

Article

Not peer-reviewed version

War (Un)made National Identity: Evidence from Kenya and Tanzania

[Nueraili Dayimu](#) *

Posted Date: 5 February 2026

doi: 10.20944/preprints202602.0405.v1

Keywords: national identity; state initiatives; bellicism; post-colonialism; nation-building; Kenya; Tanzania



Preprints.org is a free multidisciplinary platform providing preprint service that is dedicated to making early versions of research outputs permanently available and citable. Preprints posted at Preprints.org appear in Web of Science, Crossref, Google Scholar, Scilit, Europe PMC.

Copyright: This open access article is published under a [Creative Commons CC BY 4.0 license](#), which permit the free download, distribution, and reuse, provided that the author and preprint are cited in any reuse.

Disclaimer/Publisher's Note: The statements, opinions, and data contained in all publications are solely those of the individual author(s) and contributor(s) and not of MDPI and/or the editor(s). MDPI and/or the editor(s) disclaim responsibility for any injury to people or property resulting from any ideas, methods, instructions, or products referred to in the content.

Article

War (Un)made National Identity: Evidence from Kenya and Tanzania

Nueraili Dayimu

Department of Sociology, Zhejiang University, Hangzhou, China; nurali@zju.edu.cn

Abstract

Background: This paper critically examines the bellicist theory, which posits war as central to national unification in modern state formation. While influential, its applicability to the Third World, particularly Africa, is debated. The research gap lies in explaining nation-building in the absence of war, as exemplified by Tanzania's high national identity despite lacking significant conflict, contrasting with Kenya's lower identity despite interstate war. The central question is: What drove a high national identity in Tanzania despite the absence of war? **Methods:** A qualitative comparative method (QCM) was employed to analyze post-colonial state formation in Tanzania and Kenya; **Results:** The findings suggest that post-colonial state policies—discontinuing colonial legacies, fostering inter-ethnic embeddedness, and establishing equal citizenship—are key drivers of higher national identity; **Conclusions:** this study challenged the necessity of war for nation-building, highlighting the importance of state-led integration processes via inclusive and equal policies to all.

Keywords: national identity; state initiatives; bellicism; post-colonialism; nation-building; Kenya; Tanzania

1. Introduction

The relationship between war and national identity has been a topic of scholarly discussion for many years. Bellicism theorists argued that war effectively made national unification in the modern European nation-state formation (Huntington, 1968; Tilly, 1975; Cederman et al., 2023). Recent debates on war-driven theories have ferociously discussed whether and to what extent bellicist hypotheses can be applied to the Third World states (Centeno, 2002; Herbst, 2000; Huang & Kang, 2021; Hui, 2005; Taylor & Botea, 2008; Thies, 2005). Among those scholars, Africanists assumed that African states held a low national identity and fragmented population because of the absence of interstate war in the continent. However, they called for African leaders to believe peace costs were even higher than interstate war (Jeffrey Herbst, 1990). Undoubtedly, national unification is important, especially in the world order of modern nation-states shaped after World War II. However, the outbreak of the Russia-Ukraine war reminds us to be cautious about bellicism articulation in our era.

However, Tanzania and Kenya defy the odds. Despite the absence of internal or external wars that could threaten the existence of the state, the level of national identity is relatively high in Tanzania, while four years of war between Kenya and Somalia has done little to strengthen Kenyans' sense of national identity (Robinson, 2014; Nwankwo, 2016; Green, 2021). This case disproves the bellicist theories because the interstate war in Kenya did not lead to successful nation-building, and nation-building in Tanzania happened in the absence of war. Therefore, I disagree that interstate war is the driving force behind the formation of national identity in Africa, as demonstrated by the cases in this study selected.

What is the driving force behind the high level of national identity in Tanzania? To answer this question, I used the historical-comparative method and analyzed the state formation processes of Tanzania and Kenya after independence. I posit that post-colonial state initiatives produced variation in national identity in multi-ethnic post-British-colonial nations. State initiatives vary in three dimensions: whether the state discontinued colonial legacy, whether heterogeneous ethnic or tribal

members embedded each other, and whether various ethnic or tribal members share equal citizenship following the modern state formation.

This article challenges the notion that war is necessary for state capacity and nation-building. In this paper, I use the same notion as Wimmer (2018) that nation-building is national identification, in which citizens begin to see themselves as members of a national community and feel loyal to nationals, above and beyond their attachment to an ethnic group, a tribe, a village community, or a religion. Using case studies of Tanzania and Kenya, this paper explored potential mechanisms for nation-building and national identity formation in the absence of war.

Tanzania and Kenya are contradictory because of their similar demographic characteristics, particularly their ethnic and religious composition. For example, there are 126 ethnic minorities in both countries. Both countries encompass similar ethnic or tribal groups in origin. Again, both countries have Muslims, Christians, Catholics, and other African indigenous religions. In addition, the colonial history of the two countries before independence is also similar. Although Tanzania was a colony of Germany before World War I, it was taken over by the British Empire after World War I and ruled by the British Empire until independence. Therefore, both countries were colonies of the British before independence. Secondly, they are geographically very similar, and the two countries are neighbors. However, it is interesting that citizens' sense of national identity is quite different. In the investigation of national identity and ethnic identity of citizens in African states, scholars found that ethnic identity is higher than national identity in Kenya, and the proportion of national identity in Kenya is less than 50%, while that in Tanzania is as high as 88% (Robinson, 2009; 2014; Nwankwo, 2016; Green, 2018). Thus, the two cases are comparable.

I chose Tanzania and Kenya as the case study because Kenya continued its colonial legacy after independence. At the same time, Tanzania conceived the blueprint for establishing a Tanzanian nation. Moreover, Kenya fought a four-year war with Somalia, and Tanzania avoided international conflicts. Finally, Kenya is rife with ethnic and civil strife, but Tanzania is relatively safe. Although there are many similarities, the variation in national construction and nation-building validates the research question and comparison of cases.

In the first section, I will do a brief literature review of the bellicism arguments and will state the research gap and puzzle. In the second section, I will frame my hypothesis. Furthermore, in the third section, I will use my case study to discuss why Tanzania can build up state capacity while Kenya fails.

2. Review on the Relationship Between War and Nation-Building

Many scholars delved into the relationship between conflict and war in nation-building. Most studies presented a positive role of violence, external threats, external conflicts, geopolitical competition, and war in nation-building. They posited that such violence and war made nations by fostering national identity, national solidarity, internal homogenization, internal development, and the rise of nationalism. In this section, I reviewed the existing literature on the relations between war and nation-building, in which nation-building is about building a national identity or national coherency in a state through building a common association between the state and its population. However, Tanzania and Kenya falsified existing bellicist literature. Further, there is another gap: comparative studies on the nation-building of multi-ethnic states need to be more comprehensive.

Some scholars addressed the positive function of conflict in group building (Hall & Malesevic, 2013). For example, Sumner (1906) postulated external conflict as a server of internal homogenization. Simmel (1955) presented that conflict establishes and maintains group identity and boundaries. In his view, intra-group conflicts contribute to the group identity establishment, re-affirmation, and keeping boundaries against the surrounding social world. Coser (1956) went further than them. He emphasized that social conflict is the mechanism of group-building, in which conflict within a group may help to establish the unity of members or vitalize existing norms, and hostility with other groups further maintain boundary lines. In their postulation, social conflicts enhance group unity, coherence,

and social norms, especially where external conflicts arise. These external conflicts help to maintain the group's identity and boundaries with other groups or societies.

Nationalist scholars conceptualized nationalism as the psychological process of in-group favoritism. Kedourie (1960) defined nationalism as the members of a sovereign state cultivating the peculiar identity of a nation and sinking their persons into the greater whole of the nation, in which the nation is an opponent of foreigners. He measured nationalism as an individual's cohesion of the state, loyalty to the state, and love of the state. Gellner (1964) defined nationalism as group loyalty and sentiment centered on political units. Furthermore, he articulated that nations are the artifacts of men's convictions, identifications, faithfulness, and solidarities in a given territory (Gellner, 1983). Kohn (1944) said nationalism is a centralized form of government over a large and distinct territory, which integrates the masses of the people into a common political form. Nationalism is embedded in a broader context, and it is a love of the homeland as the heart of patriotism by group consciousness. In their perception, national identity, national feeling, national consciousness, and national solidarity summed up to nationalism. Afterward, many scholastic discussions go on the cause of nationalism or nation-building.

One of the prominent debates is whether the war resulted in nationalism or whether it played a positive role in nation-building. Charles Tilly is the foremost figure in this scholarly discussion. Tilly (1985) argued that war makes states, and he defined state-making as eliminating or neutralizing their rivals inside those territories. Then how do states make those populations into nations in their territory? In his view, war makes the state by neutralizing or eliminating internal and external enemies from the territory, but how do the agents in state-making not only exclude the internal rivals from their population but also include or absorb the rest of them into the category of nationals? The state uses violence to monopolize control over territory and resources, but why do ordinary people accept this monopoly? In what conditions do people consist of the state? How do states ensure national solidarity? Those are something we can not know from Tilly and need to explore further.

Scholars have discussed the positive effect of war on national solidarity. Some scholars emphasized the importance of the interstate war on citizens' solidarity in collecting taxation. For example, Feldman and Slemrod (2009) suggested that interstate military conflicts promote national identification and increase the positive attitudes of citizens toward tax compliance. Thies (2005) examined the true impact of external threats on state-building efforts when war expanded to consider interstate rivalry. He found interstate war has significant, positive effects on the state's extractive capacity. Others claimed the positive role of internal war. Such as Rodríguez-Franco (2016) analyzed that the internal wars lead to elite solidarity regarding state-building, as they perceive the risks of war as existent, decide to protect their interests with the help of the state, and feel a sense of patriotism. In sum, they found war is significant in mobilizing the population in their territories to extract taxation to military conflicts in terms of solidarity from citizens to the state.

Some scholars argue that wars can serve as catalysts for nation-building. Aron (1958) believed war plays a crucial role in social development, compassing a lack of class polarization, shared cultural values, and civilizational achievements. Current scholars reaffirmed his claim. For example, Alesina, Reich, and Riboni (2020) found that when states engage in wars, they need to motivate their population, mainly soldiers, to endure the hardships of war and fight effectively. Thus, states developed nation-building policies to increase national identity and cohesion among the population. In turn, war can drive the implementation of nation-building policies as states seek to motivate their soldiers and create a sense of unity and identity among the population. Sambanis, Skaperdas, and Wohlforth (2015) hypothesized that an individual's identification with their nation is contingent on the nation's relative status, in which war becomes a vehicle to induce national identification by increasing the nation's status relative to rivals. In their theory, state capability depends on the strength of nationalist sentiment. Increased national identification due to victory in war encourages investments in state capacity reducing domestic conflict costs and reinforcing national identity. Military victory in interstate war increases a state's international status and an individual's national

identification. These authors supposed war could induce national identity, homogenization, and coherency against a foreign enemy. In their argument, war played a positive role in nation-building.

Geopolitical competition of states made the rise and spread of nationalism (Mann 1988, 1993, 2005; Posen, 1993; Tilly 1985, 1990). They argued that the increase in national homogenization was a historical outcome of state rulers' military and geopolitical rivalry. Rulers had to mobilize domestic financial support and military participation to finance wars. In return, states make citizenship rights and national attachments much more inclusive. Posen (1993) said state geopolitical insecurities foster and maintain nationalist homogenization. For Mann, Posen, and Tilly, the war created solid national identities through military means, and as such national cohesion remains, first and foremost, a powerful military asset (Hall & Malesevic, 2013, pp. 4-5). In their arguments, institutional changes helped dissolve old aristocratic hierarchies, paving the way for much greater social integration and eventually for the appearance of nationally cohesive populations (Hall & Malesevic 2013, pp. 4). Smith (1999,2003) and Hutchinson (2005, 2007) argued that war experience is decisive for the development of national consciousness as wars polarize distinct populations, strengthen stereotypical divides and enhance national self-perceptions. What is essential for Smith and Hutchinson is how particular wars are collectively remembered and commemorated (Hall & Malesevic, 2013, pp. 4-5).

Some bellicist scholars have called for war in Third World countries to achieve successful nation-building like the European template. Luttwak (1999) said that although war is a great evil, it does have a great virtue: it can resolve political conflicts and lead to peace. This outcome can happen when all belligerents become exhausted, or one wins decisively. Either way, the key is that the fighting must continue until they resolve. War brings peace only after passing a culminating phase of violence. Hopes of military success must fade for accommodation to become more attractive than further combat. In his perspective, when the prospects of achieving military success diminish, finding a peaceful resolution becomes more attractive than engaging in further battling or fighting. It implies a shift in perspective towards seeking non-violent solutions when military objectives seem less attainable. Diaz and Murshed (2013) verified Luttwak's argument by comparative analysis of Sri Lanka and Colombia. They said nation-building and state consolidation was a bloody process.

Further, Africanists scholars possessed the same notion. They argued that the absence of interstate war caused lower national identity and national solidarity in African states (Herbst 1989, 1990; Jackson & Rosberg, 1982). Herbst (1990) questioned building nations out of "blood and iron" and addressed the lack of interstate wars that disunified a disparate population. He defined nationalism as a ubiquitous association between a state and its population. In his argument, the peace fragmented populations in African countries, while the war developed nationalism in Europe. Because external threats coerce people into realizing that they are a nation and only can defeat the threat as a nation. Thus, the population united around common symbols and memories that were significant ingredients of nationalism. He called for African leaders to believe that the costs of peace are even higher than the interstate war due to it causing a fragmented population.

Bellicism theories need to be more convincing. According to Herbst, only severe external threats could result in fundamental changes in economic structures and societal beliefs for building nations. I agree that changes are critical to nation-building, especially in Africa, but there is a puzzle if the external war is the only means of those changes. In the selected case, Tanzania has a higher level of national identity without interstate war, while Kenya has been low besides experiencing interstate war (Bandyopadhyay & Green, 2013; Green, 2018; Robinson, 2009; 2014; Nwankwo, 2016). It remains a critical question on bellicism arguments. What caused this variant outcome in the nation-building of Tanzania and Kenya, despite demographic, historical, and cultural similarities? In addition, there is a methodological gap among the existing literature that no research compared multi-ethnic post-colonial states on their nation-building journey. This paper fills this gap and contributes a new lens for the nation-building theories that state initiatives are crucial in nation-building in multi-ethnic states.

After World War II, nation-states became the main subject of the world order; diplomatic relations became the norm instead of warfare. One of the most important ways in the new order is how to build their nations instead of opening war against other neighboring states or far abroad states. I am inspired by Herbst's argument that African states have a low level of national identity due to the lack of inter-state war in the continent. Therefore, leaders should consider war to enhance the state's capacity to integrate the population into a nation. However, while reading about Tanzania and Kenya, I found the odds that Tanzania has a high level of national identity without war, in contrast even though there were four years of interstate war between Kenya and Somalia, Kenya failed to build Kenyan nations, as tribalism, ethnicity, and ethnic or tribal conflict still existed thereof.

Thus, this remains a puzzle; if war-driving theories fit all in Africa, why Tanzania has a higher level of national identity while Kenya lacks thereof? I compare these two countries because they have similar demographic compositions as they have similar ethnic groups and tribes in both countries; moreover, their religious structures are also going to be similar. In this paper, I will figure out the underlying structural mechanisms to discern why Tanzania can build up a Tanzanian nation after the post-colonialism period while Kenya still adhered to their colonial rule and divided legacy.

3. Analytical Framework: Postcolonial State Initiatives and Nation-Building

Postcolonial state initiatives produced variation in national identity in multiethnic post-British-colonial nations. State initiatives vary in three dimensions: whether the state parted with the colonial legacy of privileging certain ethnic groups for employment in the army or the government, the extent to which the state geographically mixed ethnic groups, and whether citizenship rules were the same for all ethnic groups. The state could successfully build a nation if postcolonial state initiatives discontinued the colonial legacy, built embedded networks among a diverse population, and implemented equal citizenship rights. Otherwise, the state would be fragmented. In this paper, State initiatives are state-level policies to implement the whole building of the nation after independence.

For countries colonized by the British Empire, Whether the state parted with the colonial legacy of privileging certain ethnic groups for recruitment in the army or government employment is one way the state could dissolve ethnic conflicts after independence. One of the salient features of British colonialism was the divided rule and privileging of certain ethnic groups into different parts of their colony, which consequenced civil wars in postcolonial territories. A relatively peaceful world order was established after World War II, but ethnic civil wars became severe humanitarian crises in third-world countries. Many studies found its colonial roots (De Silva, 1986; Fildis, 2011; Idris, 2005; Mamdani, 2001; Newbury, 1992). These scholars examined how colonialism left ethnic divisions within colonized states, which resulted in devastating ethnic conflicts after declaring independence (Lange et al., 2021). Other scholars examined how continuing the colonial legacies on military recruitment, administration, and legislation led the postcolonial civil conflicts (Fildis, 2011; White, 2011).

The extent to which the state geographically mixed ethnic groups is crucial to nation-building. There are two poles in this continuum, one is an embedded ethnic distribution, and the other is a divided ethnic distribution geographically. When different ethnic group members mix in their neighborhood or community, diverse people get together. Citizens build the same sense of identity due to the embedded networks among heterogeneous ethnic group members (Wimmer, 2013). They live and grow up together from birth, which makes mutual contact and interaction highly possible between different ethnic group members. Dense contact and interaction in day-to-day life cultivate and shape shared cultural and institutional norms in their community. Hechter (1977) analyzed three dimensions of national development cultural integration, economic integration, and political integration, in which regular interaction is crucial. A neighborhood is the most critical space for building connections between individuals. When the extent of geographically mixed ethnic groups increases, the connections between the diverse members become frequent despite their ethnic origins, as they grow up in the same community from birth without being artificially divided. Therefore, the

extent to which mixed ethnic groups integrates heterogeneous people in cultural, economic, and political space through dense contact and interactions.

In contrast, a geographically divided ethnic distribution led to two outcomes. One is the salience of ethnic boundaries, and the other is unequal resource access. Geographically divided ethnic distribution separates different ethnic groups in the territory along the administrative lines of a state. It creates less contact and interaction between the different ethnic group members, which led the absence of shared cultural or institutional norms. Instead, they shape distinctive norms in their ties and communities, which entails the feeling of belonging to their ethnicity (Wimmer, 2013), which makes it possible to bring people together into shared cultural, economic, and political values within boundaries. In addition, the geographical lines between different ethnic groups made accessing resources in the territory unequal, making the relations between different ethnic groups hostile to each other. These structural forces impede sustained contact cross-ethnicity and increase ethnic political demands. In turn, the sense of ethnicity becomes more salient than the sense of nationality, and those outcomes generate conflicts between ethnic groups, furthermore may lead to domestic civil wars.

Whether citizenship rules were the same for all ethnic groups underscores ethnic inequality, it is the most significant way to unite all ethnic groups around the state in the modern world. Equal rights give individuals a sense of belonging to the state. I define the citizenship rules were the same for all ethnic groups as equal civil rights for everyone in the juristic whatever their ethnic backgrounds, and there is no default first-class or second-class citizenship division politically. Specifically, each ethnic group members equally share civil rights, not only because of equality in documents but also in their day-to-day socio-political practice, and there is no ethnic politicization by default. However, the hierarchical institution of citizenship rights gives rise to ethnic hostility between different ethnic groups because unequal citizenship rights lead to unequal access to resources, as in the Bourdieusian perspective, different groups struggle over power and prestige then. This kind of inequality led members from disadvantaged ethnic groups to dishonor their nationality. Instead, the ethnic boundary and ethnic hostility would be salient nationwide. These dynamics of state policies cause ethnic politicization. Nation-building succeeded in Switzerland because of the absence of ethnic politicization (Wimmer, 2018), making it possible to create a multiethnic nation-state instead (Hall & Malesevic, 2013, p. 13). Otherwise, disadvantaged groups pursue maintaining their boundary, which undermines nation-building. If it gets worst, it may cause domestic conflicts or civil wars due to ethnic inequality.

4. Results

This section may be divided by subheadings. It should provide a concise and precise description of the experimental results, their interpretation, as well as the experimental conclusions that can be drawn.

4.1. *Post-Colonial Tanzania*

This section may be divided by subheadings. It should provide a concise and precise description of the experimental results, their interpretation, as well as the experimental conclusions that can be drawn.

In the post-colonial period, Tanzania established a more peaceful country. After independence, Tanzania was not reduced to wars between countries, and ethnic conflicts, military and political conflicts, political instability, and other factors caused no internal strife. Compared with neighboring East African countries, the Tanzania regime was relatively stable during its independence period, and the relationship between different ethnic groups in the country was also relatively harmonious. Thus, what led to stability in Tanzania? Especially as a multi-ethnic and multi-religious country, how did they maintain peaceful coexistence between different groups? The reason can be traced to the nation-building policies of Tanzania, including the discontinuity of colonial legacies, embedded ethnic groups, and equal citizenship rights among all ethnic groups.

4.1.1. Tanzania Discontinued the Colonial Legacy

After independence, Tanzania did not continue its state structure in the colonial period. However, under the leadership of the founding president Julius Kambarage Nyerere, it carried out a forced villagization movement called the "Ujammah" movement. They carried out the land movement in 1964, through which more than half of the country's agricultural population emigrated to other places. As a result, Tanzania built embedded ethnic relations between heterogeneous ethnic or tribal members in a neighborhood base. Through the "Ujammah", Tanzania successfully broke the original separate distribution between different ethnic groups and tribes and established a new neighborhood. In this new neighborhood, individuals from different ethnic groups and tribes were embedded together, and formed a new social network that broke the geographical separation between different ethnic groups and tribes before independence.

4.1.2. Embedded Ethnic Groups were Geographically Mixed in Tanzania

Embedded social networks allow members of different ethnic groups and tribes in Tanzania to coexist geographically. This kind of social network can make them have to live together in day-to-day life and mutual reliance between neighbors because in the early days of the founding of Tanzania, more than 95% of the population in the rural areas, and the rural population in daily production and life activities are highly interdependent, such dependence will inevitably lead to favorable relations between neighbors, as time goes by, They form a harmonious community that transcends ethnicity, tribe or religion. Gradually, the harmonious community becomes an institutional norm of society.

Harmonious social institutions transcend ethnic groups and tribes, bringing the people of Tanzania together as a nation. Since members of different ethnic groups and tribes live together in the same geographical space, there is no unfair distribution of resources in Tanzania due to the distribution of different ethnic groups or tribes in different geographical spaces throughout the country. Suppose the administrative division within a country is based on ethnic groups or tribes. In that case, it will lead to inequality among different ethnic groups due to the different resources available in different geographical spaces, and ethnic inequality will inevitably lead to ethnic conflicts. However, it is precise because the Tanzanian state dissolved their territory's original single-ethnic population distribution and constructed a new embedded ethnic distribution network. This initiative enables the state to avoid ethnic inequality resulting from geographical distribution and makes it relatively fair to get access to natural resources. This relative fairness of the distribution of natural resources is immune to ethnic conflict.

4.1.3. Citizenship Rules were the Same for all the Ethnic Groups in Tanzania

The Tanzanian government has achieved a relatively high level of national identity by allowing members of different ethnic groups to enjoy equal rights as citizens. However, the reason why the Tanzanian government can make members of different ethnic groups and tribes feel that they do not have the sense of relative deprivation of ethnic rights is because of the embedded housing mode and the same system of public services, such as education, medical care, and justice, implemented in the early days of the founding of Tanzania. Some scholars also addressed the lacking of inter-regional inequalities that gave rise to more successful nation-building in Tanzania (Bandyopadhyay & Green, 2013; Green, 2011). The government eliminates implementing different policies for ethnic groups or tribal members in policy settings. To some extent, this allows Tanzanians to feel that they are members of their community rather than fear and insecurity caused by their ethnic identity. Nyerere introduced equal civil rights for all ethnic or tribal members in Tanzania's early years. During his tenure, he launched the "Ujammah" movement, which caused many problems regarding ecological protection, yet brought harmonious relations between different ethnic, tribal, and religious groups.

Not only does the government not make the people of Tanzania feel that there is racial inequality in the distribution of natural resources, but also in the provision of public goods such as education and health care. Due to the further economic development, urbanization, industrialization, and

modernization processes in different administrative regions, there will inevitably be inequality in the supply of public goods, at least in quantity or quality. Nevertheless, Tanzania's housing pattern naturally removes the racial factor behind this inequality. As a result, the Tanzanian government has brought people from different ethnic, tribal, or religious backgrounds together around the Tanzanian people. Those dynamics are why the people of Tanzania have a high sense of national consciousness.

4.2. Post-Colonial Kenya

4.2.1. Kenya Inherited the British Colonial Legacy

Kenya, in contrast to Tanzania, continued the colonial legacy of the British Empire. These colonial legacies include the national institutional system of the country, the distribution structure of the domestic population, and the organizational model of the regime, which all continue the pattern of the colonial period. It has not been subjected to the same rural movement as Tanzania, and the distribution of the population within its territory is still characterized by the pattern of a single ethnic group living in an administrative area during the British colonial period.

The colonial legacy has led to ethnic conflict within Kenya and war between Kenya and Somalia. Since the Somali people in northern Kenya and Somalia were divided into two regions during the British Empire, the Somali people in the northern region were given to Kenya by the British Empire. However, the ethnic division management policy of the British Empire escalated the conflicts among different ethnic groups during the colonial period. After independence, ethnic Somalis on the northern front wanted to join their kin group, the Somali State. This caused a war between Kenya and Somalia, which lasted four years. Although the two countries signed the Ashura ceasefire in 1967, it did not stop ethnic and civil unrest. Scholars also addressed the problems of ethnicity as the cause of the Shifta War (Odak, 1995). The war did not bring prosperity and national cohesion to Kenya. On the contrary, the war, combined with the ethnic isolation caused by the ethnic division living mode in Kenya, resulted in constant internal unrest, ethnic clarity, terrorist attacks, etc., which made Kenya face many threats of civil war.

The war between Kenya and Somalia has not increased the sense of nationhood among the Kenyan people but has intensified the ethnic conflict within Kenya. After the war, the conflict between Somalis and other groups in Kenya on the northern front became more and more serious, and ethnic conflict and ethnic clarity kept occurring. Somalis want to be part of Somalia. They do not identify with Kenya; they identify with Somalis of the exact origin. As they are distributed along the border between the two countries, separatism, and terrorism are rising in the region, posing many challenges in Kenya. Instead of bringing prosperity and cohesion to Kenya, the international war has divided the country along ethnic lines. Four years of war between Kenya and Somalia has brought ethnic clarity to Kenya and hatred of the Kenyan state among Somalis.

4.2.2. Ethnic Boundaries Along the Administrative Line in Kenya

During the British colonial period, ethnic division was implemented in Kenya. During the colonial period of Kenya, the British Empire united more than 40 independent communities in Kenya. However, in Britain, administrative divisions are divided along ethnic lines, and different regions have different ethnic components. For example, in a census taken before independence, Kenya's population distribution was as follows: most 70% of the boroughs were dominated by one dominant ethnic group. Half are the districts where more than 90% of the population is single. Almost every administrative district contains more than 50% of one ethnic group or tribe. After the founding of Kenya, Kenya inherited the administrative divisions of the British colonial period, the Kenyatta and Moi regimes (1963–1978; 1978–2002) did little to diminish the ethnic lines from colonialism (Lynch, 2006). The distribution of different ethnic groups or tribes did not change but directly continued the distribution characteristics of the British colonial period.

Ethnic boundaries are coterminous with political and administrative boundaries in Kenya (Fapohunda & Poukouta, 1997), making the population geographically divided by ethnic or tribal

origins. The geographical lines of different ethnic groups are as follows: the Kalenjin reside in the Rift Valley; the Kikuyu live in the Central region but have also migrated to Nairobi and the Rift Valley. The Meru/Embu reside in the North and East. The Luhya live in the Western province but have also migrated to Nairobi and Mombasa. The Luo live in Nyanza, with Kisumu as their capital, but have also migrated to the Rift Valley. The Kamba live close to Nairobi and exhibit ethnic affiliation to the Kikuyu. The Mijikenda/Swahili live in the Coast province. The Meru and Embu groups neighbor the Kikuyu to the north and east (Iyer & Weeks, 2020). Due to its low state capacity, Kenya previously ignored the North and Frontier District (NFD) regions in its national development scheme, which left actual and perceived distance between the north and central regions (Grasso, 2020). 90% of the African populations live in rural areas. As a result, the divided distribution between different ethnic groups made it difficult to contact and communicate with heterogeneous people beyond their ethnicity.

4.2.3. Ethnic Inequalities in Kenya

The geographical divide has led to a divide in the distribution of resources among Kenyans. Kikuyu are distributed in areas with good natural conditions, so their division of natural resources leads to unequal distribution of resources, which is highlighted by ethnic groups and tribes. This inequality has led to an ethnic relationship between the superior and the inferior groups of the Kenyan people. It is not just inequality in natural resources, but also in the provision of public goods and in politics. These are reflected in the inequality of education, medical supplies, and political elections caused by the inequality of education.

Administrative dividedness results in ethnic inequality in access to resources. In Kenya, attaining education and ethnic attainment between ruling party has strong association (Alwy & Schech, 2004). Further, it led to educational inequality in public sectors (Simson, 2019). Co-ethnic voters will coordinate and form blocs (Long & Gibson, 2015). Administrative designated ethnic inequalities lead the people to think of loss of equal rights or discrimination in Kenya. People in Kenya formed a social distance because of their distributions. Cohesive ethnic network in their own ethnic or tribal belongs.

Upper class of dominant ethnic group Kikuyu in Kenya encouraged their fellow to identify their ethnicity to assure their class supremacy (Bloom, 1985). The privilege of developing upper class mostly concentrated to Kikuyu which formulated 20% of the Kenyan population (Bloom, 1985). It has successfully deracialised but at the same time ethnicised the state as the political class continues to mobilize the citizenry around ethnic political parties (Ndege, 2009).

Politically designed ethnic discrimination prevails in Kenya (Bratton & Kimenyi, 2008). In a sense, the Kenyan government has conveniently politicized ethnic groups or tribes, resulting in different groups with different identities facing inequality in the state apparatus or national public services. For example, ethnic inequalities in education resources and opportunities (Alwy & Schech, 2004), inequalities in educational attainment (Simson 2019), ethnic inequalities in votes (Long & Gibson, 2015). It may even be the insecurity or fear brought by identity. In this case, ethnic groups and tribes in a weak position will fight against the state and superior group in order to obtain the rights they want, and fight against the government in order to obtain the equal rights or freedom they need. The legitimacy of this confrontation can be traced directly to insecurity or fear of inequality.

5. Discussion & Conclusions

This study found two divergent outcomes in nation building of Kenya and Tanzania, although both countries share similarities in history, cultures, and demographic compositions. The national identity of the population is relatively high in Tanzania, while it has been low in Kenya. Consistent with Acemoglu & Robinson's (2012) and Wimmer's (2018) argument, this study demonstrates that early postcolonial state-building policies systematically contributed to the observed divergence in nation building.

Bellicist scholars articulate that war is the cause of nation-building, especially interstate war. However, through this comparative study of Tanzania and Kenya, I found that interstate war does not affect nation-building in the Kenyan case. Conversely, the interstate war between Kenya and Somalia becomes one way of demising the Kenyan nation-building process. Therefore, war is not the only way to enhance national capacity and consciousness. On the contrary, war may dissolve the national capacity and lead to internal unrest, disturbance, and civil war. Ethnic conflicts caused by these factors may be the factors that lead to the weakening of the country and decrease the state's capacity for nation-building in the Third World multi-ethnic and multi-cultural states.

Nevertheless, states can increase national solidarity and the national identity of the population in a policy setting nationwide. For example, Tanzania aims to unite its people by creating national imagination. In contrast, Kenya can only unite its population around the country if it has such imagination. In Tanzania, the discontinuity of the colonial legacy, geographically mixed distributions of ethnic groups, and equal citizenship rules for all ethnic group members contributed to nation-building, resulting in a higher national identity. In contrast, the absence of those three elements, inheritance of colonial legacy, geographically separated ethnic distributions along the lines of administrative divisions, and hierarchical citizenship relations in Kenya led to ethnic conflict; as a result, Kenya became an ethnically divided state with a low level of national identity.

Some may question why I ignored the language because, in Tanzania, they have lingua-franca, while in Kenya, different groups from different ethnic or tribal origins were speaking in their vernacular languages. Scholars argue that language is one way of nation-building, such as in China (Wimmer, 2013). Nevertheless, language is not an explanatory variable in this research as I found language is one of the responses led by state initiatives in both countries; so far, we can also generalize this into more states. I argue that not the common language builds the nations; diversely, the nations build up a common language; here, I illustrate the former Soviet Union. The USSR imposed Russian as a common language, which did not work for this function of building USSR nationals. So far as nationals speak the same language, they fight for independents. As inner conflicts are common in Middle East states, rebellions still become prevalent in their country, what else they have a lingua-franca community. Further research is needed to discern why Tanzania came up with a lingua-franca.

However, this article also has many things that could be improved. Further research should have investigated why Tanzania implemented the Ujammah mobilization and how they can do it without resistance, but why there is no such act in Kenya.

5. Conclusions

This section is not mandatory but can be added to the manuscript if the discussion is unusually long or complex.

Author Contributions: Nueraili Dayimu is the only author in this article, was responsible for all aspects of the work including: conceptualization, methodology, analysis, and writing & editing.

Funding: Not applicable. This research received no specific grant from any funding agency in the public, commercial, or not-for-profit sectors.

Institutional Review Board Statement: Not applicable. This study did not involve human participants, animal subjects, or any data requiring ethical approval.

Informed Consent Statement: Not applicable. The manuscript contains no individual person's data in any form.

Data Availability Statement: No new data were created for this study.

Acknowledgments: The author wishes to express sincere gratitude to Professor Dingxin Zhao of the Department of Sociology at Zhejiang University, as well as Dr. Marie-Eve Ren and Dr. Jan Harm Schutte (Hundred Talents Program Researchers) for their valuable reviews and constructive comments on this work.

25. Hui, V. T. B. (2005). *War and state formation in ancient China and early modern Europe*. Cambridge University Press.
26. Huntington, S. P. (1968). *Political order in changing societies*. Yale University Press.
27. Idris, A. H. (2005). Reconceptualizing History, Identity, and Conflict. In *Conflict and Politics of Identity in Sudan* (pp. 9-22). New York: Palgrave Macmillan US.
28. Iyer, S., & Weeks, M. (2020). Social interactions, ethnicity, religion, and fertility in Kenya. *Journal of Demographic Economics*, 86(3), 329-365.
29. Kedourie, E. (1960). *Nationalism*. London: Hutchinson.
30. Kohn, H. (1967). *The Idea of Nationalism*. New York: Collier-Macmillan.
31. Lange, M., Jeong, T., & Amasyali, E. (2021). The colonial origins of ethnic warfare: Re-examining the impact of communalizing colonial policies in the British and French Empires. *International Journal of Comparative Sociology*, 62(2), 141-165.
32. Long, J. D., & Gibson, C. C. (2015). Evaluating the roles of ethnicity and performance in African elections: Evidence from an exit poll in Kenya. *Political Research Quarterly*, 68(4), 830-842.
33. Luttwak, E. N. (1999). Give war a chance. *Foreign affairs*, 36-44.
34. Lynch, G. (2006). Negotiating ethnicity: Identity politics in contemporary Kenya. *Review of African political economy*, 33(107), 49-65.
35. Mamdani, M. (2001). Beyond settler and native as political identities: Overcoming the political legacy of colonialism. *Comparative studies in Society and History*, 43(4), 651-664.
36. Ndege, P. O. (2009). *Colonialism and its Legacies in Kenya*. Lecture delivered during Fulbright-Hays Group project abroad program: July 5th to August 6th.
37. Newbury, C. (1992). Rwanda: recent debates over governance and rural development. *Governance and politics in Africa*, 193-219.
38. Nwankwo, N. E. (2016). "Mimi ni Mtanzania": An Analysis of Post-Colonial Nation Building and the Emergence of National Identity in Contemporary Tanzania.
39. Odak, O. (1995). Inter-ethnic relations in bantu-nilotic ethnic boundaries of western kenya. *Zeitschrift für Ethnologie*, (H. 2), 227-240.
40. Robinson, A. L. (2009). *National versus Ethnic Identity in Africa*. University of California, Berkeley.
41. Robinson, A. L. (2014). National versus ethnic identification in Africa: Modernization, colonial legacy, and the origins of territorial nationalism. *World Politics*, 66(4), 709-746.12
42. Rodríguez-Franco, D. (2016). Internal wars, taxation, and state building. *American sociological review*, 81(1), 190-213.
43. Sambanis, N., Skaperdas, S., & Wohlforth, W. C. (2015). Nation-building through war. *American Political Science Review*, 109(2), 279-296.
44. Simmel, G. (1955 [1908]). *Conflict and the Web of Group Affiliations*. Glencoe: Free Press.
45. Simson, R. (2019). Ethnic (in) equality in the public services of Kenya and Uganda. *African Affairs*, 118(470), 75-100.
46. Sumner, W.G. (1906). *Folkways*. Boston: Ginn.
47. Taylor, B. D., & Botea, R. (2008). Tilly tally: War-making and state-making in the contemporary third world. *International Studies Review*, 10(1), 27-56.
48. Thies, C. G. (2005). War, rivalry, and state building in Latin America. *American Journal of Political Science*, 49(3), 451-465.
49. Tilly, C. (1975). *The formation of national states in Western Europe*. Princeton University Press.
50. Tilly, C. (1985). "War Making and State Making as Organized Crime." Pp. 169-87 in *Bringing the State Back In*, edited by P. Evans, D. Rueschemeyer, and T. Skocpol. Cambridge University Press.
51. White, C. E. (2011). *Is legible space peaceful space? Bureaucratic order and civil war onset*. Georgetown University.
52. Wimmer, A. (2018). *Nation Building: Why some Countries Come Together While Others Fall Apart*. Princeton University Press.

Disclaimer/Publisher's Note: The statements, opinions and data contained in all publications are solely those of the individual author(s) and contributor(s) and not of MDPI and/or the editor(s). MDPI and/or the editor(s) disclaim responsibility for any injury to people or property resulting from any ideas, methods, instructions or products referred to in the content.