups, had been directed within the colonial military by Bantu non-commissioned officers, and only very gradually attained command positions. In 1971, when a key line commander, Chief of Staff Major General Idi Amin, overthrew the government of President Milton Obote, one of his first moves was to reinforce Kiswahili as the official language of the army, while especially rewarding speakers of Kinubi, and to begin a widespread purge on non-Nilotic officers and enlisted men. This rapid move to establish a distinctive military identity, however, was one of narrowing traditional enrollments until only those traditional groups absolutely loyal to him remained. While it was a move to achieve complete military autonomy and political domination of Uganda, it bore little relation to the invention of a new quasi-ethnic identity. When Yoweri Museveni finally came to power in 1986, stabilizing the system, he openly favored senior bureaucrats and military officers from *his tribe*, the Banyankole, hence perpetuating this pattern of traditional ethnic domination through the military. He has played a careful balancing game ever since while fighting a succession of ethnically based civil wars, mostly against dispossessed northerners.

Kenya’s independence in December 1964 was concurrent with the East African mutiny, and thus left its first political leaders largely unscathed by the event. Jomo Kenyatta, the first post-independence leader of Kenya, and a Kikuyu, initiated and followed a careful manipulation of the ethnic balance of the Kenyan military that elevated Kikuyu officers to the top ranks. Subsequent leaders have followed suit, appointing their ethnic group to key military positions. Nevertheless, the military has been excluded from internal security duties. The result has been a largely professional military establishment, albeit one that has been commanded by senior

officers from the president's ethnic group, that has not intervened in politics. Rather, ethno-politics, with a good deal of inter-ethnic violence, has dominated the presidential political agenda, and continues to do so today, although *without* military participation.

Algeria is prototypical of several North African countries. Its revolution in the early 1960s created a military establishment that was unified, nominally ideological and secular. Nevertheless, as Yassine Belkamel argues, it was gradually co-opted by corrupt, foreign-trained officers who turned on the democratic processes in the late 1980s and early 1990s, at the cost of hundreds of thousands of deaths. The unique identity and autonomy of the Algerian military, in this case, served the military well, but dealt harsh and repeated blows to the multi-ethnic society in Algeria. The Berbers, in particular, a majority, were largely excluded from the political life of the country.

Paulo Gustavo Pellegrino Correa explores the dynamics of the military in tiny Suriname, the only non-African case in our study, and the most recent new nation. The retention of some elements of Dutch military culture, the resistance to dominant ethnic politics by the military in the new nation, and the desire to create a safe platform for nefarious and apparently criminal activities led to a bloody military coup and the charismatic and personalistic military dictatorship of Dési Bouterse, 1980–1987. Implicated in the murder of fifteen young critics of his dictatorship, and convicted in absentia by a Dutch court in 1999 of drug trafficking, Bouterse was elected president in 2010. The role of the military, set apart from the myriad of ethnic communities in Suriname in its unique cultural adaptation, is of central interest in this regard.

CONCLUSION

The increasingly "tribal" behavior of many military establishments is almost undeniable. The suggestion, however, that military establishments under certain circumstances may evince quasi-ethnic identities has preeminently political implications, and is thus inevitably provocative. As Abner Cohen has noted, "Contemporary ethnicity is the result of intensive interaction between ethnic groupings and not the result of complete separatism."[38] That

interaction is inevitably political. While military identity-formation appears to be strengthened to some extent in an environment of relative isolation, its exercise is best appreciated in conditions of social conflict. Such interactions, often conflicts, among other ethnic entities have frequently involved xenophobia, hatred and, ultimately, violence. At the very least, this is a worrying feature of contemporary civil-military relations.

From a primordialist perspective, the military *qua* ethnic group suggests an intractable budgetary foe in the legislative process, an even more strident opponent of particular foreign and domestic policies, and even a self-righteous intervening force in the nation's political processes. From an instrumentalist perspective, a military establishment *qua* quasi-ethnicity may represent a trump card in the increasingly difficult game of ethno-politics. Neither of these alternatives is particularly attractive to the modern democratizing state. Each raises a key question: What do we know about ethno-politics? Rothschild has argued that "politicized ethnicity often erodes the legitimacy of a state and the effectiveness of the state's apparatus, and while it sometimes triggers and even spearheads anti-regime and anti-governmental violence, it ordinarily does not supply the follow-through conceptual model for major, historic, systemic social revolutions."[39] It tends, in other words, to be reactionary. Moreover, it also tends to be intensely changeable,[40] and hence unpredictable. Finally, it tends to be violent and, apparently, increasingly so. Anthony D. Smith noted in the 1980s, in a pattern that appears to be progressing today, that "interethnic conflict has become more intense and endemic in the twentieth century than at any time in history."[41]

Nationalism, the silent figure lurking behind this analysis, is perhaps its most important point. The era of the national security states in Latin America (and, to a lesser extent, in Asia) is apparently finished, although indications are that the military establishments in newly democratizing countries are experiencing a new wave of nationalistic fervor. Anti-globalism and economic collapse are increasingly feeding upon more intense "democratic" politics in many countries. The "Arab Spring" is but one such phenomenon. If, indeed, military establishments occasionally adopt quasi-ethnic

identities, they also more frequently appear to assume the role of hyper-nationalists. This is threatening to democracy. More importantly, perhaps, while such behavior may resolve a local institutional dilemma, it ultimately threatens world peace.

NOTES

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1. Raymond Williams noted, for example, that “culture is one of the two or three most complicated words in the English language.” Williams, *Keywords* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1983), 8.
2. Anthony D. Smith, *The Ethnic Revival* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1981), 18.
3. Vigny, Alfred de, *Servitude et grandeur militaires* (Gloucestershire, UK: Clarendon Press, 1907).
4. Morris Janowitz, *The Professional Soldier* (New York: Free Press, 1971).
5. Smith, *The Ethnic Revival*, 19.
6. Clifford Geertz, “The Integrative Revolution: Primordial Sentiments and Civil Politics in the New States,” in *Old Societies and New States: The Quest for Modernity in Asia and Africa*, ed. Geertz (New York: Oxford University Press, 1963), 120.
7. Meaning defense of the borders against invasion by a recognizable foreign country, increasingly a rarity in the twenty-first century.
8. See, in this regard: Eric Hobsbawm and Terence Ranger (eds.), *The Invention of Tradition* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1983).
9. We are indebted to Professor Emeritus Paul Brass, of the University of Washington, for this understanding of the complex concept of ethnicity.
10. “Ethnicity and ethnic identity . . . involves, in addition to subjective self-consciousness, a claim to status and recognition, either as a superior group or as a group at least equal to other groups. Ethnicity is to ethnic category what class consciousness is to

class." Paul Brass, "Ethnic Groups and Ethnic Identity Formation," in *Ethnicity*, ed. John Hutchinson and Anthony D. Smith (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1996), 86.
11. Manuel Castells, *The Power of Identity* (Oxford: Blackwell Publishers, 1997), 53.
12. Linda S. Bishai, "Secession and Security: The Politics of Ethno-Cultural Identity," *Security and Identity in Europe: Exploring the New Agenda*, ed. Lisbeth Aggestam and Adrian Hyde-Price (New York: St. Martin's Press, 2000), 158.
13. Geertz noted that "it is the very process of the formation of a sovereign civil state that, among other things, stimulates sentiments of parochialism, communalism, racialism, and so on, because it introduces into society a valuable new prize over which to fight and a frightening new force with which to contend." "The Integrative Revolution," 120.
14. Geertz maintained that "to an increasing degree national unity is maintained not by calls to blood and land but by a vague, intermittent, and routine allegiance to a civil state, supplemented to a greater or lesser extent by governmental use of police powers and ideological exhortation." "The Integrative Revolution," 110. The trend that Geertz described in the 1960s may well be in a process of reversal today, with appeals by states increasingly based upon such ethnic identifiers as religion, culture, and . . . a sense of shared common descent.
15. Geertz, "The Integrative Revolution," 109.
16. At least in the view of primordialist observers.
17. Geertz, "The Integrative Revolution," 111.
18. Joseph Rothschild, *Ethnopolitics: A Conceptual Framework* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1981), 1–2.
19. This premise can also be qualified. The Nubians of Uganda, for example, are often cited as an "invented" ethnic group. However, the "invention of ethnicity," like the invention of culture and of tradition, is common. The ascriptive elements quickly pertain. See, in this regard: Roy Wagner, *The Invention of Culture* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1981); Eric Hobsbawn and Terence Ranger, (eds.), *The Invention of Tradition* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1983).

20. I am using the term *culture* here as a broader construct that encompasses ethnicity.
21. In Bishai's estimate, "Identities are formed on many levels, but it is the ethno-cultural group which is most threatened by state politics." "Secession and Security" 160.
22. Brass, "Ethnic Groups," 85.
23. The "modernization" of military establishments, and their acquisition of nuclear weapons, may actually exacerbate this tendency toward apartness. Janowitz, in describing the U.S. military, argues, "the boundaries of the military as a social organization are more than the mental definitions that its members create. The realities of military strategy, the admixture of weapons systems and politico-military rules for employing them, have served gradually since 1945 (and more decisively since 1960) to limit the trend toward civilianization. A national defense strategy which relies on nuclear weapons produces a military force with increasingly distinct boundaries." Janowitz, *The Professional Soldier: A Social and Political Portrait* (New York: Free Press, 1971), xvi.
24. Geertz, "The Integrative Revolution," 110.
25. Janowitz and Little comment on the "vestiges of ascriptive status and authority in the form of seniority as a criterion of assignment and promotion [that] remain to complicate the incorporation of new skill groups. The dilemmas of authority based on ascription versus achievement exist in all organizations. But it is a recurrent civilian perspective that the military establishment underemphasizes achievement in order to maintain traditional forms and the privileges of authority." Morris Janowitz and Roger Little, *Sociology and the Military Establishment* (New York: Sage, 1965), 31.
26. According to Janowitz, "Cohesion—the feeling of group solidarity and the capacity for collective action—is an essential aspect of the military profession's internal organization that conditions its political behavior." Janowitz, *Military Institutions and Coercion in Developing Nations* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1977), 143.
27. Janowitz, *The Professional Soldier*, 177–178.
28. E.g., in Uganda in the 1970s, the Nubians dominated the military ranks. There are many other cases like this. Cynthia Enloe notes that "almost every multi-ethnic society has one or two groups that

have been stereotyped as being prone to, or adept at, soldiering." Enloe, "Ethnic Soldiers," in *Ethnicity*, ed. John Hutchinson and Anthony D. Smith (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1996), 282. She concluded that these were often vulnerable ethnic groups, unable to resist "assignment" to this least favorable task, and not necessarily "warriors" by tradition.

29. In West Africa, for example, military deserters have been identified by the distinctive calluses left on their shins by military boots worn without socks.

30. Janowitz cautioned: "It is not possible to speak of an ideology among military officers in the new nations. Instead . . . because of diversity rooted in cultural and historical background, it is possible only to speak of some more or less common ideological themes . . . . at the core of these themes is a strong sense of nationalism and national identity, with pervasive overtones of xenophobia. In varying degree, this outlook adheres to the military as a profession. Profession and career seem to produce few experiences which work to counter this xenophobia." *Military Institutions and Coercion*, 139.

31. Janowitz and Little, *Sociology and the Military Establishment*, 77.

32. In Janowitz's estimate, "Social cohesion in primary groups is influenced by the proximity of danger and the importance of the mission which the group is assigned. Up to a point, as the threat of the danger increases and as the importance of the mission becomes apparent, the social cohesion of primary groups increases." *Sociology and the Military Establishment,* 85.

33. According to Janowitz, "Social cohesion in primary groups, military or other, is affected by two separate sets of factors: the social background and personality of group members and the immediate social situation. In the military establishment common social background assists the members in developing intimate personal relations; similarities in previous social experience such as social class, regional origin, or age supply a meaningful basis for responding to military life." *Sociology and the Military Establishment*, 80.

34. Bishai, "Secession and Security," 154. Bishai concludes: "Only by understanding how deeply intertwined are the manifestations of

security and identity can we explain the existential cloud which hovers over Europe today."
35. Castells, *The Power of Identity*, 7.
36. Bishai, "Secession and Security," 160.
37. Janowitz noted in the 1970s that "in the new nations, the military establishment is recruited from the middle and lower-middle classes, drawn mainly from rural areas or hinterlands." *Military Institutions and Coercion*, 104.
38. Cohen, "Ethnicity and Politics," in *Ethnicity*, ed. John Hutchinson and Anthony D. Smith (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1996), 83.
39. Rothschild, *Ethnopolitics*, 243.
40. Rothschild, *Ethnopolitics*, 229: "the political salience of ethnic cultures and the quality of allegiance to them change across historical time and across the spectrum of types of states."
41. Smith, *The Ethnic Revival*, 10.

Chapter 2

The Army and Politics in Guinea

Mamadou Diouma Bah

The military has been an important political actor in Guinea's history for more than a quarter of a century. It helped Lansana Conté to the presidency after the sudden death of President Ahmad Sékou Touré in 1984. In the following decades the military establishment gradually entrenched itself in the political, economic and legal system of the country, exhibiting varied political behavior. It formally ceded power in 2010 after enormous domestic and international pressure following the violent suppression of a pro-democracy rally in September 2009, an action that claimed many civilian lives.

The entrenchment of the military in politics has often been associated with the outbreak of large-scale violence in West African nations.[1] Yet, despite the protracted military involvement in Guinean politics, the country has not experienced large-scale armed conflicts. This chapter discusses the linkage between military behavior in politics and the preservation of relative peace in Guinea. As indicated in the introduction of this volume, the appearance of early forms of quasi-ethnic identity in a military institution may assist it in politics and conflict management in a nation prone to violent civil conflicts. More specifically, in Guinea the emergence of an independent military identity, which appeared to direct the military's political behavior, provided both advantages and disadvantages to Guinea. The advantages apparently included the absence of internal civil war, a phenomenon that victimized its neighbors. One of the obvious disadvantages was a heightened institutional competitiveness of the military and its consequent commanding political role in the Guinean polity.

Since independence in 1958, Guinea has been confronted with a threat to its stability emanating from the deep divisions of its major ethnic groups along clear cultural and regional lines. The country is divided by nature into four major geographical regions, with each region dominated by a major ethno-linguistic grouping.[2] Lower Guinea is inhabited mainly by the Soussou ethnic group, which represent around 15 percent of the population. In Middle Guinea the

Fulani people are the dominant ethnic group and represent around 40 percent of Guinea's population. Upper Guinea is predominantly inhabited by the ethnic Manlinké, who constitute around 30 percent of Guineans. In the Forest Region, the Guerzé, Toma and Kissi constitute three very different linguistic groups but are bound together by their regional affiliations and represent around 10 percent of the population. In addition to these major ethno-linguistic groups, a number of other minor ethnic groups without distinctive geographical identities also influence the ethnic makeup of the country. This type of ethnic composition, whereby ethnic groups are few in number but large in size, has put Guinea among those nations categorized as having deep ethnic divisions and thereby vulnerable to large-scale violence, as will be discussed below.

In September 1958 the Guinean people rejected a constitutional referendum sponsored by the French colonial power by voting for immediate independence. In rejecting this constitution, which was meant to guarantee the territory a junior partnership in a French-dominated community, Guinea became the only French colony to opt out of the French community. This led to a hasty withdrawal of the French army, and left Guinea's entire defense force with only several hundred Republican Guards.[3] This unique situation forced the newly independent nation to rely on the Guinean veterans of World War II the Algerian and Indochina Wars to recruit and train newly formed armed forces in place of the colonial officers.[4] Because of its abrupt rupture with France, and following the sudden withdrawal of French forces, Guinea reoriented its military toward the Soviet Bloc, a move in the context of the Cold War that guaranteed its access to modern weaponry and equipment necessary to build a competent new army "to accompany the country's . . . path to nationhood."[5] However, newly elected president Sékou Touré's perception of the Guinean army was soon radically changed by his observation of the wide range of military coups against socialist and non-socialist regimes in West Africa by the late 1960s.[6] These coups, in fact, influenced a turning point in civil-military relation in Guinea, apparently causing Touré to devise two important strategies for bringing the military fully under civilian control: the creation of a

National Militia, and the orientation of the army toward *nation-building tasks*, in the form of developmental activities, as discussed below.[7]

The National Militia consisted mainly of former educators and college-educated youth who tended to be selected at an early stage in their careers. In addition to being "the real security force around the presidency and the government as a whole,"[8] the militia was also tasked with overseeing every unit of the Guinean armed forces. President Touré focused on making the National Militia the training school of "future military cadres [and] the indispensable mainspring of [the] security system, of which the conventional armed forces constitute [but] a [functional] section."[9] Thus, the National Militia was said to have been "materially spoiled by President Touré,"[10] despite the scarcity of resources and the Western blockade against Guinea. Not surprisingly, the National Militia played a major role in maintaining President Touré in power. For instance, alongside the military, the militia successfully repelled the Portuguese-led military invasion of Guinea on 22 November 1970.[11] After these events, the National Militia was further strengthened under the direct supervision of the presidency, and with only the slightest connection to the Ministry of National Defense.[12]

The privileging of the National Militia came at the cost of the conventional armed forces, which were increasingly marginalized and overshadowed by the militia. For instance, after the mid-1970s, the militia became the full-time regular force in the capital Conakry, while serving as a reserve force for national defense at several levels throughout the rest of the country. In the following years, the militia was granted superior status to that of the army and the police force.[13] The strengthening of the militia was apparently presumed to serve as a counterbalance to the military, thereby weakening the possibility of a military coup.

Civilian control of the military under President Touré's rule was primarily maintained, however, by mobilizing the Guinean armed forces for developmental activities and nation-building tasks.[14] Under this strategy, the Guinean armed forces were oriented toward corporate unity, civic action, construction, manufacturing and

agricultural activities. In the late 1960s, an agricultural engineering unit within the military was established with a primary task of producing agricultural produce, including coffee, bananas, tomatoes and rice. The marketing and distribution of these goods was the responsibility of a military agricultural enterprise created specifically for this purpose. By the early 1970s, battalions of military agricultural production units were operating in the regions of Kindia, Labé, Kankan and Nzérékoré.

Similarly, a military production committee (Commité Militaire de Production, or CMP) was created to involve the military in the construction sector. Under the CMP, the army contributed to the building of Guinea's infrastructure, constructing bridges, road networks, administrative buildings and barracks.[15] A committee consisting of military officers was tasked with planning and implementing the manufacturing production programs.[16] It is reported that in the period between 1965 and 1984, the military factories (Usines militaires de Conakry) produced "about 250 military and civilian uniforms daily and about 180,000 pairs of shoes annually."[17]

President Touré's expansion of the National Militia's security role was an attempt to create a competing and unified security structure for the purpose of guarding his regime from both internal and external threats.[18] Similarly, the orientation of the army toward developmental and nation-building activities was also geared to reduce the political ambition of the army, minimizing its threat to Touré's rule from another standpoint, and ostensibly co-opting soldiers and keeping them fully occupied, if not always fully obedient to civilian government. The general agreement among observers is that during President Touré's period, the military establishment did not play a significant role in Guinean political affairs.[19] However, after Touré's death in 1984, the army developed a defensive solidarity, an intense corporate unity that gradually verged on a deep interpersonal bond or internal affinity, what we have called a separate *quasi-ethnic identity*. Ultimately they were described as wielding a highly unified and "inappropriate degree of influence on

the economic and political life of the country,"[20] often acting "as the final arbitrator in national politics."[21]

Ethnic Politics in Guinea

Political mobilization in Guinea during the 1940s and mid-1950s was entirely based on ethnic affiliation. In this period, each of Guinea's four regions was dominated by at least one ethno-regional organization. In Lower Guinea, the Soussou-dominated *Union de la Base Guinée* (Lower Guinea's Union) was predominant. In Middle Guinea, the *Amicale Gilbert Vieillard* organization was initiated by the Fulani students of the Sébikotane colonial school in Senegal, and subsequently became dominated by the Fulani aristocracy of the Fouta Djallon. The *Union Mandingue*, dominated by the Malinkés, was predominant in Upper Guinea. In the Forest Region, the predominant organization was the *Union Forestière*.[22]

From 1945 to 1952, these organizations formed "electoral committees rather than political movements," restricting their political activities to "defending individuals in trouble with the administration," and providing the means of satisfying the political ambition of individuals whose membership was largely determined by ethnic affiliation, tribe and language.[23] Thus, according to Claude Rivière, Guinean politics during this period had a highly ethnic and regional character such that "when called upon to participate effectively in political life, [Guineans are] divided along ethnic line[s]" often leading to clashes despite temporary agreements among groups.[24] During the twenty-six years of single-party rule under Sékou Touré (1958–1984) and eight years of no-party military rule under General Lansana Conté (1984–1991), ethno-politics were officially subdued, despite the fact that most Fulanis had felt disadvantaged under Sékou Touré, as had the Malinkés under Lansana Conté.[25]

With the introduction of multiparty politics in the early 1990s, ethno-politics resurged. The presidential election in December 1993 and the parliamentary elections in 1995 epitomized that resurgence, as did the ethnically charged presidential campaign in 2010 and the parliamentary elections in 2013.[26]

The issue of ethnicization of the Guinean military, and its potentially destabilizing effect on national politics, has been a recurrent theme in Guinea's political discourse. Guinea's periodic domestic violence, often involving the armed forces, is well documented.[27] State security has nevertheless been successfully preserved since independence. For instance, Sékou Touré and Lansana Conté were Guinea's only two presidents over fifty years (from 1958–1984 and 1984–2008, respectively), and both remained in office until their deaths of natural causes. Both regimes managed to protect the central structures of the state from destabilizing events usually associated with civil wars and/or armed conflicts in the sub-region of West Africa. Following the death of President Conté in 2008, and a brief military take-over by Captain Moussa Dadis Camara (2008–2010) in a bloodless coup, veteran opposition leader Alpha Condé was democratically elected to the presidency in 2010. Beneath this relatively peaceful transfer of power was a careful management of the political role of the military, however.

Colonel Lansana Conté had come to power in April 1984 in a bloodless military takeover after the sudden death of President Sékou Touré a few weeks earlier. One major challenge to President Conté's rule, which could have degenerated into a major ethnic conflict within the army, occurred in July 1985. Colonel Diarra Traoré, the prime minister after the 1984 military coup, was demoted to minister of education in December of the same year. In July of the following year, Traoré attempted what turned out to be a failed military coup. While President Conté belonged to the Soussou ethnic group, both Traoré and former president Touré were of Malinké origin, and therefore the coup was seen by some Guineans as an attempt on the part of the Malinkés "to re-establish their dominance lost with the passing of Sékou Touré."[28] The coup therefore "unleashed a susu [Soussou] looting spree of Malinké shops, and harassment of Malinkés living in Conakry" and other towns.[29] While the government tried to downplay the ethnic motive behind the coup, placing the blame on "Traoré's ruthless quest for power,"[30] yet another military-related threat to President Conté's power arose in February 1996, when a mutiny in the army, led by Commander

Ousmane Sow (of the Fulani ethnic group), succeeded in arresting the president. Although he was later released and reinstated after signing an agreement that met the economic demands of the soldiers, a critical ethnic *and* military point had been made.

The fact that both the 1985 coup and the 1996 mutiny were led by officers belonging to ethnic groups different from that of President Conté's led some observers to interpret these events *primarily* from an ethnic rivalry perspective.[31] One such observer has argued that since the 1985 coup attempt, the main threat to President Conté's rule has emanated from "officers of Mandé origin," working toward the restoration of "a Mendé dominated regime."[32] In a similar interpretation in the aftermath of the 1996 mutiny, President Conté is alleged to have concluded that the mutiny was "ethnically based."[33] Accordingly, it is argued that the president engaged in a "Sosoization of the army"[34] to the extent that "the Guinean army [was] transformed into an ethnic gang docilely serving General Lansana Conté and [his Soussou] dominated elites."[35] Michelle Engeler echoed this view in describing the military establishment "as loyal only to Conté's ethnic group, the Soussou,"[36] whom Robert Groelsema described as the ethnic group which had "a disproportionate number of colonels and lieutenant colonels" and "army posts."[37]

However, upon closer examination, these events cannot be entirely reduced to ethnic affiliations within the armed forces. Major Ousmane Sow, for example, who is of Fulani origin, led the battalion to counterattack Diarra Traoré's 1985 coup attempt against President Conté,[38] suggesting that "the leadership struggle between Conté and Traoré does not appear to have been a clash between Soussou and Malinké ethnic groups."[39] Similarly, it was evident that the coup was not supported by the majority of officers from Traoré's ethnic group, the Malinkés, therefore contradicting the ethnic rivalry analysis of the events.[40] Similarly, the 1996 mutiny was largely staged by junior soldiers demanding "back pay, a salary increase and better living conditions,"[41] rather than a desire to instigate a regime change on ethnically based grievances. The

political impasse in the country at the time, and the difficult economic situation, provided the more likely bases for the military takeover. On the contrary, the soldiers who captured President Conté released him when he promised to meet their economically based demands, and apparently did so without any external pressure whatsoever, or any countercoup, or any threat of one.[42]

By keeping President Conté in office and using the system as an instrument to achieve political, economic and social goals, the military perceived its interest as being better served, rather than initiating a regime change with the accompanying political uncertainty.[43] The perception of the army officers that the interest of the military establishment could be better served through maintaining the president in charge, rather than risking replacing him with a civilian president, is, in fact, the most plausible explanation given the evidence. By reinstating the president, *the military preserved its unity* as an establishment despite the disagreements among its individual members. While Human Rights Watch has noted that there have always been "illicit benefits enjoyed by the military's upper echelons [which] led to a series of revolts by younger army officers,"[44] it is clear that the Guinean military has always resolved its conflicts internally *to avoid major divisions* within the armed forces and threats to its unity as an establishment.[45]

The behavior of the Guinean military, then, increasingly mirrored the behavior of *an ethnic group* in the West African context, in a traditional sense. According to Sulayman Khalaf, in tribal societies, individuals of the same tribe may fight among themselves, but are easily united against outsiders. He explains loyalty in situations of conflicts in tribal society as follows: "I and my brother against my cousin, and I and my cousin stand together against the outsider."[46] In a similar fashion, Max Gluckman explains that in a tribal conflict situation, "men of the same village fight each other with clubs not spears. Men with different villages fight each other with the spear," and that "if one of them is involved in fighting with a more distant section all these districts may join up with one another."[47] In a tribal setting, these customary ties go a long way to ensuring the survival

of the group as a unit by forbidding members of the same tribe from using excessive violence against each other.

By the same token, this dynamic may explain why the military in Guinea has never experienced an internal coup, as has happened in so many other African countries. The 2008 bloodless military takeover that brought Captain Moussa Dadis Camara to power just hours after the official announcement of President Conté's death, in December 2008, is a clear testament to the army's "collective interest in staying in power,"[48] and its tendency to avoid any challenge to a military power holder. According to the Constitution, the Speaker of Parliament, Aboubakar Somparé, was the rightful successor to President Conté at the time, prior to the required election. The swift abrogation of the constitutional succession by junior officers, and the lack of meaningful resistance from high-ranking military officers at that time, indicated that the corporate interests of the military trumped the effect of any possible lines of fracture within the military. Ethnic rivalries, personality conflicts and generational differences were immediately put aside. Rather, as others have observed in a general ethnic context, social prestige and economic well-being—characteristics highly valued within military establishments *and* West African ethnic groups—appeared to be primary motivations in the case of Guinea.[49]

According to William Gutteridge, speaking in a broadly general context, the political attitude of the military "may be compounded of a number of elements of which the economic status of the soldier [and] his reputation"[50] are key factors. This view was echoed by Ruth First, who argued that "whatever the political background to a coup d'état, when the army acts it generally acts for army reasons, in addition to any other it may espouse."[51] The anxiety to defend the interests of the military as an institution and to protect its corporate status and privileges provides "the most widespread and powerful of the motives for intervention"[52] in politics. In the case of Guinea, the 2008 coup, which prevented the return of civilian rule, can readily be interpreted from this broad corporate understanding of military behavior.

In summary, although the protracted military involvement in Guinean political affairs after 1984 presented a threat to Guinea's stability, this threat seems to have been mitigated by the military's adoption of what appears to have been increasingly quasi-ethnic group behavior. Through this the Guinean military was able to achieve the cohesiveness and institutional autonomy necessary to remain in power. Other West African military establishments under similar circumstances, had fallen into what was categorized as *low unity* military establishments, and succumbed internally to traditional ethnic rivalries where intra-military killings and "coup-traps" were prevalent.[53] In Guinea, an apparent perception of a common identity within the military seems to have strengthened unity among members and prevented the country from *coup d'état*-induced armed conflicts. Just as members of an ethnic group tend to unite when faced with external threats to its well-being, by behaving as an ethnic-like group, the military in Guinea had apparently maintained a modicum of mutual loyalty and unity required to preserve corporate institutional interest.

Quasi-Ethnicity in the Military

While this growing ethnic-like behavior led to the maintenance of relative peace in Guinea, it also permitted the military to dominate the country's economic and political life during the period between 1984 and 2010, when the real power was vested solidly in the hands of the armed forces.[54] The army was able to achieve such enormous power through a militarization of public administration, the creation of a *military–business nexus*, and a national policy of impunity in the armed forces.[55] While the military directly ruled the country after the success of the 1984 coup, in the aftermath of the elections of 1993 the military adopted a *lead-from-behind strategy* in which President Conté ran in competitive elections, which he inevitably won while retaining his military status and forming governments of both civilians and military officers. The military resumed direct rule between 2008 and 2010 following Captain

Moussa Dadis Camara's coup a few hours after President Conté's death.

The protracted military rule in Guinea, and the resultant militarization of public administration in which members of the armed forces dominated every level of the government structure, became pervasive. For instance, prefects and sub-prefects during the Conté period were usually active or former military officers. In fact, nearly "40% of sub-prefects were members of the active military during the Conté administration."[56] Similarly, it was often the case that senior officers were appointed governors, prefects and ministers.[57] This tendency to militarize the public administration increased significantly following the December 2008 coup. Available data show that thirty of the thirty-three prefects and all eight regional governors were replaced after 2008 with military officers, and of the 350 sub-prefects, fifty were from the military.[58]

As a result of this militarized administration, a military–business nexus flourished in Guinea, and military expenditures, to the extent that they could be measured, significantly increased. Official figures from the annual national budgets from 2007 to 2010 show that the military was allocated 12.12 percent of the national budget in 2007, 12.65 percent in 2008, 24 percent in 2009, and 33.5 percent in 2010.[59] These figures become more significant when compared with what was allocated to other ministries. In 2010, for instance, pre-university education received just 7 percent, and health care 1.7 percent of the national budget.[60] In addition to its formal budgetary allocation, the army continued to have access to unallocated funds, subsidized goods and services. For example, subsidized goods for the military included Guinea's staple food: soldiers paid less than 10 percent of the market price for a bag of rice.[61]

Beside the military–business nexus, a tacit guarantee of impunity has been a central prerogative of the Guinean security forces.[62] Recent studies of the Guinean armed forces conclude that brutality and impunity for crimes committed against civilians run "deep into the armed forces' culture."[63] According to International Crisis Group, the armed forces of Guinea "have a well-deserved reputation for human rights abuses, including suppressing [political]

opposition, torture and extra-judicial killings."[64] This view is echoed by the United Nations Office of the Special Adviser on Genocide, which concludes that "Guinea has a history of human rights violations, perpetrated mostly by the security forces, including unlawful killings, rape, arbitrary detention, torture and excessive use of force."[65] According to Human Rights Watch, during Conté's era the army was insulated from accountability for their many human rights abuses.[66] The brutality of the armed forces against the civilian population was exacerbated by the military's formal return to power in the 2008 coup, when, for example, a political rally was violently repressed in September 2009 by military forces resulting in the deaths of 157 unarmed civilians and over 1,700 injured.[67] Eyewitnesses described this incident in the following terms: Just as party leaders were about to address the crowd, armed men *in uniform* entered the stadium and started shooting after closing all the stadium's gates.[68] Numerous eyewitness accounts reported widespread sexual violence against women, including gang rape.[69] A Human Rights Watch report on the events provided evidence that the killings and sexual assaults were committed by members of various units of the Guinean armed forces, including the elite Presidential Guard, the elite Gendarmes, the police, as well as men in civilian clothes armed with knives and machetes.[70] Despite national and international pressure, successive Guinean governments have "failed to bring to justice even one member of the security forces credibly implicated in killings and other serious abuses"[71] of human rights. Lawyers Without Borders concluded that the security services have appeared to benefit from total protection throughout Guinea's recent history.[72] This impunity, according to Guinea's legal bar association, is reinforced by process: The state has often been both "murderer and investigator."[73]

Following the election of Alpha Condé to the presidency in November 2010, Guinea embarked on a policy of security sector reform (SSR), a program led by the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) and supported by the United Nations (UN), France and the European Union (EU). Since the program

started in 2011, significant measures have been taken, including the retirement of 3,928 troops.[74] Optimists argue that the 2010 landmark democratic elections and the introduction of the SSR programs are clear indications that Guinea has turned toward democracy and a subordinate military.[75] There is no denial that the SSR programs represent a major step in a democratic direction. Military subordination to civilian rule in Guinea represents a crucial prerequisite to the establishment of a civil society. Yet despite strong international support, bringing the military under non-partisan civilian control while maintaining its professional and force capabilities at effective levels has proven to be arduous tasks for the new democratic government. An attack on President Condé's residence in July 2011,[76] and the fact that military officers continue to hold key government offices, including ministerial posts, suggest that the army remains at least a potential threat to those who would attempt to diminish its economic power and political influence.

As discussed above, the inchoate emergence of quasi-ethnicity in the military has proven to be a valuable insight in understanding continuing military cohesion, autonomy and, possibly, resultant political stability in Guinea. This understanding enables the author to go beyond the traditional civil-military relations approach, revealing important lapses in the politicized military-conflicts-nexus arguments in the existing literature, and helping to clarify the puzzle of why a degree of military cohesion could be maintained in a deeply ethnically divided Guinea, and despite protracted military involvement in politics (1984–2010).

The case of Guinea has previously called into question the widely accepted assumption in the literature that military disintegration and violence often follow protracted military rule in West African nations. Although the Guinean military dominated the political life of the country for more than a quarter of a century, this study points to a surprising conclusion: that the military maintained cohesion by establishing its own internally independent identity and by behaving as a quasi-ethnic group. As such, the quasi-ethnicity in the military approach suggests that when a military establishment in a deeply plural society like Guinea's behaves like a quasi-ethnic group, this behavior is likely to prevent it from degeneration into

factionalism and consequent violent conflict as generally suggested in the dominant literature.

It is, of course, true that the behavior of the armed forces as an ethnic-like group will vary from case to case. In Guinea, the vested interests of the military establishment and the ruling elites in preserving the system led to the Guinean military's adaptation. Acting alongside the civilian administration, the military apparently inserted itself into most of the vital organs of the Guinean state through the militarization of public administration, the economy and the judiciary. This tacit agreement between the ruling elites and the military establishment, ostensibly to preserve the system for the mutual benefit of the elites, led to a sustained stability despite the vulnerability of the system to armed conflict, particularly during President Conté's rule.[77]

The 2008 coup provided further opportunities to test the role of military behavior in politics, this time under different leadership. The suppression of an opposition rally led to large-scale killings of civilians carried out by the Presidential Guard in September 2009, and an assassination attempt made on President Camara soon followed.[78] After these events the military was subject to mounting domestic and international pressures to relinquish power to civilians. This led to a major rift within the military as to whether or not to cling on to power. The argument was ultimately settled by officers who persuaded their opponents that the corporate interests of the military would better be served by a return to civilian rule. Accordingly, a semi-military transitional government was put in place whose task it was to organize free and fair presidential elections. A veteran opposition leader, Alpha Condé, was declared the winner of the presidential elections in November 2010.

The maintenance of military unity, and hence a single military identity, thus became more important to senior military leaders than holding onto political power. It would seem that Guinea had moved yet one step closer to the establishment of a quasi-ethnic military identity. An analysis of the gradual development of this identity during the period between 1958 and 2008 seems to clarify our understanding of the unusual path followed by that country. From the relatively low cost of the Guinean military under Sékou Touré to the

subsequent massive escalation of Guinea's military expenditures under President Conté, Guinea nonetheless maintained one constant pattern in its civil-military relations: It avoided the bloody civil wars that affected virtually all of its neighbors.

The orientation of the army toward developmental and nation-building activities and the diminished role of the military in Guinean political affairs between 1958 and 1984 explain why defense costs were lower during this period, at least in comparison with President Conté's rule. The army under Sékou Touré had less than five thousand soldiers, and the official estimate of defense spending ranged from 4 to 5 percent of the Guinean gross national product.[79] As discussed earlier, fear of military intervention was the single most important element that determined Touré's strategy toward the military. However, instead of *buying off* the army with lavish expenditures, President Touré "kept much of the armed forces in poverty."[80] The president ensured that the army in Guinea did not receive government largess.[81] In contrast, after the military coup of 1984, the Guinean army gradually expanded to the extent that it was then inflated in size in relation to the population of Guinea. By the end of the 1990s, the Guinean army was estimated at around 9,700 soldiers,[82] and by 2010, the army was estimated at around 45,000 soldiers.[83]

Apparently both leaders, Touré and Conté, feared the threat that the military establishment posed to their rule, although they developed two very different strategies for dealing with it. While Touré opted to reduce spending on the armed forces, weakening the military establishment, Conté opted for a strategy of co-option via lavish expenditure, strengthening the military. Both strategies reinforced the stability of the country over divergent time periods. During Touré's era in the 1960s, 1970s and mid-1980s, a small military served as an impetus for political stability in the West African region, where military coups were largely the primary source of instability and political unrest. During Conté's rule in the late 1980s, 1990s and early 2000s, a weak, underpaid and disorganized national army in the face of increased armed rebellions in the region proved fatal in many West African nations. Conté's strategy of strengthening

the military served to provide stability in that era. However, there were other cases of better (if not well) paid military interventions as well. And yet, there was no bloody, military-inspired civil war in Guinea, as occurred in all of its neighbors. The one consistent, and possibly explanatory, feature of the military establishment of both presidencies was a separate Guinean military identity, one that appears to have developed gradually to the point that very different presidential strategies did not trigger traditional ethnic divisions within the military establishment, and the inevitable internal fighting, and then civil war that likely would have followed. In short, the outcome of the case study of Guinea appears to strengthen the quasi-ethnicity argument as a viable interpretation of the behavior of the Guinean military, and the surprising absence of civil war in Guinea.

CONCLUSION

Although the Guinean army was far from a monolithic group, its corporate interests became strong enough to trump the effects of internal cleavages such as ethnic, factional or generational differences and, therefore, led to a degree of cohesion that prevented it from the tendency of many West African military establishments to degenerate over time into ethnic polarization, factionalism and, ultimately, civil war. Simply stated, this resulted in a degree of national political stability. However, that same political and economic dominance and the impunity of the armed forces that this internal unity, built around a unique military identity that we have called *quasi-ethnic military solidarity*, represented and continues to represent, also appears to constitute a severe threat to the health of civil society and democracy in Guinea. The relative peace and security have come at a great cost. Ethno-politics continue in Guinea, and the military establishment remains a major player.

NOTES

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1. A strong relationship between military intervention in politics and armed conflicts in West Africa has been identified by recent literature; see for instance, Patrick J. McGowan, “Coups and Conflict in West Africa, 1955-2004: Part II, Empirical Findings,” *Armed Forces & Society* 32, 2 (2006): 234–53; Paul Collier, *The Bottom Billion, Why the Poorest Countries are Failing and What can be Done about It* (Oxford, UK: Oxford University Press, 2007); Paul Collier, *Wars, Guns and Votes: Democracy in Dangerous Places* (London, UK: Vintage, 2009). Evidence shows that coups, whether successful or otherwise, often trigger counter-coups, military factionalism, ethnic polarization, chaotic politics, and communal violence in West African nations. See, Paul Collier and Anke Hoeffler, *Coup Traps: Why does Africa have so many Coups d’Etat?* (Oxford, UK: Centre for the Study of African Economies, Oxford University Press, 2005), 3. In fact, there is a cyclical relation between coups and armed conflicts in West Africa. Just as coups have been principal triggers of a number of West African civil wars in recent decades in several other instances, coups have been triggered by armed conflicts in the region. See, Richard Baégas and Ruth Marshal-Fratani, “Côte d’Ivoire: Negotiating identity and citizenship,” in *African Guerrillas, Raging against the Machine*, ed. Morten Boas and Kevin C. Dunn (London, UK: Lynne Rienner, 2007), 81–111.

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3. Victor D. DuBois, “The Role of the Army in Guinea,” *Africa Report* 8, 1 (1963): 3–5; Mohamed Saliou Camara, “From Military

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6. In 1966, the socialist president of Ghana, Kwame Nkrumah, was removed from power by the military and took refuge in Guinea. In 1968, the socialist president of Mali, Modibo Keita, who was a close associate of Sékou Touré, was overthrown in a military coup. For a complete list of all military coups in West Africa between 1955 and 2004, see Patrick J. McGowan, "Coups and Conflict in West Africa, 1955-2004: Part II, Empirical Findings," *Armed Forces & Society* 32, 2 (2006): 234–53.
7. Other strategies consisted of using illiteracy in recruitment, personal loyalty at the top and intensive Pan-African commitment. See Camara, "From Military Politization to Militarization of Power in Guinea-Conakry."
8. Camara, "From Military Politization," 320.
9. Camara, "From Military Politization," 320–21, cited from Sékou Touré, *The Doctrine and Methods of Democratic Party of Guinea* (Conakry, Guinea: Imprimerie Nationale Patrice Lumumba, 1967), 283.
10. Camara, "From Military Politization."
11. In 22 November 1970, the Portuguese military command in Bissau sent a group of several hundred Portuguese and Bissau-Guinean soldiers, foreign fighters, and exiled Guineans to attack Conakry from the sea. The assault mainly aimed at neutralizing the African Party for the Independence of Guinea [Bissau] and Cape Verde (Partido Africano da Independência da Guiné Cabo Verde) which had its headquarter offices in Conakry. President Touré of Guinea had been a major source of sustenance to this Bissau Liberation movement. For more detail, see John P. Cann, "Operation Mar Verde, The Strike on Conakry," *Small Wars & Insurgencies* 8, 3

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12. Camara, “From Military Politization,” 320.
13. Thomas E. O’Toole, *Historical Dictionary of Guinea*, 143.
14. Elise Forbes Pachter, “Contra-coup: Civilian Control of the Military in Guinea, Tanzania, and Mozambique,” *Journal of Modern African Studies* 20, 4 (1982): 596.
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16. O’Toole, *Historical Dictionary of Guinea*, 45.
17. International Crisis Group, “Guinea: Reforming the Army,” 3
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21. Graeme Counsel, “Music for a Coup ‘Armee Guineenne,’” 109.
22. Mohamed Saliou Camara, *His Master’s Voice: Mass Communication and Single-Party Politics in Guinea Under Sékou Touré* (Trenton, NJ: Africa World Press, 2002), 50–51.
23. Rivière, *Guinea*, 63.
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26. Mohamed Saliou Camara, “New media and ethno-politics in the Guinean diaspora,” *Africa Media & Democracy Journal* 1, 1 (2012): 1–20; Mamadou Diouma Bah, *Coping with Vulnerability: State Resilience to Armed Conflict in Guinea* (PhD diss. The University of Waikato, 2014), 59–61.

27. Bah, *Coping with Vulnerability*, 69–104.
28. Howard Schissel, “Conté in control,” *Africa Report* 31, 6 (1986): 22.
29. Robert J. Groelsema, “The Dialectics of Citizenship and Ethnicity in Guinea,” *Africa Today* 45, 3/4 (July–December 1998): 411. It is worth noting that initially, President Conté “welcomed the ethnically targeted attacks” on Malinké-owned shops and businesses in a speech delivered in his native Soussou language “in an expression that became famous in Guinea, ‘Wofatara,’ which means ‘well done’ in Soussou,” see, International Crisis Group, “Guinea: Change or Chaos,” *Africa Report* 121 (14 February 2007), 3 [footnote 13].
30. Schissel, “Conté in control,” 22.
31. Colonnel Diarra Traoré, who led the 1985 coup attempt, was from the Malinké ethnic group, and Commander Ousmane Sow from the Fulani ethnic group led the 1996 mutiny against the regime of President Conté who belonged to the Soussou ethnic group.
32. Camara, “From Military Politization,” 323.
33. Camara, “From Military Politization,” 324.
34. Camara, “From Military Politization,” 325.
35. Camara, “From Military Politization,”324.
36. Michelle Engeler, “Guinea in 2008: The unfinished revolution,” *Politique africaine* 112 (December 2008), 95.
37. Groelsema, “The Dialectics of Citizenship,” 417.
38. Mohamed S. Camara, *Political History of Guinea since World War Two* (New York: Peter Lang, 2014), 278.
39. Kudamatsu Masayuki, *Ethnic Favouritism: Micro Evidence from Guinea* (28 July 2009), 10, accessed 28/03/2013, http://ssrn.com/abstract=1440303orhttp://dx.doi.org/10.2139/ssrn.1440303.
40. “Guinea: Diarra Traore’s Attempted Comeback,” *West Africa* (15 July 1985): 1412.
41. Mamadou Diouma Bah, “State Resilience in Guinea: Mitigating the ‘Bad Neighbourhood Effect’ of Civil War Next Door,” *Australasian Review of African Studies* 33, 1 (June 2012): 25; National Democratic Institute for International Affairs, *Reports of the Civilian-Military Relations Assessment Mission: West and Central Africa* (Washington, DC: National Democratic Institute for International

Affairs, 18 March–10 April 1997), 7, accessed 02/05/2013, http://www.ndi.org/files/Civil-military-relations-assessment-CEWA-ENG.pdf.
42. Issaka K. Souaré, *Civil Wars and Coups d'etat in West Africa: An Attempt to Understand the Roots and Prescribe Possible Solutions* (Lanham, MD: University Press of America, 2006), 96.
43. Mamadou Diouma Bah, "The Military and Politics in Guinea: An Instrumental Explanation of Political Stability," *Armed Forces & Society* 41, 1 (2015), 77–79.
44. Human Rights Watch, "We Have Lived in Darkness," 2011.
45. Bah, " Military and Politics," 78.
46. Sulayman N. Khalaf, "Settlement of Violence in Bedouin Society," *Ethnology* 29, 3 (July 1990): 231.
47. Max Gluckman, *Custom and Conflicts in Africa* (Oxford, UK: Basil Blackwell, 1956), 8–9.
48. International Crisis Group, "Guinea: Military Rule must End," 1, *Crisis Group Africa Briefing* 66 (16 October 2009). Although President Conté had died in the early hours of the evening, his rightful successor according to the constitution, the speaker of parliament Aboubakar Somparé announced the president's death the following morning. At the time of the announcement, the speaker was surrounded by the prime minister, Ahmed Tidiane Souaré, and the chief of staff of the Armed Forces, General Diara Camara. However, five hours later, this constitutional succession was contrasted by the announcement of a military takeover by mid-ranking officers led by Captain Moussa Dadis Camara. Had this constitutional transfer of power succeeded, it would have been the first time power was transferred to a civilian administration since the 1984 coup.
49. Jerzy J. Wiatr, "Social Prestige of the Military: A Comparative Approach," in *Military Profession and Military Regimes, Commitments and Conflicts*, ed. Jacques van Doorn (The Hague: Mouton, 1969), 73–81.
50. William F. Gutteridge, "The Political Role of African Armed Forces: The Impact of Foreign Military Assistance," *African Affairs* 66, 263 (1967): 93.

51. Ruth First, *The Barrel of a Gun: Political Power in Africa and the Coup d'etat* (London, UK: Allen Lane, 1970), 20.
52. Samuel E. Finer, *The man on horseback: the role of the military in politics*. (London, UK: Pall Mall Press, 1962), 41.
53. Christopher Clapham and George Philip, "The Political Dilemmas of Military Regimes," in *The Political Dilemmas of Military Regimes*, ed. Christopher Clapham and George Philip (London, UK: Croom Helm, 1985), 6.
54. Engeler, "Guinea in 2008: The Unfinished Revolution," 98.
55. Bah, "Military and Politics," 75–85.
56. Louis A. Picarda and Ezzeddine Moudoud, "The 2008 Guinea Conakry Coup: Neither Inevitable nor Inexorable," *Journal of Contemporary African Studies* 28, 1 (2010): 61.
57. Human Rights Watch, "We Have Lived in Darkness," 49.
58. International Crisis Group, "Guinea: Military Rule must End," 5.
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60. Human Rights Watch, "We Have Lived in Darkness," 51.
61. International Crisis Group, "Guinea: Ensuring Democratic Reforms," *Africa Briefing* 52 (24 June 2008): 10.
62. Bah, "Military and Politics," 82.
63. International Crisis Group, "Guinea: Reforming the Army," 16; see also, Counsel, "Music for a Coup," 2010.
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65. United Nations Office of the Special Adviser on Genocide, *Report of the Special Adviser to the Secretary-General on the Prevention of Genocide on his Mission to Guinea from 7 to 22 March 2010* (United Nations, 2010): 9, accessed 08/05/2013, http://www.un.org/en/preventgenocide/adviser/pdf/osapg_mission_report_guinea_mar_2010.pdf.
66. Human Rights Watch, "We Have Lived in Darkness," 14.
67. International Crisis Group, "Guinea: Military Rule must End," 2; Counsel, "Music for a Coup," 109; Sadiki Koko, "Challenges for a Return to Civilian Rule in Guinea," *African Security Review* 19, 1 (March 2010): 103–104.
68. International Crisis Group, "Guinea: Military Rule must End," 2.
69. Amnesty International, *Guinea: International Inquiry Needed into Conakry Killings and Rapes* (30 September 2009), accessed

05/04/2013, http://www.amnesty.org.uk/news_details.asp?NewsID=18437; Human Rights Watch, “Bloody Monday: The September 28 Massacre and Rapes by Security Forces in Guinea,” *Human Rights Watch* (December 2009), accessed 05/04/2013, http://www.hrw.org/node/87190.
70. Human Rights Watch, *Guinea: Stadium Massacre, Rape Likely Crimes Against Humanity* (17 December 2009), accessed 05/04/2013, http://www.hrw.org/news/2009/12/17/guinea-stadium-massacre-rape-likely-crimes-against-humanity.
71. Human Rights Watch, *Guinea*, 14.
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73. Human Rights Watch, *Guinea*, 57, quoted from letter from the president of the Guinean bar association, Boubakar Sow, to the Minister of Justice, Alsény Réné Gomez, 31 January 2007.
74. Manuel Manrique Gil, “The democratic transition in Guinea reaches a critical point,” *European Parliament Policy briefing* (June 2013), 7.
75. Gil, “The democratic transition in Guinea reaches a critical point,” p. 7.
76. For more details, see Vincent Foucher, “Alpha Condé and the Politics of Military (Mis)Adventure,” *African Arguments* (Guinea Briefing, 17 October 2011).
77. For an extended discussion of elite cohesion in Guinea and its resultant relative stability of the country despite its vulnerability to armed conflicts, see Mamadou Diouma Bah, “Mining for Peace: Diamonds, Bauxite, Iron-ore and Political Stability in Guinea,” *Review of African Political Economy* 41, 142 (2014): 508–510.
78. For details of this assassination attempts, see Bah, “Military and Politics,” 82; BBC News, “Guinea aide admits shooting junta leader Camara,” *BBC News* (16 December 2009), accessed 08/08/2014, http://news.bbc. co.uk/2/hi/8415659.stm.
79. O’Toole, *Historical Dictionary of Guinea*, 9–10.
80. International Crisis Group, “Guinea: Reforming the Army,” 4.
81. Pachter, “Contra-coup: Civilian Control of the Military,” 607.
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footnote 97.

Chapter 3

Military Identity in Nigeria

Ibikunle Adeakin

Nigeria is one of the most ethnically diverse countries in the world and the most populous country in Africa. It consists of over 250 different ethnic groups, which speak approximately 300 languages. Nevertheless, it has at least four macro-ethnic groupings: the Yoruba, the Igbo, the Hausa, and the Fulani, the last two often considered together as one macro-ethnic group because of its pre-colonial history, religion (Islam) and geography. Each of these has a unifying *lingua franca*, and about 70 percent of the population falls into one of these macro-ethnic groups.[1] Nigeria is one of the few countries in the world, then, with such a diverse ethnic composition and numerical size, and yet with such a basic and potentially confrontational macro-ethnic setting. Additionally, it has almost an equal representation of two of the dominant religious beliefs in the world: Christianity, in its major forms and denominations, and Islam. This ethnic diversity and, more importantly, its basic simplicity and the conflicts that it creates, can be observed in all spheres of socio-political life. It is evident in politics, employment opportunities, sports, schooling and commerce and is the subject of numerous academic and political works.[2]

The Nigerian military establishment is particularly susceptible to ethno-politics. As a result, ethnicity within the military remains an important variable in the behavior and solidarity of this powerful political institution. While our understanding of the military has tended to be dominated in the literature by discourses that focus less on the role of religion and ethnicity, relatively little attention is paid to an understanding of the dynamic and changeable capacity of the concept of ethnicity in civil-military relations.[3] The manifestations of ethnic identity within the Nigerian military are not static; they manifest themselves differently according to particular contexts. As Larry Diamond has noted, such identities in Nigeria “are multiple and fluid, shifting up or down in scale depending on the political context.”[4] Similarly, military institutions, particularly in developing

countries, sometimes evince their own characteristics of ethnicity, or what we have called in this volume quasi-ethnicity: a distinctive and separate ethos; a unifying language, in this case Nigerian "militarized" English; a distinctive mindset that justifies a relatively weak "orthodox military" *raison d'être*, that is, defense of the borders from invasion by a foreign country; and clear (and arguably ascriptive) membership boundaries.[5] The prospects of the military institution in Nigeria forging a distinct quasi-ethnic identity for itself within the context of the various ethno-political and religiously driven demands and conflicts rest on its potential as the ultimate answer to recurrent and acute ethnic and religious threats, mostly in the country's North, to the very existence of the Nigeria state itself.

Any analysis of this sort, however, should begin with a summary of the colonial legacy of military recruitment in Nigeria and its ultimate affects following independence. Part of this chapter is based on field research (elite interviews) conducted in 2011 in which the author explored Nigerian military institutional behavior in its transitional phase after more than a decade in power. This included a series of face-to-face interviews with senior Nigerian military officers conducted on military bases in Nigeria. Although they often made it clear that a tangible and distinct ethnic, or quasi-ethnic, military identity had not yet fully emerged, they just as frequently implied in their comments, without apparently recognizing its significance, that something like its development would rapidly become a necessity in the near future. Their sense of growing isolation constantly implied a need for institutional autonomy, and this was usually placed in the context of ethno-politics.

During the initial period of colonial rule, the recruitment of enlisted military personnel in Nigeria was based on an explicit preference for members of those ethnic groups that were perceived to be "martial tribes," or "martial races," as Cynthia Enloe and others have referred to them. These were ethnic groups that were said by the colonial powers to have had a natural inclination to combat.[6] The largely fictional presumption of special warlike characteristics pertaining to particular ethnic groups in Nigeria, as defined, of course, by the British, was purposefully vague, for as Enloe also observed, "martial races" were in reality usually the most vulnerable,

uneducated and weakest groups in the colonies, those unable to compete politically, and unable to resist their assignment to what amounted to the least preferable colonial task.[7]

The British in Nigeria greatly favored the recruitment of military personnel from the northern part of Nigeria, especially ethnic groups from the large Hausa-Fulani macro-ethnic category, as well as those from the hinterland region of the Benue/Plateau. As a result, at independence in 1960, enlisted military personnel, mostly those at the lower ranks, were predominately a mixture Hausa-Fulani, with, again, some minor ethnic groups from the Benue/Plateau.[8] Likewise within that period, the officer corps in the Nigerian military was dominated by another single ethnic group that had been very successful in assimilating into the colonial bureaucracy, the Igbos. This group had tended to attain higher educational levels, had achieved greater, if nonetheless limited, success in commerce and industry, and was clearly favored by the British colonial bureaucracy.

The resultant ethnic imbalance in the early military establishment was exacerbated by the specific needs of the British at the outbreak of WWII.[9] Prior to the war, the bulk of the Royal West African Frontier Force, then stationed in Nigeria, came from the Hausa-Fulani macro-ethnic group. However, due to the technological requirements of WWII, the British not only needed combat troops that could fight in battles across Europe and the Far East, it also needed semi-skilled and skilled positions, among them technicians, commissary specialists and clerks to accompany and provide immediate skilled aid to combat troops in the field. As a result, the British recruited Southerners, mostly Igbos, the large macro-ethnic group located predominantly in Eastern Nigeria that had previously dominated clerical and lower-level technical positions in the colonial bureaucracy.[10] By the time the British decided to include Nigerians in the officer corps in the late colonial period, most of the qualified indigenous officer candidates were Igbos.

After independence, a new policy was initiated by the Northern People’s Congress (NPC)-led government, which was a conservative party predominantly made up of Northern Muslim elites, to address this perceived ethnic imbalance, one that placed a high

priority on correcting it.[11] There were concerns from opposition political parties (mostly from the South) that this policy was directly geared to rid the Nigerian military of Southern and Eastern ethnic dominance, and especially Igbos, from the officer corps. As a result, military officers and the political elite of all three macro-ethnic groupings—the Igbo, Hausa-Fulani and Yoruba—believed that the "Nigerianization"[12] policy, initiated by the NPC within the military, was an attempt by the big three groups to gain ethno-political advantage.

In this political climate of ethnic mistrust, the first military coup in 1966 was widely seen as ethnically driven by the Igbos. A decade later, Adewale Ademoyega, the only non-Igbo to have been prominent in that coup, argued convincingly that the intentions of the conspirators had been "honorable," and that there had been little or no ethnic motivation. He added that the Northerners had been a majority in the military at the time, and that this was the only reason that they had suffered a majority of the coup casualties in that first 1966 intervention.[13]

The ethnic effects of that first military coup were far-reaching, however, and ultimately served to initiate an ethnic-based civil war. In effect, it shattered the emergence of a corporate military; self-interested Igbos were blamed for the coup, especially by officers from the north, who believed that the Igbos wanted not only to dominate the military, but all of the political processes in Nigeria.[14] The countercoup of 1966, then, evinced a reactive ethno-political pattern. It was openly motivated by ethnic revenge and opportunism; was based almost exclusively upon traditional ethnic attachments within the military, primarily those of Northern officers; and was clearly designed to reverse the outcomes of the first coup. The conspirators used the rhetoric of traditional ethno-politics rather than of the nationalist ideals that they rather obliquely claimed as their rationale for this second intervention.[15]

The countercoup led, in turn, to a political disaster of immeasurable proportions, the Biafran civil war of 1967–1970. This was responsible for the deaths of between one and three million people, a deep and long-lasting schism in Nigeria's nation-building

efforts, a significant halt to Nigeria's early attempts at creating a degree of military professionalism, and a thirty-year suspension of civilian government.[16] There was one unifying feature pertaining to the civil war, however. Even though the military was highly fragmented along ethnic lines at the start of the war, officers from the Northern and Western regions were able to settle their differences in time and forge a single purpose in opposing the Eastern Region's secession. This professionalization-by-necessity briefly bridged the ethnic divide and may have set the stage for the future development of at least a modicum of military unity, if not the seeds of a quasi-ethnic military identity.

Among the military barriers to an early resolution of the civil war were the rigid Nigerian military protocols. The soon-to-be new head of the breakaway Igbo state of Biafra, Colonel C. Odumegwu Ojukwu, was senior in rank to the new head of the Nigerian government, Colonel Yakubu Gowon.[17] Because of basic military protocols, any serious negotiations between them as equals were therefore impossible. The coup conspirators refused to back down from their insistence upon Gowon as their commander, and Odumegwu Ojukwu could not bargain with him on equal terms. He therefore declined to negotiate, declaring the Eastern Region as the new independent state of Biafra. Nigerian troops almost immediately attacked Biafra, and a three-year bloody civil war ensued.

At the end of the civil war in 1970, and the utter defeat of Biafra, there was a renewed effort by the Nigerian military elite to create an independent military identity, one that was devoid of any appearance of traditional ethnic attachments that might divide the officers and lower ranks.[18] This program was extended to the civilian population less rigorously in what was called the "One Nigeria" project. Gowon's victorious government continued to stress a slogan that was used abundantly during the civil war that with the end of the war there would be "no victor, no vanquished." In line with that, the government instituted a policy that granted amnesty to virtually all Igbos who had participated in the war. Limited efforts were made to reintegrate into the national military establishment former Nigerian soldiers who had fought for Biafra. This appeared, however tentatively, to set the stage

for the creation of a separate military identity, devoid of the bitterness and hostility that had plagued the traditional ethnicities.

The Gowon government also implemented the “Three R’s Policy” (“Reconciliation, Rehabilitation and Reconstruction”). This policy was meant to foster a rapid reintegration of the Igbos and Eastern Region into the political and economic mainstream of Nigerian society.[19] To ensure that no ethnic group in the future would be able to dominate the military establishment, however, it was agreed that each of the twelve states (at that time), six of which were in the North, would have equal representation in the recruitment and selection of military personnel.[20] Reintegration, it seemed, would not be allowed to upset a carefully engineered ethnic balance. The implementation of anything like a single, quasi-ethnic military identity seems to have been put on hold, at least for the time being.

Subsequent military governments, including those of Murtala Mohammed, Olusegun Obasanjo (1975–1979), and Buhari-Idiagbon (1984–1985), tried to project enhanced levels of corporate identity for the military. The military dictatorships of Ibrahim Babangida (1985–1993) and Sani Abacha (1993–1998), however, significantly shifted the presumptions of the senior (ruling) military cadre.[21] As presidents, these two generals assumed far more personalistic styles of governing, and under their regimes expressed pronounced preferences for Northern (Muslim) influence within the military, and this traditional ethnic preference ultimately became a driving organizational force. At the death (and possible assassination) of Abacha in 1998, the first six senior military officers in line of succession to Abacha were also Northerners.[22] Northerners had in effect assumed hegemony, ultimately at the cost of the regime’s legitimacy.

With the advent of civilian rule in 1999, the greatest challenges to the Nigerian military were maintaining its unity and continued professionalization, and key to these were, once again, the challenge of forging a single corporate identity, a challenge that remains very much alive today. An immediate danger appears to be the likelihood that the military will lose control over its internal

security obligations in the North, and in the petroleum-producing region of the Niger-Delta.

Since the military formally disengaged from political power it has been significantly involved in internal security missions across the country. Because of the ethnic nature of most of the security challenges that it has faced, it has had to counter identical ethnic and religious attachments that are simultaneously evident within its own ranks. Such internal operations have sometimes had potentially dire consequences for the existence of the Nigerian state, and have included actions in the Niger-Delta against violent militia groups, including the Movement for the Emancipation of the Niger Delta (MEND) and the Niger Delta People's Volunteer Force (NDPVF).[23]

Similarly, in the northern part of the country the military is engaging with Boko Haram, a threat not only to the long-term existence of the Nigerian state,[24] but to the immediate unity of the military as well, as evident in Boko Haram's reportedly overrunning a military base in the remote northeastern town of Baga in January 2015, where soldiers were said to have fled at the first appearance of the Muslim extremist group. It is not surprising that the army has struggled to deal with the dramatic proliferation of conflicts with militant organizations that are religiously inspired, the most prominent of which is Boko Haram, said to be allied with Al-Qaeda and, most recently, the Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant (ISIL). By early February, Boko Haram had in control vast swaths of territory in Northern Nigeria, almost without military interference. In mid-February 2015, President Goodluck Jonathan called for assistance from the armies of neighboring states to assist in crushing this Nigerian terrorist group, despite the Nigerian military establishment's large and well-funded profile.[25]

Nigerian military resolve to deal with Boko Haram has been shockingly weak, especially given the military's size, its international peacekeeping record and its relative standards of professionalism. Troops from the far–less-developed and militarily prepared countries of Niger and Chad have had to be called in to deal with the Northern revolt, and have done so effectively. This, in turn, threatens to break apart Nigerian military solidarity and reputation, and to cause that most dominant military establishment in the region to lose face,

especially as it watches passively while soldiers from weaker and less-developed neighboring countries retake towns in Northern Nigeria from the control of an international terrorist organization.

It should be noted, however, that Nigerian military engagement with violent organizations with ethno-religious and political attachments is not a new phenomenon. An earlier organization that emerged in post-independence Nigeria, Maitatsine, founded by Muhammad Marwa in the early 1970s,[26] triggered widespread riots and violence across Northern Nigeria between 1980 and 1985, leading to the deaths of more than four thousand people.[27] What perhaps makes Boko Haram, and the passive Nigerian military responses to it, unique among similar situations with Islamic roots, are Boko Haram's manifest links and strategic alliances with other pan-Jihadist organizations operating within West and East Africa.[28]

The Nigerian military, then, is confronted with a double challenge. The first is to achieve a significant degree of professionalism so that it can limit any form of ethnic and religiously inspired militant and terrorist organizations operating within the country. For that to happen, there is an urgent need for the military establishment to distance itself, and particularly its identity, from any of the three or four macro-ethnic groups, especially given that the military composition at both the enlisted and officer ranks have significant numbers of Muslims of Northern origin. Second, it is vital to limit the infiltration of factional interests such as Boko Haram into the military, especially at the lower ranks, given that historically a sizeable majority has been recruited from the North, a region long vulnerable to anti-Nigerian Muslim factions, and Boko Haram's locus of origin.

Gradual Development of a Quasi-Ethnic Military Identity?

The Nigerian military shows evidence of developing the beginnings of a unique identity, one that apparently takes it cues from Hausa-Fulani military officers. This group has historically dominated important positions within the officer corps. The

development of a quasi-ethnic military identity might empower Northern officers while allowing the institution to be more successful in its competition for resources in the ethno-political struggles in Nigeria. There are reasons, then, why the very early emergence of something like a quasi-ethnic military consciousness might just be appearing in the second decade of this century.

Although in security engagements, the Nigerian military have been thought in the past to have shown relatively high levels of professionalism, and to have avoided insofar as possible weakness based upon internal ethnic attachments, the need to solidify its own, unique and unified identity now seems to have reached crisis proportions. In this sense, there are a variety of related factors that may be pushing it toward the creation of something like a military quasi-ethnic identity, two of which are prominent among them: mission ineffectiveness (especially in violent and potentially divisive parts of the country), and an increasingly desperate need to maintain at least some level of political influence at the national level. The military budget is important in this later regard. Arguing for a budget in a civilian-dominated legislature, particularly following a period of utter military failures in the North, will require a good deal of ethno-political juggling, something that an internally ethnically divided military establishment will find impossible.

It is important to note that the initial internal developments within the military that point to at least some intent to forge a single, separate military identity owe their origins to some extent to the government of President Olusegun Obasanjo (a former military head of state and general) who, on assuming office in May 1999, stated that one of his primary goals was to re-professionalize the military and to remove it from politics after three decades of direct involvement. To achieve this goal, the government forcibly retired all military officers who had held political office prior to the start of the Fourth Republic, that is, from 1966 to 1999. Overall, the retirement exercise affected 53 senior army officers, 20 naval officers and 16 air force officers. In addition, 4 high-ranking policemen were also affected by this exercise. In order to limit consequent grievances from within the military, the government sought to stabilize the

military by promoting middle-belt (mainly Benue/Plateau region) officers to key military positions.

This move was based on historical antecedents. Even though officers from this region had contributed significantly to the military, and were known for their professionalism and loyalty, they had been marginalized by the Hausa-Fulani officers, especially after they had overthrown the regime of General Yakubu Gowon in 1975, an officer from the Plateau region. This marginalization was further compounded in 1990 when Major Gideon Orkar, from Benue, failed in a coup against General Ibrahim Babangida. Orkar apparently would have disestablished the core Hausa-Fulani states, according to his prepared (but never delivered) speech, until a set of conditions from these states was met.[29]

Based on data collected during field research in 2011, in which the author examined aspects of military behavior during democratization, it appears that there are three areas that the military establishment after 1999 emphasized internally, all of which point to an intent, however subtle in some instances, to forge a separate military identity. The first of these involved an emphasis, elevated above traditional ethnic origins, on individual achievement in higher education as a key part of the recruitment and selection of officers; the second, an insistence on a level of discipline during internal security engagements; the third, an observable degree of military professionalism, including all of the corporate and closed social ramifications that this implies. Each of these three criteria was elevated above the traditional priority given to traditional ethnic identity of officers in question.

A greater emphasis on higher education in the recruitment and selection of officers, while insisting that the selection process maintain equal representation from each state, has also arguably created the beginnings of a separate identity, if not a sense of quasi-ethnicity, within the military. However, it should be noted as earlier mentioned that the desire to create a form of ethnic balance within the military in the 1960s meant that merit had to be sacrificed routinely in favor of creating a semblance of national “balance” as defined ethnically. It also meant that the educational requirements for

officers (especially in the North) had to be lowered to achieve this goal.

Since 1999, there have been fewer conflicts in the recruitment and promotion of officers, however. This also includes opportunities for overseas training, which were once contentious. As William Ehwarieme noted, “Opportunities for training especially overseas, which depended so much on whether one was an Abacha or Babangida supporter are liberalized since 1999, permitted many more officers without special connections to benefit.”[30] An active-duty military officer, reiterating a similar view on required levels of educational attainment when discussing the calibre of military personnel that were recruited post-1999, he noted that “this is [a new] millennium. The kind of officers we have now are more learned and exposed. . . . We keep learning by watching what is happening in the international community and [also] events occurring.”[31]

The military’s numerous security operations have involved armed conflicts across the country, and these have led to allegations of human rights abuses. The military has consistently tried to maintain a separate identity based upon discipline and accountability and to make this especially evident during such engagements. Another active-duty military officer, while discussing the issue of human rights violations and ethnic and religious bias in such engagements, commented on allegations that the military took sides in an operation in the city of Jos (Plateau state). He pointed out that the terrorists had dressed as soldiers and engaged in killings to draw blame to the military. He said that “we had to change . . . our uniform from green camouflage to brown desert camouflage because it was easier for people to get the green camouflage to perpetrate those evil acts than the brown one.”[32] Military identity, military professionalism and military restraint were all under attack. Identity became central, and a unique military identity, more so. Similarly, when the discussion focused on accountability in alleged cases of accidental weapons discharges in internal engagements, this serving military officer noted: “We are not [like] the police . . . for us a single round is meant to kill and it must be accounted for . . . it must be

accounted for and an express order must be given to fire so that it is extremely difficult for them to misfire."[33]

Since 1999, there have been significant efforts taken by civilian governments to increase the level of military professionalism. Again, this implies intensification of corporate unity. Along with additional local training opportunities, and overseas training opportunities for increasing numbers of officers, the government has also signed several bilateral agreements on joint military exercises with other militarily advanced nations. As an active duty military officer noted, beginning "immediately after 1999 we have fared better in terms of salary [and] resources. They give us more attention now."[34]

The patent failure of the military to address internal security problems in the North in 2014 and 2015, it would seem, represents a severe challenge to these advances, however. National investment in military professionalism at a time when the institution is passively watching as the armies of Niger and Chad resolve a Nigerian internal security crisis in the North does not argue convincingly for federal spending. One can only surmise that the situation does drastically increase demands for the Nigerian military to inoculate itself against vulnerabilities based upon internal ethnic divisions, and thus to stress, to senior military commanders at least, the critical need to develop its own unique institutional culture.

Military Identity and Boko Haram

One of the striking features of the civilian rule in Nigeria since 1999 has been the rise of Boko Haram, literally translated as "Western education is evil." As noted above, one of the greatest immediate challenges to the Nigerian military, deeply engaged in its own form of Western military education, is limiting its own infiltration by members of Boko Haram. The bulk of military personnel, especially at the lower ranks, have been historically recruited from the North, Boko Haram's locus of origin, and the region where it most often tends to engage the security forces. Boko Haram, on the other hand, routinely uses tactics of infiltration to undermine resistance.

In ideological terms, it can be argued that Boko Haram has undergone fundamentally different phases of evolution, and although its roots are local, it represents a distinctly new phenomenon in the context of Islam and politics in Nigeria. The first phase in its development was the implementation of a missionary-activist ideology as emerged in 2002. Its founder and original leader, Mohammed Yusuf, belonged to both Ibrahim Zakzaky's Islamic Movement in Nigeria (IMN) and Abubakar Mujahid's Ahl al-Sunnah wal-Jama'ah, Ja'amutu Tajidmul Islami (Movement for the Islamic Revival, MIR). Its main financial backer, Alhaji Buji Foi, had close ties with Sheikh Abubakar Gummi and Dr. Ahmed Gummi's Jama' atul Izalatul Bid' ah Wa' ikhamatul Sunnah (Izala). Initially, its primary goal was establishing an autonomous Islamic community to be ruled by a radical version of Sharia (Islamic law), something that Boko Haram sought to implement in the Northern state of Yobe.[35]

After late 2003, Boko Haram evolved into a Nationalist Jihadist Islamist organization, employing militant tactics and targeting politicians, members of the Nigeria police force, and other security agencies. From that point onward, Boko Haram sought the institutionalization of Islamic law throughout the twelve predominately Muslim states in the North, and in the longer term, to turn all of Nigeria into an Islamic state. This period is often listed as the second ideological phase of Boko Haram.

After 2009, following more than five years of clandestine activities and the establishment of new leadership, the organization appears to have re-branded itself. Boko Haram had further evolved into a militant terrorist *and military* organization and had begun targeting both combatants and civilians in terrorist activities as well as military operations. Within this context, it appears that it had begun to develop strategic ties with other Jihadist groups in Africa, especially Al-Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb and North Africa (AQIM), the Movement for Oneness and Jihad in West Africa (MUJAO), Ansar Al-Dine (Defenders of the Religion) in northern Mali as well as with al-Shabab in Somalia—all of which are Al-Qaeda affiliates.[36] And, as noted above, it has most recently declared an allegiance with ISIL. In 2013 Boko Haram began taking and controlling territory

in the Nigerian North, and by January 2015 was in control of significant swaths of territory and a number of towns.

In its engagements with Boko Haram, the Nigerian military has adopted a strategy that it normally uses in cases of ethnic and religiously driven conflicts. This is based on ensuring that the bulk of the soldiers who are to engage in a given security operation are not predominantly from that ethnic group or region of the country. In the case of Boko Haram, this method has not proven to be effective. Boko Haram justifies its activities based on religion, Islam, to which a sizeable number of military personnel adhere. While there have been few reports that soldiers posted to fight against Boko Haram have failed to do so *based on their religious beliefs*, there is a good deal of confusion as to why the Nigerian military has failed so demonstrably in stopping this group from taking land and hostages in Northern Nigeria. Reports in the media as to why the military has abandoned posts or military bases during Boko Haram's attacks have pointed to more fundamental causes: shortages of basic operational necessities, such as military hardware, basic military medical supplies and care; non-delivery of military wages and allowances; and even the demoralizing effects of endemic corruption, which continues to be a hindrance not only in the military as an institution but in the entire society. While it is difficult to link these very general complaints to abandonment of bases during attacks by Boko Haram, one can imagine a political setting in which a civilian government is increasingly pressured by a dissatisfied military establishment that is willing to lose bases, fail in security engagements, and otherwise threaten a representative assembly until it gets the budget that it wants. Is this surprising military failure, then, merely a strategy?

To complicate this interpretation, the top military echelon has court-martialed officers and soldiers who have abandoned posts or refused to fight against Boko Haram. While these cases, regarded formally as mutiny, remain subject to controversy, largely based on the reasons why they refused to fight, this rather unexpected insistence on internal discipline reinforces to some extent the notion of the critical and immediate need for a non-traditional military identity. Perhaps this crisis represents the first seeds of an emerging quasi-ethnic identity.[37]

There are immense and immediate challenges to the military in its forging of a separate identity, especially in opposition to Boko Haram. Traditional ethnic attachments run deep. Many officers and enlisted men are Northerners first, and seem likely, at least in the short term, to remain that way. For example, in 2013, a media report quoted the former Chief of Army Staff, Lieutenant General Azubuike Ihejirika, as stating that numerous soldiers and officers had been arrested for conspiring with Boko Haram in a military offensive against this group in northeast Nigeria. While this surprisingly brief mention of internal religious divisions, an admission that no military establishment would take lightly, may underscore the commitment of the top echelon of the military to military professionalism and discipline,[38] its candor, again, also reveals the great distances that remain to be travelled to arrive there.

A key post-Cold War challenge that confronts many developing countries, and especially Nigeria, is the need for the military to maintain its position in the ethno-political power structure, especially in the annual competition for its budget. Studies have suggested that significant increases in military budgets tend to have negative impacts on the economic development of transitional states. Such allocations are usually taken directly from other sectors, such as education, health, agriculture, public works and housing.[39] The Nigerian case is intensified by constitutional provisions that mandate that the National Assembly provide adequate civilian oversight of the military. Following apparent failures to do so after 1999, demands were made by trade unions and other groups in civil society in 2014 that the National Assembly investigate funds released to the military to fight Boko Haram. The chairman of the Senate Committee on Petroleum Downstream at the time, Senator Magnus Abe, resisted this, however, citing a less-than-persuasive argument that “if we start any form of public probe and the military thinks we are only interested in the money and not the efforts at combating insurgency that may become counterproductive.”[40] It is perhaps not surprising, then, that civil investigations into military spending, especially during periods of crisis, are rare at best, although theoretically the president has the power to initiate such inquiries.

CONCLUSION

The military establishment in Nigeria has developed a critical need for, if not the beginnings of, a separate culture, a quasi-ethnic identity. This would be both promising, in insulating the institution from destructive social forces that it will have to combat in its internal security functions, and in allowing it to compete effectively for resources necessary to accomplish these tasks, and threatening, in that, if it were to eventuate it might well promote continued military authoritarianism, facilitating the military's participation as an institution in the ethno-politics that have repeatedly tortured this emerging democracy. At the very least, the development of this near-ethnic identity would be likely to continue to hold significant implications for civil-military relations in Nigeria.

A bedrock barrier remains. In its long and varied history of internecine conflict, the military has been unable to deal effectively with its own internal ethnic divisions. Even today, this is especially evident in its internal security operations against Muslim fundamentalists in the North, and in those many other operations involving distinct and often mutually antagonistic tribal and ethnic identities, mirrored internally within the military itself. In the past, these interactions have also proven to be politically significant in a larger, national context. Now, laden with increasingly desperate internal security duties in the north—the ethnic homeland of many of its officers and troops—this represents a serious challenge, not only to the Nigerian military establishment, but to the future of Nigeria.

What we do know about *ethno-political* behavior that might help us to predict political outcomes in this setting? Joseph Rothschild stressed that state legitimacy is typically threatened by ethnicity when the latter becomes hyper-politicized, although this kind of threat seldom leads to a social revolution—it simply lacks the necessary and ongoing commitment. Such ethno-politicization, then, tends to be reactionary and . . . anti-democratic. It breaks apart political systems. Moreover, it also tends to be changeable, and hence unpredictable. Finally, it tends to be violent. We can assume that when it takes place in a country like Nigeria, and infects a military establishment like that of Nigeria, it will be doubly so.

Anthony D. Smith noted in the 1980s that such conflicts are becoming increasingly intense in the contemporary era.[41]

Nationalism, the silent figure lurking behind this case, is perhaps its most important likely outcome. The era of the national security states in Latin America (and, to a lesser extent, in Asia) is past, although indications that the military establishments of the developing world are experiencing a new wave of nationalistic fervor are evident. If the Nigerian military establishment, connected as it appears to be to a global learning curve, responds to its current crisis and reacts by developing a unified military culture, a quasi-ethnic identity, if only to enhance its budget, or to confront such Northern security challenges as that posed by Boko Haram, the obvious benefits may soon be outweighed by a new series of threats to Nigeria. Democracy is fragile at best, and Nigerian democracy even more so. An ethnically unified Nigerian military establishment, while obviously more capable of winning an adequate budget and defeating Boko Haram, is not necessarily the harbinger of a democratic spring.

NOTES

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2. E.g., Okwudiba Nnoli, *Ethnicity and Development in Nigeria* (Aldershot: Ashgate Publishing Ltd., 1995).

3. Edlyne Anugwom, “The Military, Ethnicity and Democracy in Nigeria,” *Journal of Social Development in Africa* 16, 2 (2001); Pradeep Barua, “Ethnic Conflict in the Military of Developing Nations: A Comparative Analysis of India and Nigeria,” *Armed Forces & Society* 19, 1 (1992).
4. Larry Diamond, “Constitutional Design of a Third Nigerian Republic,” *African Affairs* 86, no. 343 (1987): 212.
5. Daniel Zirker, Constantine P. Danopoulos, and Alan Simpson, “The Military as a Distinct Ethnic or Quasi-Ethnic Identity in Developing Countries,” *Armed Forces & Society* 34, 2 (2008).
6. C. N. Ubah, *Colonial Army and Society in Northern Nigeria* (Kaduna: Baraka Press and Publishers Limited, 1998); Cynthia Enloe, *Ethnic Soldiers: State Security in Divided Societies* (Athens: The University of Georgia Press, 1980).
7. Enloe, *Ethnic Soldiers: State Security in Divided Societies*, 27.
8. Norman J. Miners, *The Nigerian Army 1956-1966* (Suffolk, UK: Methuen and Co. Ltd., 1971).
9. Jimi Peters, *The Nigerian Military and the State* (London, UK: Tauris Academic Studies, 1997).
10. Ubah, *Colonial Army and Society in Northern Nigeria*; Robin Luckham, *The Nigerian Military: A Sociological Analysis of Authority and Revolt 1960-1967* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1975).
11. This centered on the creation of the NPC. The Northern People’s Congress was a political party made up of mostly Hausa-Fulani political elites who led the government from 1960 to 1966. The leader of the party was the Sardauna of Sokoto, Sir Ahmadu Bello, while the party’s prime minister was Sir Tafawa Balewa.
12. The “Nigerianization” policy of the 1960s was introduced by the NPC-led government to fill former British officers positions within the military with qualified Nigerian officers. See: Adewale Ademoyega, *Why We Struck: The Story of the First Nigerian Coup* (Ibadan: Evans Brothers, 1981).
13. Ademoyega, *Why We Struck*, 89.
14. Veronica Nmoma, “Ethnic Conflict, Constitutional Engineering and Democracy in Nigeria,” in *Ethnic Conflict and Democratization in*

Africa, ed. Harvey Glickman (Atlanta: The African Studies Association Press, 1995).
15. Ruth First, *The Barrel of a Gun: Political Power in Africa and the Coup d'etat* (London, UK: Allen Lane, 1970).
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22. By the mid-1990s, successive military governments had created 36 states, 19 of which were in the north. In view of this, it should not be surprising that Northern officers dominated the military governments up until 1999, when the military formally handed power to the civilians. See Ukana B. Ikpe, "Patrimonialism and Military Regimes in Nigeria," *African Journal of Political Science* 5, 1 (2000).
23. John Campbell, *Nigeria, Dancing on the Brink* (Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield, 2011); Michael Peel, *A Swamp Full of Dollars, Pipelines and Paramilitaries at Nigeria's Oil Frontier* (Chicago: Lawrence Hill Books, 2010).
24. Ali A. Mazrui, Albert Schweitzer, and Andrew White, "Nigeria: From Shari'a Movement to Boko Haram," United Nations' Alliance of Civilizations, http://www2.binghamton.edu/igcs/docs/Nigeria%20From%20Sharia%20Movement%20to%20Boko%20Haram.pdf; Abimbola Adesoji,

“The Boko Haram Uprising and Islamic Revivalism in Nigeria,” *Africa Spectrum* 45, 2 (2010).
25. Neighboring armies of Chad and Niger were said to be making major progress in expelling Boko Haram from captured territory by late March 2015, as the Nigerian military, inexplicably, sat on the sidelines. See: Jeremy Binnie, “Chad Takes Fight against Boko Haram into Nigeria,” *Jane Defence Weekly*, 11 February 2015; Richard Joseph, “Growth, Security, and Democracy in Africa,” *Journal of Democracy* 25, 4 (2014).
26. F. U. Okafor, ed., *New Strategies for Curbing Ethnic and Religious Conflicts in Nigeria* (Enugu: Fourth Dimension Publishers, 1997).
27. Elizabeth Isichei, “The Maitatsine Risings in Nigeria 1980-85: A Revolt of the Disinherited,” *Journal of Religion in Africa* 17, 3 (1987).
28. Alex Perry, “Threat Level Rising: Boko Haram and Other African Terrorist Groups Inspired by Al-Qaeda Are Gaining Strength, Sophistication and Global Ambitions,” *Time*, 19 December 2011; Mazrui, Schweitzer, and White, “Nigeria: From Shari’a Movement to Boko Haram.”
29. The conditions given by Orkar in his speech for these states to be included back into Nigeria included the installment of Alhaji Maccido (the people’s choice) as the Sultan of Sokoto, and that the Hausa-Fulani elites led by Sultan Maccido would have to vouch that its people would no longer seek total domination of Nigeria. For more on Orkar’s speech, see: http://www.dawodu.com/orkar.htm, accessed 22/06/2013.
30. William Ehwarieme, “The Military Factor in Nigeria’s Democratic Stability, 1999-2009,” *Armed Forces & Society* 37, 3 (2011): 506.
31. Personal interview with an active-duty military officer, Kaduna (8 April 2011).
32. Personal interview with an active-duty military officer, Zaria (5 April 2011).
33. Same officer.
34. Personal interview with an active-duty military officer, Kaduna (8 April 2011).
35. See International Crisis Group, “Understanding Islamism” (*International Crisis Group: Middle East/North Africa Report*, 37,

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Chapter 4

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 Zanaki. 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 percent. 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 Kabaka[10] 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 “Mwalimu”[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 renamed 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 exclusionary. 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 sufferered, 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 apology[48] and a consequent insistence on fundamental change. Nyerere made it

clear that from that point on that he would undertake fundamental 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 ethno-political 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

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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 eve 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/-/84jiycz/-/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.

Chapter 5

Ethnopolitics and the Military in Kenya

Thomas Stubbs

In a continent renowned for its unbridled praetorianism, Kenya stands out as one of the few African states to have maintained civilian rule throughout its independence. Despite the historical quagmire of successive coups and rebellions experienced by the surrounding region—Ethiopia to the north, Somalia to the northeast, Uganda to the west, and South Sudan to the northwest—Kenya's military establishment has been able to preserve its reputation as a highly professional and distinctly apolitical outfit. This achievement is all the more surprising given the continuing salience of ethnicity in the country, a characteristic that often penetrates the national military establishment, divides it, and pushes it into interventionist practices.

The propensity of ethnicity to divide in Kenya was recently demonstrated by the post-election violence of 2007–2008, for which the country's president and vice-president may eventually stand trial at the International Criminal Court for alleged involvement in inciting violence against each other's ethnic communities. Kenya's military has not only remained united amidst the destructive ethno-political conflicts that have occurred throughout the country's five-decade history, but has resisted interfering in the civilian domain at almost every historical juncture.

The post-election violence, however, laid bare some of the major historical fault lines in Kenyan society. Kenya's population of approximately forty-one million is divided across eight provinces: Western, Nyanza, Rift Valley, Eastern, North Eastern, Coast, Central, and the City of Nairobi. These provinces exhibit a highly uneven pattern of economic development, from the comparatively wealthy Central Province to the impoverished Nyanza Province. With the exception of Nairobi, the provincial demarcations also map closely onto the established locales of Kenya's principal ethnic groups: the Kikuyu (17.2 percent of the total population in 2009) from Central Province; Luhya (13.8 percent) from Western Province; Kalenjin

(12.9 percent) from the Rift Valley; Luo (10.5 percent) from Nyanza; and Kamba (10.1 percent) from Eastern Province.[1] The Kikuyu, in particular, are regarded as Kenya's "heartland tribe." They are numerically the largest, located near the capital city, politically active, and historically important, and they have consistently been a target for ethnic violence.[2] With at least forty-two distinct ethnic groups, all with different languages, traditions, and economic interests, the task of addressing Kenya's social cleavages has always been fraught with difficulties. The enormity of the challenge has only been intensified by political leaders, all of whom have sought to mobilize support on the basis of ethnic appeals.

Given the unusual combination of ethnically polarizing politics and military subservience to civilian control, Kenya looms large as a critical case in exploring the interplay of ethnic and military identities. To what extent can the military's continuing apolitical stance be attributed to an evolving quasi-ethnic military identity that has transcended the pre-existing categories of ethnic identification? This chapter seeks to address this question by tracing historically the dynamics of ethno-politics in Kenya and its impact upon the military establishment. It separates Kenya's history into three chronologically ordered sections covering periods of presidential rule, with a final section drawing conclusions. In short, the chapter finds that a military quasi-ethnicity is not emerging in Kenya. Instead, as part of a coup prevention strategy, Kenya's civilian leadership has continuously applied an ethno-political arithmetic to military recruitment and promotion, elevating the functional relevance of primordial ethnic identities above competing occupational referents. Nevertheless, with no ethnic group exhibiting an outright majority in Kenyan society, civilian leaders have also needed to rely on a membership distribution that contains a significant portion of non-aligned ethnic groups, which has offered a check on the absolute dominance of allied ethnic groups. On aggregate, this has kept the military in political stasis.

The Kenyatta Era, 1963–1978

To understand the evolution of ethno-politics and its relevance to the military, it is important to consider the key historical events directly prior to independence. Kenya became independent after years of unrest caused by the Mau-Mau emergency, an overwhelmingly Kikuyu-based rebellion stoked by the alienation of their lands to Europeans, deteriorating working conditions for squatter labor on European estates, and increasing population pressure on African reserves.[3] A state of emergency was declared by the colonial government in October 1952 that lasted until 1960. Although the British brutally suppressed the rebellion, thereafter they were compelled to negotiate an accession to independence with African nationalists. In December 1963, the Kenya African National Union (KANU) formed Kenya's first independent government. KANU was a consortium of Kikuyu and their cultural cousins, the Embu and Meru, as well as the Luo, and was led by the presidency of Jomo Kenyatta, a Kikuyu, and the vice-presidency of Jaramogi Oginga Odinga, a Luo. KANU's alliance of ethnic groups accounted for 53 percent of Kenya's population at the time.[4] An opposition party, the Kenyan African Democratic Union (KADU), had already been established to defend the interests of smaller ethnic groups against the dominance of the Luo and Kikuyu.[5] However, by 1964, KADU was dissolved and its leaders incorporated into KANU, including KADU's second-in-command, Daniel arap Moi.

The Kenyan military was constituted from the remnants of the British King's African Rifles (KAR) units.[6] Prior to independence, Kamba, Kalenjin and Samburu ethnic groups dominated the Kenyan battalions of KAR, with the Kamba in particular having been regarded by the British as a martial race.[7] The Kikuyu, however, were underrepresented as a result of a deliberate colonial policy to exclude them from the army, given the threat they had posed during the Mau-Mau emergency.[8] Immediately after independence, the Kamba and Kalenjin each comprised approximately one-third of the forces, with the remainder including a wide spectrum of Kenya's other ethnic groups.[9] The officer ranks were predominantly British and Kamba, while military heads were exclusively so.[10]

Independence ushered in a period of Kikuyu dominance over Kenya's political sphere. Not only did Kenya have a Kikuyu president, but the civil service was also Kikuyu-dominated, due both to ethnic favoritism and, more benignly, the historical coincidence of Kikuyu homeland proximity to Nairobi and consequent Kikuyu interaction with British institutions.[11] The distribution of patronage and services also favored the Central Province, the Kikuyu homeland, which became a major source of discontent for the Luo, who received little preference from the state despite having supported KANU into government.

In 1966, after numerous disagreements with Kenyatta over the direction of the country, Oginga Odinga resigned from KANU to form the Kenya People's Union (KPU). The split alienated Kenyatta permanently from the Luo community, who instead supported Odinga's KPU. As a side effect of the whole affair, the Luo ethnic group lost significant status among Kenyan society and soon came to be viewed as second-class citizens.[12] In the public sector, they became increasingly distrusted in the military, police, and parastatals because they were no longer aligned to KANU. In the private sector, they could not gain traction because Nyanza was unsuitable terrain for growing tea or coffee and the commercial sector was already dominated by Kikuyu. Perhaps unsurprisingly, Luo increasingly blamed their marginalization on Kikuyu.[13]

In 1969, tensions escalated when Tom Mboya, a prominent Luo politician who had remained loyal to Kenyatta and KANU, was assassinated by a petty crook of Kikuyu descent with connections to the intelligence services.[14] Later in the year, a visit to the Nyanza city of Kisumu by Kenyatta was met by hostile Luo crowds who blamed Kenyatta for Mboya's murder; in response, Kenyatta's security team fired into the crowd, leaving several dead, hundreds injured, and dramatically escalating the animosity between Luo and Kikuyu. In the wake of these events, the KPU was banned and Odinga was imprisoned for two years, effectively signifying the beginning of a *de facto* single-party state.

The Kenyan military in the post-independence era experienced a brief period of discontent with the 1964 East African army mutinies,

in which disgruntled enlisted men challenged their continued subordination to expatriate officers and the continuation of pre-independence pay structures.[15] Thereafter, African officers assumed operational command of all major units. Despite an ethnic military composition which was decidedly non-Kikuyu, Kenyatta was effectively sheltered from threats to his leadership from the military. For one, the Kenyan military maintained close ties with the British forces. Throughout the 1960s, British military advisors were overseeing the Kenyan army to ensure that it continued to operate along KAR lines. In the process, the British assured the military's professionalism and, more importantly, its political reliability.[16] In addition, army recruitment had, at least up to this point, insulated the army from major ethnic conflicts, especially those associated with the Luo–Kikuyu divide. The Kamba, who were a non-aligned ethnic community, were in 1966 still the single largest group represented in the officer corps, comprising 28 percent of the total, compared with their population share of 11 percent;[17] and they were scarcely a challenge to Kikuyu dominance given their modest political aspirations.[18] Another stabilizing factor that may have helped maintain civilian control of the military was the existence of an external threat. The Kenyan army had already been built up by 1964 to confront the *shifta*, a Somali secessionist movement in northern Kenya that sought union with the kindred groups in Somalia. The army's success in suppressing these forces gave legitimacy to professional norms of military conduct beyond the somewhat facile reasoning that struggled to maintain such conduct as a virtue in and of itself.[19]

Nevertheless, Kenya was not without ethno-political wrangling for control of the military. Kenyatta embarked on a process of Kikuyuization of the military, particularly within the officer corps. In 1966, Kikuyu held 23 percent of the officer corps and 19 percent of the total population, despite having barely featured at all in the military at independence; by 1967, there were as many Kikuyu as Kamba officers.[20] The Luo officer component, in contrast, was 10 percent in 1966, and Luo comprised 14 percent of the total population. Furthermore, the Kamba-British line-up of military heads

at independence was replaced by a Kamba-Kikuyu combination as British commanders left and Kikuyu officers were promoted.

During the 1970s, military heads were exclusively Kamba, Kikuyu, or British, except for the sole exception of one ethnic Taveta, who held the post of commander of the Navy from 1972 to 1978.[21] Throughout the 1970s not a single Luo featured above the rank of major.[22] In the lower ranks, Kamba and Kalenjin continued to dominate in the late 1960s. Kamba made up 21.4 percent of the army, but only 11 per cent of the total population, while Kalenjin comprised 22.4 percent of the army, and 10 percent of the population.[23] The Luo community was the most underrepresented in the rank-and-file.[24] This pattern continued into the 1970s.

Kenyatta also established a new paramilitary force, the General Service Unit (GSU), which was independent of both the army and the police and was largely commanded by Kikuyu officers.[25] In what turned out to be a prescient comment, Colin Leys remarked that, “while the GSU was in no way a match for the army, it could be used independently for political control in situations in which the army could not be deployed without the risk of making it an arbiter of policy.”[26] Indeed, history demonstrates that it would become somewhat of a predilection among Kenya’s presidents to utilize the GSU for ethno-political purposes. In the Kisumu massacre of 1969, for instance, the GSU was largely responsible for the shootings. In 1971, the GSU would be called upon to arrest a slapdash coup plot, resulting in purges of Kamba military officers and further rounds of promotions and the inevitable recruitment of Kikuyu.[27] The GSU was also periodically called upon to clamp down on dissent, as when university students demonstrated following events such as the banning of the KPU and Tom Mboya’s assassination.[28] Even prior to this, the GSU had been sporadically deployed in Nyanza to search for weapons and to intimidate the Luo, apparently tactics geared to forestall rebellion.[29]

Notwithstanding its Kikuyuization, the military contrasted with the GSU by maintaining a veneer of political neutrality during Jomo Kenyatta’s tenure, and steered clear of engaging in overt partisan functions for Kenyatta, KANU, or the Kikuyu. On the one hand,

Henry Bienen points out that Kenyatta did not need to use the army as an ethno-political base for political power because the Kikuyu held numerous non-military bases.[30] The Kikuyu, or at least the Kikuyu elites, could rely upon their dominance in the civil service, commerce, and even a prosperous farming cohort. In any case, if the Kenyan army had been continuously summoned to engage in ethno-politics, it would have become increasingly difficult to keep the army itself insulated from its own internal ethnic conflicts, an undesirable prospect given the external threat of Somalia.[31]

On the other hand, the military's role in politics could also remain negligible in the face of the socialist challenge, since ethnic divides effectively displaced any emerging class consciousness for the most exploited groups in society.[32] Class divisions had, in fact, proceeded the furthest among the Kikuyu themselves.[33] The rhetoric of ethnic conflict, and not that of brute force via military intervention, was strategically deployed by KANU nationwide to divide and destabilize socialist opposition movements, such as the KPU. This also presented itself as a sensible course of action given that the economic performance of the regime was highly dependent on foreign direct investment, expatriate presence, and tourism, all of which were vulnerable to the use of outright force to suppress opposition.[34]

During Kenyatta's reign, there was a progressive enlargement of Kikuyu control over the apparatuses of coercion. Even so, the Kenyatta regime remained a predominantly civil one; the army was not a day-to-day actor in Kenyan internal affairs.[35] The Kikuyu-dominated GSU, rather, offered an effective counterweight to the military, one that could be deployed to intervene in domestic affairs for ethno-political purposes. The military remained a professional institution reported to have high morale,[36] although Donovan Chau's historical account of the Kenyan armed forces at the time alludes to anxieties felt by military recruiters. Attempts to insulate the military from ethnic cleavages and inter-ethnic conflict suggested that cultural solidarity was far from established in the military,[37] and a distinct quasi-ethnic identity was even further from reality. Indeed, the fear that ethnic divisions would ultimately tear the military apart

appears to have been one of the reasons that ethnic Kambas continued to be recruited disproportionately. The Kamba were seen as a natural buffer, a significant factor in mitigating conflict between Kikuyu and Luo within the military.[38] A large Kamba presence also ensured that the military could not become an instrument of civilian leaders for domestic coercion. John Murray pointed to this when he suggested that a move to intervene domestically by Kikuyu officers alone would likely bring reaction from non-Kikuyus in the lower ranks.[39] He observed that threats by the army to intervene, were they to have been realized, would have called for a degree of trust and cooperation between Kikuyu and non-Kikuyu officers beyond what seemed at the time to exist.

The Moi Era, 1978–2002

Kenyatta ruled up until his death in 1978, at which point KANU vice-president Daniel arap Moi, a Kalenjin, took the reins of power. Moi was originally backed by a faction of two key Kikuyu politicians, Charles Njonjo and new vice-president Mwai Kibaki.[40] His cause was also greatly assisted by the effective cannibalization of Kikuyu candidates from various factions, each vying for power.[41] As a member of what was at that stage a non-contending ethnic group, Moi was an acceptable compromise to both the Kikuyu and the Luo. He has been described as a far more autocratic ruler than his predecessor.[42] A deft populist and manipulator of ethnicity, Moi was also acutely aware of the ethnic tensions that had formed over the course of Kenyatta's rule, especially those opposing Kikuyu dominance. He masterfully played ethnic groups, including the fragmented Kikuyu contingent, against each other, while solidifying support from his fellow Kalenjin, as well as the Luhya, pastoralist tribes (e.g., Maasai, Turkana, and Samburu), and various minority ethnic groups from the Coastal Province.[43]

The manner in which Moi played ethno-politics was more brazen than had been the norm under Kenyatta, and with good reason. Moi lacked not only his predecessor's sizeable ethnic base, but also personal anti-colonial resistance credentials.[44] He did not possess

the economic resources of Kenyatta to develop patronage networks and co-opt potential opponents. He had not accrued vast personal wealth. He could not benefit from the distribution of the fruits of independence in the way Kenyatta had (especially through land vacated by European settlers). And he had to contend with an unfavorable global economic climate following the oil price shocks of the 1970s.[45]

Rather, Moi's favored ethno-political instrument was the use of oppression. In 1982, ethnic welfare organizations, most prominently including the Gikuyu (Kikuyu), Embu and Meru Association (GEMA), were prohibited. Later in the same year, Moi amended the Constitution to entrench the *de jure* one-party state.[46] The ensuing dissatisfaction expressed by contending ethnicities manifested in an abortive 1982 coup attempt, in which lower ranks of the air force attempted to seize power. The coup was spearheaded by Luo and a few Kikuyu junior and non-commissioned officers.[47] Both the GSU and members of the army still loyal to Moi were responsible for crushing the coup attempt.[48]

Moi's wariness increased after the failed coup, triggering the proliferation of fresh measures to curtail civil and political freedoms. Moi also began to redistribute many of the advantages hitherto enjoyed only by the Kikuyu and the Central Province to allied groups and regions. These included development initiatives and appointments to key positions in the central government, civil service, and parastatals.[49] In the military establishment, Moi pursued a similar control strategy to that of Kenyatta: manipulation of the officer corps through promotion and reassignment of sensitive positions, and the use of the GSU as a counterbalancing ethnic army.[50] This strategy entailed a dual process of "Kalenjinization" and "de-Kikuyuization." Moi began by reducing Kikuyu in the officer corps, since they posed the greatest risk of a coup, and replaced them with either Kalenjin or with non-contending ethnic groups such as Kamba, Somali, or Samburu. A similar strategy was adopted for recruitment in the GSU and included the sacking and conviction of the Kikuyu commandant for failing to have taken sufficient action to prevent the attempted coup.[51] In 1986, one-third of the lieutenant

colonels and colonels were still Kikuyu, and the Kamba component was even larger; Kalenjin held only one-fifth of the senior posts.[52] However, the seven top military positions had already been reassigned to Kamba, Kalenjin, Somali, and Samburu, with Kikuyu no longer represented.[53] By the mid-1990s, the process of Kalenjinization of the army was effectively complete.[54] Of the five military heads in 1996, three were Kalenjin and the remaining two were Maasai and Mijikenda. Of the eighteen generals in the Kenyan army, one-third were Kalenjin, despite accounting for only one-tenth of Kenya's population. This ethnic patterning could also be observed in the lower ranks and in the GSU.[55] The Luo, who had by now been portrayed as the epitome of indolence, poverty, and rebellion, continued to be discriminated against in military recruitment.[56]

Another significant moment during Moi's tenure arose in the early 1990s with the increasing international pressure to reinstate multiparty politics following the fall of communism. For the international community, the eradication of the communist threat shifted attention from Cold War geopolitical alignment, where Kenya's pro-capitalist and anti-communist stance made it a donor darling among Western nations, to concerns over human rights violations and lack of political freedoms, for which Kenya's record was frankly appalling. Condemnation over Kenya's performance was brought to a head with the unresolved murder of the Luo foreign minister Robert Ouko, an act widely assumed to be ethno-politically motivated because of his growing independent political prestige in the international community.[57] Coupled with a sudden domestic demand for multiparty politics, Moi was publicly hobbled.

It was at this delicate moment that the Kikuyu business elite pushed for greater political representation. They were suffering from yet another economic downturn after a decade of Kalenjinization and de-Kikuyuization.[58] The Luo community, represented by Oginga Odinga of the old guard, also needed a dynamic forum to articulate their discontent following decades of marginalization and exclusion from the political sphere and the fruits of economic gains (for which Ouko's death was an additional source of bitterness).[59] These two domestic groups were able to mobilize grassroots support against

the regime, undermining KANU's ability to demobilize the opposition to the one-party state.[60] Mass protests were met with brutal repression from Moi's GSU. Pro-democratic activists were detained and tortured, further incensing the international community.[61] Sufficiently repulsed by Moi's penchant for crude violence, donors halted their financial support pending political reforms. In 1991, Moi finally announced Kenya's return to multi-party politics.

Moi's capitulation on the one-party state was accompanied by self-fulfilling warnings about the dangers of inter-ethnic violence in a multiparty context. Once opposition had been permitted to function openly, Moi began "outsourcing" the use of violence from state institutions like the GSU to extra-state militia. The Kalenjin militia in the Rift Valley was mobilized with money, threats of non-compliance, and an ideology of intra-ethnic solidarity and inter-ethnic hatred in a push to drive Kikuyu out of the area. Rival militia backed by opposition parties, such as the Mungiki, also emerged.[62] By labelling what were effectively political clashes in ethnic terms, presumed to have been a deliberate KANU strategy of "ethnicizing violence,"[63] opposition parties became, in effect, ethnically balkanized entities, thus undermining their multi-ethnic appeal. By retaining a Coastal and Rift Valley support base (a relatively diverse base, under the circumstances), Moi and the ruling KANU party won the 1992 multiparty election. The unsuccessful challengers included Kenneth Matiba's Forum for Restoration of Democracy-Asili (FORD-Asili), which drew on Kikuyu and split Luhya support, Oginga Odinga's Forum for Restoration of Democracy-Kenya (FORD-Kenya), a vehicle for the Luo vote, and Mwai Kibaki's Democratic Party, capturing some Kikuyu support and ethnic groups in the Eastern Province (such as the Kamba). The fragmentation of the opposition, itself enhanced by Moi's careful deployment of divide-and-rule tactics, had clearly worked in KANU's favor. The subsequent 1997 election repeated these tactics, though conflict was concentrated in the Coastal Province, where Kikuyu and Luo "migrants" were attacked by local militia.[64]

Although the 1990–1992 clashes resulted in more than fifteen hundred deaths and the displacement of over three hundred

thousand inhabitants, conspicuous in its absence was the military.[65] It may have been reluctant to become embroiled in the suppression of militia because the institution itself was divided—the military was *disproportionately* Kalenjin, although it was by no means *majority* Kalenjin—or because it had a legacy of professionalism to uphold, part of which entailed maintaining distance from domestic affairs. Given the evidence in judicial inquiries that high-level actors in Moi's government recruited individuals directly from the military to foment the clashes, the former may be the most plausible explanation.[66]

The Kenyan military, in any event, largely refrained from intervening in civilian affairs during Moi's reign, either for or against him, and remained a relatively professional force. Moi stacked the military with his fellow Kalenjin as a coup prevention strategy, although one should not discount the extent to which he was able to obtain loyalty through patronage. He was thought to have offered farms and parastatal positions that could be redeemed upon retirement to senior military officers, for example. The military nevertheless remained divided. This may ultimately explain why Moi did not call upon it to serve his immediate political interests. For instance, in 1985, Moi was warned that the growing proportion of Kalenjin among senior officers was creating discontent among the wider military personnel.[67] It is also known that Kikuyu and Luo officers voiced their complaints on several occasions over the Kalenjin-biased promotion processes, and other ethnic groups pointed to the Kalenjin-skewed recruitment regulations.[68]

It is difficult to foresee how an independent, quasi-ethnic military identity could emerge in such an environment. The enduring salience of primordial ethnic attachments within the Kenyan military was confirmed by Hornsby's observation that a culture of "tribalism" remained embedded in the army—in no small part because of the continuing ethno-political calculus applied to military appointments.[69]

Kibaki and Beyond, 2002–Present

Moi was barred from running in the 2002 presidential elections by a constitutional limit of two elective terms. Uhuru Kenyatta, son of Jomo Kenyatta, was appointed by Moi as successor to the leadership of the KANU party. After almost forty years in power, however, the reconfigured leadership could not engineer one more election victory. The previously fragmented opposition united to form the National Rainbow Coalition (NARC) party, a loose alliance between Kikuyu former vice-president Mwai Kibaki, who became heir to the presidency, and Luo leader Raila Odinga, son of Oginga Odinga. In a re-creation of the original KANU alliance of the early 1960s, the coalition stitched together ethnic support from the Kikuyu, Embu, Meru, and Luo, along with substantial gains in support from Kamba and minority ethnic groups in the Coastal Province.[70] In marked contrast to the elections of 1992 and 1997, the 2002 election was a peaceful affair, in part because both major candidates were Kikuyu, in effect minimizing the potential for ethnic polarization. The subsequent transfer of power also proceeded smoothly. This was largely because Moi understood that Kibaki would never seek to investigate him for corruption perpetrated under his regime, given their common and equally culpable historical experiences in KANU.[71]

It is widely understood that there was an initial opening of democratic space and ethnic comity during Kibaki's tenure.[72] Although the most powerful posts in the central government—the ministerial positions in finance, defense, justice, and security—were all held by members of the Kikuyu and closely related Embu and Meru ethnic groups, the cabinet was far more balanced ethnically and regionally than it had been under Moi.[73] Ethnic anxieties soon resurfaced, however, as a new historical round of Kikuyuization unfolded in the civil service and top echelons of the military and GSU, often at Kalenjin expense.[74] Within the military, several senior Kalenjin figures were retired, usually into appointed roles as parastatal heads, while Kikuyu and Kamba representation increased. Prior to Kibaki's election in 2002, there were no Kikuyu military heads; by 2005, four out of six of the top military positions were held by Kikuyu.[75]

Meanwhile, power tussles within the NARC government eventually led to its collapse in November 2005. Tensions between Kibaki's National Alliance Party of Kenya (NAK) faction and Odinga's Liberal Democratic Party (LDP) contingent were already palpable after Kibaki's failure to honor pre-election agreements with Odinga (e.g., that the post of prime minister would be created for him, and that ministerial appointments would be divided equally between NAK and LDP). Differences eventually came to a head over constitutional reform, with the LDP opposing NAK's proposed changes. When the government lost the Kenya Constitutional Referendum, Kibaki retaliated by throwing key LDP leaders out of government. These actions effectively signaled that the multi-ethnic consensus that had held NARC—and arguably the nation—together had finally disintegrated. Its breakdown led to a resurgence of populism and ethno-nationalism, sowing the seeds of ethnic violence in 2008.[76] For Luo, in particular, Kibaki's actions rekindled anti-Kikuyu resentment by adding to a divisive ethnic narrative that had Kikuyu "behaving according to type" and doing "just as Jomo Kenyatta had done to Oginga Odinga."[77]

Raila Odinga and his LDP stalwarts went on to form the Orange Democratic Movement (ODM) to challenge the incumbent, Kibaki, and his rebranded Party of National Unity (PNU) in the 2007 election. Controversial political figure William Ruto, a former Moi protégé who represented Kalenjin interests, also joined ODM to form what was essentially an anti-Kikuyu bloc.[78] The ODM's rhetoric prior to the election could be distilled as "Kenya against the Kikuyu." The Kikuyu were depicted as synonymous with Kibaki and PNU, and were scapegoats for a myriad of social, political, and economic ills that had plagued Kenyan society since independence.[79] The parliamentary vote in the election was won comfortably by the ODM, while the presidential vote was extremely close, with Kibaki declared the winner despite clear indications of voting irregularities and electoral fraud.[80] The announcement of Kibaki's victory triggered widespread civil conflict. Violence erupted in the Rift Valley, as Kalenjin militia attacked Kikuyu and anyone else suspected of supporting the ruling party; and in urban centers, those protesting

the election result were subjected to violence from rival militia and the police force. The ethnically heterogeneous Kibera slum in Nairobi also became a major hotspot for Luo-Kikuyu violence.[81] Like the violence of 1992, elements within the Kalenjin, Luo, and Kikuyu political elite are thought to have mobilized these outbursts. At the time of writing, William Ruto and Uhuru Kenyatta may well stand trial in the International Criminal Court (ICC) for their alleged involvement in organizing the violence, although perhaps surprisingly, Odinga was not implicated, despite the widely held view among Kenyans that he had incited riots in Kibera.[82]

The 2007–2008 post-election violence resulted in over 1,100 deaths and 350,000 internally displaced persons, as well as destruction of approximately 117,000 private properties and 500 government-owned properties.[83] Peace was ultimately restored on 28 February 2008, when the parties signed a National Accord, brokered by former United Nations secretary-general Kofi Annan, paving the way for a power-sharing arrangement between Odinga and Kibaki. Appointments to key military positions in 2011 reflected the compromise, with two Luo included.[84] The National Accord that ended the conflict also established the Commission of Inquiry into Post-Election Violence (the Waki Commission) as part of the post-conflict peacebuilding process.[85] The resultant *Waki Report* heaped criticism on the police for their unwillingness to confront protestors in their own home areas, and on both police and the GSU for contributing to the escalation of the violence. During the crisis, Kibaki was ultimately forced to rely on the Kikuyu-dominated GSU to hold strategic points around Nairobi from falling into pro-ODM hands, while deploying as many police units as possible outside their home areas.[86] Although reluctant to become involved, the military was also called in to undertake some of the police duties. They were briefly deployed to quell fighting in and around the Rift Valley urban center of Nakuru and to secure major transport routes throughout the country.[87] The *Waki Report* notes that the military performed its duties well; it acted apolitically, was subject to civilian rule, and did not resort to violence.[88] The Commission also expressed surprise in the report that more military involvement was not initiated, and

suggested that additional military support could have reduced the impact, extent, and duration of the post-election violence.

Although Kibaki stuck to the two-term constitutional limit, the 2013 election was yet another ethnically polarized affair, though a largely peaceful one. In a realignment of Kenya's ethnic coalitions, Uhuru Kenyatta and William Ruto harnessed their respective Kikuyu and Kalenjin support bases and formed the Jubilee Alliance to challenge Raila Odinga's Coalition for Reform and Democracy (CORD). The Jubilee Alliance is, at first glance, a perplexing coalition given that the two men are accused of crimes against humanity for their respective roles in orchestrating violence *against each other's ethnic groups*. Given their history, it is difficult to ignore Susanne Mueller's observation that their run together was part of a broader strategy to deflect and undermine the ICC.[89] For Odinga, having lost Kalenjin support, CORD was formed as a broad coalition of ODM and several minor parties in an exercise of ethnic arithmetic. Odinga was able to obtain the support of the Kamba, who had voted outside the two major ethnic blocs in the 2007 election, while retaining Luo and Luhya support. Jubilee's marriage of convenience ultimately defeated CORD, resulting in Uhuru Kenyatta's election to the presidency and William Ruto's election to the vice-presidency. Uncertainties over their ICC indictment continue to hang over Kenya, and could be a politically explosive issue in the future.

In the meantime, security challenges posed by Kenya's incursion into southern Somalia in October 2011, continue to threaten stability. Al-Shabaab, the radical Islamic group that the Kenyan military was deployed to suppress, has responded with an intermittent string of low-level terror incidents in Nairobi, Mombasa, and other urban centers, mostly involving hand grenades aimed indiscriminately at the public. A terrorist attack on Westgate Mall on 23 September 2013, in which sixty-seven people lost their lives, raised serious doubts over Kenya's internal security and the role of the military.[90]

Since Moi relinquished leadership there has been little evidence of the emergence of a quasi-ethnic identity in the military, largely because little changed under Kibaki, and it is too early yet to speculate on the second Kenyatta government. Ethnic recruitment

and promotion into senior military roles has continued apace, and the GSU still acts as an ethnic counterweight to the army. More alarmingly, perhaps, Peter Kagwanja warns that the ethnic character of the post-election violence has eclipsed civic nationalism and entrenched notions of "ethnic citizenship."[91] Of equal concern are Adam Ashforth's findings in conversations with Kalenjin that ethnic cleansing of Kikuyus from the Rift Valley is overwhelmingly seen as a "good thing."[92] Under these circumstances, it is difficult to envisage how the military could remain insulated from such an ethnically toxic environment, despite their abstention from overt ethno-political acts on civilians. That this ethnic division does not preclude the military from acting professionally is curious in itself, as it suggests that the development of a quasi-ethnic identity is not a requisite condition for the effective functioning of the military.

CONCLUSION

Cynthia Enloe once remarked that alterations in military ethnic relationships are rarely left to chance.[93] Unlike many African countries, Kenya has survived over five decades as a functioning nation-state without the imposition of military rule, in large part as an outcome of an active process of ethnic calculation in military personnel management. Kenya has faced only one serious threat to ongoing civilian rule during this time, the botched coup attempt of 1982. Equally impressive is the military's lack of involvement in political engagements, neither in support nor in opposition to the government. It is curious, in view of this, that the civilian leadership has never maintained absolute dominance over the military establishment. With no ethnic group in Kenya forming close to an outright majority, civilian leaders have had to rely on several non-aligned groups to counterbalance the Kikuyu. The use of "martial races," such as the Kamba, has been one neo-colonial response taken by the political leadership.[94] Another has been to employ the services of pariah ethnic groups who, lacking the political capital, economic resources, and numerical base, have been incapable of laying a credible claim to the state apparatus (and elicit no such pretentions), such as the ethnic Somali. Both of the aforementioned

groups have remained ambivalent throughout the major ethnic conflicts in Kenyan society, principally between the Luo, the Kalenjin, and the Kikuyu, and have thus preserved the military largely in a state of political stasis.

Despite the military's putative respect for civilian control, however, Kenyan society continues to be divided ethnically, perhaps more so than ever before. The ongoing salience of ethnicity is best understood as the outcome of an elaborate history of ethno-politics. Kenya has a long history of repeated transformations of ethnicities into political identities, with leading members of Kenya's political class having mobilized support along ethnic lines, beginning in the early days of KANU and KADU. Furthermore, the introduction of multiparty elections in 1992 has, unsurprisingly, failed to arrest these tendencies. Political parties have been, to quote Mueller, "non-programmatic and little more than shells for ethnic barons."[95] The most brazen feature of Kenya's history of ethno-political manipulation, however, is the way in which ethnic alliances have been constantly reconfigured along lines that remain most politically expedient for leaders. The malleability of these allegiances have bordered on the absurd, such as the Kalenjin-Kikuyu alliance forged by William Ruto and Uhuru Kenyatta merely one election cycle after the two groups were primary antagonists in the most violent episode of Kenya's independent history.

The pervasive narratives, largely based on the precipitous actions of Kenya's civilian leadership, have both reified and demonized the ethnic "other" in a profoundly multi-ethnic society. While the military has been able to maintain its distance from the most severe ethno-political conflicts, it has not been totally insulated either. That insularity, a possible product of a quasi-ethnic military identity, simply does not exist. The composition of the Kenyan military is multi-ethnic, however, albeit out of sync with the ethnic proportions of Kenyan society and manipulated from time to time by political exigencies. It is also clear that in the interests of coup prevention, civilian leaders would not be best served by fostering the development of a quasi-ethnic military identity, as Kenya's presidents have no doubt been well aware. We might instead contemplate whether they have been systematically engaged in a *deliberate*

attempt to reinforce the primacy of pre-existing categories of ethnic identification within the military establishment. Consider Moi (though any of Kenya's presidents would suffice): By way of Moi's putative de-Kikuyuization and Kalenjinization of the military establishment, he effectively installed an incentive structure that conferred Kalenjin (and allied) ethnicities with special membership status, along with material rewards, thereby accentuating internal ethnic divisions within the military establishment. It became beneficial for Kalenjin officers to emphasize their "Kalenjin-ness" over competing identities since it was linked to opportunities, including career advancement. From Moi's perspective, harnessing "Kalenjin-ness" functioned to strengthen intra-ethnic loyalty bonds, thereby offering a strong deterrent to challenges to his authority from within the military.

The best military in the eyes of a civilian leader is one where its soldiers are not only the most competent, but are also the most politically reliable, a fact that was obviously not lost on Kenya's leaders.[96] Successive presidents have manipulated the senior ranks of the military to emphasize either members of their own ethnic group or ethnically non-aligned, numerically marginal, and politically reliable groups. Members of the GSU paramilitary force have also been overwhelmingly drawn from a single ethnic community, usually that of the president. Security planning in Kenya has been, and continues to be, viewed through an ethnic lens. In a context where ethnic criteria are instrumental to career and life opportunities for military personnel, it is inescapable that primordial ethnic attachments remain their primary point of reference. In this overwhelming political context, the Kenyan military has been unable to establish its own quasi-ethnic identity.

NOTES

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1. Joel Barkan, *Kenya: Assessing Risks to Stability* (Washington, DC: Center for Strategic and international Studies, 2011), 3–4. All other ethnic groups make up less than 10 percent of Kenya's population. These include the following: Kenyan Somali of North Eastern Province (6.2 percent); Kisii of Nyanza (5.7 percent); Mijikenda of Coast Province (5.1 percent); Meru of Eastern Province (4.3 percent); Turkana of Rift Valley (2.6 percent); Maasai of Rift Valley (2.2 percent); and other groups making up less than 1 percent of Kenya's population each (9.3 percent).
2. Ali Mazrui, *Soldiers and Kinsmen in Uganda: The Making of a Military Ethnocracy* (Beverly Hills, CA: Sage, 1975), 68.
3. Robert Bates, *Beyond the Miracle of the Market: The Political Economy of Agrarian Development in Kenya*, 2nd ed. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005); Paul Collier and Deepak Lal, *Labour and Poverty in Kenya 1900-1980* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1986).
4. Barkan, *Kenya: Assessing Risks to Stability*, 5.
5. David Throup, "Elections and Political Legitimacy in Kenya," *Africa: Journal of the International African Institute* 63, 3 (1993): 372.
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9. Donovan Chau, *Global Security Watch: Kenya* (Santa Barbara, CA: Praeger, 2010), 28.
10. Charles Hornsby, *Kenya: A History Since Independence* (London: I.B. Tauris, 2012), 180.
11. Gordon Wilson, "The African Elite," in *The Transformation of East Africa*, ed. Stanley Diamond and Fred Burke (New York: Basic Books, 1966), 431–61.
12. Hornsby, *Kenya: A History Since Independence*, 257.
13. Hornsby, *Kenya: A History Since Independence*, 258.
14. Hornsby, *Kenya: A History Since Independence*, 209. Tom Mboya had a reputation for his political dynamism and was seen as the obvious choice for second-in-command following the fall of Oginga Odinga. However, because Mboya had such a charismatic claim and was Luo—an ethnic group that was becoming increasingly antagonistic—he was not given the vice-presidency. It instead fell to Joseph Murumbi, a half-Maasai half-Goan. The marginality of his ethnic background made him a non-threatening candidate, since he was unlikely to complicate the balance of power in the ethnopolitical game playing out between the Kikuyu and Luo.
15. Henry Bienen, *Kenya: The Politics of Participation and Control* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1974); Colin Leys, *Underdevelopment in Kenya: The Political Economy of Neo-Colonialism 1964-1971* (Nairobi: East African Educational Publishers, 1975); Timothy Parsons, *The 1964 Army Mutinies and the Making of Modern East Africa* (Westport, CT: Praeger, 2003).
16. Parsons, *The 1964 Army Mutinies and the Making of Modern East Africa*.
17. Henry Bienen, "Military and Society in East Africa: Thinking Again about Praetorianism," *Comparative Politics* 6, 4 (1974): 508.
18. Osborne, *Ethnicity and Empire in Kenya: Loyalty and Martial Race among the Kamba, c.1800 to the Present*.
19. Bienen, *Kenya: The Politics of Participation and Control*; N'Diaye, "How Not to Institutionalize Civilian Control: Kenya's Coup Prevention Strategies, 1964-1997," 624.

20. John Lee, *African Armies and Civil Order* (London: Chatto & Windus, 1969), 110.
21. Hornsby, *Kenya: A History Since Independence*, 231. The top military positions in Kenya are Chief of General Staff, Commander of the Army, Deputy Army Commander, Chief of Staff at Ministry of Defence, Commander of the Air Force, and Commander of the Navy.
22. Hornsby, *Kenya: A History Since Independence*, 230.
23. Hornsby, *Kenya: A History Since Independence*, 181.
24. Hornsby, *Kenya: A History Since Independence*, 182.
25. Bienen, *Kenya: The Politics of Participation and Control*.
26. Leys, *Underdevelopment in Kenya: The Political Economy of Neo-Colonialism 1964-1971*, 239.
27. Bienen, *Kenya: The Politics of Participation and Control*; Daniel Branch, *Kenya: Between Hope and Despair, 1963-2011* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2011), 101. While some prominent persons were implicated, such as the chief justice, a member of parliament, and an army commander (all Kamba), what emerged from the plotters' confessions was a confused and incredibly poorly structured Luo-Kamba plot, inspired in part by the Kikuyuization of Kenya and the events of 1969—Mboya's assassination, the Kisumu massacre, and KPU's banning. It remains unknown how much senior Kamba officers actually knew of the plot.
28. Susanne Mueller, "The Resilience of the Past: Government and Opposition in Kenya," *Canadian Journal of African Studies* 48, 2 (2014): 338.
29. Branch, *Kenya: Between Hope and Despair, 1963-2011*, 59; Hornsby, *Kenya: A History Since Independence*, 150.
30. Bienen, "Military and Society in East Africa: Thinking Again about Praetorianism," 510.
31. Kenya is exceptional in the African context as one of the few countries with a real external defense commitment, on account of the Kenya–Somalia dispute.
32. Leys, *Underdevelopment in Kenya: The Political Economy of Neo-Colonialism 1964-1971*.
33. Bienen, "Military and Society in East Africa: Thinking Again about Praetorianism," 498.

34. Leys, *Underdevelopment in Kenya: The Political Economy of Neo-Colonialism 1964-1971*.
35. Two major instances where the army did become involved in internal affairs were when Tom Mboya was assassinated and when Oginga Odinga was arrested. The provocations themselves were almost surely wrapped up in an ethno-political calculus, but the army's subsequent involvement in the fallout may have been more to do with the quelling of generalized mass participation in politics, Luo or otherwise.
36. Hornsby, *Kenya: A History Since Independence*, 229.
37. Chau, *Global Security Watch: Kenya*, 33.
38. Chau, *Global Security Watch: Kenya*, 33.
39. John Murray, "Succession Prospects in Kenya," *Africa Report* 13, 8 (1968): 47.
40. Kate Currie and Larry Ray, "State and Class in Kenya—Notes on the Cohesion of the Ruling Class," *Journal of Modern African Studies* 22, 4 (1984): 559. Kikuyu support would be subsequently discarded by Moi. Charles Njonjo was disgraced by allegations of treason in 1983 and Mwai Kibaki was demoted to a minor ministerial post after 1988.
41. Charles Hornsby and David Throup, "Elections and Political Change in Kenya," *Journal of Commonwealth and Comparative Politics* 30, 2 (1992): 172–76.
42. Mueller, "The Resilience of the Past: Government and Opposition in Kenya," 339.
43. Hornsby and Throup, "Elections and Political Change in Kenya."
44. Daniel Branch and Nic Cheeseman, "Democratization, Sequencing, and State Failure in Africa: Lessons from Kenya," *African Affairs* 108, no. 430 (2009): 7–8.
45. Branch and Cheeseman, "Democratization, Sequencing, and State Failure in Africa: Lessons from Kenya," 8.
46. The shift to a *de jure* one-party state was in part instituted in order to eliminate the potential threat posed by the formation of Oginga Odinga and George Anyona's Kenya Socialist Party.
47. Chau, *Global Security Watch: Kenya*, 39.
48. Currie and Ray, "State and Class in Kenya: Notes on the Cohesion of the Ruling Class," 570.

49. Ryan Briggs, “Aiding and Abetting: Project Aid and Ethnic Politics in Kenya,” *World Development* 64 (2014): 194–205; Hornsby, *Kenya: A History Since Independence*, 338. Moi’s curtailing of Kikuyu influence in the public sector did not dislodge Kikuyu from their economic pre-eminence in the private sector; rather, it overlaid their pyramid of influence with a layer of Kalenjin interlocutors who derived their wealth directly from these state connections, much to the discontent of the Kikuyu business elite.
50. N’Diaye, “How Not to Institutionalize Civilian Control: Kenya’s Coup Prevention Strategies, 1964-1997,” 627–28.
51. Currie and Ray, “State and Class in Kenya: Notes on the Cohesion of the Ruling Class,” 571.
52. Hornsby, *Kenya: A History Since Independence*, 410.
53. Hornsby, *Kenya: A History Since Independence*, 336.
54. Moi’s control of the military was never absolute. The army refused to back Moi when he wished to declare a state of emergency following the 1990–1992 ethnic clashes, and again resisted pressure from Moi to intervene in the wake of the attacks on the Coastal Province preceding the 1997 election. There were also rumors in 1999 of a coup plot, and six soldiers were jailed for planning a mutiny in 2000.
55. N’Diaye, “How Not to Institutionalize Civilian Control: Kenya’s Coup Prevention Strategies, 1964-1997,” 627–28.
56. Hornsby, *Kenya: A History Since Independence*, 372.
57. Throup, “Elections and Political Legitimacy in Kenya,” 386–87.
58. Hornsby and Throup, “Elections and Political Change in Kenya,” 191.
59. Luo leaders were systematically excluded from power since Oginga Odinga’s defection to KPU, much to the detriment of the socio-economic position of Luo and Nyanza Province. In particular, Tom Mboya and Robert Ouko were assassinated, while Oginga Odinga continued to be excluded by the refusal of Kenyatta and Moi to allow him to contest one-party elections. Without access to the state apparatus and its opportunities to develop patronage networks, Oginga Odinga and other prominent Luo remained on the fringes of power, unable to expand their support outside of Nyanza Province.

60. Branch and Cheeseman, “Democratization, Sequencing, and State Failure in Africa: Lessons from Kenya,” 10.
61. On 4 July, 1990, two former Kikuyu ministers, Kenneth Matiba and Charles Rubia, were detained. The two had been holding meetings with Oginga Odinga and his son Raila, threatening Moi’s political stranglehold with the reestablishment of the Kikuyu-Luo alliance that had existed at independence. Their arrest was precipitated by the fact that they had called an unauthorized rally in Nairobi in the coming days. When crowds assembled on 7 July, 1990, to attend the now-banned rally, they were dispersed by the GSU, sparking days of rioting that resulted in at least 20 deaths and 1,000 arrests.
62. Mueller, “The Resilience of the Past: Government and Opposition in Kenya”; Throup, “Elections and Political Legitimacy in Kenya,” 341–42.
63. Jacqueline Klopp and Elke Zuern, “The Politics of Violence in Democratization: Lessons from Kenya and South Africa,” *Comparative Politics* 39, 2 (2007): 136–37; Mueller, “The Resilience of the Past: Government and Opposition in Kenya,” 341–42.
64. Barkan, *Kenya: Assessing Risks to Stability*, 7.
65. Branch and Cheeseman, “Democratization, Sequencing, and State Failure in Africa: Lessons from Kenya,” 14.
66. Klopp and Zuern, “The Politics of Violence in Democratization: Lessons from Kenya and South Africa,” note 43; Hornsby, *Kenya: A History Since Independence*, 490.
67. Hornsby, *Kenya: A History Since Independence*, 410.
68. Chau, *Global Security Watch: Kenya*, 44.
69. Hornsby’s *Kenya: A History Since Independence*, 658.
70. Barkan, *Kenya: Assessing Risks to Stability*, 8.
71. Branch and Cheeseman, “Democratization, Sequencing, and State Failure in Africa: Lessons from Kenya,” 18.
72. Frank Holmquist, “Kenya’s Postelection Euphoria—And Reality,” *Current History* 102, 664 (2003): 202–5; Mueller, “The Resilience of the Past: Government and Opposition in Kenya,” 342–43. Mueller further notes that while repression was still deployed on occasion under Kibaki, individuals were not killed or detained as they had been under previous regimes.

73. Barkan, *Kenya: Assessing Risks to Stability*, 8; Hornsby, *Kenya: A History Since Independence*, 698.
74. Holmquist, “Kenya’s Postelection Euphoria—And Reality,” 202–5; Hornsby, *Kenya: A History Since Independence*, 712.
75. Hornsby, *Kenya: A History Since Independence*, 713.
76. Peter Kagwanja, “Courting Genocide: Populism, Ethno-Nationalism and the Informalisation of Violence in Kenya’s 2008 Post-Election Crisis,” *Journal of Contemporary African Studies* 27, 3 (2009): 372–73.
77. Mueller, “The Resilience of the Past: Government and Opposition in Kenya,” 341.
78. Adam Ashforth, “Ethnic Violence and the Prospects for Democracy in the Aftermath of the 2007 Kenyan Elections,” *Public Culture* 20 (2009): 15–16; Branch and Cheeseman, “Democratization, Sequencing, and State Failure in Africa: Lessons from Kenya,” 18. William Ruto was a strong campaigner on the issue of *majimbo*, or regionalism. He inspired fear among Kikuyu residing in the Rift Valley, who could clearly identify a slippery slope from respectable federalism, to reconsideration of land rights, to a license to commit ethnic cleansing.
79. Kagwanja, “Courting Genocide: Populism, Ethno-Nationalism and the Informalisation of Violence in Kenya’s 2008 Post-Election Crisis,” 372–77. As Kagwanja points out, the “Kenya against the Kikuyu” rhetoric was a reinvention of history given the impoverishment Kikuyu endured under Moi. It also ignored class divisions among Kikuyu themselves.
80. Government of Kenya, *Report of the Independent Review Commission on the General Elections Held in Kenya on 27 December 2007 [Kriegler Report]*, Nairobi, 2008.
81. Barkan, *Kenya: Assessing Risks to Stability*; Branch and Cheeseman, “Democratization, Sequencing, and State Failure in Africa: Lessons from Kenya.”
82. Kagwanja, “Courting Genocide: Populism, Ethno-Nationalism and the Informalisation of Violence in Kenya’s 2008 Post-Election Crisis,” 383.
83. Government of Kenya, *Report of the Commission of Inquiry into the Post-Election Violence in Kenya [Waki Report]*, Nairobi, 2008.

84. Hornsby, *Kenya: A History Since Independence*, 774.
85. Government of Kenya, *Report of the Commission of Inquiry into the Post-Election Violence in Kenya [Waki Report]*.
86. Branch and Cheeseman, “Democratization, Sequencing, and State Failure in Africa: Lessons from Kenya,” 20; Kagwanja, “Courting Genocide: Populism, Ethno-Nationalism and the Informalisation of Violence in Kenya’s 2008 Post-Election Crisis,” 382.
87. Ashforth, “Ethnic Violence and the Prospects for Democracy in the Aftermath of the 2007 Kenyan Elections,” 11.
88. Richard Barno, “Kenya: After the Crisis, Lessons Abandoned,” *African Security Review* 17, 4 (2008): 173.
89. Mueller, “The Resilience of the Past: Government and Opposition in Kenya,” 343.
90. Emmanuel Kisiangani et al., “Africa Watch,” *African Security Review* 23 (2014): 84–85.
91. Kagwanja, “Courting Genocide: Populism, Ethno-Nationalism and the Informalisation of Violence in Kenya’s 2008 Post-Election Crisis,” 369.
92. Ashforth, “Ethnic Violence and the Prospects for Democracy in the Aftermath of the 2007 Kenyan Elections,” 18.
93. Cynthia Enloe, *Ethnic Soldiers: State Security in a Divided Society* (Athens: The University of Georgia Press, 1980), 4.
94. Enloe, *Ethnic Soldiers: State Security in a Divided Society*, 25; Osborne, *Ethnicity and Empire in Kenya: Loyalty and Martial Race among the Kamba, c.1800 to the Present*.
95. Mueller, “The Resilience of the Past: Government and Opposition in Kenya,” 12.
96. Enloe, *Ethnic Soldiers: State Security in a Divided Society*, 23.

Chapter 6

Political Ethnicity and the Military in Algeria

Yassine Belkamel

Researchers have tended to agree to that there is no political force in civil society that can consistently compete effectively with the armed forces for political power. Military establishments simply have the ability to take power and to control most countries by force at will. This is especially true in developing countries, where there are deep ethnic and/or religious divisions, and political leadership is mainly formed by elites who, "in one way or other, were the product of the colonial era."[1] There are, of course, specific strategies that can facilitate the acquisition of power by individuals within the armed forces. The creation of a separate military identity is one of these, and the case of Algeria illustrates this strategy well.

Although Algeria for all intents and purposes has been under a military system since its independence in 1962, it has remained an integral part of the Arab world in most of its international agreements, practicing French conventions, to which it was trained and subjected for more than a century, thus retaining a profound legacy. The effects of the past formal and present neo-colonialism, then, are tangibly present in Algeria today. One of these effects is the character of the elites who have guided Algerian society over the past fifty years. Belkacem Saadallah notes that in the late nineteenth century a "French-educated elite . . . tried, despite their limited number, to find a formula by which the native and colonial societies could live together harmoniously."[2]

These elites, with their distinctive mentality, have notably failed to condition native Algerians to accept the domination of the French regarding the Algerian Muslims. This, moreover, must be seen in the context of the path of the Algerian revolution, one that is unique in that is has proceeded without charismatic leadership. In fact, Algerian society has never had a single, compelling political leader. It

should not be surprising, then, that Algerians tend to resist overtures from would-be charismatic leaders, and lean toward the structure, if not the formality, of dynastic leadership.

Revolutionary leadership after the late 1950s, then, was in the hands of a *group* rather than a single leader, beginning with the leaders of the Willayas, and later the three “B”s: Boussouf Abdel Hafid, Belkacem Krim, and Ben-Toubal Lakheder.[3] The natural divisions and disagreements latent in this structure naturally led to increased violence during and after the revolution and independence. With the formation of a military regime heading the Revolutionary Council, and the single political party (the FLN), Algeria faced changes that transformed its national security, its social and ethnic identity, its political structure, and even its international relations.

While the forced military intervention into politics put an end to many of the existing civilian conflicts in the intervention at that early stage of Algeria’s independence and during the first stages of the formation of its administration, this in effect created a new administrative identity, one attached integrally to an authoritarian regime ruling the country by force. The military, as the enforcer of a new set of behavioral rules, a “lobby” as it were, infiltrated virtually all major national institutions in the interests of the new administrative norms, an authoritarian behavioral agenda and, sadly, the personal interests of a narrow elite.

Algerian institutions, then, have essentially been controlled by the military since independence. Political parties, including the largest historically, the Frente de Liberacion National (FLN), have been used to gain legitimacy and to serve Algeria’s image externally. The military has remained the guarantor of institutional reliability, however. Infiltration, oversight, compliance, all relating to, and guaranteeing norms that are at great variance with traditional Algerian religious and ethnic behavior. How is this possible, given that enlistment and officer recruitment of the Algerian military is from the Algerian population? The only plausible explanation, as the following pages will relate, is the creation of a counter identity, a quasi-ethnic military identity, overlaid, however imperfectly, and at

great cost in human lives and trauma, upon the institutions of Algeria.

Algerian Ethnicity: Differing Perspectives

Algerian society was based historically upon different tribes, some of them indigenous and others the products of invasions and migrations. The Berbers constituted the original native ethnic groups in Algeria, and their societies were organized from extended families, clans, and tribes. They varied greatly among themselves and were adapted to rural and desert life well before the arrival of the Arabs and the French.[4] The structure of modern, urban Algerian society only began to materialize during the French colonial period. During the Ottoman period (1525–1830), Algerian society was divided among Arabs, Berbers and other tribes, most of them living in the countryside, where subsistence farmers and nomadic herdsmen lived in small, ethnically homogeneous groups, and less than 6 percent lived in cities.[5] Since the culture is mainly centered on religion, the religious reference was usually focused on mosques in the major cities. Communities inevitably maintained contacts with urban centers, relying on urban religious leaders, imams, to deal with major social problems.

Some parts of Algerian social life were managed culturally according to perceived race or religion. For example, among settled and nomadic Arab groups, tribes and migrants were arranged along a gradient of social prestige. Arabs and some Berber tribes took from Islam the convention of *Ashraf* (nobles allegedly descended from the Prophet Muhammad) and *marabouts* (a constitution for their social and political life) in deciding upon people who had the highest socio-political prestige. Executive power tended to be under the leadership of the *Qaid* (tribal chief), who exercised absolute authority. According to Helen Metz, “Settled Berber groups were democratic and egalitarian.”[6] They were more independent in their hamlets or villages, managed by a group of male elders, called *Jama’a.* Social stratification typical in Arab groups did not exist in Berber villages.

Other groups of Berbers have featured prominently in the media since the beginning of the “Arab Spring” in North Africa in 2010. The greater Sahara, in which the *Tuareg* and *Mezabete* communities are native, has experienced major outbursts of violence against Arabs and security troops. Berbers have made use of this situation, moreover, to advocate for their political and cultural rights. This is understandable given their continuing poverty and underdevelopment. Their homelands have been routinely ignored in Algerian government plans, projects and development programs, and in 2001 violent protests, known as the “Black Spring,” took place and are said to represent a significant shift in Berber identity and political presence. The region of the Algerian Berbers continues to experience demonstrations, strikes and violence directed against police and security officers. By 2014 such conflicts had extended to clashes between Berbers and Arabs. The obvious and fundamental cause of the conflicts has been inequality; successive Algerian governments have failed to distribute resources with any sense of justice or equality.

Algerian Berbers have had a long history of often violent opposition to the military regime. After independence, and the military coup against the Provisional Government of the Algerian republic (GPRA) in 1963, Ahmed Ben Bella turned against the majority Berbers. His first statements presumed that Algeria was an Arab country. He repeatedly affirmed “We are Arabs!” The Berbers reply was strident: “We are Algerians and Muslims, but we are not Arabs.”[7] The new Algerian government, ruled by military elites, forbade the use of the Berber language in the media, schools, and public services, and even banned the use of Berber names for children. Many Berber leaders, and leaders of Islamic movements, were arrested, tortured and killed, or went into exile.[8] Hocine Ait Ahmed,[9] one of the early nationalist elites, and among the nine “historic leaders” of the Algerian Nationalists and founders of the FLN, was arrested and apparently destined to be assassinated along with Colonel Mohamed Chaabani and others, but escaped with the help of revolutionaries and lived in exile for over 27 years, only returning to Algeria in 1990. Chaabani and Mohammed Khidher and many others were killed by Houari Boumédiène, who subsequently

made a deal with the French-trained officers in which they gained legitimate revolutionary credentials after having fought against the Revolution and been turned away by most of the regional military base leaders, including Abdelhamid Brahimi.

Ahmed Ait Bachir noted that the Berber community had a different vision from that of other Algerians, and saw history and even the future of Algeria from a very different perspective. Between these who advocated a secular modernized school system, and those who defended the traditional Arab-Islamic schooling, there was an enormous gap that was not only political but also deeply cultural. “As Kabyle [Berbers], we have a historical vision of Algerian identity, while other Algerians have a religious and ideological vision.”[10] Bachir discussed language, noting that it did not provide a basis for a single Arab identity. The Mexican who speaks Spanish is not Spanish, he said, just as the Brazilian who speaks Portuguese is not Portuguese.[11]

Most of the Berber elites believe that the Algerian authorities used religion and the Arab language to prevent the emergence of an independent Algerian identity. Bachir argued in an interview that Algeria had lost its identity, referring somewhat confusingly to the unique Algerian identity that began to take shape in the 1930s when the Arabic language and Islam became integral in the emerging nationalist movement in opposition to French colonial rule. “Colonization brought [about] the genocide of our identity, of our history, of our language [and] of our traditions,” President Abdelaziz Bouteflika later said on Algerian television in 2006.[12]

Have Algerian governments evolved in their treatment of the different ethnicities, identities and the cultures of their society? It is probably fair to say that the quasi-ethnic military Algerian government today has about the same lack of regard for the unique differences of the many varied ethnic groups in Algeria that was demonstrated brutally by the first independent governments headed by Ben Bella and Boumédiène. The leadership of the FLN has never tolerated even a scintilla of multiculturalism. Rather, the single cultural identity, broken down into three supposedly indivisible adjectives—nationalist, Muslim and Arab—has gradually been consolidated, at times with a great loss of life. Arab uprisings have

galvanized Algerian Berber demonstrations, including one in which tens of thousands took to the streets of Tizi Ouzou and Bejaia in April 2012 on behalf of preserving the distinctive Berber cultural identity and language.

Algerian Society and the Struggle for Identity

Historically, before the French, the Algerians were mostly laborers and farmers under what was nearly a “feudal” system, with a taxation regime that was dominated by two Jewish families, the Busnach and the Bacri.[13] The people of Algeria have never really had a tradition of self-governance, power sharing, or even of participation in the conduct of state affairs.[14] Unlike other North African countries, there was never a royal family or kingdom, although power was not shared with community members. The Ottoman Empire had dominated the country through dictatorship under the principles of the Caliph in Islam.[15] After the Ottomans, the French colonized Algeria and occupied the country by force for more than 130 years. Algerians were deprived of even the most minimal rights as human beings. They were classified by the French government as sub-citizens, formally referred to as “locals, laborers and farmers.” By the 1930s, the French government allowed some rights to Algerian elites, but these were very limited, and there was no right to criticize or disagree politically with the French government. The elites could only request assistance in personal matters, and had no right to complain.[16] Algerians could not engage in politics or vote in elections, as could the French citizens in Algeria. Nevertheless, socially at least, the Algerian elites considered themselves a superior minority, separated from an inferior majority of ignorant peasants (*fellaheen*), superstitious people (*Murabits*), and reactionary holy men (*Ulama*), who, in fact, were scholars of Arabic literacy and Islamic studies. Some observers defined the elite as including Algerian interpreters, lawyers, doctors, teachers, magistrates, journalists, a few merchants, agricultural workers, and students.[17] Obviously, not all observers agreed, as a particularly attentive writer noted: “Those who included some merchants and

agricultural workers were talking about the Algerian middle class in general, while those who defined the elite as a few doctors, lawyers, and journalists were describing the Algerian French-educated class."[18] Moreover, Algeria was far different from other countries under European colonial rule at that time. Even distant India was ruled by the British through local leadership. In that case, all of the major administrative positions were held by ethnic Indians, and they dealt directly with their own people in their official functions, including the provision of public services. The British, in this instance, demonstrated significantly more respect, and less belligerence, toward the Indian people than did the French toward the Algerians. The British, in fact, did not physically occupy a great deal of India.

In the case of Algeria, however, repeated efforts at French settlement, as if Algeria were part of France, appeared to be designed to ensure that Algeria would forever serve as an extension of France across the Mediterranean, as an exclusive settlers' colony. Large numbers of Europeans were encouraged to move to Algeria and become farmers, shopkeepers, and administrators there. By the twentieth century, a fully articulated European society had taken root, one with an identity of its own.[19] The *pieds noirs*' influence in Paris was such that Algeria was considered to be an integral part of metropolitan France, thereby assuring that settlement in Algeria would remain an attractive opportunity and an assured route to successful business investments.[20]

In Algeria, locals were not treated as equals. They were constantly reminded that they were inferior to both the French and other Europeans, all of whom enjoyed full rights. Benjamin Stora noted that France's aim was "to ensure the absolute and complete subjugation of the population to the needs and interests of colonization."[21] It became obvious that the colonized were "subjects" and not "citizens" and were liable to special legal and social provisions: They were in effect restricted to the lowest economic and social classes in the colonial society, required to perform menial tasks, literally reduced to the status of slaves in their own homeland, with no standing in the courts, and subject to detention without due process.[22]

The debates of the *corps legislative* of 1870 favored the institution of a civil regime because it seemed to be in the best interests of the European settlers and native-born Algerians.[23] While the decree of June 1870 provided that the General Councils would be selected by Europeans, Jews, Arabs and Berbers, the right to vote for the latter two categories of people was in fact repealed by the decree of 28 December 1870 on the basis that it violated "the principle of public law by conferring the right of suffrage and candidature upon persons who were not native born Algerians or naturalized French citizens."[24]

French policy against Algerians changed every time the French authorities had a change in leadership in Algeria. Algerian Muslims had always fought for their identity, and now the French government suddenly accepted them as French subjects, if not citizens, if they had been born in Algeria.[25] The 1870 Decree of Crémieux in effect granted French *citizenship* to Jews born in Algeria. According to Azzedine Haddour, the Crémieux Decree opened a "racist" wedge at the core of native-born Algerians, separating Arabs from Jews.[26]

French proposals for Algerian inclusion as part of France were summarily rejected by the French government, principally because the settlers' primary goal was the establishment of a "good life" in Algeria, and this seemed to require rejecting the expenditure of resources in support of the well-being of the Muslim community. According to General Hanoteau, an officer of the *bureaux Arabs*: "What our settlers' dream of is a bourgeois feudalism in which they will be the lords and the natives the serfs."[27] Algerian Jews tended to acquire French citizenship, and thereby came under the control of French authority, while Algerian Muslims consistently refused to be controlled except by their own governors and Islamic law. Following charges of anti-Semitism lodged by Muslim politicians in the election of 1898, Governor Laferrière bent to the colonists' demands for autonomy, granting financial independence and the creation of an elected colonial assembly. Algeria became a "small French Republic" in which "the voter's card became the title of nobility in this novel feudal system."[28]

Conditioning Soldiers to a New Identity

A group of French-trained military officers who had fought on the side of the French during the Algerian war for independence quietly switched sides at the end of the war and began to claim an increasingly larger share of the power. The “French Officers,” so-called because of their training in French military schools, had initially fought against the Algerian revolutionaries, had been born in Algeria in the late 1930s, received their secondary education in French,[29] in the mid-1950s embarked on careers in the French military, and only very late in the war chose to switch to the National Liberation Army.[30] After Algerian independence they received military training at prestigious institutions, such as the *Ecole Superieure de Guerre* in Paris, and the *Frunze Military Academy* in Moscow, and they notably preferred to communicate in French.[31]

Their apparent goal, rather than providing training for the young soldiers on Algerian military bases as had been anticipated by the Algerian leadership, soon became clear: It was to seize political control of the country by becoming, initially and in a *de facto* sense, the primary decision-makers in Algeria. By some accounts they were gradually able to influence leadership selection, over time even participating in decisions that determined who would become president and prime minister of the country. Nevertheless, they seemed to retain close contacts in France and to represent those economic and political interests while pursuing their own very personal, and by all accounts, corrupt interests as well. Key to their strategy was their influence over the development of a French, secular, anti-revolutionary military culture, one geared to accept the commands of a reactionary elite without hesitation or question.

This is one of the primary causes of the protracted and massive human rights violations that Algerians have suffered since the liberation war, as I argued at great length, and with abundant evidence, in my 2014 doctoral thesis.[32] That violence was, and still is, the most disturbing aspect of the failure of electoral democracy in Algeria, a very brief and limited system transformation that was best seen in Algeria after the promulgation of the 1989 Constitution and

lasted until 1992. It is apparently the disorganization and hence the weakness of the Algerian civilian political elites, especially those in the Islamic movements, that helped the military, directly and indirectly, and particularly the French Officers, in maintaining their control, principally through their periodically intense violations of human rights.

The French Officers became the key factor in the military's dominance of the politicians in this bloody competition.[33] It included the jailing of Ahmed Ben Bella, the first president, in 1965, and the assassination of revolutionary Mohamed Boudiaf in 1992, who had returned from exile to become head of state, along with the subsequent murders of hundreds of politicians and elites. In fact, questions have been raised about the deaths of many of the revolutionary leaders, including the second president of Algeria, Houari Boumédiène, in 1978. Abdelhamid Brahimi, one of the revolution leaders and former prime minister, confirmed that Boumédiène was poisoned by one of the French Officers.[34]

The *coup d'état* of 1992 opened a new chapter of violence against civilians and left thousands of civilians dead, including President Boudiaf, who was shot in front of the public and the media. Thousands of Algerians were jailed in the process, many of whom are still missing today.[35] Many scholars and political analysts have blamed the events of 1992 on the military regime, principally for seizing and retaining power in Algeria following independence. The coup of 1992, conducted against the first fully open and free elections in Algeria, appears to have been directly related to the French agencies and their economic interests in the area,[36] and was characterized by the regime at the time as a popular liberation from Islamic domination, and hence to protect "democracy."[37]

Legitimacy and National Identity

Historical, political and social context is important in understanding the nature of the Algerian regime and the way in which military groups have played a part in shaping national politics. Algerian political culture and government reflect the impact of the

country's colonial history and its cultural identification.[38] This is also, and perhaps especially, true of the development of the quasi-ethnic identity of the Algerian military. The formation of political institutions in Algeria came about after independence and the official recognition of Algeria's first constitution in 1963. Revolutionaries who had fought the French throughout the war insisted on retaining power through the FLN. According to Henry F. Jackson, "The FLN in Algeria is a political history of the period of 1954 to 1965."[39] The FLN was never a political party, however, at least as parties are understood in other parts of the world. It was not until the declaration of the National Charter by Boumédiène that the FLN moved from its anonymous revolutionary organization to become a unified political party in a more modern sense. This change was part of a coup against the Algiers' Charter of Ben Bella, held in early 1964. Jackson argues that the Boumédiène coup of 1965 caused a change in the FLN's platform, and brought about the demise of the revolutionaries' "empire," hidden as it was behind the title of revolution, and the structure of the FLN. In reality, according to John Nellis, it was never a political party, because it simply did not act like one.[40] The French Officers duly noted this. Development of the military as a unified, quasi-ethnic institution provided a strong counter-platform for them, as events in the early 1990s graphically demonstrated.

For the tenth anniversary of that first *coup d'état*, on 19 June 1975, the Boumédiène regime announced the drafting of the National Charter and elections for the National Assembly and the president of the republic. On 26 April 1976 the first draft of the National Charter was made public. Later in the same year, another draft of the constitution was made public by the Boumédiène regime along with a detailed ideological proclamation. The Algiers Charter adopted by the FLN in 1964 had criticized the state institutions and the bureaucracy of the country, asserting the pre-eminence of "[an] avant-garde party profoundly linked to the masses." In contrast, the National Charter of 1976 was pledged

> To restore national sovereignty, construct socialism, struggle against underdevelopment, build a modern and prosperous economy, and be vigilant against external dangers requires a

> solid and constantly fortified state, not a state invited to die out, when it has barely re-emerged from the void.[41]

One of the seven sections of this Charter was entitled “The Party and the State,” and in it appeared statements concerning Algeria’s sole political party, the FLN. The Charter stated that the party was “the guide of the revolution,” and that it was a “directing force of the society.” It mentioned the party’s use of “democratic centralism,” and reminded citizens that it “controls the overall policy of the country.”[42] The Charter did admit, indirectly, that the FLN had become ineffective after independence and was not in a position to assume a policy leadership role. The Charter suggested that these difficulties were temporary, however, adding that it “must modify its modes of organization and adapt them to new situations.”[43]

According to Cherif Belkacem, a former minister in Ben Bella’s government, the single-party system began in Algeria during the war and continued during the post-independence period because it was thought that the Algerian people of the time needed to be unified to achieve their goal of independence from France. Within the different ideologies and viewpoints of the Algerian elites, the principles of the revolution were eventually shaped, and the goal of independence, while distant and difficult to achieve, had to be won. However, at the time the prospect of building the country, considering the conflicts among the Algerian elites, was bleak. Belkacem noted in 2009 that “the political leadership of the FLN [came] from different political backgrounds, and every one of them could have his own party, so maybe the conflict will grow into a new war between Algerians.”[44]

In an opposing view, Mohammed Larbi Zitout argued that “for most of Algerian post-revolutionary history, the FLN can scarcely be characterized as anything more than a front organization for a government ultimately controlled by the military.”[45] Ahmed Chouchane regarded the FLN after independence as similar to the communist party in Russia, and this was especially true during the period of Boumédiène. More than 70 percent of the members in the central committee of the party were military officers. The period of Chadli Bendjedid’s leadership involved a number of changes in the

FLN, some of which were geared to make it more like a political party, mostly by releasing military members and opening membership to a new civilian generation.[46] The emerging quasi-ethnic identity of the military officer corps was fused with that of the FLN. The FLN was the only party allowed, and most of its members had occupied positions in the political structure. They tended to have close relations with the military power holders, and close connections abroad with the French. The FLN was, in Chouchane's view, the face that the military regime used to establish itself in power. Under the leadership of Abdelhamid Mehri in the early 1990s the FLN began to openly oppose the regime on some issues. The secret service was very active at this time, however, and Mehri was subsequently removed from his position as head of the FLN in 1996.

According to Chouchane, Algerian physicist and political activist-in-exile Dr. Mourad Dhina, and former Algerian secret service agent and now political activist-in-exile Mohamed Samraoui, the Algerian military secret service was involved in most of the new political parties in the 1990s, when multiparties were finally allowed, and it played a major role in some of them, albeit with different levels of focus and interest, depending upon how popular a party was with the population at large. In some instances they had their own members planted inside the executive committee of a party and they would direct party policies and planning, often against the wishes of the other committee members, and sometimes in contention with other parties, even serving as provocateurs in attacking government officials.

The collapse of the single-party state, and of the hegemony of the FLN, was primarily the result of conflicts among elites who held power through the FLN. These conflicts ultimately resulted in a massive "population outburst"[47] on 5 October 1988. The violent response of the government resulted in the deaths of thousands of innocent civilians and damage that cost the country billions of dollars. Despite the apparent intentions of those behind these events, and of those who were directly responsible for the violence that led to the deaths at the hands of the armed forces, significant changes subsequently took place in the political system in Algeria and spread across a variety of the departments of government.

These changes, which began after the popular outburst of October 1988, did not happen by chance.[48] Within a few months, in 1989, a constitutional amendment provided for democratic elections, and enabled more than sixty political parties, including parties linked to Islamic movements and organizations from different ethnic groups across the political spectrum, to participate in the local elections of 1991-1992. This was the first time after independence, indeed, the first time in history, that Algerians had experienced such levels of political freedom and democracy.

According to General Khaled Nezzar, however, Algeria has never actually been governed by civilians. The unique political culture of the Algerian military has ultimately determined government outcomes over the past fifty years. After independence, Algeria was governed by a military regime that operated behind the façade of a single political party and apparently controlled most of the elements of government, including the ministries and the presidency.[49] This hegemony of the military over the Algerian bureaucracy affected the social and political ethos. According to a variety of observers, new divisions were created in Algerian society, structuring the bases of conflict. Those considered nationalists, those who believed, at least nominally, in revolution or “holy war” against French colonialism, were considered supporters of the military regime. Those who did not share these beliefs were branded as “traitors.”

Society, Identity and Politics

Religion and ethnicity have played important roles in multicultural Algeria. On the other hand, the formation of the state and the establishment of the legitimacy of the regime after independence were largely based on the concept of revolution, socialism and Arabism, in contradiction to the Charter of Summam, as well as to Islamic principles and the culture of the Berbers. Boumédiène’s coup and the formation of the Border Army implied a competition for power, and a willingness to use authoritarianism, corruption and economic opportunism.

The French-trained officers, a relatively small group within the Algerian military, initially exploited conflict among the FLN leadership

to gain political power, which they gradually achieved by influencing the development of a quasi-ethnic culture within the army while establishing an allegedly corrupt network, the "*Algérie Française*."[50] They achieved some of their key goals through the presidency of Chadli Bendjedid (1978–1992), when one of their own, General Larbi Belkheir, became the head of the High Council for Security, secretary-general of the presidency, and head of the cabinet. He attained the rank of major-general during this period. At the time of the elections of 1991-92, Belkhir was the minister of the interior.

The French Officers came fully into power in 1992 through a *coup d'état* against the president, ending his program of democratization and free elections. They remained the most important political actors within the regime after that. They were said to have built a strong network of secret agents to assist them in exercising authoritarian control over the country, dominating politics, the economy and even the social lives of civilians. Their central means of control, as noted repeatedly above, appears to have been violence. With the most recent election of President Abdel-Aziz Bouteflika, their feeble figurehead, in 2014, they have started to see an end to their period of hegemony, especially after the deaths of high-ranking members of the group, including Larbi Belkheir, Mohammed Lammari, and Smain Lammari. Khaled Nezzar, Zarhouni, and a handful of other French-trained officers have subsequently gone into retirement. Bouteflika even convened a presidential group to examine the role of the military in government, but, as the military had both the institutional knowledge and experience in decision-making, Bouteflika and his group have made little headway. The ineffectiveness of their efforts was reportedly compounded by entrenched corruption.

The Decline of the French Officers

In September 2005, Algerians voted in an unprecedented referendum to approve a charter for "peace and national reconciliation," offering amnesty to Algerian insurgents in exchange for laying down their arms. The charter also extended the same offer of clemency to military officers, police and security agents involved in

crimes during Algeria's civil war. The charter was nevertheless rejected by opposition organizations, key personalities, the Islamic Salvation Front (FIS), communist organizations and the families of the disappeared, who thought that there should be reparations paid to the relatives of those who had suffered from the violence, and has not been ratified. The reported illness of President Bouteflika, moreover, which has prevented him from making public appearances or even giving a public speech since 2012, has also prevented the establishment of civilian control over political and military sectors. On 16 July 2013, after eighty days of treatment in Paris, the presidential office announced that the president had finally returned to Algeria. According to an official statement, "after finishing his treatment and rehabilitation in France, Bouteflika will find comfort and rehabilitation here in Algeria." No announcement specified *when* Bouteflika would resume his presidential duties, and it is not clear, in fact, that he has ever done so. Although he surprised the political community in and outside the country with what were described as "his" major political changes in the government and the military structure, quickly implemented shortly after his return,[51] according to an interview with journalist Faisal Metaoui, on *France TV*, Bouteflika, or someone acting in his stead launched these changes in preparation for the elections of 17 April 2014, which he won without campaigning, the assumption being that he was too ill at the time to campaign. Metaoui noted that

> Bouteflika and all those close to him are afraid of prosecutions in the future, because of the corruption cases [that] occurred during his three terms, which involved his brother Said and members of his family, as well as senior ministers, such as former oil minister Chakib Khelil.[52]

On 2 February 2014, the new FLN leader, Ammar Saâdani, publically criticized the head of the Military Inteligence Services (DRS), accusing him of mismanagement and negligence.[53] He blamed General Mohamed Médiène for the precarious political and security situations in Algeria. It was the first time that the head of the official political party had made charges against someone at the

highest level in the power structure, someone ostensibly responsible for his own appointment and, indeed, likely that of the president.[54] Saâdani's fierce criticism of Médiène came as a shock to an Algerian public, "trained" to fear the notorious DRS. According to Saâdani, the DRS "has [had a] role in major political assassinations and terrorist attacks against Algerians [which] remain hard to corroborate and yet are too genuine to discard."[55] He charged them with a failure to protect President Boudiaf in July 1992, when he was assassinated while delivering a speech live on television. A previous terrorist attack against Bouteflika in Batna (400 km south east of Algiers) was said to be the result of the failure of the DRS to protect him, and Saâdani noted a long list of failures of the DRS since the crisis of the 1990s.[56]

The Algerian public likely knew that Saâdani's declaration was not necessarily a courageous and honest act, but rather had much to do with who was behind Mr. Saâdani in this attack against the heart of the system. "People know that the head of the FLN does not have the guts to bash the DRS without solid support from within the military establishment," according to Ahmed Chaoui, freelance journalist based in Washington, DC.[57] According to observers who analyzed Saâdani's criticism of General Médiène, the FLN leader was conciliatory toward potential presidential candidates, especially Bouteflika's brother, Said. Saâdani led Algerians to believe that the attacks on the DRS were in fact authorized by the FLN in direct support of Said Bouteflika, in case Abdelaziz Bouteflika was unable to run for a fourth mandate.

Some Algerians have described Saâdani's attack on the DRS as a smoke screen, however, an effort to protect Generals Gaïd Salah and French Officer Saïd Bey in their alleged scheme to remove General Médiène from power. By discrediting Médiène and the DRS, the door was left open for Said Bouteflika to present his prospective candidacy as viable. This view would suggest a pattern that runs counter to Algerian political tradition, in which political "dynasties" are forbidden. The later arrest of the long-standing, anonymous counter-terrorism chief, known only by the alias "General Hassan," a senior DRS officer and strong supporter of General Médiène, signaled that

General Gaïd Salah had declared an all-out war against the DRS. According to the Algerian daily, *Echorouk*, General Hassan was accused of forming a criminal group, a gang, to attack civilians, engage in arms trafficking, and commit serious security breaches, one of which led to the 2013 bloody terrorist attack on the Tiguentourine gas complex in Amenas in southern Algeria.[58]

One week after Ammar Saâdani's declaration, publicly accusing the powerful military intelligence chief of interfering in politics to the detriment of the country's security, ex-General Hocine Benhadid, who was security advisor for President Liamine Zeroual, returned to Algeria after twenty years of retirement to object to Saâdani's accusations and to accuse the president's inner circle publicly of "treason." He declared to *El Watan* and *El Khabar* newspapers that "he came to power with the slogan 'pride and dignity' . . . so he could retire . . . with dignity and let Algeria catch its breath."[59] Benhadid, who once commanded one of Algeria's military regions, said he was speaking on behalf of others in the armed forces, without naming anyone, "because we cannot let this situation continue." He specifically pointed to the group around General Gaïd Salah, saying: "The chief-of-Staff has no credibility, and no one is fond of him."[60] In the midst of these attacks and counter-attacks, in his first official response to Saâdani's declaration, Bouteflika strongly backed the army, offering condolences to the families of seventy-seven people killed when a military aircraft crashed in the mountainous northeast region of Oum El Bouaghi, saying that "No one has the right, whatever their position, to attack the People's National Army and other state institutions."[61]

On 22 February 2014, the media reported that Algeria's President, who had not publicly addressed the country for nearly three years, and had not even been seen in public for much of that time, would be running for a fourth term on 17 April 2014.[62] Bouteflika, without campaigning, went on to win the election with 81.53 percent of the votes; Ali Benflis took second with 12.18 percent; Abdelaziz Belaid had 3.36 percent; Louiza Hanoune received 1.37 percent; Ali Fawzi Rebaine had 0.99 percent; and Moussa Touati received 0.56 percent. While Bouteflika was widely

expected to win the election despite his infirm condition and absence in the campaign, his key competitor, Ali Benflis, did not accept the results and vowed to react strongly against any evidence of voter fraud. Bouteflika's claim was reinforced, however, when the Ministry of Internal Affairs refused Benflis's application for the formation of new political organization, an application that had been submitted, but not approved, beforehand.

CONCLUSION

According to Lisa Watanabe, "Since the state was synonymous with the ruling party until the early 1990s, regime legitimacy has also been tied to religion and ethnicity."[63] Algeria, then, has had a single military party as its acceptable national culture based on hegemonic political power. Nevertheless, the gradual creation of a *modern* military establishment with a *separate identity* that has avoided these two fundamental elements while reinforcing (if not serving as) the state, manifesting a separate quasi-patois or language, obedience to French Officers, French military culture, Arabist culture, uniform dress, a secular religious code, and uniform rules of behavior, looks a great deal like the establishment of a quasi-ethnic military identity. This is a very recent and largely incomplete process, of course. The former identity that the military brought to the country was that of a dictatorship conforming to French military and colonial rules. Boumédiène used his military forces to continue this program against civilians, against the original identity of Algerian society, which traced back to the Ottoman Caliph, as a multi-ethnic country under Islamic culture. Boumédiène created his military support base from a cadre of French-trained officers, and he used them to prosecute a war against Muslim and Berber civilians. He announced in the process the creation of a new Algeria, to be governed under secular, socialist and Arabist principles. Communist and Islamist parties were banned, taking a page from the Egyptian experience. Ahmed Ben Bella would declare that Algerian policy was Arab nationalism, repeating three times that "We are Arabs," blatantly ignoring that a majority of the population was not of Arab descent,

but choosing rather to follow his friend, Gamal Abdel Nasser with visions of Arab Nationalism.[64]

The Revolutionary Charter thus became the main legislative base of the country, although it inhibited political and cultural activities. A new class formed within Algerian society, one based on elite discrimination, where elite military and political party membership signaled special status, and where Berbers and other non-Arabs became the lowest of the low. Resistance to the new system from intellectuals began early at universities and cultural centers, and following government overreaction, many joined secret movements. Most of the intellectual debates were between socialists and democrats, and between secularists and Islamists.

Violence by the military and security officers was immediate and profound. Even given the deep disagreements among the Islamists and secularist, there was a relatively high degree of cooperation among them in their protests in Algiers after the *coup d'état* of 1992 and subsequent years up until 1999. A meeting in Rome in January 1995 between the FIS and official political parties under the auspices of the Sant'Egidio Community brought Algerian opposition groups together in an attempt to find a solution to the worsening spiral of violence and a solution to the political deadlock. By this time more than a hundred thousand deaths had stemmed from repeated conflicts with the military. The agreement, known as the Rome Platform, was signed by most of the elites from the different ideologies and ethnic groups, although it failed to get a response from the French-trained officers. As the *ICG Africa Report* noted, "The Rome Platform was never applied since the military regime in Algiers never recognized it."[65]

The Arab Spring has seen demonstrations across the Middle East and North Africa, some of which have resulted in regime change. In Algeria there were bloody clashes and protests on the streets of Algiers, Kabilya, and Ghardaia, the latter in the spring of 2014. Dozens of people, including two policemen, were injured there in violence between Arabs and Berbers.[66] By 2015, the violence, largely triggered by a government dominated by the French Officers, has cost Algerians over two hundred thousand lives. Hundreds, if not thousands, of people have been jailed and tortured, with huge

numbers of displacements and disappearances. The unique quasi-ethnic military and political culture, formulated as existing within a wider Arab nationalism, and committed to a vague socialism, has never been reflected beyond the military-political elites. Rather, it has been most evident in its expressions in political authoritarianism, corruption and economic opportunism as well as in massive human rights violations against civilians. This steadfast commitment to a separate cultural identity, in fact, has been completely inconsistent with Algerian thought. Although the National Charter of 1976 asserted that the ruling elite's foremost goals were "to restore national sovereignty, construct socialism, struggle against underdevelopment, build a modern and prosperous economy, and be vigilant against external dangers [and this] requires a solid and constantly fortified state, not a state invited to die out, when it has barely re-emerged from the void,"[67] it was clear even then that the only road to these goals was one of cultural inclusivity.

Given the secular nature of the quasi-ethnic adaptation of the Algerian military-political identity, it is not surprising that Muslims have been the majority of victims in each of the post-Independence *coups d'état*. The FLN leaders can be interpreted as having fallen into one of two groups: The first group pertaining to the Summam Congress, were nationalists and Islamists, and tended to support Algerian civil society; the second group was associated with Nationalist-Arabist thought, rejecting the charter of the Summam Congress, and choosing to meet later in Tripoli, Libya, in 1958. Neither of these trains of thought ultimately prevailed in their entirety, however. As noted above, the cultural mindset that ultimately prevailed after independence was that of the French Officers, who first established their influence in the *coup* of 1963, and then strengthened it in 1965. They assumed dominance after 1992 and, much like the Egyptian military, came to dominate the economy through their control over the military.

Algeria's civil society, then, is very weak, and its political parties are divided and unpopular, most of them having been created just a year before the 1992 coup. The parties that had strong popular voices were destroyed or seriously undermined, including the FIS,

FFS and the FLN, whose leadership rejected the coup and subsequent civil war in Algeria. According to Francessco Cavatorta:

> . . . the civil war that affected Algeria was largely interpreted as the inevitable outcome of the confrontation between the secular and liberal values of many within Algerian society and the inherent anti-democratic and violent nature of political Islam.[68]

NOTES

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15. The Caliph, by the rules of Sharia law, has to be respected and must be obeyed by all citizens, as an obligation under Islamic law.
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18. Saadallah, "The Rise of the Algerian Elite."
19. See: William B. Quandt, *Between Ballots and Bullets, Algeria's Transition from Authoritarianism* (Washington, DC: Brookings Institution Press, 1988), 15.
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24. Confer, *France and Algeria*, 7.
25. Confer noted that "at the fall of the second Empire, the Muslim majority in Algeria remained only French subjects under the *senatus consulte* of 14 July 1865, and acquired neither citizenship nor most of the civil rights that pertained to that status." Confer, *France and Algeria*, 7.

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42. Quoted in Nellis, "The FLN in Algeria."
43. Quoted in Nellis, "The FLN in Algeria."
44. Interview in French with Cherif Belkacem, Minister of Orientation and Education (l'orientation et de l'éducation) in the government of Ben Bella, and, after June 1965, in charge of the reorganization of the party (FLN). He was the executive secretary of FLN (Délégué du Secrétariat executive). This interview took place in 1966 by *French TV INA*. The question was: "Why did Algeria, after Independence, choose the single party system? What was the birth and development of the FLN, and after 1962, what happened to socialism in Algeria under Ben Bella?"
45. Zitout, personal interview, London (04/07/2009).
46. Ahmed Chouchane, personal interview, London (August 2009); N. Haddam, Skype personal interview, USA, from Hamilton, NZ (May 2009). Zitout espouses another view: after 5 October 1988, in particular, the FLN became increasingly autonomous.
47. The name given to the 5th October 1988 event. This involved demonstrations and uprisings by citizens, especially youth, in all the large cities in Algeria. It was put down by the army with the deaths of more than 500 people and injuries of thousands more. A new political control system had been established by the regime, using torture and the raiding of houses at night to kidnap and arrest mostly young protestors. Then-president Chadli Bendjedid promised political and economic reform and political democracy.
48. Abdelhamid Brahimi (2000).
49. Khaled Nezzar, *Mémoires de Général Khaled Nezzar* (Algiers: Chihab Editions, 1999); French Channel, *Chanal Plus*, "Interview

with General Khaled Nazzar," 1995.
50. L. Aggoun and Jean-Baptiste, *Françalgérie*.
51. In September 2013, the Minister of External Affairs, Mourad Madelsi, and the Minister of Internal Affairs, Dahu Waled Qablya, were removed. One week later, on 12 September 2013, Bouteflika, or someone acting in his stead, turned to high-ranking military officers. In a major shift, the DRS investigations, which had in the past been led by Major-General Mehena Djebbar, now fell under the authority of the Chief-of-Staff and Vice Defense Minister, Brigadier-General Gaid Salah. Also terminated were two influential intelligence generals, General Bachir Tertag, in charge of counter-espionage, and an officer in charge of security abroad, Major-General Mehena Djebbar, considered to be among the most prominent military figures in Algeria and close to General Médiène, known as "Toufik," arguably the most powerful man in the country. Following these changes, which affected people at the pinnacle of power, Bouteflika announced a series of changes in the structure of the military bureaucracy itself. Beginning with the Military Intelligence Services (DRS), the most powerful department in the military, Bouteflika, apparently acting as Minister of Defence, limited the role of the DRS to military matters only, and thus moved this agency out of politics, further away from the media, and separated it as well from the judicial police, a former source of its authority. Confirmed by Capitan Chouchane to *almagharibia TV*, *el khabar*, *el watan* and *echorouk* (Algerian newspapers), 22/09/2013: http://www.elkhabar.com/ar/politique/356262.html; also: http://www.tsa-algerie.com/actualite/item/58-lutte-contre-la-corruption-bachir-tartag-le-general-du-drs-aux-commandes-de-l-operation-mains-propres.
52. *France24,* "Changes in the Pyramid of Power in Algeria, Bouteflika 'Holed Up' Beyond 2014": http://www.france24.com/ar/20130913/.
53. *Echoroukonline* Algerian daily newspaper, 10/02/2014.
54. General Médiène (who reportedly referred to himself as "the God of Algeria") had been the most powerful and feared figure within the shadowy world of Algeria's military establishment. See the letter of the ex-CEO of Algerian Oil Company, Hocine Malti, to General

Médiène; Hocine Malti, *Algeria-Watch*, “General Toufik: Algeria’s God: An Open Letter to Mohamed ‘Toufik’ Médiène,” 16 February 2013: http://www.algeria-watch.org/en/articles/2013/malti_open_letter.htm.
55. Ahmed Chaoui, “Algeria Military Rift over Presidential Elections Turns ‘Nasty,’” *Morocco World News*, Wednesday, 12 February 2014, http://www.moroccoworldnews.com/2014/02/122396/algeria-military-rift-over-presidential-elections-turns-nasty/.
56. Azzeddine Bensouiah, “Le DRS poursuit Saâdani en justice,” *Liberté,* 5 février 2014, Algeria-watch: "http://www.moroccoworldnews.com/2014/02/122396/algeria-military-rift-over-presidential-elections-turns-nasty/".
57. Ahmed Chaoui, “Algeria Military Rift.”
58. Ahmed Chaoui, “Algeria Military Rift.”
59. “Retired Algeria General Urges Bouteflika to Step Down,” *Wind Daily, Democracy*, Algiers (AFP) 12 February 2014: http://www.winddaily.com/reports/Retired_Algeria_general_urges_Bouteflika_to_step_down_999.html.
60. *El watan* and *El khabar* newspapers: the response of the military: http://elkhabar.com/ar/politique/387156.html.
61. *El watan* and *El khabar* newspapers: the response of the military: http://elkhabar.com/ar/politique/387156.html.
62. “Algeria’s President Bouteflika to Run for Re-election,” *BBC News Africa*, 22 February 2014: http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-africa-26306778.
63. Lisa Watanabe, “Religion, Ethnicity and State Formation in Algeria,” in *State Formation and Identity in the Middle East and North Africa*, ed. Mohammed Masad and Kenneth Christie, eds. New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2013.
64. Tahar Djaout, *The Last Summer of Reason, le dernier été de la raison*, Education du Seuil, 1999. English translated by Marjolijn de Jager, 2001, xiii.
65. *ICG Africa Report* no. 24, Algiers/Paris/London/Brussels, “The Algerian Crisis: Not Over Yet,” 20 October 2000.
66. Ghardaia has been the scene of ethnic violence that has killed seven people and wounded more than 400 since December 2014 when fighting erupted between Berbers, known as Mozabites, and

Arabs, known as Chaambas. Hundreds of houses and shops in the town, which is a UNESCO heritage site, have been burned down in the unrest. The two communities have lived together for centuries, but tensions between them have risen sharply since vandals destroyed a historic Berber shrine in late December. Videos seen by visiting journalists in January have been circulating on the Internet showing youths vandalizing Mozabite property, smashing up the tomb of Amir Moussa, a 16th century Berber leader, and desecrating the ancient cemetery in Ghardaia, as police look on. See: http://english.alarabiya.net/en/News/africa/2014/04/12/Arab-Berber-clashes-wound-dozen-south-of-Algeria.html.

67. *Algerian National Charter* (1976); Stora (2001), 147–48.

68. Francesco Cavatorta, "Alternative Lessons from the 'Algerian Scenario,'" *Perspective on Terrorism* II, 1 (January 2008), 78.

Chapter 7

Forging a Military Identity in Suriname

Paulo Gustavo Pellegrino Correa

The history of military institutions after the decolonization process that took place between the years 1960 and 1970 in Africa and Latin America allows us to better understand the relationship between the military and the state. Armed groups that fought the colonizers in countries like Angola and Mozambique constituted themselves as political and military powers in the newly independent states. Their importance in the fight against the power of the metropolis established their permanence in the political and military power of the new countries, soon to be governed by authoritarian regimes.

It was not until the late twentieth century, and the "third wave of democratization,"[1] that widespread regime change, from authoritarianism to democracy, reshaped the role of military institutions and, consequently, their relationship with their states. As Daniel Zirker, Constantine Danopoulos and Alan Simpson pointed out,[2] military institutions, especially in newly revitalized democracies beset with deep and traditional ethnic divisions after the 1990s, began, at least in some cases, to adopt unique ethnic, or "quasi-ethnic," identities of their own. This meant, according to the authors, that they had begun to develop "a distinctive (and separate) ethos, a separate language (broadly construed—a technical/military patois), a distinctive 'social' history, a separate mythology, a distinctive kind of nationalism (if only to justify a typically weak 'orthodox' military raison d'être), clear (and arguably ascriptive) membership boundaries, and so on."[3]

This group identification in military institutions that tend to share a common history, a regimented behavior and objectives stands in marked contrast with civil society in states where the idea of "us"—often an ethnic group formerly in power in a new democracy—and "them" is deep. In this scenario, the military competes for resources and power for its institution in a decidedly ethnic setting, and to compete on equal footing it must do so with a common identity, one

that can be located within a continuum of relationships, somewhere between culture, in the broad sense, and ethnicity.

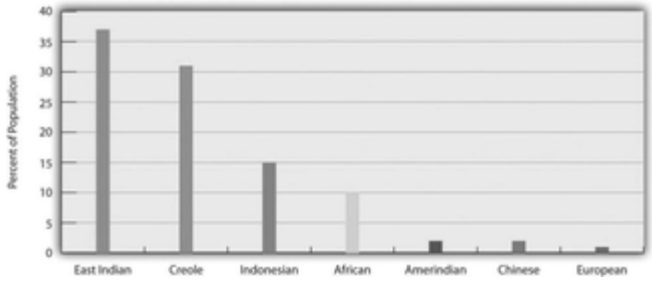
Zirker, Danopoulos and Simpson emphasized that the elusive concept of ethnicity can be understood from “a sense of lineage and/or shared common history,” regardless of its nature or construction.[4] The authors emphasized three schools of thought regarding ethnicity as an important variable in behavioral studies—primordialist, instrumentalist—and constructivist approaches. The inchoate adoption of a quasi-ethnic identity by military institutions seems to be a natural response to the deep ethnic divisions that have accompanied the third wave of democratization in so many of the new democracies in Africa, Asia and even Latin America, including this case study: Suriname.

Suriname: A Young Independent State

Suriname is the youngest independent country in South America. With 100 percent of its territory located in transnational Amazon, and with an area of 163 square kilometers, the population of 529,000 inhabitants of Suriname is concentrated in the coastal region.[5] A number of different ethnic groups dating from the colonial period—Hindus, Creoles (mixture of white and black), Javanese, Maroons,[6] Amerindians, Chinese and Brazilians (see the following figure)—make up an ethnic mosaic that has sought since the colonial period to manage local policy in a consociational form.

The consociational model, as originally proposed by Arend Lijphart, might provide a more favorable and stable institutional framework for the political processes in deeply divided plural societies (that is, those divided into traditional ethnic, religious and linguistic groups, characteristics not negotiable in the political sphere). In a consociational model, the collective decisions would not be made exclusively by a simple majority, or in a plebiscitary form, submitting one of the other groups to a permanent handicap in favor of the majority.[7] Rather, ethnic groups are awarded proportional shares of power, within which democratic decision-making can take place, and between which democratic and quasi-

democratic bargaining can proceed. In the absence of a consociational solution, and with a deeply divided political decision-making process, the military is left at a decided disadvantage. It tends to be victimized internally by those same traditional ethnic divisions while having to present a unified political front in its ethno-political competition for resources. This was the dilemma faced by Suriname shortly after independence.



Percent of Population
Source: *CIA World Factbook 2010*, https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/geos/ns.html.

The economy of Suriname has been dominated since the colonial era by the minerals and energy sector (gold, oil, and aluminum), representing about 30 percent of the gross domestic product (GDP). Agriculture and manufacturing, although small, remain important sectors. In the service sector, 45 percent of GDP is mainly driven by trade and transport activities, while personal services, transport and communication are sectors that are growing most rapidly. The informal sector is also significant and may increase within the current GDP estimates by up to 16 percent, according to World Bank data.[8]

The levels of poverty and inequality in Suriname remain high. The country was at the 105th position in 2012 in the United Nations Development Program's (UNDP) Human Development Index for Development. The UN Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) estimates that 15–20 percent of the population is undernourished. There are also significant gaps between coastal areas, in general wealthier, and the countryside, which is marked by poverty and a lack of accessibility.

Soldiers in Suriname

Instability has been the hallmark of Surinamese politics since independence in 1975. Successive military coups and a civil war from 1986 to 1994 created profound political uncertainty and widespread economic dysfunction. Among the main actors in the transition from early independence to democracy was the military, arguably the most active and most volatile. The current elected president of Suriname is Desiré (Dési) Delano Bouterse, for many years the chief military officer in the country.

The history of the Surinamese military is as recent as the country. With a peaceful independence process promoted by the metropolis, the Netherlands, the role of the military was unlike other independence processes in Latin America, where wars of independence initially (at least) conferred substantial historical importance to military institutions. Suriname, as a colony until fairly recently, had Dutch troops as the military force in a mixed composition of settlers and natives known as *Tropenmacht in Suriname* (TRIS).

The TRIS was never conceived to be a fighting force; it was organized around a modest number of men assigned to duties in a small army and navy led by Dutch officers.[9] Their actions focused on maritime patrols and land border surveillance. The force was strictly limited in part as a result of Dutch concerns regarding the independence process.[10] A strong military force, the Dutch felt, might fuel a *coup d'état* so common at that time among Suriname's South American neighbors.

Classic security issues might have modified this position; the new country had the longest borders (and simmering disputes) with Guyana and French Guiana. With French Guiana, litigation was already in place regarding a territorial dispute on the southern border. The dispute with Guyana is twofold: The first part relates to jurisdiction over the Corentyne River, on the border between the two countries; the second part of the dispute involves the New River Triangle region, located on the southern border of the two countries, next to Brazil. Territorial disputes raise the fundamental "orthodox"

role of the military establishment and represent the most dangerous sort of threat to national security in the South American context.

On the latter issue, Chaitram Singh pointed out that in 1969, just before the independence process, that Surinamese troops, inserted in the region as a way of asserting the Surinamese claim, were easily driven out of the region by the Guyanan military.[11] The Surinamese military nevertheless failed to securitize the dispute, while somewhat enigmatically attaching greater importance to the long-term expansion and political role of armed forces *qua* institution in Suriname.

The civilian politician at the head of the transition process from colony to independent state was Henck Alphonsus Eugène Arron, the leader of the National Party of Suriname. As the most visible politician in the country at the time, and thus the likely post-independence leader, Arron unfortunately did not consider the role that the military would play in post-independence Suriname, despite constant military demonstrations of growing dissatisfaction with their situation, especially among the non-commissioned officers, the eventual 1980 coup protagonists.

As to the major elements that underlay the 1980 military coup, the following should be highlighted:[12]

1. The salary gap between the officers and enlisted men, and especially between officers trained in the Netherlands, who earned more than their subordinates, and all others;
2. The lower numbers of the sergeants in respect to officers, a ratio of 15: 1; to complicate matters, the sergeants were directly in charge of the rest of the enlisted men;
3. The demand of the soldiers for unionization, something that was common at the time in Dutch military culture;
4. Opposition and repression by the Arron government regarding unionization of the military;
5. The questioning of the small role given to the military by the Arron government, limiting it to border patrol and ceremonial parades;
6. An unanswered demand by the army that it be allowed to participate in national development projects;

7. The opposition of the non-commissioned officers to government corruption and political paralysis in building the new country;
8. The ethnic nature of Surinamese politics, enhanced by the National Party of Suriname (NPS), which represented the Creoles, the Hindustani Progressive Party (VHP), and the Indonesian Peasant Party (KTPI).

The reception of the coup by the Surinamese society was controversial. On the one hand, the government's political paralysis after independence did not contribute to the construction of the young state. On the other hand, massive financial support from the Netherlands maintained much of the population in relatively comfortable conditions. Tony Thorndike pointed out in 1990 that the Surinamese population before the 1980 coup was characterized by profound social and ethnic divisions,[13] which hindered the development of a national consciousness. For Thorndike, the Surinamese after independence resembled a company linked to Europe, consuming goods mainly supported by substantial Dutch help, and frustrating those with goals of self-sufficiency.[14] The newspaper *De Ware Tijd* had noted at the time[15] that most Surinamese reacted "passively" to the coup, and this was substantiated by other sources as well.[16] Peter Meel remarked that the coup was even seen with a degree of enthusiasm.[17] As to the ethnic perceptions of the coup, Singh noted that as ethnically segmented a society as Surinamese was, the political reactions based on party affiliations were significant and, of course, tied to ethnic identity. Creoles immediately recognized that it was a Creole government that had been removed from power, and Henck Arron, a Creole leader, who was in jail.[18]

The coup did not have a clearly ethnic character, however, given the decided vagueness of the ethnic identity of the armed forces. If anything, the military maintained a lightly Dutch identity, distinguished by the prestige that it accorded to Surinamese soldiers trained in the Netherlands, and to Dutch culture in general. There was, clearly, a military reaction against the ethno-political civilian power struggle that had beset the new country. Hence, a kind of anti-

ethnic identity seems to have been attractive to the military, one that showed early signs of assuming its own quasi-ethnic form, if not content.

Neither was the coup obviously connected to some sort of bid for power by the armed forces, at least not at first. As noted above, the elements that made up the setting of the coup, the situation of the military, and specifically that of the non-commissioned officers, was the spark that led to Desiré Delano “Dési” Bouterse’s action with his small group of sergeants. Without a coherent policy, an economic program and a popular base,[19] the first actions of the military focused on strengthening its institutional framework.

According to Gary Brana-Shute,[20] the country had already become increasingly militarized. Military officers served in government offices, directed the National Information Service, the News Agency of Suriname, they had replaced several police control functions. The military had expanded their enlisted numbers in the army and navy and had established an air force. Given this expansion of power, the military managed to consolidate themselves in the first years after the coup as a national security force with unlimited power.[21]

Within the military, one of the measures that directly contributed to this consolidation of power was the removal of former officers and the self-promotion of the leaders of the coup. Dési Bouterse promoted himself from sergeant to major, and then to colonel. Another measure was the establishment of the National Military Council, which would oversee the rebuilding of the civilian power structure, seeking to demonstrate to the national and international communities the dictatorship’s commitment to democracy, while imprinting a sense of “revolution” over the impression of yet another military coup in America Latina.

Two points should be highlighted regarding the Surinamese “revolution,” however: First, as to its domestic nature, the population of Suriname had been used to voting since the colonial period, and the revolutionary military model, socialist or not, held little or no charm for them; and second, as to its international nature, during the Cold War any political movement raised warning signs on both sides of the polarized world, and the approach of Bouterse to Cuba was

regarded immediately by the United States as alarming and had no major consequences thanks only to the prompt and effective involvement of Brazil.[22]

After the episode known as the massacre of Fort Zeelandia in 1982, where political opponents of the Bouterse government were murdered, allegedly at the direct behest of the president himself, Dutch aid was stopped, thus beginning a period of great economic crisis. Internal austerity measures were coupled with increased spending on the military. Subsequent confrontations with armed groups of Maroons, repression of political and social movements, and mass migration were additional elements that pushed the military government into a major crisis of legitimacy.[23]

Under domestic and international pressure, and in the midst of this crisis of legitimacy, Bouterse was forced to restore civilian rule. He initiated the writing of a new constitution in 1985 by a commission appointed by him. According to Singh,[24] the leaders of the VHP and NPS parties insisted publicly in immediate free and fair elections for a new parliament without the participation of the military. Bouterse, however, began to meet in secret with the leaders of the parties to forge an agreement for an interim government in partnership with the military, at least until the completion of the new constitution.[25] He also quietly created the Nationale Partij Democratische, the National Democratic Party, at this point, the party that he continued to lead as of 2015.

The promised elections took place in 1987, shortly after the approval of the new constitution. The military retained veto power over the government through the Military Command and the State Council, however, and with the oversight of Bouterse. This, then, was a democracy with a military “moderating power,” and the military, with Bouterse, was firmly in command. The anti-democratic nature of the structure was affirmed by the so-called “telephone coup” of 1990, when the country’s president and ministers were “dismissed” from government by a phone call, ostensibly from Bouterse. Bouterse’s role as head of state during the government that followed was harshly criticized by international bodies. He was accused, among other things, of committing illegal acts of violence

against the civilian population. While attempts to reassess the role of the military were undertaken, such analyses always included the participation of Bouterse, and a focus upon the military establishment's anti-ethnic identity.

Chaintram Singh pointed out that senior military officers in policy-making positions consistently failed to remove the established ethnic-based institutions used to channel popular political participation in the system. These ethnically-based parties maintained the same leaders, and the same inter-ethnic tensions, as had existed before Bouterse's coup. Singh added that "the mere existence of these parties was a constant reminder to the population that they had an alternative to the military they had come to resent."[26]

When the military left power for the first time, it should have meant a return to "orthodox" or traditional military functions, defense of the borders, limited civic action projects, and protection of "national security," minimally defined. It should not have implied the tacit governance of the country from behind the scenes, as had happened in some countries in Africa and Latin America between 1980 and 1990. However, as the easily marginalized military establishment, and one with an anti-ethnic, or quasi-ethnic, identity at that, in a small and poor country, the alternative to a central role in governing the country appeared to be a rapid decline and, ultimately, institutional disestablishment, and the consequent loss of a central role for its unique identity. According to Chaintram,[27] the Surinamese military leadership feared this possible alternative to governing. It feared relegation to periodic military parades, and little else.

Hence, while relinquishing control over the government in 1987 was forced on military officers and Bouterse, by a sense of political illegitimacy and institutional isolation, and domestic and international pressures made continuation in power unbearable, they turned over power to a civilian government at a time when they were certain of their continuing influence on government as guardians of the state. And it was in this role, then, that the military again overthrew government in 1990, provoking, once again, international condemnation and the possibility of foreign intervention. This

ultimately strengthened civilian claims on power, and weakened the military, however.

The 1990s were marked by the democratization process in many of the Latin American countries that had earlier experienced military dictatorships. Bouterse thus faced strong international criticism and a renewed crisis of legitimacy. Nevertheless, the decidedly mixed ethnic identity of the military, its lightly Dutch cultural affinity, and its anti-ethno-political stance, seem to have assisted the claim of a national military identity. Ultimately, however, he was forced once again to call elections. A multi-ethnic coalition of several parties, the New Front (*Nieuw Front voor en Democratie Ontwikkeling*), won the elections, and placed an ally of Bouterse in the presidency, although it succeeded through constitutional amendments in limiting the power of the military, reducing its size and cost, and forcing the retirement of officers close to Bouterse, who was now reduced to his fallback position as the leader of his National Democratic Party, and a “civilian politician” in opposition.

At this juncture, then, Bouterse established himself as the full-time head of his party and participated in subsequent elections in coalition with the New Front. In 2000, he formed the Millennium Coalition, an alliance between the Indonesian Peasants’ Party, led by the National Democratic Party, although he received only a third of the seats in parliament of the New Front. In 2010, the alliance led by Bouterse finally came to power, and he was elected president, this time as a civilian, and one who by then had been convicted in absentia by a Dutch court for drug smuggling, and who was unable to travel abroad because of an Interpol warrant for his arrest.

CONCLUSION

The historic route of the military in post-independence Suriname inevitably leads to a focus upon an individual, Dési Bouterse, and to the unique role played by a newly empowered military establishment in a deeply divided society. Dutch colonial military practices created and trained a multi-ethnic professional force, but one that was largely devoid of native officers, and hence of professional leaders. The creation of a new institutional identity was apparently twofold: First, it

was reactive in nature, and this reaction was to the deep ethnic divisions that had come to dominate political party politics in Suriname; second, it was instrumental. The new officers of the Surinamese military establishment sought upward political and social mobility. They had benefitted immediately and directly from the departure of the Dutch, only to be threatened by an unfolding democratic process that promised only ethnic favoritism and limited avenues of upward mobility for a declining military establishment. Dési Bouterse, a product himself of mixed ethnic background and elite (by the standards of the day) military training, naturally assumed the role of institutional leader. His ruthlessness and single-mindedness in confronting the ethno-political contest required a unified military backing. In this respect, the case of Surinamese military establishment may have approached the model of a quasi-ethnic military identity. As mentioned above, the wage gap between officers and enlisted men, the consistent resistance of governments to unionization of the military, the dissatisfaction with their role in the country, and the consociational model of Surinamese politics, in which the military was never represented, were among the elements that drove the 1980 coup.

The creation of a group identity of an institution excluded from power, devoid of a major role in independent Surinam, and yet one with advanced weaponry, military training, and a recent history of dramatic promotions (following the withdrawal of the Dutch), provided the impetus for previous non-commissioned officers to seize and consolidate political power. Their reaction to pending limitations on their personal pretensions to upward social mobility, and to civilian ethno-politics and the favoritism and corruption that these implied, provided the pretexts, or excuses, for their internal military promotions, their establishment of the National Military Council and the Military Command, their participation in the Council of State, and ultimately their ruthless interventions and institutional benefits, including increased military budgets and the creation of a separate, perhaps multi-ethnic party.

The size of the Surinamese armed forces shortly after independence was a little more than 750 men. From the military coup in 1980, that number increased by more than three times, as

did the military budget.[28] In 2012, with Bouterse in the presidency, the military approached 1900 men.[29] While force modernization still depended upon international donations, primarily from Brazil, the multi-ethnic institution has survived and prospered to some extent in an ethno-political system that has routinely practiced favoritism based upon ethnic identity. Nevertheless, there are clear signs that the military establishment was primarily used to further the political and material ambitions of one man, Dési Bouterse. As a military dictator, Bouterse assured the expansion of the armed forces, given that it was the army that would protect him from civilian reprisals. Moreover, the identity of the military establishment existed in an inverse relationship to Bouterse's consolidation of his power as a civilian politician. As Bouterse's political fortunes rose, the military suffered a drop in size, role and even prestige. Bouterse, despite his conviction in absentia in a Dutch court for drug trafficking, and indictments for abuse of power and human rights violations, has established himself as an independent civilian politician of national prestige and power, impervious to the institution, and its unique quasi-ethnic identity that he helped to fashion, and that originally put him in power.

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6. The Maroons are the descendants of African slaves who fled to the Surinamese forests between the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. After more than half a century of war against colonial troops, the independence of the Maroons was recognized by the signing of a peace treaty with the Dutch in the 1760s. This treaty allowed the Maroons to occupy a large part of the interior of Suriname, which has been their home ever since. According to the Central Bureau of Citizens Administration/Ministry of the Interior, this group represents approximately 15 percent of the population, and since the 1980s has been gradually seeking more political space and respect for their rights as traditional peoples of the region. See also: Central Bureau of Citizens Administration/Ministry of the Interior, *Demografische Data in Suriname 2003 en 2004* (Paramaribo, 2006).
7. See: Chaitram Singh ("Suriname and the Limits of Consociationalism," 2014) and Arend Lijphart, "Os Modelos Majoritário e Consociacional de Democracia," *A Ciência Política nos Anos 80*. (Brasília, Editora da Universidade de Brasília, 1982).
8. Source: http://data.un.org/CountryProfile.aspx?crName=Suriname.
9. The Surinamese Air Force was only established in 1980.
10. Brana-Shute, *Suriname*, 1996.
11. Chaitram Singh, *Guyana: Politics in a Plantation Society.* (New York: Praeger, 1988), 131.
12. See: marcus Colchester, *Forest Politics in Suriname*. Utrëcht: International Books, 1995; Singh, *Guyana*; Singh, "Reining in the

military: re-democratization in Suriname," *Journal of Third World Studies* 24 (Spring 2007), 73; Singh, "Re-democratization in Guyana and Suriname: Critical Comparisons*," European Review of Latin American and Caribbean Studies*, 84 (2008); Singh, "Suriname and the Limits of Consociationalism," *Journal of Third World Studies* 31 (2014).

13. Tony Thorndike, "Suriname and the Military," in *The Dutch Caribbean: Prospects for Democracy*, ed. Betty Sedoc-Dahlberg (New York: Gordon and Breach, 1990).
14. Thorndike, "Suriname and the Military," 60.
15. Singh, C., "Re-democratization in Guyana and Suriname: Critical Comparisons*," European Review of Latin American and Caribbean Studies,* no. 84 (2008).
16. Edward M. Dew, *The Trouble in Suriname, 1975-1993,* Westport, CT: Praeger, 1994, 46.
17. Peter Meel, "The March of Militarization in Suriname," in *Modern Caribbean Politics*, ed. Anthony Payne and Paul Sutton. Baltimore, MD: Johns Hopkins Press, 1993, 180.
18. Meel, March of Militarization, 80.
19. Colchester, 16.
20. Brana-Shute, 1996.
21. Brana-Shute, 1996, 473–74.
22. The fears of political changes in Suriname and a possible tilt to the left made Brazil send in 1983 a diplomatic mission headed by General Danilo Venturini, This mission devised by the United States, because it wanted to make a military intervention in Suriname, however, opted for Brazilian performance. The visit aimed to offer support to Suriname, civil and military assistance programs, seeking to persuade the Bouterse regime to abandon its approach to Cuba and stay close to the West. See URT, J. N. *A lógica da construção de confiança: Relações Brasil-Suriname entre 1975 e 1985, Rev. Bras. Polít. Int.* 53 (2): 70-87 [2010].
23. Colchester, 16–17.
24. Singh, *Re-democratization*, 73.
25. Singh, *Re-democratization*, 85.
26. Singh, *Re-democratization,* 91
27. Singh, "Reining in the Military," 91.

28. Brana-Shute, “A Military and It’s Auxiliaries,” 473.
29. See: International Institute for Strategic Studies. ed. James Hackett. *The Military Balance 2012*, London: Routledge, 2012.

Chapter 8
Conclusion

Daniel G. Zirker

Two critical points are highlighted in this examination of what we have chosen to call “quasi-ethnic identities” in military establishments: First, that although the emergence of this phenomenon has been, at best, gradual and incomplete, it has been increasingly aided by a global learning curve; and second, that its goal or strategy, the strengthening of military autonomy and bargaining power, includes the further isolation and alienation of the military from mainstream society, and hence from democratic practices. As to the first point, information exchange is now so rapid and so pervasive that even a relatively remote military establishment such as that of Guinea or Suriname can be fully aware within hours of developments in “military organizational engineering” across the globe. Of the cases in this volume, only Guinea, Tanzania and Algeria have fully established independently “invented” military cultures, the “quasi-ethnicities” that are the subject of this book. Of those, only Guinea has thus far been able to use its development to establish a largely *separate*, *autonomous* and *independent* military organization for purposes of bargaining, and maintaining a unified military position, and been able to maintain a relatively healthy budget and avoid the civil wars, albeit through a protracted military dictatorship, that have beset all of its West African neighbors.

The invention of a quasi-ethnic identity in the Tanzanian People’s Defence Force (TPDF), while rapid and impressive, served primarily as a vanguard model for the implanting of a national ethnic identity such that, by the 1990s, it became *the* single national, and apparently enduring, ethnic identity of Tanzania.[1] The Algerian military quasi-ethnic invention, on the other hand, has primarily served the interests of a narrow, civil-military elite, rather than as the quasi-ethnic identity of a relatively autonomous and independent corporate military establishment. Each of the other examples—Kenya, Nigeria, Suriname and Uganda—has evinced contrasting manifestations of traditional, or semi-traditional, and periodically changing ethnic balancing of one sort or another, and these military

establishments have struggled to move into the next paradigm, the era of quasi-ethnic identities, as much as they have periodically seemed to strive to do so.

Second, in the so-called “third wave of democratization,”[2] military conscription is rapidly disappearing, and increased professionalization and the isolation of military institutions is increasingly the norm. In deeply divided societies in the developing world, the recruitment of qualified officer candidates often implies the exclusion, and hence social marginalization, of selected, “less developed” traditional ethnic groups, and when this is coupled with the concentration in a national officer corps of nationally scarce expertise, this may intensify the privation of those underdeveloped ethnic groups from one of the key concomitants of national development in many deeply divided countries, the benefits of civic action projects[3] conducted by the “national” military establishment. With the common absence of one or more of the major traditional ethnic groups among the officer corps, charges of bias and neglect of those ethnic regions necessarily follows. An independent military culture, one that is verifiably and demonstrably “national,” if only because it is not linked to a traditional ethnic interest, is the only possible inoculation to this kind of predictable crisis.

Even with a careful blend of traditional ethnic groups in the officer corps and enlisted ranks, the lot of most military establishments in deeply plural societies seems to be one of political and social isolation. An examination of African military establishments, for example, almost immediately points to their isolation based upon recent colonial heritage, persisting colonial military customs, internal ethnic struggles within the military, and the frequent manipulation of the armed forces by civilian elites. Again, the only potential antidote to these maladies, although not without its threat to civil society, involves the development within the military institution of an independent cultural identity, and the transformation of the military institution into a kind of cultural “melting pot,” where officers, in particular, are able “to lose some of their regional or tribal characteristics.”[4] In this interpretation, the officers’ mess might be used to encourage “a sense of exclusiveness.” As William Gutteridge notes, the threat of this close identification among officers is

immediately apparent. It involves fostering a “club-like atmosphere . . . in which conspiracy can flourish.”[5] One can easily see how this would begin to overcome traditional ethnic barriers within the officer corps, at a potentially drastic cost.

Conspiracies are legion among junior officers in deeply divided societies, however. The basis of “conspiracy” in such cases tends to be either traditional ethnic attachments, or rank-on-rank, where the higher ranks have been carefully selected by political elites, and the lower ranks are desperately seeking alliances. The traditional bases of most of these rank-based alliances, in turn, are . . . traditionally ethnic. Traditional ethnic attachments, in fact, hold the key to most successful coup conspiracies and, later, to their downfall. The development of a single quasi-ethnic military identity could begin to attenuate at least these bases of critical alliances. Inter-rank conspiracies would remain a possibility, of course, but one critical and potentially debilitating source of such alliances might be replaced. It is a prospect that no modernizing military establishment can afford to ignore.

What of the long-term threats that are posed to civil society by military establishments in deeply plural societies that are able to adopt their own unique quasi-ethnic identities and thereby set themselves apart from the vagaries of traditional ethnic identities? These appear to be significant. A new ethnic, or quasi-ethnic, group with the legitimate exercise of force, heavily armed, endowed with a sense of corporate unity and a mission to guard national security, *according to their own definition*, would appear to trump all other players in an ethno-political competition for resources and power. If one were to add a relatively low regard for democratic practices and human rights, the prospect of a newly developed military quasi-ethnic identity is a frightening one indeed. Nevertheless, its development in many military establishments would be linked to institutional survival, particularly as the orthodox military *raison d’être*, defense of the borders against a foreign military incursion, gradually disappeared, and civilian authorities increasingly questioned the need to have a military establishment in the first place.[6] These arguments are commonplace in the neo-liberal “new world order,” and countries like Panama and Costa Rica have

existed for decades without the threat or cost of military establishments. Will military institutions in deeply divided societies continue to tolerate this lightly veiled threat to their survival?

The case studies in this volume have compared and contrasted military establishments at various stages in the recognition and development of their own institutional identities. Some of them, Guinea, Tanzania, Algeria, and perhaps Suriname, have manifested quasi-ethnic identities that have put them at odds, at least initially and in different ways, with traditional ethnic groups in their countries. The Ugandan, Kenyan and Nigerian military establishments have experienced varying forms of traditional ethnic balancing in their respective officer corps. In each case, however, the national military institution was pressured by the changing ethno-politics of a newly independent country and, except in the cases of Kenya and Tanzania, responded with intervention and/or violence.

Mamadou Bah's chapter on Guinea is an exploration of a rich question: Why has Guinea not suffered from the bloody civil wars that have affected virtually all of its West African neighbors? His analysis points to Guinea's separate military identity as a primary, if not exclusive, explanation. Ibikunle Adeakin examines Nigeria, one of Guinea's neighbors and a strongly contrasting case study. Nigeria is a survivor of sub-Saharan Africa's first major ethnically-based civil war, the Biafran conflict. He traces the coups of 1966, the removal of the Igbo officers, the accession to, and retention of power by the Hausa-Fulani generals, and the isolation and eventual defeat of the Igbo secession attempt. He explores the military handover of power to civilians in 1999 and their surprising difficulties in dealing with Boko Haram, a northern-based (Hausa-Fulani) Muslim terrorist group, and speculates as to the possible ethnic and political motives.

My own chapter contrasting the cases of Tanzania and Uganda, and Thomas Stubbs's chapter on Kenya take these three very closely linked East African cases and underscore their vastly different outcomes. Uganda and Kenya, British East Africa, have had relatively few, highly competitive ethnic groups, while Tanganyika (mainland Tanzania), German East Africa prior to WWI, and a British protectorate thereafter, had over 120 mostly non-competitive groups. All three countries experienced a military mutiny at the dawn of their

independence, the East African mutiny of December 1963, and each of these countries handled it differently. Kenya was not quite independent, and allowed British military units to step in. Later it would carefully balance its officer corps with the ruling (usually Kikuyu) ethnicity, while keeping the military out of politics. Uganda, rotating and balancing traditional ethnic identities in the officer corps, acceded to the pay and promotion demands of the mutineers, and experienced a violent coup and disastrous military dictatorship seven years later. The military has long played a key role in maintaining the power of presidents, always via the ethnic balancing of senior officers. Tanzania completely disestablished its branch of the neo-colonial army, implanting a new military force based on a *lingua franca*, Swahili, and a strong commitment to a socialist view of national development, with a view to using it as a vanguard agency to promote a new, unified national culture. Today, none of the three countries can be described as having established a quasi-ethnic military identity for the purpose of establishing an independent and autonomous institution, although Tanzania came the closest.

Algeria created perhaps the purest independent military identity based upon a faulty image of its revolution. In reality, as Yassine Belkamel's chapter illustrates, a profound Thermidor in the Algerian revolution had led to the assassination or exile of most of its radical revolutionary leaders, and a group of opportunistic, reactionary, French-trained officers who had spent most of the revolution fighting on the side of the French, and only crossed over in the waning hours of the fight to take up leadership positions on the margins of the revolutionary struggle, were able very gradually to "Arabize" and secularize the military culture by capturing key politicians and maintaining the military institution in power in their own interests. After the first democratic elections in the late 1980s, it was this group, the "French Officers," that launched their bid for absolute power via a bloody coup, and a civil war that has cost as many as two hundred thousand lives. They have subsequently ruled Algeria through the military establishment and its quasi-ethnic culture, using figurehead presidents and reportedly rigged elections. Suriname, on a much smaller scale, has maintained a unique military culture based loosely of Dutch military culture and governed by the criminal

mentality of a charismatic leader, Dési Bouterse. As Paulo Gustavo Pellegrino Correa notes in his chapter, the development of an independent and autonomous military identity can serve as a shield for criminal activity in this new, neo-liberal global environment. Again, opportunism and instrumentalism are the best explanations of the development of a quasi-ethnic military identity in Suriname.

At the heart of this book is a basic question common to all institutions, one that was perhaps best phrased in the title of Herbert Kaufman's now-classic work, *Are Government Organizations Immortal?*[7] Kaufman's work did demonstrate that most government institutions, at least in the United States, tend to adapt to survive, that is, when facing a loss of mission and government support, they tend to change their clientele and their mission precisely in order to maintain a budget and . . . survive. This is reminiscent of the motives discussed in this volume for the development of a military quasi-ethnic identity, particularly when placed in a contemporary historical context.

With the end of the Cold War, and the phantasmagoric concept of the "peace dividend," attention turned to the hundreds of national armies that continued to draw scarce national resources in a world of debt and hunger . . . and the relatively few cases of "orthodox" military missions, that is, of invasions of national borders by neighboring countries. Indeed, when Tanzania invaded Uganda in 1979, it was said to have been the first time in modern African history that one independent African country had invaded and occupied another. While Non-State Armed Groups (NSAGs) have increased dramatically in this new world of cultural conflict, this fundamental question remains: Are military establishments really necessary in their current numbers and distribution?

Our book does not address this question. Rather, it examines the way in which military establishments are increasingly dodging it, removing themselves from civilian pressures, the internal disputes of traditional ethnic antagonisms, the external disputes of national ethno-politics, and even budgetary disputes to which a divided and dependent institution is so vulnerable. An ethnically homogeneous army in an age of ethno-politics will always be a formidable bargaining agent, however. In the final analysis, armies have a

legitimate monopoly of violence, and they have guns, a powerful combination.

NOTES

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1. A possible caveat here involves the separate culture of the tiny “country” of Zanzibar, a late addition to Tanzania, and still accorded a separate culture as part of its “confederal” structure.
2. Samuel P. Huntington, *The Third Wave: Democratization in the Late Twentieth Century* (Norman: Univeristy of Oklahoma Press, 1993).
3. Engineering and technology projects, medical assistance, disaster relief, etc.
4. William Gutteridge, “Military Elites in Ghana and Nigeria,” *African Forum* 2 (1966): 40.
5. Gutteridge, “Military Elites,” 40.
6. Costa Rica disestablished its military by constitutional provision in 1953 after a bloody civil war, and Panama did so in the 1990s. Julius Nyerere, of Tanzania, pressed unsuccessfully for an African military force to replace African national armies in the 1960s and 1970s.
7. Herbert Kaufman, *Are Government Organizations Immortal?* (Washington, DC: Brookings Institution, 1976).

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