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## **CIVILIAN CONTROL OF THE MILITARY IN TANZANIA AND ZAMBIA: EXPLAINING PERSISTENT EXCEPTIONALISM**

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**Civilian control of the military in Tanzania and Zambia:  
Explaining persistent exceptionalism**

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Military interventions seem endemic in sub-Saharan Africa. Presenting data for the period between 1956 and 2001, Patrick McGowan counts a total of 80 successful military coups along with 108 failed coup attempts and 139 coup plots (McGowan 2003). 62.5 percent of all states in sub-Saharan Africa have experienced at least one successful coup and 37.5 percent have even suffered multiple coups. 41 out of 48 states (85.4 percent) have had either coups or failed coup attempts. Only six countries have remained completely free of all three types of military intervention events.<sup>1</sup> Interestingly, military interventions have remained pervasive over time. Since the first coup in the Sudan in November 1958 there has been no single year without coup activity by African militaries. The period from 1958 to 1979 witnessed 47 successful coups, 46 failed coups and 66 coup plots, while there were still 33 successful coups, 62 failed coups and 73 coup plots between 1980 and 2001. Even the democratisation trend from the early 1990s did not lead to a significant reduction in coup occurrence. Against this background, Clarks's (2007) thesis that democratisation has facilitated 'the decline of the African military coups' seems premature.

The pervasiveness of the African military coup notwithstanding, one should not lose sight of the fact that no less than 18 out of the 48 states in sub-Saharan Africa (37.5 percent) have so far avoided a successful military take-over. This is a very significant number and shows that many African states have proved remarkably immune to the 'coup epidemic' for almost five decades of independent statehood. Tanzania and Zambia are two such cases of persistent exceptionalism. Even though both of these countries have faced coup attempts (Tanzania in 1964; Zambia in 1980 and 1988) and coup plots (Tanzania in 1969 and 1983; Zambia in 1990 and 1997),<sup>2</sup> they have always been able to avert successful military intervention. This continued non-occurrence of effective military coups raises the following question: why have countries like Tanzania and Zambia been able to maintain civilian control over the military?

A brief look at the abundant literature on the causes of military coups provides very few answers to this question (Luckham 1994). Beyond countless single case studies, there is a substantial body of quantitative literature that seeks to identify the structural factors underlying the pervasiveness of the African military coup (Morrison et al. 1972; Jackman 1978; Johnson et al. 1984; McGowan and Johnson 1984; Jackman et al. 1986; Lunde 1991; Jenkins and Kposowa 1990, 1992; Kposowa and Jenkins 1993).<sup>3</sup> The cited risk factors include, among others, high levels of social mobilisation, an 'overload' in political participation, the political centrality of the military, ethnic plurality and competition, corrupt and authoritarian rule, widespread public discontent as well as economic dependency and decline. Such 'structural' explanations of African military interventions are problematic for a number of reasons. First, the quantitative literature is highly inconclusive with no consensus on which structural characteristics drive the occurrence of military coups (Jackman et al.

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<sup>1</sup> Botswana, Cape Verde, Eritrea, Cape Verde, Namibia and South Africa.

<sup>2</sup> Note that McGowan (2003) wrongly codes the 1980 coup plot in Zambia as a coup attempt.

<sup>3</sup> For a critique of such 'structural explanations' see Goldsworthy 1986.

1986). Second, scholars have tended to use broad and indirect measures that are hardly suitable to account for differences in coup proneness,<sup>4</sup> while lacking the data to explore the arguably more important factors relating to intra-military politics and civil-military integration. Third, the structural features commonly said to increase the vulnerability to military coups are often just as characteristics of polities like Tanzania and Zambia where coups have *not* occurred.

More revealing in terms of understanding coup avoidance in Tanzania and Zambia is the surprisingly scarce literature on civil-military stability in Africa. Key in this respect is still the pioneering work by David Goldsworthy (1981) and Samuel Decalo (1989). Trying to understand civilian control of the military in sixteen coup-free African states, Goldsworthy broadly distinguishes between ‘objective’ and ‘subjective’ control. He finds that while ‘objective’ control through state legitimacy may play a role, patterns of civilian control are largely subjective – i.e. civilian control is advanced through a number of specific techniques including, among others, ascriptive recruitment, political indoctrination, co-optation of army personnel, the creation of paramilitary counterweights and the use of a foreign patron. Similarly, Decalo investigates the modalities of civil-military stability in twelve African states. He identifies seven strategies of civilian control, which can be summarised in three overlapping modalities of civil-military integration: the external guarantor, the trade-off and the legitimised modalities.

While the work by Goldsworthy and Decalo is a useful starting point, it merely enumerates a large number of relevant factors and therefore lacks focus and prioritisation. Moreover, their findings are hampered by their rather weak empirical base – a problem that goes back to the relatively large number of cases. Against this background, I propose an alternative, more focused approach to understanding civil-military stability. My hypothesis is that the avoidance of successful military intervention is due to the systematic integration of the army into a country’s ‘elite bargain’.<sup>5</sup> This integration typically relies on three key strategies: (1) inclusive recruitment policies; (2) political control through the ruling party; and (3) the provision of generous access to state patronage. The combined outcome of such strategies will be a non-partisan army that is broadly reflective of the country’s ethno-regional diversity and develops both ideological and material identification effects with the civilian government. As the army is given a stake in the survival of the existing ‘elite bargain’, the military mainstream will see no need for a coup and guarantee the persistence of civilian rule.

In what follows I will probe the plausibility of these propositions by using Tanzania and Zambia as case studies. In each case, I will first detail the three strategies to ensure civilian control of the military and then go on to assess how this has helped to avoid successful military intervention in moments of crises. I conclude by summarising the findings of the two case studies and outlining possible avenues for future research.

### **Civil-military relations in Tanzania**

‘The mutiny was a strike of the army people, and it went out of control. It shocked the country. But every cloud has a silver lining, as the British say. It enabled us to

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<sup>4</sup> To account for the effects of ethnic diversity, for instance, scholars typically use ethnic fractionalisation indexes as indirect measures rather than trying to explore ethnic tensions within the military (e.g. Kposowa and Jenkins 1993). The assumed causal mechanisms between a country’s ethnic demography and the occurrence of a military coup remain entirely unclear.

<sup>5</sup> For details on the notion of the elite bargain see Lindemann 2010a; DiJohn and Putzel 2009.

build an army almost from scratch. Many institutions we have inherited, but the army is something we built ourselves' (Julius Nyerere, cited in Lupogo 2001).

The current Tanzanian army grew out of units of the King's African Rifles that were stationed in Tanganyika under British colonial rule. Significantly, colonial army recruitment policies were not as divisionary as in other colonies such as Uganda. Even though soldiers of the colonial army were drawn from only seven of the about 120 ethnic groups, these seven groups were dispersed country-wide, including the Sukuma and Hehe in the North, the Ngoni and Yao in the South, the Nyamwezi and Fipa in the West as well as the Hehe in the Centre (Omari 2002: 93). As a consequence, no single ethnic group or region came to dominate the military. This lack of ethno-regional bias notwithstanding, the nationalist movement under the leadership of Julius Nyerere perceived the army as an instrument of colonial repression and therefore refused to establish any links with the few African officers in the colonial army.

This situation did not change much with the advent of independence on December 9, 1961 when the army was composed of two-thousand soldiers with only three African officers (Lupogo 2001). Even though the King's African Rifles were renamed into Tanganyika Rifles, they continued to form the core of the new country's armed forces under British command. Africanisation of the officer corps was proceeding slowly and soldiers faced persistent discrimination at the hands of British officers and developed grievances over low pay. Training was British-oriented and did little to improve the skills of recruits. No universal conscription had yet been introduced. Most importantly, there was almost no contact between the political authorities of Tanganyika and the armed forces whereby the latter 'had no machinery of making its grievances known to the Government' (Swai 1991: 94). While the ruling party Tanganyika African National Union (TANU) took great care to accommodate other sectorial interests such as the civil service or the trade unions (Lindemann and Putzel forthcoming), the army was ignored in the struggle for sharing the fruits of independence. This neglect of the armed forces can arguably be explained by TANU's confidence that it could keep 'the army apolitical' and make it serve the civilian government (Omari 2002: 93). When asked whether the military mutiny in Congo could be repeated in Tanganyika after independence, President Nyerere (cited in Omari 2002: 93) even overconfidently replied that:

'[t]hese things cannot happen here. We have a strong organisation, TANU. The Congo did not have that kind of organisation. And further there is not the slightest chance that forces of law and order in Tanganyika will mutiny.'

The outbreak of the military mutiny in early 1964 showed that TANU's confidence in the neutrality of the armed forces was unfounded. On January 19, 1964, the first battalion left its barracks, arrested British officers and took key installations in Dar es Salaam, including the radio station, police headquarters, the airport and State House. As the President went into hiding, the Tabora-based second battalion joined the mutiny two days later. In negotiations with government, the mutineers demanded both the expulsion of British officers and higher pay. The mutiny was accompanied by widespread looting in Dar es Salaam and was suppressed only with the help of British troops. Interpretations on how much of a threat the military mutiny represented to the TANU-led government vary considerably. Henry Bienen has claimed that the mutineers not only never came close to seizing power due to the organisational strength of TANU but also repeatedly emphasised that they only wanted Africanisation and improved wages (Bienen 1978).<sup>6</sup> Such downplaying of the coup attempt is

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<sup>6</sup> According to Bienen, TANU ranks remained united and the civilian posts it controlled continued to function throughout. Civil servants did not join in, nor did key traditional leaders endorse the mutiny.

at least questionable. According to insiders, like the Tanzanian Colonel Swai, the mutiny shook the country in its foundations and underlined the fragility of the political system. Swai recalls that the coup attempt was organised by a ‘handful local rank and file who were poorly trained and armed and yet managed to force the whole government machinery to a standstill for several days’. Despite its often alleged organisational strength, TANU was unable to organise any local resistance and was only rescued by ‘a handful of British marines’ (Swai 1991: 95).

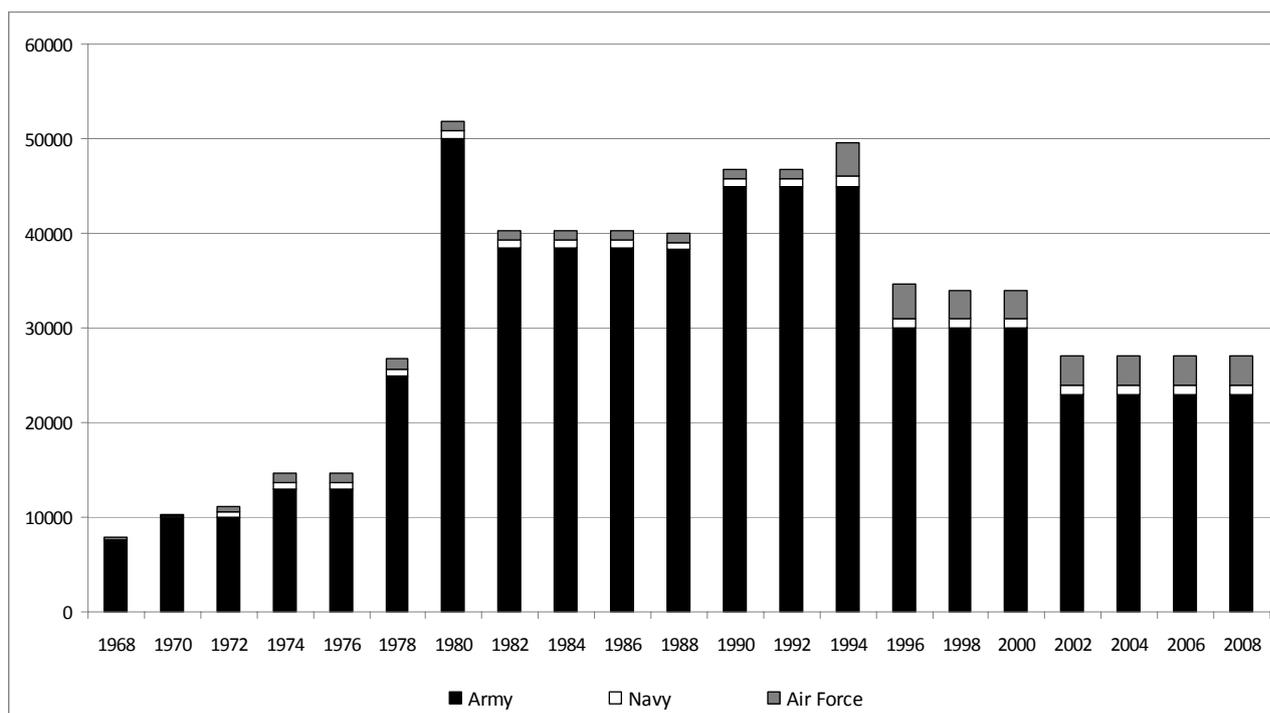
What is certain is that TANU felt extremely threatened by the 1964 military, not least since the mutiny lasted much longer than in neighbouring Uganda and involved almost the entire army. As a result, the Tanzanian leadership decided to abolish the old army and construct an entirely new force under tight civilian control. This policy relied on three key measures: inclusive recruitment policies, political control through the ruling party and the provision of generous access to state patronage.

### *Measures to ensure civilian control of the Tanzanian military*

#### **1. Inclusive recruitment**

The new army was established in September 1964 and named the Tanzanian People’s Defence Force (TPDF). It was divided into three main branches: land forces, navy and air force. The total size of the Tanzanian army was soon dramatically increased from 7,900 in 1968 to 51,850 in 1980 when the war against Idi Amin’s Uganda reached its height (see Figure 1). Afterwards, it remained at a constantly high level until the mid-1990s. More recently, the TPDF was downsized from 49,600 in 1994 to 27,000 in 2008.

Recruitment policies were from the beginning inclusive in nature. A key policy in this respect was the attempt to balance ethnic representation within the military. After 1964, the introduction of a ‘strict formula of balanced recruitment and promotion’ helped to nationalise the newly created army, while allowing for the purging of ‘potentially adventurist cultural cohorts’ (Zirker 1992: 112). This approach was maintained over time, whereby the TPDF has always remained a national force that is broadly reflective of the country’s ethno-regional diversity. Appointments to the officer corps are made by the president and are based on individual merit and performance (Lupogo 2001). Accordingly, even three sons of presidents have failed to reach the commissioned ranks. In order to ensure the army’s professionalism, a national military academy was set up and sources of training diversified (Omari 2002: 94).



**Figure 1: Size of the Tanzanian People's Defence Force (TPDF), 1968-2008**

Source: Compiled based on IISS various years.

The inclusive character of the armed forces also became evident in TANU's attempt to establish the TPDF as a 'people's army'. In 1965, national service was introduced, eventually becoming voluntary for primary school leavers, but obligatory for secondary school leavers for two years. From the early 1970s, this move was complemented by the creation of a citizen's militia, drawing on traditions of village self-defence. The recruitment of the militia was done by the ruling party (but recruits were not limited to TANU members only), while the army carried out the training (Swai 1991: 96). Upon completion of the training recruits became part of a 'reserve army' whose command was directly under the Party rather than the military. Interestingly, the militia's role was not confined to war time when it assisted the regular army at the front. Instead, it was also active during peace time, performing police and security duties. The size of the citizen's militia grew from 35,000 in 1976 to 100,000 in the mid-1980s, and still numbered 80,000 in 2008 (IISS various years). Such dramatic 'militarisation of society' (Swai 1991: 96) has been useful in at least three different ways: first, it helped to build confidence between the broader population and the army, which had been perceived as an alien and oppressive force since colonial rule; second, it ensured that all ethnic groups in every district of the country were made part of the country's security architecture; and third, it provided the ruling party with a counterbalance to the TPDF, which no longer monopolises the use of force.

## 2. Political control through the ruling party

In the context of the one-party state introduced in 1965, the TPDF was from the beginning strictly subordinated to the ruling party and initially even drew on the base of the TANU youth wing (Omari 2002: 94). Even though it soon became necessary to recall former members of the Tanganyika Rifles due to the limited numbers of recruited TANU youths, TANU membership was required as a prerequisite to join the armed forces. From the mid-1960s, political commissars were introduced into the army in order to ensure 'a new, correctly politicised military establishment' (Zirker 1992: 112). Moreover, political education in the

army was accorded a very prominent role. Over time, up to 25 percent of training time was reserved for political study, which stressed the history of the national struggle and the ideology of the party.

With the 1971 Party Guidelines (Mwongozo), the policy of having political commissars in the army with the express duty of politicising it was institutionalised (Swai 1991: 98ff.). Posts of political education officers were created at every level of the command structure and filled with officers who had graduated from the Party Ideological College, Kivukoni. Moreover, the 1971 Party Guidelines also formally redefined the relationship between the ruling party and the armed forces. While all soldiers had been required to join TANU from 1964, it was not until after 1971 that a formal party structure was introduced into the army (see Table 1). The party structure in the military – operated from 1971 and approved by the TANU/CCM (*Chama cha Mapinduzi*, Party of the Revolution) National Executive Committee (NEC) in 1978 – was modelled after the overall structure of the ruling party and introduced a ‘kind of democratic centralism’ (Omari 2002: 100) into the army. By the late 1970s, Nyerere identified the army as ‘the most politicized institution in Tanzania’ (ACR 1977/1978: B408).

**Table 1: TANU/CCM organs in the Tanzanian People’s Defence Force (TPDF)**

Source: Swai 1991: 99.

<b>ARMY</b>	Army Conference
	Army Executive Committee
	Army Political Committee
<b>DIVISION</b>	Division Conference
	Division Executive Committee
	Division Political Committee
<b>BRIGADE</b>	Brigade Conference
	Brigade Executive Committee
	Brigade Political Committee
<b>UNIT</b>	General Meeting
	Battalion Executive Committee
	Battalion Political Committee
<b>COMPANY</b>	Meeting of all Members of the Company
	Company Executive Committee

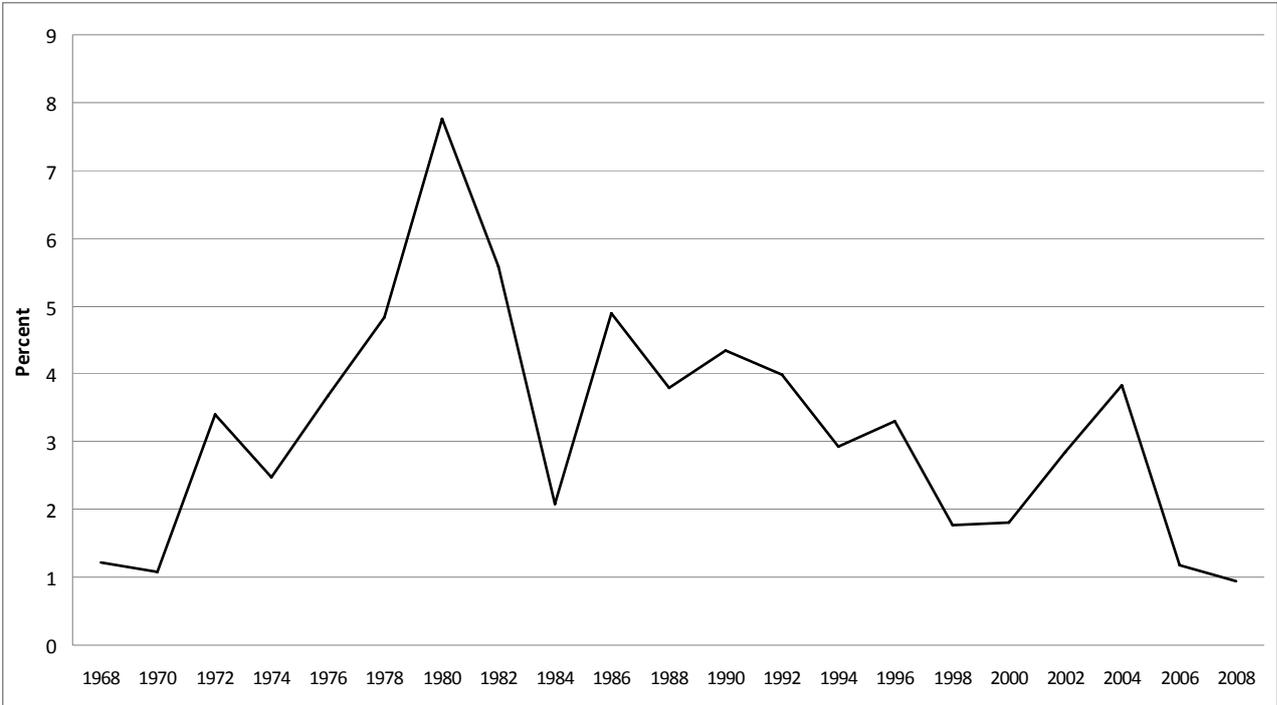
Even though the army party hierarchy remained subordinate to the ruling party’s NEC, it nonetheless gave the military an opportunity to participate in the formulation of party policy. This opportunity was further extended in 1981 when the military was for the first time granted formal representation at the ruling party’s sittings (Swai 1991: 100ff.). This meant that the armed forces were turned into a ‘party region’ with districts, and therefore got the right to elect their own representatives to the National Conference. The military representation was equivalent to three districts – a non-negligible representation if one considers that the entire Party had no more than 113 in the country. The ‘military region’ was chaired by the chief of the defence forces, who became a member of the CCM NEC and the National Conference.

The re-introduction of multi-party politics in 1992 brought about important changes in the relationship between the army and the ruling party. While thirty years of civilian-military integration had created a situation where it was becoming difficult to draw a line between CCM and the army, the civilian and military spheres now had to be formally de-linked

(Omari 2002: 102). As a consequence, party structures in the army were abolished and army personnel are now prohibited from being involved in politics: they can no longer join political parties. However, the available evidence suggests that CCM is still able to exercise considerable political control over the TPDF through more informal patterns of cooptation.

**3. Access to state patronage**

A third strategy to ensure civilian control in Tanzania has been to provide the army with generous access to state patronage. On the one hand, this strategy came to be reflected in rising military budgets since the late 1960s, which can be interpreted as a systematic attempt of cooptation. Between 1970 and 1990, the percentage of the national budget allocated to the military increased from 4 to 14 percent, while the budget share for education decreased from 14 to 4 percent (Zirker 1992: 117). Similarly, the defence budget as share of GDP increased dramatically from the late 1960s to the mid-1980s and remained at a relatively high level thereafter (see Figure 2).

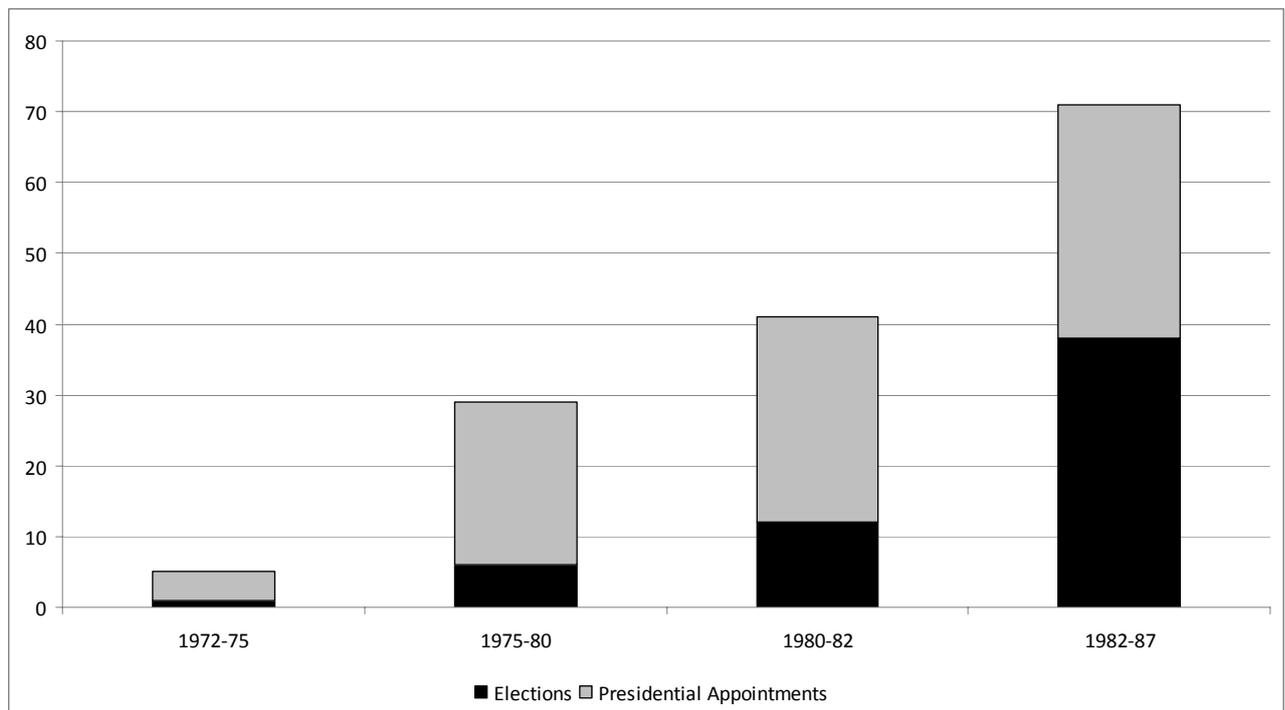


**Figure 2: Tanzanian defence budget as share of GDP, 1968-2008**

Source: Compiled based on IISS various years.

On the other hand, since the early 1970s the political authorities have successfully tried to co-opt military leaders into positions of party and government (Omari 2002: 101ff.). In this context, military officers were either directly appointed by the president or allowed to run for political office without having to give up their jobs. In case of election, they were granted an unpaid leave and could return to their original position upon completion of their service. The ensuing ‘militarisation of the bureaucracy’ gained pace throughout the 1970s and especially the 1980s (see Figure 3). From the early 1980s, five seats of the CCM NEC were set aside to be contested exclusively by the army and cabinet posts were opened to army officers either through election to parliament or direct presidential appointment (Swai 1991: 101). In 1982, more than 30 percent of all regional party secretaries were military personnel, while 15 percent of the district party secretaries and commissioners were army officers (Omari 2002: 101). Five years later, 15 percent of the CCM NEC members were senior officers, whereas 24

percent of the regional party secretaries and 20 percent of the ruling party's national conference delegates were former soldiers. As a consequence, the Tanzanian administration looked like a 'civilian-military coalition' by the late 1980s.



**Figure 3: Civilian posts held by army personnel through elections and presidential appointments, 1972-1987**

Source: Compiled based on Swai 1991: 101.

Note that civilian posts include Members of Parliament (MPs) and Regional/District Party Chairmen.

Interestingly, Omari reports that the habit of co-opting army members into the civilian sphere has continued even after the end of the one-party state in 1992 (Swai 1991: 102). By 2002, 45 percent of regional commissioners and 20 percent of the district commissioners were still of military background. Also, many top ranking military officers contested the 1995 elections under the umbrella of the CCM even though they were now required to resign their army duties with no possibility of returning afterwards. Beyond these 'traditional' forms of civil-military integration, the army has also been allowed to benefit from 'new' sources of patronage, including involvement in gold mining, commercial links with the Mugabe regime in Zimbabwe and gun running in the Democratic Republic of Congo (Kelsall 2003: 62). Kelsall interprets this as evidence that the TPDF is slowly turning into 'a law unto itself' and cites a dissident member of the Tanzanian parliament who analysed the army's involvement in gold mining in the following terms:

'No man wants his wife to go into business alone. If a man allows his wife to go into business that suggests to me that he is no longer able to feed her'.

Altogether, the available evidence suggests that the army leadership continues to benefit from generous access to state patronage and therefore still aligns itself with the ruling party even in the era of multi-party politics.

### ***Civil-military integration and the avoidance of military intervention***

Tanzania's ruling party learned a lesson from the unexpected army mutiny of 1964, and has done everything to cement civilian control by integrating the military into the country's 'elite bargain'. The result of these efforts is an inclusive, ethnically balanced army that is not only heavily politicised due to decades of political control and indoctrination, but also benefits from enduringly lavish access to state patronage. As the armed forces have become ideologically and materially intertwined with the regime, they have developed a stake in the latter's survival. Seen from this perspective, the forging of a 'civilian-military coalition' has been the surest way to avoid successful military intervention. This is aptly summarised by the Tanzanian Maj.-Gen. Herman Lupogo (2001):

'[T]he armed forces did not feel left out of the action, as they were represented in the cabinet and in the regional and district offices. They also had a big presence in the urban and rural areas as militia instructors. They could therefore not point accusing fingers at other political leaders because they were in it together. The military was part of the government and the party hierarchy. *It could almost be maintained that they did not need a coup d'état*'. (Own emphasis)

This is not to deny that there were a few moments of crisis when the relationship between the civilian and military leadership was put to a test. One such moment occurred in the wake of the 1967 Arusha Declaration, which laid out the country's policy of socialism and self-reliance and caused considerable disgruntlement among those whose property had been nationalised. This ultimately motivated some politicians and a handful of army officers to hatch a coup plot in 1969 (Lupogo 2001). However, the latter had only extremely limited support in the newly created army, where the higher ranks of the officer corps remained loyal to party and government. As a consequence, the coup plot was uncovered in the early stages and never had a chance to succeed. Nevertheless, it sent warning signals throughout the TANU leadership and – combined with Amin's 1971 coup d'état in neighbouring Uganda – reinforced the ruling party's resolve to strengthen civilian control over the army.

Another crisis in civil-military relations occurred in the early 1980s when the sweeping victory in the war with Uganda left Tanzania with an ambiguous legacy (Lupogo 2001). On the positive side, it demonstrated the TANU's achievements in building an effective military force that commanded enormous popular support and could be mobilised within short periods of time. On the negative side, the war had left the country with an oversized and confident army that became increasingly difficult to control. To make matters worse, the serious economic downturn at the time increased the overall vulnerability of the regime. It is in this context that a second coup plot was hatched in 1982/83, again involving both civilian and military conspirers (ACR 1982/1983: B287; 1983/1984: B278). As in 1969, support for the plot was confined to relatively isolated pockets in the lower ranks of the officer corps, evident in the fact that the arrested plotters in the army only included three colonels and seventeen other junior officers. While the pre-empted coup was never a serious threat, it nonetheless highlighted a certain discontent in the armed forces. This explains not only why high budget allocations to the military were maintained even in times of the worst economic crisis, but also why more and more army officers were co-opted into party and government throughout the 1980s. As the 'civilian-military coalition' reached its peak, the potential of a successful military coup could be defused.

At the same time, the ruling party also managed to contain the Sungu Sungu movement that had developed in the most populous regions of the country 'as a popular peasant army

reacting to the cattle rustling and illegal smuggling of gold and ivory from the rural areas' (Campbell 1992:101. See also Heald 2006). As the state failed to deliver security to ordinary citizens in times of economic decline (especially in the countryside), the movement started to dispense justice itself through popular democratic village assemblies – a form of self-organisation that bypassed the courts, the police and the party structures. Faced with this challenge, the government initially sought to use its intelligence organs to infiltrate and undermine the movement. But as the Sungu Sungu grew to immense proportions with over five-million citizens participating, the ruling party skilfully retreated behind the populist traditions and declared the movement to be the 'real rural people's militia' (Campbell 1992:101). As the Sungu Sungu were integrated into the village-security structure, CCM had successfully co-opted this 'tremendous burst of popular energy'.

A final critical moment occurred with end of the one-party state in 1992 that required the formal de-linking of the military and civilian spheres. As party structures were removed from the army, Tanzania's achievements in subordinating the army under political control seemed endangered. However, the expected crisis has so far not materialised, not least because CCM has managed to maintain itself in power. While formal control over the army has declined, the ruling party continues to lubricate the old 'ties' with the TPDF through generous access to state structures and resources. The central question remains whether the military has become institutionalised to the point that it can serve any political masters who occupy state offices. Should another political party gain power, it will either have to purge all known CCM members in the army or be prepared to face hostilities.

### **Civil-military relations in Zambia**

Historically, the Northern Rhodesia Regiment – the forerunner to the Zambian Army – grew out of the Northern Rhodesia Police that was established soon after the British South Africa Company began to administer Northern Rhodesia on behalf of the British Crown in 1891 (Phiri 2002: 3). It was for this reason that even after its establishment in 1933, the Northern Rhodesia Regiment remained predominantly occupied with constabulary duties to protect the colonial power. As in the Tanzanian case, colonial recruitment policies were not as divisionary as in many other African colonies. Whereas the Northern Rhodesian Police had initially recruited from five ethnic groups only, the Northern Rhodesian Regiment extended recruitment to twelve out of the colony's 73 ethnic groups (Haantobolo 2008: 92ff.). Significantly, these groups hailed from all parts of the country, including the Bemba and Bisa from the North, the Tonga from the South, the Nsenga, Chewa, Ngoni and Tumbuka from the East, the Lozi from the West, and the Lunda, Luchazi, Luvale and Kaonde from the North-West. As a consequence, no single ethnic group or region was in the position to dominate the armed forces.

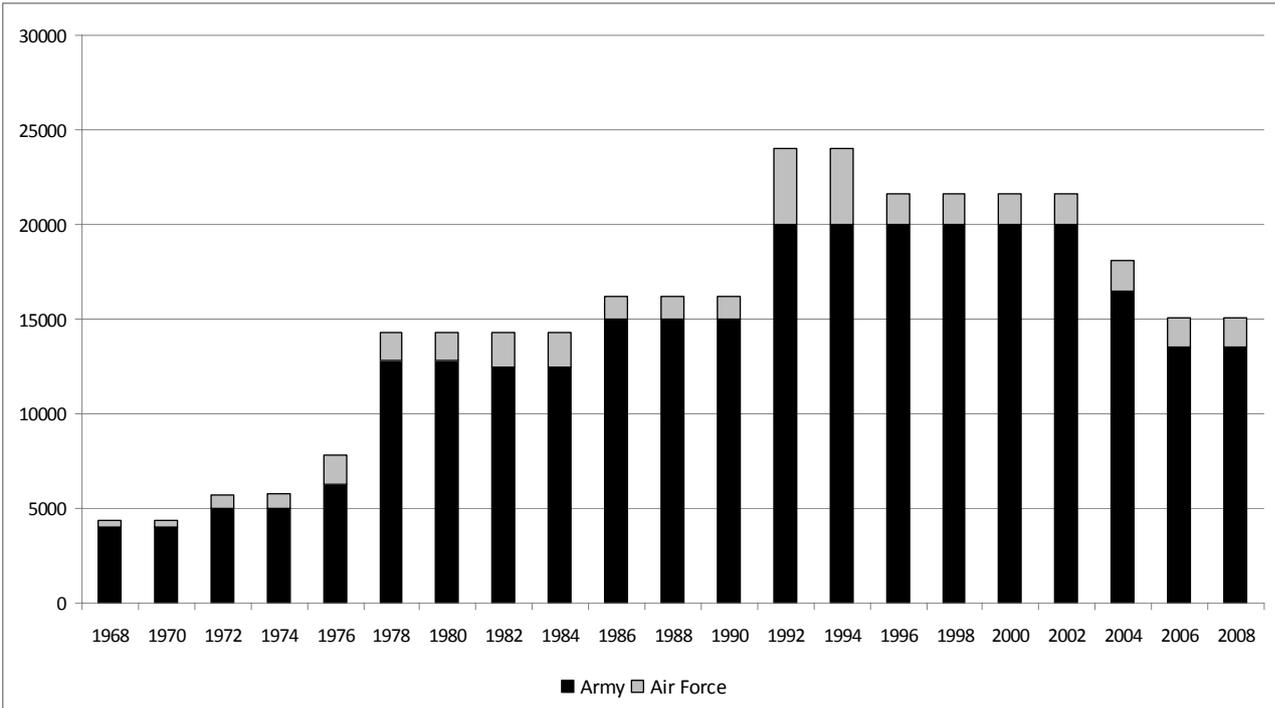
Even though the army was generally perceived as a tool of colonial oppression, the nationalist movement under the leadership of Kenneth Kaunda established – in sharp contrast to the situation in Tanzania – very close contacts with African officers in the Northern Rhodesian Regiment. Sikota Wina, a key member of the liberation movement, recalls that senior African officers in the army and police would even secretly inform the 'freedom fighters' whenever the colonial government planned a crackdown on the nationalists (Interview, Sikota Wina, Lusaka, October 4, 2008). As a consequence, there was little distrust between civilian and military leaders when Zambia reached independence in 1964. At the same time, however, the 1964 military coup attempt in Tanzania just a few months before Zambia's independence had sent a timely warning to the leadership of the country's ruling party, the United National

Independence Party (UNIP), that harmonious civil-military relations could not be taken for granted. Trying to avoid the experience of Nyerere, who was a close friend of Kaunda, UNIP immediately set out to submit the Zambian army to tight civilian control. As in Tanzania, this quest for civilian control relied on three key measures: inclusive recruitment policies, political control through the ruling party and the provision of generous access to state patronage.

**Measures to ensure civilian control of the Zambian military**

**1. Inclusive recruitment**

At independence, the Northern Rhodesian Regiment was renamed the Zambian Defence Forces (ZDF), and came to consist of the Zambia Army (ZA) and the Zambia Air Force (ZAF). Later a third pillar was added with the creation of the Zambia National Service (ZNS) in 1971 (see below). Whereas the UNIP government inherited an army of only 2,900 soldiers from Northern Rhodesia, the size of the ZDF was rapidly expanded from 4,400 in 1968 to 16,200 in 1986 (see Figure 4). This dramatic growth was closely related to regional threats to national security, including the unilateral declaration of independence in Southern Rhodesia, liberation struggles in Angola, Mozambique and Namibia as well as South Africa’s recurrent destabilisation attempts (Agyeman-Duah 1992: 145).



**Figure 4: Size of the Zambian Defence Force (ZDF), 1968-2008**  
 Source: Compiled based on IISS various years.

Drawing on the experience of Tanzania, where slow Africanisation had been behind the 1964 coup attempt, UNIP decided to ‘Zambianise’ the army’s officer corps as quickly as possible. Accordingly, African officers – especially those trained at the Royal Military Academy in Sandhurst – were rapidly promoted, while British officers were replaced through an early retirement scheme (Haantobolo 2008: 140ff.). The first Zambian army and air-force commanders were appointed in 1971. Interestingly, however, Zambian officers were first given supernumerary appointments whereby they worked side by side with the expatriate

officers until the latter finally left. This allowed UNIP not only to ensure a smooth handover of military duties but also enabled it to observe the performance and loyalty of the Zambian officers. In 1972, Kaunda even listened to warnings by British officers that a precipitated dismissal of all expatriates might lead to a military coup like in Nkrumah's Ghana and allowed the contracts of remaining expatriate military personnel to run up to the end of the Zambianisation programme in 1979. Although the extended stay of the British delayed Zambianisation, it gave the government enough time to train adequate replacements and helped to avoid a Uganda-like situation where a too rapidly Africanised officer with great privileges had ultimately developed political ambitions.

**Table 2: Distribution of army commanders between language groups, 1976-2008**

Source: Own data compiled based on Wele 1995: 158; Interviews, General Malimba Masheke, August 7, 2008; Dr Geoffrey Haantolobo, Lusaka, July 31, 2008.

<b>SECOND REPUBLIC</b>		
<b>Unified command structure (1976)</b>		
<i>Zambia National Defence Force</i>		
Gen. G. K. Chinkuli (Tonga)		
Lt.-Gen. P. D. Zuze (Nyanja)		
Lt.-Gen. B. N. Mibenge (Bemba)		
<b>De-unified command structure (1980)</b>		
<i>Air Force</i>	<i>Army</i>	<i>National Service</i>
Maj.-Gen. C. Kabwe (Bemba)	Gen. M. N. Masheke (Barotse)	Brig.-Gen. C. J. Nyirenda (Nyanja)
Lt. Gen. A. Lungu (Nyanja)	Lt.-Gen. C. S. Tembo (Nyanja)	Brig.-Gen. F. S. Mulenga (Bemba)
Maj.-Gen. Simbule (Bemba)	Lt.-Gen. G. M. Kalenge (North-Western)	Maj.-Gen. T. Fara (Nyanja)
Lt.-Gen. Simutowe (Bemba)	Lt.-Gen. F. G. Sibamba (Barotse)	
<b>THIRD REPUBLIC</b>		
<i>Air Force</i>	<i>Army</i>	<i>National Service</i>
Lt. -Gen. R. Shikapwasha (Tonga)	Gen. N. M. Simbeye (Bemba)	Lt.-Gen. W. G. Funjika (North-Western)
Lt.-Gen. S. Kayumba (North-Western)	Lt.-Gen. S. L. Mumbi (Nyanja)	Maj.-Gen. M. Mbao (Nyanja)
Lt.-Gen. Ch. Singogo (Bemba)	Lt.-Gen. G. R. Musengule (Bemba)	
Lt. Gen. S. Mapala (Nyanja)	Lt.-Gen. I. Chisuzi (Tonga)	Maj.-Gen. R. Chisheta (Bemba)

Recruitment into the Zambian army was based not only merit but also on Kaunda's principle of 'tribal balancing' that was practiced at all levels government (Lindemann 2010b). Following the country's overarching motto of 'One Zambia, One Nation', the ruling party abolished all racial or ethnic discrimination in recruitment for the ZDF, not least since it recognised that ethno-regional imbalances had played a major role in military interventions

across sub-Saharan Africa (Haantobolo 2008: 136; Lungu and Ngoma 2005: 317). At the level of the 'rank-and-file', a newly introduced quota system prescribed that army units were to be composed of soldiers from all provinces and districts – a system that ensured that all ethnic groups had a stake in the army (Interview, General Malimba Masheke, August 7, 2008). To further ensure the national integration of the armed forces, trained soldiers were purposefully posted outside their home areas – for example, soldiers from Solwezi in North-Western Province were posted to Chipata in Eastern Province. Similarly, the officer corps was deliberately drawn from all parts of the country. While detailed information on the composition of the entire officer corps is not available, a close look at the linguistic affiliation of Zambian army commanders during the Second Republic shows that all of the country's five major language groups (Bemba, Nyanja, Tonga, Lozi and North-Western) have over time enjoyed representation at the very top of the military hierarchy (see Table 2). Interestingly, insiders like Peter Matoka (Interview, July 16, 2008), one of the most long-standing ministers under Kaunda, claim that national integration within the army was facilitated by the fact that the first army commander, General Chinkuli, was from the small Lenje tribe rather than from one of the bigger ethnic groups – a situation that helped to avoid patterns of tribal dominance:

'If we had started with someone from a big tribe like the Bemba, maybe the tribal disease would have grown. But we started with a brilliant young man from a small tribe'.

The national outlook of the military was also enhanced by the creation of the ZNS as a third pillar of the army. The ZNS emerged from the UNIP Youth Wing that had established Youth Production Camps in all districts of Zambia after independence and was also mandated to provide youths with military training (Haantobolo 2008: 146ff.). In 1971, the ZNS was formally established and involved all Zambians between 18 and 35 who – upon graduation – became members of a reserve army, the so-called Home Guard. Similar to Tanzania's citizen militia, the Zambian ZNS proved useful in different ways. First, it combined military training with training in food production and thereby bridged the gap between the broader population and army personnel in a creative and productive way. Second, the government's policy of dispersing ZNS camps throughout the territory anchored the military in every corner of the country and contributed to the emergence of a nationwide sense of belonging.

Significantly, inclusive recruitment policies in the army – that was progressively downsized to 15,100 in 2008 (see Figure 4) – were retained even after UNIP lost power to Frederick Chiluba's Movement for Multiparty Democracy (MMD) in the 1991 elections. According to Mbita Chitala, member of the Defence Council under Chiluba, ethnic balancing was continued at all levels of the armed forces to ensure 'that the whole country is represented' (Interview, Mbita Chitala, Lusaka, July 29, 2008). This claim is confirmed when analysing the linguistic affiliation of all army commanders during the Third Republic (see Table 2). Allegations of a Bemba-bias under Chiluba notwithstanding, the available evidence indicates that the top command positions in the army are still distributed fairly equitably among the country's major language groups.

## **2. Political control through the ruling party**

During the First Republic (1964-1973), political control of the military was mainly achieved through the establishment of the Defence Council, which included the president, key ministers (defence, finance, works and supply, and transport) and the ZA and ZAF commanders (Phiri 2002: 7ff.). At this stage, political control through the ruling party remained minimal. This changed, however, with the introduction of the one-party state in

1973, when the Kaunda government made a deliberate attempt to politicise the army. Even though the degree of civil-military integration never reached the same degree as in Tanzania, UNIP organs commonly referred to as ‘works committees’ were introduced in the barracks. Appointments to key army positions were generally given to those believed to be loyal to the ruling party. Moreover, all ranks had to participate in political education seminars where party policy was explained and loyalty to the one-party state was promoted (ACR 1975/1976: B384).

Equally important in terms of civilian control over the army was the establishment of a highly centralised Department of Military Intelligence, which operated undercover from the Ministry of Defence and managed to place its agents at all levels of the army (Haantobolo 2008: 175ff.). The systematic collection of information on army personnel was made possible by the creation of ‘defence and security committees’ at the national, provincial and district levels, which met frequently and uncovered almost every anti-party activity. All this helped the Kaunda government to demote, dismiss or even detain all elements identified as disloyal to the one-party state.

Patterns of political control over the army changed with the end of the one-party state in 1991, when the civilian and military spheres had to be formally de-linked. Frederick Chiluba’s MMD, which captured power in the October 1991 elections, held the view that the military should be politically neutral and therefore moved to professionalise the ZDF (Phiri 2002: 12; Haantobolo 2008: 203). As a result, party structures and political education in the army were abolished. Instead, the Chiluba government strengthened both the role of the Defence Council and parliamentary oversight over the military. Breaking with past practice, estimates of expenditure by the Ministry of Defence have been subjected to parliamentary debate and scrutiny since the early 1990s. The protagonists of parliamentary control over the military are two parliamentary committees – the Committee on National Security and Foreign Affairs and the Public Accounts Committee – as well the Office of the Auditor-General. Particularly influential have been the annual reports by the Public Accounts Committee, which revealed many irregularities in military spending, especially in the procurement of goods and services. As part of a drive to curb corruption since 2001, the Mwanawasa government directed that all the people implicated in the misappropriation of government resources were to be prosecuted. By 2004, a number of former army commanders and other officers had been arrested and appeared in civil courts.

### **3. Access to state patronage**

Finally, all Zambian governments have made a sustained effort to provide the Zambian army in general and high-ranking military leaders in particular with generous access to state patronage. Under Kaunda, this became evident in dramatically increased defence budgets from the late 1960s. Figure 5 shows that the defence budget as share of GDP increased dramatically from the late 1960s. As this growing military expenditure was no longer made public from 1970 onwards, the army leadership gained considerable discretion in the distribution of financial resources as well as control over personnel policy and defence planning. Moreover, the army was from the beginning granted further material privileges, including free access to meali meal (the country’s staple food) and subsidised prices for other foodstuffs and beer.



**Figure 5: Zambian defence budget as share of GDP, 1968-2008**

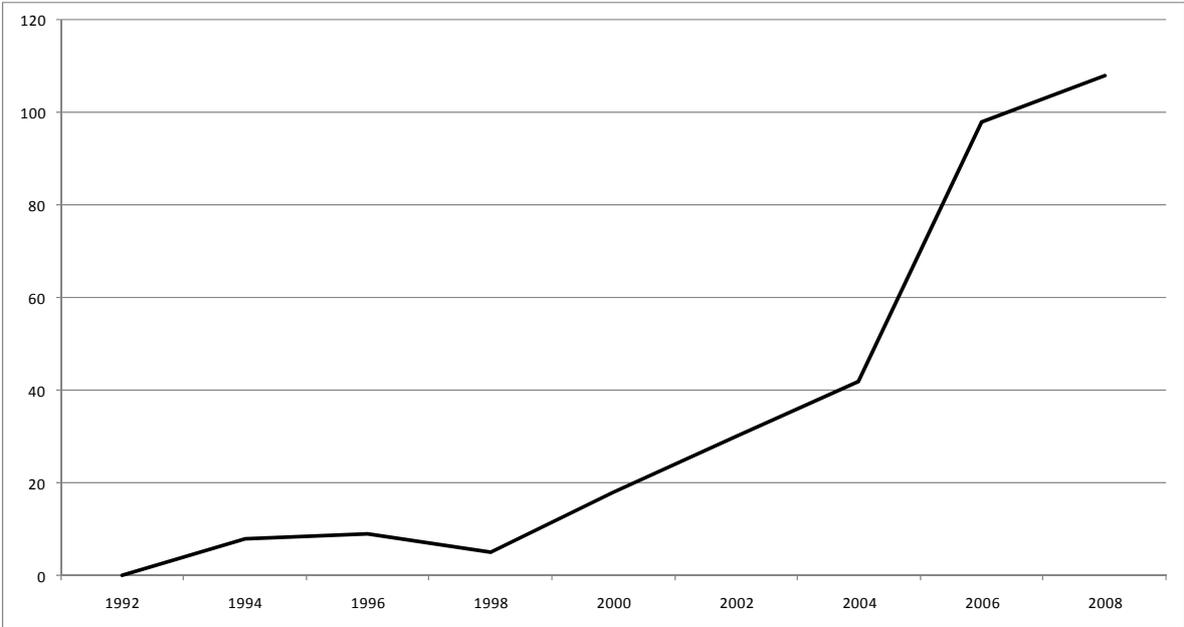
Source: Compiled based on IISS various years.

Furthermore, the Second Republic witnessed a progressive ‘militarisation’ of the civilian sphere whereby high-ranking army leaders were offered lucrative positions at all levels of government. This began as early as 1973, when Kaunda nominated the three heads of the armed services to parliament and appointed all three of them as ministers of state (ACR 1973/1974: B333).<sup>7</sup> Such a strategy of cooptation was maintained throughout the 1970s and 1980s, with many current or former army officers being appointed to the cabinet, the UNIP Central Committee or as district governors. Prominent ministers with military background included, among others, Major-General Chinkuli, General Masheke, Lieutenant-General Mibenge, Brigadier-General Haimbe and Lieutenant-General Lungu. As more and more army officers were serving in high-ranking civilian positions, people started wondering whether the president was slowly turning over the country to soldiers (ACR 1988/1989: B758). Altogether, the Second Republic saw the forging of a ‘civilian-military coalition’ that looked very much alike the one in Nyerere’s Tanzania.

The return to multipartyism in 1991 brought about certain changes. Most importantly, all military officers who had been appointed to civilian positions under Kaunda were either retired or retrenched (Haantobolo 2008: 203). Yet, the MMD by no means fully abandoned UNIP’s strategy of appointing former military personnel to high political office. Accordingly, two out of three vice-presidents under Chiluba were of military background, including Brigadier Miyanda and Lieutenant-General Tembo. Even under Mwanawasa former military officers like Lieutenant-General Shikapwasha (Minister of Home Affairs) or Brigadier-General Chituwo (Minister of Health) occupied key cabinet positions, while many others were given lucrative posts as ambassadors. This indicates that careers still do not end with retirement from the army.

<sup>7</sup> The nominated included Insp.-Gen. Chela (Minister of State of Home Affairs), Air-Com. Zuze and Maj.-Gen. Chinkuli (both Ministers of State of Defence).

Moreover, the available evidence indicates that the *Zambian army* continues to benefit from access to considerable state patronage. Even though the defence budget as share of GDP declined after the MMD took over (see Figure 5), the military retained its traditional privileges, such as free meal and subsidised beer. Also, the army seems to be kept comfortable through ‘new’ forms of patronage, which help to ‘buy off’ the very top army leadership. Under Chiluba, the military leadership was allegedly heavily implicated in the proliferating corruption scandals, which involved considerable material benefits. Such allegations have now been confirmed by the fact that several of Chiluba’s high-ranking army officers were prosecuted and convicted in civil courts after Mwanawasa took over in 2001, including, among others, Lieutenant-Generals Funjika, Kayumba, Singogo and Musengule (*Saturday Star*, March 10, 2004; *Agence France Presse*, December 30, 2006; *Times of Zambia*, March 3, 2009). More recently, the government has managed to keep the army busy by sending large numbers of military officers to participate in lucrative peace-keeping missions. By now, the country is involved in a total of nine such missions worldwide (Côte d’Ivoire, DRC, Ethiopia/Eritrea, Liberia, Nepal, Serbia, Liberia and Sudan) whereby the number of *Zambian observers* has grown from 8 in 1994 to 108 in 2008 (see Figure 6). This has left behind a rather small number of officers who can be more easily monitored.



**Figure 6: Number of Zambian observers in peace-keeping missions, 1992-2008**  
 Source: Compiled based on IISS various years.

***Civil-military integration and the avoidance of military intervention***

The *Zambian army* has always been deeply integrated into the inclusive ‘elite bargain’ that has characterised the country since independence. As in Tanzania, the three pillars of this integration have been inclusive recruitment policies, political control through the ruling party and enduring access to generous state patronage. This combination has clearly helped to minimise the potential for successful military intervention. The persistently inclusive approach to recruitment, to begin with, meant that no one ethnic or regional faction could ever dominate the army, which made it extremely difficult to organise a successful military coup without being detected and contained by other factions. Moreover, the progressive integration of the civilian and military spheres throughout the Second Republic created both ideological and material identification effects among military leaders and showed – according to the former army commander Gen. Masheke – that ‘that to arrive into a higher office, you do not

need to take up arms' (Interview, Gen. Malimba Masheke, August 7, 2008). The available evidence indicates that this has not changed much since MMD came to power in 1991. Even though the army was formally de-politicised, the military leadership has remained part and parcel of the MMD 'elite bargain', evident in the appointment of former army officers to top civilian positions and lucrative benefits derived from corruption (under Chiluba) or peace-keeping missions (under Mwanawasa).

Again, this is not to deny that civil-military relations in Zambia have gone through a number of crises, which were nevertheless overcome due to the close ties between the political and military establishment. The first moment of crisis occurred in October 1980 when the government detected the first coup plot in the country's history. This arose in the context of Zambia's mounting economic crisis from the late 1970s and mainly involved a number of influential businessmen who were alienated by UNIP's economic policies (Larmer 2008: 114ff.). While the plotters managed to establish contacts with a number of disgruntled senior army officers, they enjoyed only very limited support in the army – a situation that was arguably due to the high level of civil-military integration that had been built since independence. In the end, military intelligence seems to have played a key role in the uncovering of the conspiracy by infiltrating the coup plotters and intercepting communication with air-force personnel (Haantobolo 2008: 184).

Another two moments of crisis occurred in the late 1980s when the country was destabilised by the effects of enduring economic decline and the growing conflict with the trade union-led opposition movement. In this context, six senior army officers and three civilians were detained over an alleged coup plot in October 1988 (ACR 1987/1988: B824). Less than two years later, in June 1990, disturbances following the food riots led to the coup attempt by Lieutenant Luchembe and a small group of junior officers who managed to control the national radio for several hours and broadcast that the Army had taken over (ACR 1989/1990: B674). Even though the Luchembe coup attempt received spontaneous public support that reflected growing disaffection with the Kaunda government, it is generally agreed that the coup plots in 1988 and 1990 failed because they were conducted by small and isolated factions within the military (Phiri 2002: 12). These had little support in the military mainstream, which remained deeply integrated with the Kaunda regime, not least because the practise of co-opting the service chiefs into party and government had reached its peak at the time.

The most recent crisis in civil-military relations occurred in the wake of the transition from UNIP to MMD in the early 1990s. Here, the retrenchment of all alleged UNIP loyalists in the army and the military intelligence created some antagonism between the military and the Chiluba government, not least because the retirement packages were paid with considerable delay (Haantobolo 2008: 203). The most serious disruptions took place in the military intelligence – the stronghold of UNIP loyalists – where the abrupt reduction in experienced personnel and funds caused a considerable loss of morale. Moreover, military leaders initially complained over limited interaction with the political authorities, which seemed to believe that military coup d'états belonged to the Cold War period and thereby saw a reduced need to accommodate military interests. It is in this broader context that Captain Lungu (alias Captain 'Solo') launched another coup attempt on October 28, 1997. Lungu and his comrades managed to gain control of Radio Zambia and claimed that they had taken over on behalf of the National Redemption Council, the alleged political wing of the defence force (Phiri 2002: 12). Even though the 1997 coup attempt revealed a certain weakness in civil control of the military, tellingly it was again organised by relatively junior army officers who enjoyed little

support in the higher ranks of the army. As a consequence, the coup attempt was immediately crushed by loyalist forces. In the end, it became obvious that the military mainstream had been sufficiently integrated into the newly emerging MMD 'elite bargain' and thereby continued to have a vested interest in the political status quo.

## **Conclusion**

Tanzania and Zambia are among those exceptional African countries that have so far been able to avoid successful military intervention. In both cases, the continued maintenance of civilian control of the military has been achieved by the deliberate integration of the army into the country's 'elite bargain', a strategy that has relied on three pillars: inclusive recruitment policies, political control through the ruling party and the provision of generous access to state patronage. Inclusive recruitment at all levels has ensured that no single ethno-regional faction can ever monopolise the army, which in turn has made it very difficult for one faction to organise a successful military coup without being detected and contained by other factions. Moreover, political control through the ruling party and the provision of generous access to state patronage have created lasting ideological and material identification effects and given the military leadership a stake in the survival of the civilian regime. Interestingly, the advent of multi-party politics from the early 1990s has not led to fundamental change in the patterns of civilian control. Even though direct political control through the ruling party has become less important, inclusive recruitment and enduring access to state patronage continue to ensure civil-military integration in both countries.

Using the terminology of Goldsworthy as outlined above, patterns of civilian control in Tanzania and Zambia have mostly been 'subjective' in nature: both regimes have sought to reduce the military's propensity to intervene by introducing checks and balances and promoting a convergence of interests between the civilian and military spheres. At the same time, however, one could also argue that the continued existence of an inclusive 'elite bargain' in both countries has given the civilian regime a rather high degree of legitimacy and thereby introduced elements of 'objective' control, which has made military intervention difficult to justify. In Tanzania, such a legitimising strategy has been facilitated by the enduring hold on power by the ruling party, TANU/CCM, that forged an inclusive 'elite bargain' even before independence and managed to maintain the overall shape of the ruling coalition over time. In Zambia, UNIP's post-independence inclusive 'elite bargain' was reproduced in similar form by Chiluba's MMD – a similarly broad-based political party that commands considerable support in all parts of the country and therefore retains a rather high degree of legitimacy.

In terms of future research, it would be desirable to collect similarly detailed data on more African countries to see whether these propositions also hold when looking at a larger number of cases. On the one hand, this will require the study of other stable civilian regimes, including countries as diverse as Cameroon, Botswana, Mozambique, Malawi, Mauritius or Cape Verde. A preliminary look at the scant literature suggests that many of the strategies used in some of these countries are rather similar to those employed in Tanzania and Zambia (Pachter 1982; Decalo 1989). On the other hand, the trajectories of stable civilian regimes should be systematically contrasted with those of the most coup-prone polities (e.g. Sudan, Ghana, Uganda, Benin) to see whether the latter are really characterised by fundamentally different strategies of civilian control.

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