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Influence of Representative Politics on Socio-economic Development of the Kadimo Clan in Siaya County during the Colonial Period

Richard Olwande Odo

MA Student, Department of Humanities, Chuka University, Kenya

Dr. Caroline Mucece Kithinji

Lecturer, Department of Humanities, Chuka University, Kenya

Abstract:

People's representation is crucial in social and economic development. This study is on the influence of representative politics on socio-economic development of the Kadimo clan in Siaya county during the colonial period between 1902 and 1963. The study employed the descriptive research design. Data was obtained from oral, archival and secondary sources. The researcher interviewed a total of 30 respondents who were purposively sampled using snowballing technique. The study corroborated data from oral, archival and secondary sources to ensure the validity and reliability of the study. The discussion starts with the influence of representative politics on social development then moves to the influence of representative politics on economic development. Underdevelopment theory was used to establish the influence of representative politics on social and economic development of the area of study. The findings of the study were that there were no schools in Kadimo clan until 1928 when Usege School was built in Yimbo location; there were no health centres in Kadimo; that between 1914 and 1919, the World War I (WWI) was fought and non-Kadimo clans were recruited as carrier corps by the Kadimo chiefs; Kadimo chieftdom brought together the many other clan elders in the chief's council and many warriors; that the peasants of Yimbo hated to leave their homesteads to provide labour in distant places and that the Kadimo clan hated to pay the oppressive hut tax and poll tax. This study has contributed to the colonial historiography of the Kadimo clan of Yimbo in Siaya county, Kenya.

Keywords: Representative Politics, Socio-economic development, Kadimo clan, Colonial

1. Introduction

People's representation is critical in any historical study as it plays a great role in understanding the socio-economic development in the society. Through representative democracy the socio-economic challenges that were emanating from lack of political representations in ancient societies were addressed (Pitkin, 1968; Urbinati & Warren, 2008). Jusco (2005) shows how the poor are represented in the contemporary democratic governance and how the elected representatives are more or less responsive to the preferences of the poor. Ochieng (1990) observes that the British used the policy of indirect rule to govern the native people. Similarly, Odinga (1967) demonstrates that a chief was the direct agent of the colonial government in his location. According to Ayot (1977), a chief stood at the social, political and economic organisation of his group. The first colonial chief among the Kadimo clan of Yimbo was appointed in 1902 and this was crucial in the socio-economic development of the region. Between 1880 and 1905 many people died in Yimbo due to sleeping sickness and dysentery and they were affected by two great famines between 1890 and 1897 (Ochieng, 1975). The arrival of the British colonialists in Kenya, and particularly among the Kadimo clan in Siaya county, brought transformations in the socio-economic and politics of representation due to the structural changes that the British effected in local leadership. It is against this background that a study on the influence of Representative politics on socio-economic development of the Kadimo clan in Siaya county, Kenya between 1902 and 1963 was carried out.

Figure 1: Map of Yimbo
Source: Ochieng (1975)

2. 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) descriptive research is majorly used to describe the state of affair as it 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 influence of representative politics on socio-economic development of the Kadimo clan in Siaya county, Kenya. This study also fitted within the provisions of descriptive research design because the researcher collected data and reported the way things were without altering any variables.

3. 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).

4. Findings of the Study

4.1. Introduction

This section discusses the influence of representative politics on the socio-economic development of the Kadimo clan of Yimbo in Siaya county during the colonial period between 1902 and 1963. The data was obtained from the oral, archival and secondary sources. Data from the oral sources, archival sources and secondary sources were corroborated to meet reliability and validity of the study.

4.2. Influence of Representative Politics on Social Development of the Kadimo Clan of Yimbo during the Colonial Period

According to a 90-year-old respondent, there was the adoption of the Luo language as the main lingua Franca in the entire Kadimo clan and Yimbo community. Since the Kadimo were nomadic pastoralists, they quickly dispersed among the Bantu clans as they grazed their cattle in open spaces in Yimbo and within a short period, the Luo language was evident in every corner of Yimbo (Onyango O.I, 2019). This was supported by a secondary source, Ochieng (1975) that the Kadimo people had no business in learning the many *dhome* languages they found in Yimbo. An oral respondent from Got Ramogi also reported that even in the chief's council, the meetings were being held in *Dholuo*, forcing, the elders from the Bantu clans in the chief's council to learn *Dholuo*.

Education is an important indicator of social development. According to Achando (O.I, 2019), there were no schools in the Kadimo clan of Yimbo until 1928 when Usenge School was built. This was corroborated with the archival source (KNA/DC/KSM/1/23/42) which indicate that the Kadimo people had allocated land for the establishment of Usenge secondary school in Yimbo in 1928. This was due to the efforts of Yona Omolo who had attended Maseno School and conducted catechism as well as reading lessons in the location and further established education centres in Yimbo Kadimo (KNA/DC/KSM/1/10/45/10).

Some oral respondents (Akoth 2019, O.I), which was ascertained from the archival sources (KNA/DC/CN/1/2/10), there were no health centres among the Kadimo clan. *Jo-Kadimo* hugely depended on the traditional doctors to cure the various diseases that were common in the chieftdom such as stomach aches. The nearest hospital was found in Kisumu where the colonial headquarters for Central Nyanza was situated. Therefore, many people in

Kadimo relied on traditional herbs for medicine because these were distant places which they could not access easily. This means that, despite having the colonial appointed chiefs, the Kadimo people were still not able to access medical services within their location. This in turn led to underdevelopment in Yimbo as far as access to modern medical facilities were concerned.

Further inquiry established that offences in Kadimo location were punished in various stringent forms. Offences, like stealing, smoking opium, insulting retainers, being involved in a fight or letting cattle into a neighbour's farm, were dealt with by the chief. The culprits would be fined or caned (Otieno O.I, 2019). The village police who were selected because of their muscular strength and caned the culprits with pride, savagery and satisfaction (KNA/JD/1/477). However, the rich culprits got off very lightly. They could send a young boy with a goat or cow to the chief before the case was heard such that when he came before the chief's court, he would only be warned not to repeat the mistake. After 1915, Africans started getting restless due this colonial brutality meted on Africans. As Odinga (1967) quote:

Complaints of harsh treatment by the chiefs and headmen and the District Commissioner began to be seen through government authorities. There was the case for instance of heads of clans who were detained at the administrative headquarters for a week on a charge of slackness and the clan elders who were given stroke on buttocks for each hut on which tax had been ordered to be paid and was overdue. A headman who was reported to have disobeyed an order to bring in porters was forced to carry the load himself, page 24.

This means that, to ensure that law and order was adhered to, the chiefs were encouraged by the colonial government to implement the colonial policies among the people they represented by use of every means. Very brutal mechanisms were used to enforce such laws. The police assisted the chiefs in Yimbo in the administration of location. The chiefs who failed to implement such policies were also not spared from the wrath of colonial brutality.

During World War One (WWI) many people from Nyanza were recruited as carrier corps. Thousands of these African men died during the service from diseases like malaria and smallpox. The situation was not different among the Yimbo people. Presently, the people in Yimbo, look back to this period with a lot of bitterness. When the Second World War (WWII) came in 1939, the Yimbo clans which were non-Kadimo such as Goma, Walowa, Wasenge and Wahundha were thrown into panic because they feared to be recruited into carrier corps like it had happened during the First World War when chief Jairo Okello favoured the Kadimo against other clans (KNA/PC/NZA/4/5/2). This means that recruitment process is hugely influenced by the representatives of a society. When such recruitments negatively targeted a particular group against the other, then the two groups will revolt to protect their interests.

The Kadimo chiefdom brought together the many other clan elders in the chief's council and many warriors. In the council called *Buch piny*, the elders discussed the common interests and problems facing the *Jo-Kadimo* as the warriors were useful in fighting the Yimbo neighbours such as *Jo-Sakwa*, *Jo-Alego* and *Jo-Samia* which were considered traditional enemies. The sub-chiefs at the *doho* council also brought many regional clan members to discuss their common interests and problems (Mboya O.I, 2019).

Respondents also indicated that the Kadimo chiefs and other Luo chiefs in the entire Nyanza region were very keen in marrying from the other Bantu clans which they had conquered as they were settling in Yimbo. Intermarriages assisted the chiefs to rule as one great family dynasty with the areas where they married acting as satellites provinces of the Kadimo chiefdom (Masala 2019, O. I). It means that marriage was a very important aspect in leadership and the Kadimo people continued to marry outside their clan. Marrying from different clans enhanced the authority of the chiefs over the people they represented.

According to oral tradition, the Kadimo people continued to construct their houses using stick and mud after British invasion of Yimbo. They did not have iron-roofed or bricked wall houses. This means that, even with the coming of the British in Yimbo and the appointment of chiefs, the Kadimo people still lived in their traditional homestead structures.

The study established that protests were not many in the location. However, this study established some few instances of colonial protests in Yimbo. For example, the Yimbo people resisted against the ruthless rule of chief Jacob Opuk. There were also several letters of protests that were written by Yona Omollo from Kanyidoto clan demanding the removal of Kadimo chiefs and the change of the name of the location from Kadimo to Yimbo location. This means that, when people become dissatisfied with the governance of those who represented them, such leaders were resisted.

To check these activities, chiefs came up with a series of by-laws. For example, any butcher who intended to slaughter a cow or goat had to get a license and inform the public by having someone to announce by shouting on top of a tree. The announcement told the public that there was going to be the meat of very good quality. The aim was not only to advertise the meat but rather to make sure that no animal was slaughtered stealthily by potential thieves. Besides, the head, the skin and the legs of the slaughtered animal were not to be sold till all the meat was sold off (Opiyo 2019, O.I). This was to allow possible complainants looking for their stolen animal to view 'appearance' of the slaughtered animal.

Under the Local Government Ordinance, the chiefs still wielded meaningful power such that every chief administered such protectorate as he was legally competent to administer and in particular, he administered the provision of the Native Authority Ordinance (1949) and any bylaws lawfully made by any District Council. Hence, what the chiefs of Kadimo clan did, such as declaring curfew, inspecting health and sanitation, arresting and prosecuting lawbreakers, were all aspects of exercising the powers devolved to them by the colonial authorities. This means that as a system of chiefship, the Kadimo chiefs were village despot possessing powers built on administrative variant as opposed to the traditional system of leadership.

It should also be pointed out that for the first time, African District Councils (ADC) were established by law and were officially recognised as the basic units of administration so that the 1949 Ordinance was the legal instrument which established 'tribal' local governments in Nyanza (KNA/PC/NZA/3/45/12). During the colonial period, the Kadimo people did not have any representation in the Legislative council. This implies that during the colonial period, the Kadimo clan

and the Yimbo people lacked political representation leading to their social, economic and political exclusion from the mainstream of the colonial government administrative structures.

A large number of competing governance structures and the ability to exit puts competitive pressures on the chiefs to provide better governance services to collect payments from the citizens. These mechanisms incentivize governments to provide “good governance” services because chiefs and chiefdoms could lose their members, who were their only sources of revenue (Ochola 2019, O.I). This demonstrates that the interests of the chiefs were tied directly to the ability to satisfy the people they represented. As residual claimants in a competitive political environment, Kadimo chiefs thus faced incentives to remain accountable for their actions.

4.3. Influence of Representative Politics on Economic Development of the Kadimo Clan of Yimbo during the Colonial Period

The economic development in Kenya during the colonial period was only skewed to specific regions especially where the white settlers had settled. White settlement and the massive alienation of the Kenyan land had started as early as 1903. As a result, the notorious system of labour recruitment came into effect. While tropical diseases like malaria, sleeping sickness and poor climate saved the Luo of Nyanza from the systematic alienation of land, Nyanza was thrashed into the largest labour reserve in the country. When voluntary labour was slow, ordinances such as the Master-Servant Ordinance of 1906 were passed to empower the colonial government to exert labour compulsory for public and settler purposes. For instance, the Northey Circular of 1919 demanded the chiefs to encourage their subjects to engage in wage labour. On this, Oginga Odinga (1967) writes:

The District Commissioner issued labour quotas to chiefs and headmen, and the chiefs were turned into labour recruiters. Chiefs were subject to pressure and bribery to exact more and more labour from their areas and recruiting methods became major grievances among the people. Chiefs or sub-chiefs, issued with orders for labours, arbitrarily picked batches of forty men at a time from the location and had them signed up for six-month contract under which it was a penal offence to decamp, page 36.

The above assertions demonstrate that as representative of their people, the chiefs became the sovereign agents of colonial government in recruiting African labour. The unpopular labour policies which were given to the chiefs by the colonial administrators forced the chiefs to punish any individual who showed contempt to such policies.

According to oral sources, the peasants of Yimbo hated to leave their homesteads to provide labour in distant places. They also hated to pay the oppressive hut tax and the poll tax. To avoid payment of hut tax and poll tax, they took the practice of disappearing to the islands of Lake Victoria such as Mageta, Sirimbi, and Lolwe throughout the colonial period. Whenever they heard that the tax collectors or labour conscripts were coming, they would go and hide. On occasions when government motor-boats confined the islands, many would dive and swim around the islands until the motor-boats had left (KNA/DC/CN/1/2/11). This tallied with Odinga (1967) that the DC could warn the chief of the day he was coming and the chiefs, their retainers and the assistant collectors could go around collecting taxes from the chiefs and then return to the headquarters.

Ochieng (1975) saw taxation as a triple edged weapon: as stimulation to production, as a source of revenue for the support of colonial administration and as a mark of recognition by the community of the protecting power of the colonial state. It was also a cardinal principle that colonies had to finance their own cost of administration and development. Ochieng further believed that the whole process had to start with politicising the people about it. He observes:

Among unorganised communities, the tax affords a means of creating and enforcing native authority, curbing endlessness and in tribal evolution and hence, it becomes a moral benefit and is justified by the immunity from slavery which the people now enjoy, page 40.

In Ochieng's (1975) observation, the immediate object of taxation was to provide revenue for government projects and payment of employees. The first official attempt to introduce a more organised system of taxation in Nyanza region was when the District Council appointed a committee which included a location chief, sub-chiefs and representatives of the sub-location council assisted by the village police. This committee was charged with the duty of determining and assessing taxes to be paid by the people.

The researcher was interested to know how tax assessment was done in Kadimo. The assessment on how much tax to pay was made against people's wealth which included domestic animals, acreage of land, number of wives and children and business premises and also the volume of cotton produced by individual farmers. Government poll and education taxes were always automatic for all people and were not included during the assessment structures Okaka (O.I, 2019).

The Central Kavirondo Annual report of 1905-1915 shows that there was also the quota system, applied to Districts, Divisions and Sub-divisions. The aim was to reach a specific sum of revenue by making each area pay its specific or maximum share or quota in the form of tax. There was, thus, inherent competition among chiefs of different areas as they struggled to meet their respective quotas. Instructions given to the District Secretary of the Treasury of Nyanza region in 1959 read:

The assessment committee must remember that their first aim must be to reach the Kadimo quota. The second aim must be to make the rich men pay more. The third aim is to make the peasants pay sufficient tax.

It therefore means that these chiefs were merely implementing orders from the colonial masters. The logical consequence was that the chiefs deliberately over-assessed taxpayers to meet their obligatory quotas. In case they failed, they were forced to succumb to scandalous and arbitrary reassessment exercises that turned out to be extremely detrimental to the economic development of the people of Kadimo clan in Yimbo.

Besides the quota system, there was the method of collecting taxes that aroused wide-spread opposition from the Yimbo communities. One oral source aged 89 years old from Kadimo clan narrated how his only cow which was in-calf was seized in 1958 by chief Blasio Mbira to pay his sixteen-year-old son's tax. The cow was later bought cheaply by the chief. Other respondents across Kadimo clan in Siaya county such as Magak, Adul and Ong'ng'a (O, I, 2019) confirmed and emphasised the unfairness and brutality in tax collection exercise, especially when it came to education tax which was imposed by the District Council

Formation of political associations was one of the avenues of new political dispensation in Africa after colonialism. The Kadimo people did not have national political parties, however, at the locational level, they formed two political movements: the Kadimo Association was majorly for the Kadimo clan and the Ojwando Association was for the non-Kadimo clans residing in Yimbo. These two associations divided the location into two variant politic outfits. The Ojwando Association wanted to dethrone the Kadimo clan leadership in Yimbo (Ochanda 2019, O. I). This made the Yimbo people to choose whom to trade with as well as the lands to graze their cattle. This means that political associations determine the economic choice of a people in the society.

The Kadimo chiefs failed to represent interests of their people effectively and often concentrated their interests and those of their employers. This particular observation was raised by respondent who was a school teacher during colonial time (Ongere 2019, O.I). He decried the faulty tax assessment in which school leavers were assessed seventy-six shillings. This faulty assessment made Africans even poorer because they were forced to part with more than they could afford.

In his recommendation, the District Commissioner proposed to the Provincial Commissioner that the locations around the Lake Victoria region which were far from the Kisumu be brought together under a paramount chief. He suggested the youthful and good chief, referring to chief Okello of Kadimo or the retired ex-chief of Gem called Ndeda to be made the paramount chief. The paramount chief would administer the Lake locations of Seme, Asembo, Uyoma, Sakwa and Kadimo. The chief was to be supported by a council of an elected representative from each of these locations. However, the Provincial Commissioner did not take up this recommendation (KNA/DC/CN/3/4/16).

According to oral interviews conducted, there was the Yimbo road to be constructed during the colonial period. This road started from Kagolo Awala to Sakwa to Goye. To construct the road, every adult was expected by the chief to turn out once a week for the construction of the road (KNA/DC/KSM/1/30/41). There was also the construction of the Kadimo location chief's camp at Uligu. Each sub-location was to contribute money towards its construction. A market was also to be built at Kadimo Bay today called Oyele. The market allowed traders to rest before going to Uganda. By 1916, Indians had started establishing themselves at Kadimo Bay and had set up shops called dukas. They engaged in thriving trade with the natives in sisal, grain, hides, cotton and fish. Bridges were built at Nyamonye and Goye while other market centres established at Ndhiayo and Nyamonye (KNA/PC/NZA/3/1/9; KNA/PC/NZA/3/14/322).

The Kadimo chiefs dealt with those who were considered to be lazing around and not working in their farms. It was said that in 1916, Anyango wuon Jang'olo had gone to visit his friend Ndigo at Kanyibok a distant place from chief Okello's home. He was intercepted by kanga of chief Okello and was caned for loitering while he should be working in the field. The following day, a mob of over fifty warriors armed with spears and clubs invaded chief Okello's homestead to revenge the humiliation of Anyango wuon Jang'olo. Fracas spurned between this group and the *kanga* of chief Okello. In response, chief Okello appeared with a gun and everybody left in a panic. Archdeacon Walter Owen was very instrumental in introducing new crops in Kadimo and the entire Central Nyanza region (KNA/PC/NZA/4/193).

Oral respondents reported that the Kadimo people were involved in trading activities with their neighbouring communities such as Sakwa, Alego and Samia. Specifically, the trade was based on iron items like hoes, spears and axes which were manufactured by the Walowa clan of Yimbo in Bondo sub-county, Siaya county. They also imported iron tools from the Samia; sold fish to the inland Luo of Sakwa and Alego in exchange of grains such as wheat, millet and sorghum (Nyawanga O.I, 2019). The art of pot making, the Goma learnt from the Samia where they were settling before arriving in Yimbo Kadimo. This was supported by archival data that indicated the leasing of plots to Mrs. Motiba Kanji at Kadimo Trading Centre as letters from the DC and PC for Central Nyanza to Mrs Motiba (KNA/PC/NZA/3/14/322) and (KNA/PC/NZA/3/1/9). This trade links was very crucial to the development of the area under study since they were avenues through which the natives paid the taxes to the colonial administration collected by the chiefs.

Kadimo chiefs were therefore, village despots, their children received a formal education, their wives were dressed very well and they possessed large and comfortable homes with large granaries full of different kinds of foodstuff. It is not possible to provide all the cases of brutality and unfair treatment meted by the chiefs on their fellow people. However, a few interesting cases were detected during data collection and therefore, deserve to be mentioned.

5. Conclusions of the Study

The study concluded that representative politics have affected socio-economic development of the Kadimo clan in Siaya county, Kenya. For instance, between 1914 and 1919, the World War I (WWI) was fought and non-Kadimo clans were recruited as carrier corps by the Kadimo chiefs and this contributed to the underdevelopment of the area of study.

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