

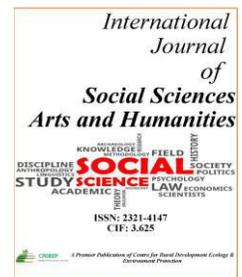
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**Full Length Research Paper**

New forms of Representative Politics among the Kadimo clan of Yimbo in Siaya County from the onset of colonialism

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ABSTRACT

The pre-colonial African political set up was composed of centralised and decentralised political systems. With colonialism, new forms of politics of representation that placed the Africans at the periphery of representative politics emerged. This study is about the new forms of representative politics among the Kadimo clan of Yimbo in Siaya county from the onset of colonialism. The study employed the descriptive research design. Data was obtained from oral, archival and secondary sources. The researcher interviewed a sample size of 30 respondents who were purposively sampled using snowballing technique. The study corroborated data from oral, archival and secondary sources to ensure the reliability and validity of the study. Postcolonial theory was used to examine the new forms of representative politics. The major findings of the study were that after the establishment of colonial rule in Yimbo, new forms of representative politics emerged as follows; appointment of chiefs; colonial protests; representation in the Legislative council; formation of political associations; collaboration with the colonial administration; democratic elections; system of colonial administration and the Kadimo village police. Pre-colonial Kadimo political structures were also explored. The study concluded that after the establishment of colonial rule in Yimbo, new forms of representative politics emerged among the Kadimo clan and hence contributed to the colonial historiography of the Kadimo clan of Yimbo in Siaya county, Kenya.

Introduction

In pre-colonial Africa, there were various and variant forms of political systems. African societies such as Ghana, Mali and Songhai had well established centralised political systems while other African societies were stateless and their leadership was organised around family, kinship and clan systems, these were decentralised (Chabal, 2009). Young,(1982)adds that Berlin conference of 1884-1885 marked the start of the idea of western political representation in Africa. New forms of political representation emerged with colonialism which removed emphasis from the local communities to the colonial headquarters in the metropole.

In examining governance and the transformation of politics of representation in various African countries, Saward (2005) proposes for stakeholders, wider interests and surrogate governances as new forms of politics of representation that emerged in Africa in the post-colonial epoch. Antoine (2016) observes that representative democracy is the most common form of government across the world. This agrees with Pap's (2017) assertions that by electing a good representative the minority will be able to voice their grievances in an orderly manner. Cox and

McCubbins (1986) and Cox (1997) expand the above observations by aptly mentioning that liberal democracy is aided or impeded by ethnic politics. On the other hand, Chandra(2004) argues that competition for wealth and power among various ethnic groups affect the institutionalisation of democracy. Ochieng (1974) observes that class and ethnic division during the colonial rule had a considerable impact on new forms of African political organisation. This was because most of the African political activity was local within a single ethnic group. Similarly, Oyugi (1994) posits that political dissent also extended to religious forms and other groups which were seeking to get rid of the 'alien' chiefs imposed on them by the colonial regime in Africa after the establishment of colonial rule. Due to increased demand for African representation, Eliud Mathu was appointed the first African representative in the legislative council in 1944. This also led to the formation of Kenya African Study Union (KASU), which was later rebranded Kenya African Union (KAU), a political organisation and movement which represented the African grievances to the colonial government (Ochieng, 1990). In his book, "Not Yet Uhuru: An Autobiography," published in 1967, Oginga Odinga states that the Luo system of government

was by consent and consultation from elders. Odinga concludes that the British changed this since they choose leaders who were unpopular among the people who could only be used to achieve the colonial aim. Commenting on the history of the Kadimo chiefdom, (Ochieng, 1975) maintains that the Kadimo clan proved to be a very dominative clan in the pre-colonial period, however, this situation changed with the coming of British rule in the location, as the Kadimo were now the conquered. This eventually, changed the socio-economic and politics of representation among the residents of Kadimo. The arrival of the British colonialists in Kenya, and particularly in Siaya county, brought changes in the politics of representation among the residents of Kadimo clan of Yimbo because of the structural transformations that the British effected in local leadership.

Previous studies on political representation have often focused on national and regional representative politics. However, the political representation of the Kadimo clan of Yimbo has hardly received any scholarly attention, for instance, to understand whether colonialism brought new forms of politics of representation among the Kadimo clan within the context of colonial structures. This study fills the knowledge gap on political historiography among ethnic communities in the colonial period, which is useful in demonstrating the chronology of politics of representation during the colonial period. It is against this background that a study on the new forms of representative politics among the Kadimo clan of Yimbo in Siaya county from the onset of colonialism was conducted.

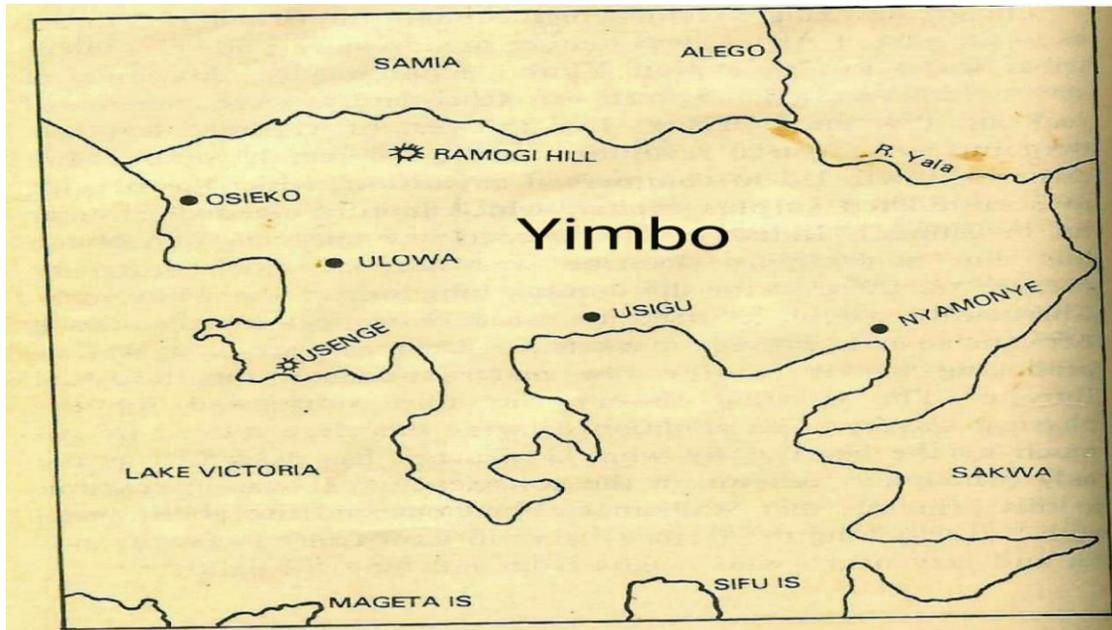


Fig 1: Map of Yimbo. (Source: Ochieng (1975))

Materials and Methods

Study area

This study was conducted in Yimbo, Usigu Division in Bondo sub-county within the wider Siaya county, Kenya. Yimbo is made up of a total of fifty-three clans. The area was chosen because no related research had been conducted in the sub-county despite the persistence of representative politics which came with new representative forms of politics at the local level. This study utilised purposive sampling with snowballing method in selecting the respondent as per the objective of this study. A sample size of 30 respondents were interviewed and these included: administrators, members of the Luo council of elders, the people of Kadimo clan all drawn from Usigu village of Yimbo in Bondo sub-county guided by Kathuri&Pals (1993).

Research Method

This study employed a descriptive research design. Kothari (1985) notes that descriptive research is concerned with describing, recording, analysing, reporting and presenting the features of particular conditions as they are. Kathuri and Pals (1993) demonstrates that the systematic and scientific nature of the descriptive research design brings valid and reliable outcomes. For Kombo and Tromp (2006) the major purpose of descriptive research is the description of the state of affair as it

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exists and it allows for both qualitative and quantitative research. Descriptive research design was used in this study as it enabled the researcher to collect, describe, record, analyse, report and present the new forms of representative politics among the Kadimo of Yimbo in Siaya county from the onset of colonialism. This study described, recorded, analysed, reported and presented the findings as they existed without manipulating any variables.

Data Analysis Procedures and Presentation

Data was analysed by the use of Qualitative Data Analysis. Qualitative data obtained from the open-ended questions were qualitatively analysed based on content analysis. This was influenced by the data obtained from primary sources, archival sources and secondary sources which were corroborated to meet the reliability and validity of the study.

The researcher presented an introduction letter to the respondent and with the consent of the respondent, the interview was conducted. Research permit was obtained from the National Council for Science, Technology, and Innovations (NACOSTI).

The researcher booked appointments with the respondent to conduct the interview prior to the interview. The purpose of the interview was explained to the interviewee who participated in

the interviews wilfully and where the interviewee sought to remain anonymous, the researcher respected the will of the respondent guided by Israel & Hay (2006).

Results

Introduction

This section discusses the new forms of representative politics among the Kadimo clan of Yimbo in Siaya county from the onset of colonialism in the context of appointment of chiefs; colonial protests; representation in the legislative council; formation of political associations; collaboration with the colonial administration; democratic elections; system of colonial administration and the Kadimo village police. Pre-colonial political structure is also explored.

New forms of representative politics among the Kadimo clan of Yimbo in Siaya county during the colonial period

The researcher sought to establish the pre-colonial political situations among the Kadimo clan. During the early pre-colonial period in Africa, chiefdoms represented an environment that was closer to a system of clubs than governments which possessed monopolies over governance services. There was also the existence of migrations of tribes, lineages and families between chiefdoms (Davidson, 1970). This led to a situation where lineages broke from chiefdoms and subordinate themselves to other chiefdoms or govern themselves independently.

In his study on pre-colonisation and post-colonisation, Leeson (2005) expands Davidson (1970) by showing that by imposing new sets of rules and limiting the individual's exit options between various chiefdoms and communities, the colonialists empowered local chiefs and destroyed many of the pre-colonial institutions. This means that the political organisations of chiefdoms in the late pre-colonial period were constrained constitutionally and responsive to their citizens. Accounts from European colonial officers working in colonial Kenya also documented the awe with which traditional structures of governance constrained the powers of clan chiefs.

According to the two informers, Achando and Okaka (O.I, 2019) *Jo-Kadimo* were led by *routhand* Dimobecame the first *ruoth* when they arrived in Yimbo. Each *ruoth* had a territorial council called *Buch Piny*. The council consisted of elders from major Luo and Bantu clans in Yimbo. The elders were locally called *jodongdhoudi*. The council also composed of *osumbwamrwayi*. *Buch Piny* dealt with major issues such as murder, rape, cattle thefts, boundary disputes, famines, invasions, diseases and inter-clan conflicts. *Buch Piny* also had a cabinet of elders from Kadimo clan and other experts like *jobilo* and *jojimbkoth*(rain makers), a cabinet that was called *Buch Oganda*.

Below *Buch Piny* were smaller territorial councils called *gweng*, or *doho* which were under assistant *ruoths*. The assistants were personally appointed by the *routh*. They were to maintain law and order in different parts of the *ruothdom*. The *doho* councillors were either influential elders or war leaders. They could also be dismissed by the *ruoth* who appointed them. In the 19th Century, *Jo-Kadimo* had four *doho* at Nyangera, Nyamonye, Goma and Majimbo. There were also clan councils called *Buch Dhoot* which dealt with clan and family affairs (Ong'ng'a O.I, 2019). This means that among the Kadimo clan, the pre-colonial

political organisation began at the lineage level. Each lineage chose ahead; when different lineages came together to form a village, they chose a chief to be the leader of the clan. The heads of the various lineages in this clan would then serve in the chief's council of elders. The chief was seen as clan's religious leader and the living representative of the ancestral spirits as well as the government leader responsible for maintaining order and acting as the decisive authority in matters affecting the welfare of the clan.

It was said that there existed a group called the inner council which also assisted the chief in governance. This council consisted of influential members of the community or relatives and friends of the chiefs. They did not have the authority to override the chief, but acted as counsellors and informed the chief about what was going on in the clan. Lastly, the chief's decision making was informed by the village of the commoners, which consisted of village meetings with the councillors, advisers and the people of the community. The village commoners served as a court of last resort when disputed issues could not be resolved by agreement between the chief and the council of elders. In the village meetings, community members and leaders could discuss the proposed compromise and the final decision would be made by the majority (Jeje O.I, 2019).

According to the two respondents, Ogwo'ng and Achando (O.I, 2019), since clans could migrate from the chiefdom, the Kadimo chief had the responsibility to meet the expectations of the Yimbo residents so as to increase his following rather than encourage desertion to a neighbouring chief. This is supported by Ashton (1947) that chiefs who fulfilled their duties were not only sure of keeping their position but of increasing their following; those who did not, found their followers dwindling or, in extreme cases, might find their position usurped by a popular rival. This meant that freedom to migrate made sure that chiefs became accountable in order to win trust of those under their rule.

The British adopted the policy of integrating the indigenous administrative system or create one where there was none, into its structure to manage her colonies. This was what became known as indirect rule which colonial appointed African chiefs became responsible for social discipline and provision of social services. This means that, the colonisers such as British had to appoint some local leaders to assist in governing of the newly acquired territories under the supervision of the District Commissioner and this changed the pre-colonial appointment set of the chiefs.

The interviews conducted in Yimbo showed that the British administration started paying Kadimo colonial appointed chiefs' salaries in form of money (Achando O.I, 2019). In his Annual Reports of 1905-1915 on Administration, the Provincial Commissioner reported that the main purpose of the establishment of a Native Treasury was to act as a source from which the salaries of Native Administration personnel would be paid (KNA/PC/NZA/2/3). This meant that from the onset of colonialism, the Kadimo chiefs were directly being paid by the colonial government as colonial administrators. This eventually made them to be in the colonial government's payroll hence colonial appointee. Interviews conducted established that traditionally, tribute was paid to the chief for the services that he

provided, such as presiding over the traditional tribal courts or receiving new villages into his community (Okaka O.I, 2019). However, this changed with colonisation as the chiefs were now being paid by the colonial government for their services in the location. It further meant that throughout Kadimo clan under British colonial rule, the chiefs were no longer compensated solely for services to their constituents.

The study also focused on establishing how colonial protests were held in Yimbo. There were occasional conflicts between the Kadimo chieftainship establishment headed by the Kadimo chief and the protectorate government over the appointment of chiefs. For instance, there were conflicts between Kadimo, Protestant, and Catholic over chiefly appointments based on religion (Odongo O.I, 2019). This meant that during the period under investigation, appointment of chiefs in Kadimo brought sharp competition between the colonial government and the Kadimo clan residents.

On the other hand, the colonial authorities were equally concerned about the kind of man to be appointed to a chieftainship position. Because having the right to appoint and/or dismiss chiefs was one of the means of ensuring hegemony over the colonial situation. It was also a way of ensuring that they employed the right administrative personnel to implement their policies (KNA/PC/NZA/2/3).

Further inquiry established that the Protestant church started identifying with the colonial government because when Christianity arrived in Kadimo the rulers had become Protestant and the British colonial state was itself Protestant oriented. What followed was that Protestants were encouraged to take their children to Protestant schools and in the long run, these educated men became ready raw materials for recruitment as chiefs, clerks, messengers, interpreters and teachers (Odongo O.I, 2019). One such beneficiary of the colonial education was Yona Omolo of Kanyidoto clan. It was reported that Yona Omolo attended the Maseno Mission School after which he came back to Yimbo and was very vocal in the appointment of chiefs in Yimbo.

The researcher aimed to establish whether or not the Kadimo clans were represented in the colonial legislative bodies. African representation was considered at this time as part of the general reorganization of the Council. The formal organization of Local Native Councils began in 1924. The Local Native Councils consisted of the District Councils, the District Officer if there is one, and the local appointed chiefs.

There were also African District Councils, which were key in African representation at the district level. There were 24 African District Councils (ADC) governed by the provisions of the African District Councils Ordinance of 1950 which replaced earlier legislation. Despite the significance of the above legislative bodies in the promotion of leadership and governance, the Kadimo people indicated that they were not represented in either the Legislative Council or the African District Councils that had been established in Central Nyanza.

Formation of political parties and/or associations during the colonial was major avenues through which Africans advocated for their grievances. According to the oral interviews conducted in Yimbo, the chieftainship was divided into two opposing political

camps and this reflected the pre-colonial structural alignment of the ruling clan versus the ruled. In Yimbo, there was the chief's clan, Kadimo which provided leadership from the time of Luo invasion of Yimbo around 1680. There were also other clans tracing their origin from the Bantu groups such as Walowa, Wawamba and Wasenge among others in Yimbo. These two opposing political camps became known as Kadimo giOjwando (Kadimo versus Ojwando).

The researcher sought to understand why the Kadimo clan did not resist the British invasion of Yimbo. Jeje (O.I, 2019), 76 years of age, noted that *Jo-Kadimo* had diviners who could foretell the future. He observed that, diviners had prophesied the coming of a white man and that this prophecy was uttered at a time when no white man had entered the country. The *jobilo* had foretold of the coming of 'red strangers', long before whites arrived in Luo land, who would come from the sea. The *jobilo* warned that once these "strangers" (whites) arrived, people should never try to fight them because they had superior weapons in contrast to the ones that the Luo possessed. Besides, Kadimo people had already seen the pacification of their neighbouring communities such as *Jo-Seme*, *Jo-Uyoma* and *Jo-Asembo* by the British soldiers hence they could wage a war against such a formidable force. Adul (O.I, 2019), mentioned that any individual who co-operated with the British colonial government did so for reasons of personal advantage. Chief Anam first engaged with the colonial administration accompanying *askari* (police) on safari (tours) within the district. He was appointed as a court interpreter in 1907 to translate *Dholuo* (Luo language) into English at the district headquarters, Kisumu. He sought out the position because of the benefits and influence that he gained.

It was important to establish how the electoral processes in Kadimo took place in Yimbo during the colonial period. Data from the oral interviews conducted in Yimbo reported that the first democratic election to be held in Kadimo location was conducted in 1947. It could be called 'democratic election' because for the first time during the colonial period, the Yimbo people were now allowed to elect their own chief as opposed to the previous case where the chiefs were appointed by the colonial government without the consultation of the Yimbo people. According to the oral interviews conducted in Yimbo on administrative purposes, the British colonial government divided Kenya into many provinces, which were administered by Provincial Commissioners (PC). The provinces were further subdivided into district administrative units, headed by District Commissioners who like Provincial Commissioners. Districts were subdivided into divisions, also under the jurisdiction of expatriate officers. Divisions were subdivided into locations under the control of African chiefs. This implies that the colonial administrative structure was designed in such a way that, the top leadership positions were held by the Europeans while Africans were used at the lower leadership positions under the supervision of the European administrative officers.

Two other bodies that were also engaged in local administration in Kadimo clan were the native tribunals and local native councils (KNA/PC/NZA/3/1/272). The colonial government recognised both bodies on the understanding that these had governed many African people before colonial rule. But in both organs, the needs of the colonial administration and the powers of chiefs were

strongly reflected. The 1897 Native Court Ordinance enjoined the government to supervise the judicial activities of tribal authorities, allowing them to employ customary law, subject to the restriction that punishment was not to be inhumane or convictions obtained through witchcraft, torture, or “barbarous practices”. The 1910-1913 Nyanza Province Annual Report remarked thus of the Luo chiefs:

The Jaluo (the Luo) chiefs, seem to think that anything like a council will tend to diminish their authority, and they prefer to act independently in all matters or consultation with their retainers, relying on the government to support them in the event of opposition. Where we have a capable and energetic chief this despotic rule works well enough, but unfortunately very few of them bear out this description. The majority of them are either wanting in intelligence and power and accomplish nothing, or make use of their authority to enrich themselves at the expense of their people (KNA/PC/NZA/2/3).

This means that the appointed Kadimo chiefs could have been corrupt in dealing with their administrative duties, showing that even the colonial government had to be cautious in dealing with them. The colonial government therefore hired and dismissed the chiefs as they found necessary.

Among the Kadimo clan, there were also retainers who assisted the chiefs in maintaining law and order. Ogwong (O.I, 2019) reported that police also called locally as *kanga* was used in the Kadimo location to represent colonial policies. Prominent among these retainers were youths who had acquired some form of Western education or those who were engaged in wage labour. Initially, chiefs in the Nyanza region tried to ignore the role of elders in assisting them in administration. This weakened the chiefs’ ability to effectively administer their locations. The colonial administration, therefore, had to restore the powers of elders. The Central Kavirondo District Annual Report for 1908-1912 emphasised the significance of the restoration of the native council in assisting chiefs to settle cases in consultation with the elders (KNA/DC/1/6/2). The report observed:

The custom had gradually grown up, more specifically among the Luo, of the chief ignoring the old men, who were formerly accustomed to assemble and deal with tribal affairs, and substituting, therefore, many youths, who had managed to procure European or Swahili clothing, the donning of which is popularly supposed to immediately increase their powers.

The report admitted that the youths undoubtedly had their uses and were always conspicuous in obtaining labour for work on the roads or anything of a similar nature, though they “never by any chance do any manual work themselves”. By virtue of the use made of them by chiefs and government officers, they had begun to consider themselves indispensable and to arrogate (take or claim something) to themselves considerable power.

Conclusion

The study concluded that after the establishment of colonial rule in Yimbo, new forms of representative politics emerged among the Kadimo clan. For instance, there was appointment of chiefs by the colonial government without consultation of the natives as

well as lack of Kadimo’s representation in the created colonial legislative bodies such as the Legislative council and the Local Native council. This led to the rise of resentment among the residents of Yimbo to the colonial rule perpetuated by the colonial appointed chiefs.

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