**IDENTITY, INDIGENEITY AND CONTESTED CITIZENSHIP AMONG**

**THE NUBI IN UGANDA**

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**Abstract**

This study sought to examine how and why the Nubi defined and consolidated themselves as an ethnic group in Uganda from 1890s to 1995. The Nubi are an indigenous ethnic group that settled in Uganda in the early 1890s from southern Sudan. They trace their ancestry from the former Sudanese British colonial soldiers who were recruited by Fredrick Lugard into the Kings African Riffles. This study was guided by the following key questions: Who are the Ugandan Nubi? What historical conditions contributed to the consolidation of the Nubi as an indigenous ethnic community? Why was the Nubi identity contested? Drawing from archival sources and oral interviews conducted in Bombo, Arua and Fort Portal from 2018 to 2020, I argue that Ugandan Nubi presents a socially constructed ethnic group that transcends the perceived understanding of ethnicity linked to Primordialism where ethnicity is perceived to be static characterised by fixed ethnic features like common myths of origin or assigned ancestral bounded territories. In contrast to primordialism, constructivism ethnic paradigm which this study adopted, perceives ethnicity to be fluid and socially constructed based on shared ethnic features. Throughout the time of their settlement in 1890s, the study argues that various historical conditions shaped the way the Nubi defined and consolidated themselves as an indigenous ethnic group in Uganda. Some of the conditions included: the role played by the early Nubi settlers in 1890s, British colonial legacy, Islamic influence through Nubi Islamic teachers like Sheikh Mahmoud Alijab, the formation of Sudanese Associations in 1920s and 1950s, Nubian Mutiny, Amin’s rise to power, the role played by the cultural leaders of Buganda and the role played by the Uganda Constituent Assembly of 1994 among other factors.

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