

STATE, SOCIETY, AND NATION-BUILDING IN TANZANIA AND KENYA

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My research explores the ways that states teach their citizens to identify with the nation in an effort to understand why some states are more effective at building national community than others. Bringing a primarily Europe-focused literature on nation-building to bear on the cases of Tanzania and Kenya has allowed me to focus on spaces of state-society interaction to better explain sub-Saharan Africa's nation-building successes and failures. My dissertation project, "Recounting the Nation: State, Society, and Nation-Building in Tanzania, Kenya, Singapore, and Malaysia," asks why Tanzania pursued a more effective nation-building strategy, premised on constructing a cohesive, ethnically inclusive nation, where its neighbors, namely Kenya, have failed to do so. This research agenda takes a two-pronged approach that interrogates not only the content of nationalisms and the constructive process, but also explains what conditions influence the strategy pursued by post-independence elites and their successors. Beyond exploring the mechanics of nationalist mobilization and pedagogy, I ask why Tanzania pursued a more successful and more inclusive nation-building strategy, as opposed to a more ethnically oriented one as in Kenya.

I take a comparative historical approach to tracing this process: considering independence as a moment in which enough is in flux to make room for fundamental change, I argue that varying levels of violence of the independence experience shaped the policies that immediately followed. In short, the gradual, legal independence trajectory adopted by Tanzanian elites gave the nationalist movement time to coalesce and mobilize around an inclusive vision of who would belong to the nation, who would be involved in achieving independence, and who would claim the nation's independence legacy. In contrast, emerging into independence from a protracted civil conflict in Kenya meant that the nation could not

move forward without struggling over how best to remember and forget the trauma of a war in which Kenyans died on both sides of the fighting. I argue that it is harder to build community in the face of such loss and that it is complicated to parse who can claim to be bringers of independence when different ethnic communities participated in the anticolonial struggle in a variety of ways.

These conditions and the choices elites made as a result set Tanzania and Kenya on diverging nation-building trajectories and altered the ways that citizens learned to relate to the state. My dissertation challenges the idea that nation-building is not successful in sub-Saharan Africa; rather, under the right conditions and with policies designed to create community, nations like Tanzania can emerge from arbitrary colonial constructs. I argue that this identity work is done in schools, museums, and through public ceremony, and that some states are

better at using these tools than others. Conducted with the support of a Fulbright-Hays DDRA, my ten-month period of fieldwork in Tanzania and Kenya focused on the empirical work for my dissertation on analyzing the content of national museum exhibits, textbooks, and school curricula, as well as on talking to elites and everyday Tanzanians about their nationalist educations and experiences. Using these materials gives us insight into not only where nation-building has happened historically and continues to happen today, but also what national narratives are being promoted in official pedagogical spaces. In other words, the discourses presented in museums and schools give us the script of the official national story, a sense of who belongs to the nation, and an idea of what values the state seeks to promote through these media.

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