

Table 1.1
Changes in Claimed Ethnic Identity as Reported to Census Enumerators, Zanzibar Island (Unguja)

Ethnic Category	1924	1931	Percent Change	1948	Percent Change
Comorian	2,244	2,101	-6%	2,764	+32%
“Indigenous” Africans					
Swahili	14,806	2,038	-86%	129	-94%
Hadimu	16,454	27,732	+69%	41,185	+49%
Tumbatu	21,288	27,663	+30%	38,548	+39%
Shirazi	13,602	8,642	-36%	disallowed as a census ethnicity	
Pemba	143	480	+235%	900	+88%
Mainland Africans					
Manyema	3,934	3,020	-23%	1,899	-37%
Nyasa and Yao	10,994	9,539	-13%	6,131	-36%
Other Mainland	23,662	31,933	+35%	29,374	-8%
Total African Population					
	107,127	113,148	+6%	118,652	+5%

manumitted slaves accounted for 85 percent of the total African population of the isles.⁵⁷ By the time that the first official census was taken of the African population, in 1924, however, individuals who identified as members of ethnic communities associated with slavery constituted less than 13 percent of the protectorate’s population. While a certain number of former slaves left the isles after abolition, it appears that the vast majority who remained in the isles reidentified themselves as members of freeborn ethnic communities as one means of establishing their identities as free men and women in the post-abolition era.⁵⁸

In turn-of-the-century East Africa, the Swahili were generally identified as freeborn coastal Muslims, many of whom were of mixed African and Arab descent, who lived primarily in urban areas and spoke the Kiswahili language. Who exactly the Swahili “were,” how-