

Political Parties, Praetorianism, and Politicization of the Tanzanian Military

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Abstract

The development of the post-independence Tanzanian state occurred during a period in which Julius Nyerere provided political and economic guidance via the African Socialist program of Ujamaa. The Tanzanian military was integral to this effort. The relationship between the military and the government was close, and the politicization of the Tanzanian People's Defense Forces created a deeply loyal military committed to the sustainment of Tanzanian political and social stability. The political development of Tanzania has not been without external influence; the political-military model of the Communist Chinese has impressed itself on the Tanzanian military. Analyzing the impact of politicization and praetorianism on the Tanzanian military gives an opportunity to assess how political parties may preserve cultural, economic, and social hegemony by political inclusion of one of their most formidable opponents. The "hidden hand" of the society can then be studied to determine to what extent political-military relationships dominated Tanzanian social networks and how they continue to modulate the military's response to change.

Revealing the “Hidden Hand” in Tanzanian Political-Military Affairs:

A Network Science Approach

The state of Tanzania has charted a course unlike many of its East African neighbors. Beginning in 1962 with independence from Britain, and continuing into the African Socialist experiment of *Ujamaa*, Tanzania has weathered political and economic shocks that in many African states such as Ghana, Liberia, Uganda, and Ethiopia have resulted in military-led coups. Surprisingly, one major factor that has helped Tanzania and increased social resiliency has been the involvement of the military in Tanzanian political affairs. Upon deeper reflection, and with the aid of social network analysis it becomes apparent that rather than operating as a political outsider and potential competitor for state power, the Tanzanian military has steadied the state when external factors such as invasion by Idi Amin’s Uganda, structural adjustment, and multi-party politics threatened to divide the loyalties of Tanzanian society. What factors have made the military such a political stalwart of the Tanganyika African National Union (TANU), and its successor, the Chama cha Mapinduzi (CCM), and will the military continue to support the CCM as the multi-party political process matures in Tanzanian politics?

Tanganyika gained its independence from Britain in 1961, and in 1963 Zanzibar left British colonial control. Both states faced significant challenges to unity, and by 1964, the political situation in Tanzania presented the Tanganyika African National Union (TANU), Tanganyika’s national political party, with a series of issues that revolved around alternative groups capable of presenting themselves as alternatives to TANU. Labor organizers and TANU representatives attempted to resolve labor disputes, while

other TANU representatives attempted to assess the impact of the recent violent Zanzibari revolution, and the growing dissatisfaction in the military ranks (Pinkney, p.96-97). The potential for a military revolt lay just below the surface. The Tanganyikan military rose up in mutiny on January 20, 1964 in reaction to poor pay and the retention of British officers. Although the mutiny was not an overt rejection of the TANU government, it challenged TANU's monopoly on power because the army publically demanded the replacement of British officers with Tanganyikans, rather than wait for a gradual replacement system (Sadlier, 269). Mutineers also attacked TANU party functionaries in their frustrated rampage, beating advocates for Africanization and radicals alike. Inclusion in TANU singled out members as insiders in a system that neglected the military's needs (Bienen, 372). The military, despite its initial violent actions, lacked a cohesive strategy for attaining power, and after Julius Nyerere's government overcame the mutineers with British assistance, the army was confined to barracks. The transfer of officer ranks from British to Tanganyikans became tangential to reasserting TANU's control of national discourse and a monopoly on the administration of violence within the state.

The long-term survival of Julius Nyerere's socialist state after the military coup of 1964 appeared in doubt. However, President Nyerere acted swiftly and decisively to reconstruct the military. After dismissing the mutineers from the service, Nyerere directed that military ties with Britain were to be cut and the military rebuilt along Communist Chinese military lines; the military became part of the state. TANU sought to monopolize power in the Tanzanian state and recognized that a military exempt from its direct control remained a threat to party dominance (Pinkney, p.120-121). Rather than

risk the threat of a competing group in a praetorian system in which various groups would compete for power and influence, the Tanzanian people's Defense Force was created as an extension of TANU (Kieh and Agbese, p.98).

One of the first steps undertaken by TANU was to break the monopoly on military service enjoyed by certain ethnic groups that could rally around their identity to contest the state. The colonial policy of recruiting "warrior groups" such as the Hehe, Ngoni, and Nyamwezi groups, which had formed the bulk of the German and British colonial armies, was immediately discontinued. While Nyerere utilized the temporary expedient of Nigerian soldiers to reestablish control in Tanganyika, he broke the exclusive military service access of these groups (Sadler, 273). However, President Nyerere kept a network of ethnic Kuryas (from the Lake Victoria region) as informants within the state security apparatus, a policy that later culminated with the ascension of an ethnic Kurya, Josepho Warioba to the offices of Prime Minister and Vice-President respectively (Southall and Melber, 241-242). Separating potential opponents from traditional power bases and networks was the first step in a process that grew to include the creation of a national army.

The political process in many former British colonies excluded the military from participating in politics. Many African leaders, among them Ghana's Kwame Nkrumah, believed that the military has no role in politics (Hutchful and Bathily, 293). President Nyerere however took a different approach and turned the military recruitment process into a political one by changing how recruits would enter military service, and the form that their service would take (Hodd, 163). The Tanganyikan national service army (Tanzanian after unification with Zanzibar in April 26, 1964) military was heavily

politicized from the moment of its recreation. Recruits were accessed through TANU's youth wing, the TYL, and membership in the army required TANU membership. TYL recruits would be led by National Servicemen in a military organization that set new requirements for recruits. Young citizens aged 18 to 25 could join, and as an added solidarity building measure, all instruction was mandated to be taught in Swahili. Obligations for new recruits were also heavy: an initial period of public work before eligibility to join the police or army; those opting out of military or police service were required to build new settlements (Bienen, 376). The initial national service period soon gave way to an intensely indoctrinated military and police force that until 1992 were all TANU or CCM party members. Party membership offered the Tanzanian military something few Western militaries enjoy: a political voice and full party membership.

The Chinese People's Liberation Army and the Chinese policy of political dualism influenced the reorganization of the Tanzanian military. Initial efforts to organize the TPDF as an extension of TANU entailed enlisting officers as political educators and trainers down to the company level. Political organization was reflected in a military organization in which company commanders became party chairmen and their executive officers party secretaries for individual companies (Hutchful and Bathily, 295). The political reorganization of the Tanzanian military created a single body of TANU stalwarts that could be mobilized in national or party defense against enemies foreign or domestic. When President Nyerere authorized the military to join TANU, he created a special region that capitalized on the military's hierarchical organization. Bienen captures the significance of this arrangement clearly: "Police and soldiers enroll in TANU as whole units, and company commanders are heads of the TANU committee

established in the company. Officers are expected to do party liaison work and to explain to the troops their role in Tanzania's development..." (376-377). The appointment of a Political Commissar of the Tanzanian People's Defense Forces gave TANU a position high in the military and ensured TANU maintained surveillance on the politicization process even after 1977 when TANU became the CCM. The amount of time spent in the political indoctrination of TPDF officers was impressive relative to other training responsibilities. Political commissars received ideological training in China, and officers trained at Sandhurst and Canada received additional training in China and the Soviet Union (Hutchful and Bathily, 295-297). There were rewards for loyalty and within the TANU and CCM political systems there were distractions aplenty for high level officers.

The military enjoyed privileges in a system that recognized its influence and ensured its compliance through special allowances and a reward system for high-level supporters. Military members that became government ministers shared in the benefits: chauffeur-driven cars; free utilities; special funds; and domestic servants. Politically astute officers advanced their interests within the TANU and CCM and "assumed positions in the government as civil servants, party leaders, trade unions leaders, academics, and directors and managers of parastatal organizations" (Hutchful and Bathily, 298). The Tanzanian state, by incorporating the military into its political structures and sharing benefits available to political elites, tied the military firmly to the state. The Tanzanian military also benefitted indirectly from war with Uganda. The war, which began in 1978, resulted between 1978 and 1979 in a "37 percent increase in military spending and an increase in government expenditures from 12.3 percent to 24.4 percent" (Hounnikpo, p.56). The close relationship between the state and military translated into increased finances at a

time when military victory against Uganda increased military prestige. The Tanzanian military received additional military equipment and the CCM political apparatus remained in control.

The military assumed greater influence in the CCM in the 1980s, and as a result the was entitled to hold a conference two days before the CCM Party Annual Delegate meeting to pick the President candidate. The military also enjoyed the status of a region (or state) within the Tanzanian government until 1992. The *mkoa wa majeshi*, or military region, had its own regional party chairman, party secretary, and delegation (Southall and Henning, 98). Retired Major General Herman Lupogo of the TPDF believed that the change from a military outside the political sphere, to one that owed its existence to President Nyerere, created an organization dependent on the president for promotion down to battalion level. Loyalty therefore was to the state, and the president as a person (Lupogo, 7). Additional networks formed in the TPDF because of political control as social class became of lesser importance than performance for promotion, and therefore different social groups mixed through formal and informal party networks. These networks became more important as officers rose in position and influence, and through party as well as military channels, could allocate influence or seek to influence policy (Lupogo, 8). The Tanzanian military became as much a part of the political system as it was a nation-building device.

Preference for active or former military officers among political campaign grew as Tanzanian government transitioned from Nyerere's socialist system into a more open capitalist model. According to Major General Lupogo, "The military provided almost 25

percent of the district commissioners in the mid 1980s and over 30 percent by 1990. District and regional commissioners also assumed heavy administrative and political responsibilities.” Military officers often ran successfully for election to parliament and were represented in the cabinet (Lupogo, 10). The increased influence of the military in politics may have been due to a perception of discipline instilled by military training, a lack of ties to economic or ethnic coalitions, and lack of class predominance (Odsetola, 94). Multi-party democracy provoked little disruption amongst the TPDF supporters of the CCM, and many remained with the CCM because the new political opposition offered no comparable network to compete with the decades-long formal and informal tied developed between the CCM and the TPDF. Although the TPDF ceased to be a part of the CCM in 1992, it did not seek to establish itself as an alternative to the CCM (Kieh and Agbese, 98). Political change did not result in regime change by military forces resistant to change. The legacy of a politicized Tanzanian military inculcated with CCM ideology, and extensively integrated into the Tanzanian political system, was an influential group that did not resist political change. Because the Tanzanian military was not outside the system, but a part of the dominant political party, it continued to provide stability instead of seizing power.

The TANU and CCM parties incorporated the military into the political system as one method by which to control the influence of the military as a counter to the TANU and CCM-dominated state. The military benefitted from their involvement in Tanzanian government, and in the late 1990s a number of former military men entered Tanzanian politics, among them now President Jakaya Kikwete. The Tanzanian military has infiltrated politics and business through political networks, and the officers of the 1980s

and 1990 have become the political elite of the Twenty-First Tanzanian state.

Praetorianism may have been averted, but the stability generated by involving the military in political affairs has given way to a state in which military personnel continue play a role in national affairs.

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