

**THE ROLE OF ATHARAKA CULTURAL TIES IN POLITICAL
MOBILIZATION DURING THE GENERAL ELECTIONS IN THARAKA
CONSTITUENCY, KENYA (1961-2007)**

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University**


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DECLARATION AND RECOMMENDATION


Declaration

This thesis is my work. It has not been presented for an award of diploma or conferment of degree in any other University or institutions.

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DEDICATION

This work is dedicated to my dear parents Mr. Wilfred Kirunguru and Mrs Julia Nthaama Kirunguru.

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ABSTRACT

Different societies in Africa have been using various cultural ties as a strategy for political mobilizations during general elections. In this regard, the study focused on examining the role of Atharaka music, clanism and age-set systems in political mobilization from 1961 to 2007. The study was guided by the following objectives: to examine the role of music in political mobilization in the Tharaka constituency from 1961 to 2007; to analyze the role of clanism in political mobilization among the Atharaka during general elections and to investigate how age-set system was used in political mobilization in Tharaka during general elections from 1961 to 2007. The study was steered by the assumption that culture plays a significant role in political mobilization. The literature was reviewed in this study to identify the gaps. The study was guided by structural functionalism theory. A descriptive study design was used. The research was carried out in the Tharaka constituency which has two sub-counties, Tharaka North and Tharaka South. Respondents were purposively sampled using snowballing techniques because it assisted the researcher in identifying respondents who have been deeply involved in Tharaka culture and politics. Tharaka constituency is among the three constituencies in Tharaka Nithi County which includes Maara, and Chuka Igambang'ombe. Tharaka constituency has a population of 133,595. The sampled wards are Chiakariga and Nkondi where Chiakariga ward has 18,564 voters and Nkondi has 9,543 thus categorizing them as a minor group in Tharaka voters. For the minor group, a sample size of 20- 50 respondents was used since the research relied on data saturation. The study sampled 40 respondents on the basis of data saturation. The researcher used both primary and secondary data. The data was analyzed thematically using historical narrations by corroborating both primary and secondary sources. The study found that music is used by Atharaka to mobilize people politically during general elections. Also, the research found that clanism and age-set systems are used to mobilize Atharaka voters during electioneering periods. On the contrary, the study found that in some instances, the use of music, clanism and age-set systems contributed to political demobilizations of certain political candidates. The findings were in line with structural functionalism theory. The study concluded that the overuse or overreliance on the culture can make people elect the wrong people for political leadership. In that regard, people should be cautious to avoid the overuse of cultural ties as a determinant of electing political leadership. Secondly, the study recommends that to encourage good governance and accountability, the government should encourage people to think beyond their culture when electing people for political leadership. To achieve Sustainable Development Goal 16 which encourages peace, justice and strong governance institutions, the overuse of the culture without a strong basis should be avoided. The research contributes to the political history of Kenya and cultural history of Atharaka. The study is also expected to contribute to policy-making, especially on ways to curb cultural ties that may instigate conflicts and ethnicity in Kenya.

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ABBREVIATIONS AND ACRONYMS

FORD-	Forum for the Restoration of Democracy
MOU-	Memorandum of Understanding
MP-	Member of Parliament
NARC-	National Rainbow Coalition
NCIC-	National Cohesion and Integration
ODM-	Orange Democratic Movement
PNU-	Party of National Unity
SDGs-	Sustainable Development Goals
UNAIDS-	United Nations programme of HIV/AIDS
USA-	United State of America
WHO-	World Health Organization

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background Information

Deaville (2015) noted that political campaigns in the United States of America (USA) are enriched by the use of music. Both Republican and Democratic Party supporters use music to communicate with their political supporters. Herzog et al., (2020) argue that music is vital while branding campaigns in the USA. The music portrays the identity of a certain campaign team. The authors illuminated the studies by creating a need to investigate whether music is used in the Tharaka community during campaign time.

In Africa, during pre-colonial periods, music mobilized people to embrace their leaders during entrance and exit from political gatherings. The gatherings were marked by musical demonstrations and dances (Allen, 2004). During colonial periods, the purpose of music took a different direction since Africans used songs to praise anti-colonial leaders and mock the colonialists. During the postcolonial period, political leaders who took leadership after the exit of colonialists used music and dances for political communication against their leaders (Martiniello & Lafleur, 2008). The authors satisfied the urge for the study to establish the use of music in the Tharaka community and its magnitude to influence politics during general elections.

In colonial Kenya, people expressed their dislike for colonialists through anti-colonial songs (Mutonya, 2004). In the 1950s, African Christians in Kenya formed songs from the bible to mock the colonialists by extracting passages and making songs that applied to their sufferings. They used music to attract their followers. In that way, they expressed their political discontent to colonialists (Mutonya, 2005). Mwaniki (1986) claims that campaigns for music among early Kenyan leaders started in 1957 when Africans were allowed to elect their representatives to the legislative council by the colonial government. People used music to awaken Kenyans to come out to elect leaders of their choice. Gathogo, (2020) noted that the first Kenyan general election was done in 1961 and many African leaders were elected. He noted that the 1957, 1961, and 1963 elections were accompanied by the mobilization of voters by the use of music. Ntiba (2015) noted that among the Chuka people, a Meru sub-tribe neighboring the Tharaka community, they composed political songs to endorse their candidates. In the Tharaka

community, music was mainly used for cultural activities like circumcision (Icheria, 2015). The study is vital if it is carried out in Tharaka to understand how they use music during political periods.

On the other hand, clan-based politics has been practiced in many parts of the world. For instance, in Central Asia, people use clans as an informal institution. These institutions bind people together and they control a big mass during elections (Collins, 2003). In the Philippines, clans seek power through their kingpin who acts as a center of unity (Teehankee, 2007). The authors posit that clan boldness is not something to ignore, and important to investigate how clan-based institutions work during elections in the Tharaka community.

Many communities in Africa include culture in their politics. Modern African societies inherited political institutions from western countries without fully abolishing their traditional political institutions (Falola, 2003). In Africa, especially modern Somalia, clans work as backups for society. Politicians encounter their opponents through the mobilization of their clan members (Musau, 2013). The author posits clans can be used to gain political power. This gives a leeway for the study to be carried out in the Tharaka constituency to confirm whether they value and embrace clanism when electing their leaders.

According to Chome (2016), the use of clans in Garrisa County, Kenya, acts as a catalyst in politics. Clans compete for leadership, and those seeking governance mobilize their supporters based on their clans. For instance, the Abudwak and Aulihan clans are dominant clans who produce leaders in Garrisa County. The author approves that one can use the support of a clan to rise to power. There is a need to explore the extent to which Tharaka clans influence local politics.

In the Tharaka community, clans and sub-clans are used to cement relationships (Lowenthal, 1973). In that regard, there needs to be a study on whether cemented relationships in clans can be used to influence politics. The magnitude of the use of clans needs to be investigated scholarly.

Another institution that is used as a political mobilizer is age-set systems. According to Hanson (1988), the age-set was very powerful in the plains of India. Every set had a role to play, from being a warrior to elderly. The latter set was the key center of leadership. Leadership in these communities was based on a certain age set. This study tried to explore whether age-set plays any role in influencing political decisions among the Tharaka community.

In Africa, the Akipo community in Nigeria uses an age-set to create a common stand between the members. In most cases, people who pass the same rite of passage in this community tend to do the same activity, and political choices are included (Ottenberg, 1958). The argument above anchors this study since it opens philosophical thought on how and to which extent age sets have been used to influence politics in the Tharaka constituency.

Dyson-Hudson (1980) noted that communities from northern Kenya use the age-set for political inheritance. Leadership was handed from one age set to another. Spencer (2014) noted that the Maasai age-set in Kenya and Tanzania had political influences from the pre-colonial to the post-colonial period. Among the Kalenjin community, the age-set cemented the relationship among its members, and every set had some leadership responsibility (Daniels, 1982). The Rendille community uses age-sets as the center of power (Beaman, 1981). Turkana community formed political organizations based on age-sets (Kirobe, 2021; Skoggard & Adem, 2010). In the Kikuyu community, the age-set formed a political baseline (Kimani, 2015; Raïmi, 2017)). The authors ascertain that the relationship among the members of age-set might be shaping politics and sway the decisions of voters in the Tharaka community.

In this case, it is important to study how segments of culture like music, clanism, and the age-set system are used as political mobilizers in the Tharaka community during electioneering periods. The Atharaka may use their tradition music such as Authi, Njai, Muriri, and Ncungo during politics. Tharaka has clans like Gankina, Kamurige, Muuruguru, Nyaaga, and Kanjogu that have enjoyed leadership dominance since independent. Age-set systems like Kiandere, Giakonge, Kiarutha and many others existed in the Tharaka community. The above segments of culture were used to influence politics.

From the above studies, there is a conviction that music, clanism and age-set are used by many communities as a key political mobilizer. It seems that these cultural aspects of societies play a significant role in influencing the politics of various communities where elections are done. The above arguments are instrumental to this study since it seeks to examine, analyze and find out the role of music, clanism, and age-set system in political mobilization during general elections in the Tharaka constituency.

1.2 Statement of the Problem

Cultural ties are exemplified in the common religion, language, music, and clanism, including age-set not only brings people together but also gives them a common interest and common political goals. Most of these cultural ties are used simultaneously in order to influence and maximize the voter's support for a particular candidate for a political position. Among the Tharaka community, some cultural ties such as music, clanism, and age-sets have been used extensively from time to time as a tool for political mobilization. Tharaka community has a lot of attachment to these cultural ties since they are embraced almost in all the social-cultural and political functions. Furthermore, the political class uses them to appeal to voters from different classes and social groups in the Tharaka society. The question of the role they play in political mobilization among the Tharaka has not been given adequate attention by researchers. They rarely focused on historical analysis of the role these cultural ties play in mobilizing people for political support. The use of some Atharaka cultural ties in political mobilization from time to time has not been addressed in historical perspectives. Given this lacuna, the study sought to fill in the gap by analyzing the role of some Atharaka cultural ties in political mobilization during general elections from 1961 to 2007. This study will contribute to the political history of Kenya and the cultural history of Atharaka.

1.3 Purpose of the Study

The primary aim of this study is to examine the role of Atharaka's cultural ties in political mobilization during general elections (1961-2007).

1.4 Research Objectives

- i. To examine the role of music in political mobilization during the general elections in Tharaka constituency from 1961 to 2007

- ii. To analyze the role of clanism in political mobilization during the general elections in the Tharaka constituency from 1961 to 2007.
- iii. To investigate how age-set systems were used in political mobilization during the general elections in the Tharaka constituency from 1961 to 2007

1.5 Research Questions

- i. What was the role of music in political mobilization during the general elections in the Tharaka constituency from 1961 to 2007?
- ii. What was the role of clanism in political mobilization during the general elections in the Tharaka constituency from 1961 to 2007?
- iii. How the age-set system was used in political mobilization in the general elections in the Tharaka constituency from 1961 to 2007?

1.6 Significance of the Study

Through comprehensive explanations, this study unearthed the role of music, clanism, and age-set systems played a role in political mobilization in the Tharaka community from 1961 to 2007. The study sheds light on the involvement of Atharaka music, clanism, and age-set systems as a strategy for political mobilization during the general elections in the Tharaka constituency. By so doing, the study has contributed to the social-cultural political history of the Atharaka people.

Since politicians use some parts of culture to woo voters in communities that extensively use cultures in social-cultural and political functions, the study will help the political class to identify the segments of Atharaka culture that appeal to all social classes and groups in the society during the political period. Political candidates will be able to identify the cultural aspects of the Tharaka community that are more useful in political campaigns.

In some situations where cultural ties are used in grouping and grouping of people, the deep use of culture in politics may enflame the eruption of chaos among the groups watering down cohesion among the members. In this regard, the study will provide valuable information to the ministry of education on inter-ethnic education, and the Ministry of Cultural Heritage and Internal Security to identify the negative and positive

impacts of the use of these cultural ties and use them to enhance cultural and political integration. The study has come up with recommendations that could help the realization of Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) 16 ‘peace, justice and strong institutions’ Kenyan’s Vision 2030 (GOK, 2008).

1.7 Scope of the Study

The study covered the period from 1961 to 2007. The study commenced in 1961 since it was the first general election to be done in Kenya where Kenyans participated in voting and it involved political mobilization. In 1961, the Tharaka community was part of the Meru region after the split of central Kenya into Central, Embu, and Meru was electing their representative to the legislative council and voters were mobilized in order to participate in that election. The study ended in 2007 because from 2013 general elections involved leadership of county government making elections more diversified due to the inclusion of governors and senators who do not solely belong to the Tharaka community making it difficult to use some cultural ties. The study focused on the Tharaka community since its significant attachment to its culture fulfills the study objectives, research questions, and the scope of this study. The study focused on local politics, that is, constituency politics. At the local level, Tharaka people hideon music, clan, and age-set membership to elect their person, and they use coded languageto praise their person and mock the opponent. At the county level and national elections, the Tharaka community may use music to praise their preferred leaders and, at the same time, mock their opponents.

1.8 Assumptions

- i. Music has been playing a significant role in the political mobilization of all socialgroups in the Tharaka community from 1961 to 2007.
- ii. Clanism has been playing a role in the political mobilization of different groups in theTharaka constituency from 1961 to 2007.
- iii. Age-set systems play a great role in mobilizing Atharaka people who share thesame age group to vote in a certain direction from 1961 to 2007.

1.9 Limitations of the Study

The study faced the following limitations. Firstly, there were a limited number of informants who were well versed with Atharaka cultural ties and how they were converted to be used as a political tool during electioneering periods, especially in colonial periods. However, the insightful information from informants who were born in the middle of the colonial period helped. Accuracy and dating of oral information especially from the aged people was also a challenge. Some archival information was not available and to some extent, the researcher was denied to access some files due to the confidentiality of the information they had. Some of the secondary information about Atharaka were highly Eurocentric with a lot of misspelled Atharaka words and also biased information. However, the researcher triangulated oral sources, archival sources, and secondary sources to ensure that the limitations of each source were overcome.

1.10 Operational Definition of Terms

Age-set:	Group of people who share the same age with a common identity
Clanism:	Is the identity of people who believe they come from the same ancestor
Cultural aspects:	Characteristics of parts of culture like music, clanism, and age-set systems that may control or change people's perception
Cultural ties:	Bond between people which supersede bloodties that include common religion, language, and customs which bind them together
Culture:	What people perceive to be part of their daily life or should be included in their daily endeavors
General elections:	A country activity is done after a period of time to elect people representatives from the county level to the national level
Male circumcision:	The act of operation of genitals that accompanies periods of rite of passage to boys
Multi-party:	Emergency of political competition of leaders with different political parties
Music:	Activity done with accompaniments of instruments and songs
Political mobilization	Awakening people for political support
Social structures:	Establish cultural institutions of a society that keep them together

CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Role of Music in Political Mobilization

He (2023) argues that music has no practical meaning, but its meaning depends on environmental occasions. He adds that music has emotional power and can be used to shape a collective atmosphere. He concludes that, from a political perspective, music can be used by politicians to convey political strategies and can also act as a bridge to gain political support. The author rubberstamps the idea that music can be used in many communities to persuade voters and in this case, Tharaka might be using the same tactics.

Music has been used for political mobilization in many parts of the world. For instance, in America, politicians use music during presidential elections to create emotional power to gain support from citizens. Frith et al. (2011) noted that pop music is commonly used to mobilize voters since it has a wide audience. For instance, President Franklin D. Roosevelt used music to attract the mood of people and improve his competitiveness during campaigns. President Barack Obama 2008 supported black rap music to express his desire to change the image of black people. This made him get a lot of votes from black people when he won the election (Schoening & Kasper, 2011). Deaville (2015) pinpointed that the campaign songs of the Democratic Party in the United States of America emphasize the role of the people in national politics, while those of the Republican Party emphasize authoritative and capable leaders. The authors ascertain that songs are used for political mobilization during general elections in the United States of America, thus creating the need for the study to be carried out in the Tharaka constituency.

Omojola (2013) noted that traditional African music has historical and philosophical issues that can be used to praise leaders, warn erring leaders in the society, recall the achievements and failures of leaders, and reinforce the legitimacy and illegitimacy of the current one. Oloruntoba (2018) argued that Africans use songs to express their views on current political issues through humor. Okeke (2019) posits that the political perspective of music in African societies is to persuade and control political crowds. In West Africa, especially Nigeria, music has been used to influence political movements

and promote particular political ideologies. For instance, in 2011, music was used as one of the main strategies to woo voters during presidential elections in the city of Kano (Adamu, 2014). In addition, Titus (2011) added that music was a powerful force for political mobilization during the 2011 general election in Nigeria. The other country where music was rampantly used was Uganda's 2021 general elections. Macdonald et al. (2023) suggested that in Uganda, the 2021 presidential elections were very competitive due to the entrance of Bobi Wine (presidential candidate), who used songs to mobilize people to vote against the sitting President, Yoweri Museveni. Bobi Wine mobilized people to vote through music. Among the Atharaka, the same study has not been given full attention thus creating the need for the study.

In Kenya, the intense use of music in political mobilization started during the colonial periods. The main theme of these songs was to criticize the bad deeds of colonialists who were oppressing Kenyans. Anti-colonial songs were engineered during the Mau Mau movements of 1952. The aim of the songs was to mobilize Kenyans to go to the forest and fight the white man (Mwaniki, 1986). The songs facilitated collective action to fight for freedom and supported freedom fighters. For instance, on October 20, 1952, the colonial government declared a state of emergency, and many freedom fighters were arrested. Songs were vital during this period since they were used to record the events and then pass the information and encouraged collective support in fighting the colonizers (Perullo, 2011). The above study has identified that songs pass messages that encouraged collective support thus giving a latitude for the same study to be carried out in the Tharaka constituency.

Kinyatti (1980) continues to argue that anti-colonial songs were compiled by people who were involved in political organizations and were supporters of independence. They awoke people for support through music. For instance, Kinuthia wa Mugiira, who compiled the song *Nyimbo Cia Kwarahura Agikuyu* (songs to awaken the Kikuyu), was an activist in the Kikuyu Central Association (KCA) and the Kenya African Union (KAU). Gakaara wa Wanjau assembled *Nyimbo Cia Gikuyu Na Mumbi* (songs of Kikuyu and Mumbi) to mobilize the protesters. Mutonya (2004) noted that during the 1961 and 1963 general elections that were participated by KANU and KADU leaders, Kikuyus used songs to woo their people to support KANU. After independence, the anti-

colonial songs changed their theme and started praising the sitting president, Jomo Kenyatta, while mocking the opponents. The study will establish the songs used in Tharaka for political mobilizations.

After President Moi took power in 1978, he encouraged the use of music in state functions. The functions were accompanied by the use of music and dances from both choirs and traditional dances. He enriched the use of music in 1982 when he formed Permanent Presidential Music Commission to cater for entertainment at public presidential functions. The commission encouraged the use of folksongs, dances, religion songs, and patriotic songs that propagated *Nyanyo Philosophy (love, peace and unity)*. Patriotic songs were used to spread the political ideas of that regime hence enabling political mobilizations (Mindoti & Agak, 2004). Indeed, to date a song like 'Twagivunia Kenya ni Nchi yetu tukufu, Kenya tunayoipenda – We boast of Kenya, It's our beloved Nation, the Kenya we love' by Wesonga is one of the songs political supporters drove their sycophancy with to the candidate they support (Lukalo, 2006). The above study justifies the need to investigate the use of music in the Tharaka community to bring people together when praising and opposing leaders of all levels during general elections. The above study is convincing that songs can be used to persuade people in certain political directions and also bring togetherness. The above studies will anchor this study since it aims to identify how the Tharaka community used songs to support politicians.

In the 2002 general elections, the National Rainbow Coalition (NARC) enriched its campaigns through songs. The song 'Who can bwogo me' (Who can threaten me?) was used as their political anthem (Nyairo, 2005). The National Rainbow Coalition used the song 'Unbwogable' to mobilize the voters to vote against the KANU government, which had ruled the country since independence (Nyairo & Ogude, 2005). Before the 2007 Kenyan general elections, music from the Kikuyu community was used to mobilize voters, especially in the Mt. Kenya region. Songs were engineered to praise and support the leadership of Mwai Kibaki while at the same time mocking and criticizing his opponent, Raila Odinga (Awino & Orwa, 2018). Tharaka community might have been using their own songs too since they are perceived as part of Mt. Kenya's political block.

In 2013, the Coalition for Reform and Democracy (CORD), led by presidential flag bearer Raila Odinga and his allies, used songs to warm up his followers before addressing them (Omenya, 2019). His follower, the late Atieno Kajwan (M.P.), used his trademark song, Bado Mapambano (The Struggle Continues), to mobilize people to support opposition leader Raila Odinga. Raila used the song Kisumu dala waa (Kisumu is our home) to identify himself with Luo, thus aiming to influence them to vote for him. Kikuyus also used songs to rally support to elevate their political kingpin, Uhuru Kenyatta, into top leadership (Too, 2019). For instance, in 2013, Kamanda WA Kioi sang Uhuru Ni Witu (Uhuru is ours) to praise and mobilize people from central Kenya to support and vote for Uhuru Kenyatta (Awino & Orwa, 2018). The study has suggested that politicians may use songs to identify themselves with certain groups of people and persuade them to vote them in. The insight from the above study will create a good foundation for the study of the Tharaka community and how they have been using songs to woo voters.

Ntiba (2015) noted that the Chuka community, a Meru sub-tribe, is rich in political songs. During local and general elections, Chuka people compile political songs to praise their preferred leaders as they mock the undesirable ones. They identify the deeds of their leaders through their songs. Bad leaders were also outlined by what they did through the political songs. The songs finally mobilized the voters. Chuka people being the neighbors of Tharaka people, their use of songs might be copied by Tharaka people, thus creating the need for study among the Tharaka people.

From the above studies, it has been noted that music may be one of the key cultural activities that might be used to influence voters in many parts of the world and the Tharaka community cannot be exempted.

2.1.2 Role of Clanism as a Political Mobilizer

The politics of clanism has been practiced in many parts of the world. In Central Asia, clans act as a web of attachment among the members. The epicenter of political command starts from the clan level in the villages. For instance, Uzbek, Kyrgyz, and Tajiks have been using clans to distinguish themselves politically (Biryukor, 2008). According to Schatz (2012), the current Kazakhstan clan identity acts as a political asset

and political knowledge originates from clans. During the electioneering period, clan relations determine political outcomes. The author rubberstamps that clans stand to act as a political guide for its membership. The uniqueness of the clan spells out the distinctiveness of their politics. Politics here are molded by the leadership of the clans. The higher the compactness of the clan and its sub-clans, the more support candidates get. From the study of these authors, the clan can dominate leadership if it has large members. The same study has not been done in the Tharaka community. From some of the literature, the Tharaka community envy clanism although its magnitude in decision-making, especially political has not been studied.

Temeiza (2022) noted that one of the major political mobilizers in Palestine politics is clans. Clans take a front role in guiding voters during municipal elections. Since clan members are generally united, competitors use them to gain support from their members to win elections. The study illuminates that clan members practice some activities in unison and there is a need to investigate whether it is practiced in the Tharaka community.

Kosals (2007) pinpointed that communism and capitalism divided Russian societies to the extent that some communities followed the idea of their clan guided by their kingpin. He further argued that Russian clans maintained a high level of trust and internal integration within themselves. The unity of clans acted as a center of command during political decisions. From the suggestions of the author, the Tharaka community may use clanism as a center of political command but its magnitude may not be known.

In West Africa, especially Nigeria, the community by the name Ebira Tao takes the leadership of clans seriously when electing a leader. Leadership is influenced by the clans (Joshua, 2018). Although the author has categorically stated how leaders of clans struggle to elect a leader, he has not outlined how clan attachment makes people join together to elect a leader. The nature of Tharaka politics has been given little attention by scholars, and the study is trying to fill that gap.

In South Africa, Zulu the main clan has sub-clans that support the main one to protect its image and its lineage. The sub-clans branched off from the main through the Ukudabula (splitting of a clan). Every sub-clan had grassroots leaders who gathered together to support the main clan Zulu (Hamilton, 1997). Apter (1983) noted South African Bantus like Zulu and Xhosa used clan solidarity as ground support for their clan members in leadership. The authors marshaled much on how people of the same clan relate. When they have equal tasks, like fighting an enemy, they take a common stand to show solidarity and brotherhood. From the above studies, there might be a connection between the work of sub-clans in Zulu and Tharaka. Both may value clans for cordial relationships and support. The authors have not expounded whether sub-clans support their fellow clansmen in political seats without logically looking at the qualities of leadership. In addition, the literature has not categorically stated whether the same acts have been happening in the Tharaka community.

In East Africa, Somalia's top leaders are elected through the clan, and it started during the colonial period (Makinda, 1991). The clan competition for leadership has been characterized by intra and interstate war. The politics of clanism has been maintained in Somalis since the community passes the information about clan political differences orally from one generation to another (Osman, 2006). By so doing, clans act as a wall to protect the interest of its membership. For instance, the most powerful clans are two, Hawiye and Darod, and all other sub-clans support any of the two in order to safeguard their mutual interest. Hawiye is supported by other sub-clans that include Abgaal, Habargedir, Hawadle, and Mursade, among many others while Harti, Marehan and Ogaden support Darod (Musau, 2013). The existing literature has not expounded scholarly whether clans play parts in the election of leaders in the Tharaka community.

Clans in Wajir County, Kenya disagree in every electioneering period since every clan wants their people to represent them in the government. Degodia and Ajuran have political dominance because of their large population. Political elites take advantage of the condition to intensify the battle (Karienyee, 2020). In Isiolo County, Kenya, politics is enriched by using clans. The results of elections do not reflect the set ideologies of the campaigners but clan structures. Clans determine the outcome of the results, and in most cases, results confirm existing clan rivalries (Sharamo, 2014). From the above studies,

there is a need to investigate whether there is a dominant clan in the Tharaka constituency that may be dominating Tharaka politics.

Among the Tharaka community, clans play many roles and the leading one is a source of identity. The origin of a Tharaka person is known by the clans one belongs to. Clans determine many things, for instance, marriage, naming, associations, dowry ceremonies, leadership, and many others (Lowenthal, 1973). The connection between one clan and the others determines the next activities. For instance, there are clans that treat others like brothers or fathers, there are clans that don't intermarry at all, and there are clans that perceive others as ancestral enemies. The latter don't agree on matters of leadership. The antagonism between the clans in the Tharaka community is something that can be seen even by a foreigner (Giarelli, 1997; Icheria, 2015). The study will substantiate the above information and outline the strength of clans in the politics of the Tharaka community.

Lowenthal (1973) has named various clans and how they interact during their cultural activities. Icheria (2015) has also outlined the relationship between clans in the Tharaka community. Although the above authors have shown that clans exist in Tharaka community, they have not demonstrated in their studies whether these clans are used for political mobilizations during general elections. It is from this stand point the study will seek to fill this gap.

2.1.3 Role of Age-set System in Political Mobilization

The other key political mobilizer in many societies is the age-set. Pritchard (1936) described an age set as a known group of people who went through the rite of passage at the same time, and they have been born at almost the same time. Foner & Kertzer (1978) define age set as a category of people who belong to joint membership and initiated manhood simultaneously. In addition, Ember (1977) specified the age set as a grouped age that is the backbone of political organization. Eisenstadt (1954) pinpointed that one of the main works of the age set was to uplift cooperation and solidarity among the members. The above definitions find relevance in the study and provide to study the roles that age-set play in politics.

Age-set is a fundamental group in a society that is characterized by the roles they undertake. The role of any age-set is to understand societal law and how it is ruled (Lienard, 2014). Neugarten (1981) reiterates that age-set roles and responsibilities have gradually changed from the traditional setup to the modern one. The change occurred due to the industrial revolution and Western education, where the roles of individuals are based on job specification. During pre-colonial and colonial periods, the newly formed age-set defended the community while the elders performed the role of leadership. Although Western education altered the systems of age-set, most African countries' age-set systems exist, and they play important roles in politics. Age-set endowed by nature, pinpoint gaps in political leadership, and sometimes they take those leadership positions (Ugiabile, 2015). For instance, in the plains of India, age-set played a key role in shaping political leadership (Hanson, 1988). The above studies create a need to investigate the age-set's role in political mobilization in the Tharaka constituency.

Eldredge (2014) argues that the Zulu age-set in South Africa creates political dynamics during elections, and it's not something to jump over. The writer of the above study noted that one of the underlying forces in South African politics is age-set. The similarity in group activities of the same age may influence whether one will be elected for a political seat. The above activities might be happening in the Tharaka community, and that is why there is a need for investigations.

Among the Igbo community in Nigeria, every age-set has its own economic and political roles. From the time of colonial Africa, the young age-set was used as a whistleblower about the deeds of colonialists. The younger one participated in defending their community against the aggression of white man. In the current societies, young age-sets are participating in political leadership either by electing their member or being elected (Ebeh & Matthew, 2020). In Sudan, the age-set among the Latuka community acts as a basic foundation for political leadership. Age-sets provide bases for political structure (Kertzer & Madison, 1980). The above arguments necessitate the need to investigate the extent to which the age-set affects diversity of the Tharaka politics.

In Kenya, the Borana community age-set is the source of unison. People of the same age-set work together to protect the interests of their age-set (Baxter, 1979). In the modern days, an age-set made of young elite mobilize each other to fight for political positions. The age-mates mobilize their members to ensure their candidate wins (McCrone, 2023). Among the Maasai, age-set influences politics (Berntsen, 1979). New age-set (young people) among the Maasai are taking leadership positions that were reserved for elders (Coles, 2008). Among the Tharaka community, the age-set acts as a source of unity (Icheria, 2015). The above studies create the need for the same study to be done in the Tharaka community.

2.2 Theoretical Framework

The study was guided by structural functionalism theory. The proponent of this theory argues that the structures of societies function interdependently aiming to work together in order to preserve the stability of the society. The theory emphasizes that interrelations between integral parts of society create unity when they come to a consensus.

2.2.1 Structural Functionalism Theory

Structural functionalism theory was mainly proposed by sociologists August Comte, Herbert Spencer, Emile Durkheim, Talcoth Parsons, and many others. August Comte in his contributions states that one can perceive the work of social structures by purely looking at how their components parts like individuals, families, culture, and social class in order to maintain the whole society. Here Comte assumed that every existing part of a society has roles to execute in order to maintain the smooth functioning of the whole society (Castro, 2009). The arguments deepen this study because they bring the sense of inclusivity in the performance of all parts of society. In culture, some segments are used to maintain it. Music, clanism and age-set systems are existing structures of culture in a society. Since these structures play distinct or common roles in the societies, politicians may use them to gain the trust and mobilize the crowd during political periods. This means that if politicians can maximize the use of clanism, music, and age-set systems in a society he or she can convince many people hence increasing the followers.

Spencer one of the key proposers of this theory gave an example of organs working to maintain the functioning of the whole body. In this case, organs are referred to as social structures working together in order to achieve society stability or preservation of society (Perrin, 1974). The theorist suggests that working together does not mean the society may not face problems but every problem must cause a selected pressure that threatens the stability of that society. Spencer argues that society organs have to work together in order to solve this problem and also find a way of distributing these solutions (Spencer, 1898). In this case, Spencer alludes that cultural activities and systems have to be mutually coordinated to achieve power, maintain it, and work on its distribution to the people. Here the theory posits that cultural activities like music, clanism, and the age-set system sometimes work together and they can be used to mobilize crowds during elections. While using them differently, sometimes collision occurs and it has to be solved for the wellbeing of a society.

In a tribal society, Spencer argues that a problem may emerge when controlling increasing population. In that way, to control this population society has to be differentiated into a social unit to distribute resources to and control them (Elwick, 2003). In this case, Spencer tries to argue that dividing society into segments makes it easy to control. From the above argument, we can draw a conclusion that politicians may pin point a single structure in the society like culture, and divide it for easy use during political periods.

Emile Durkheim whose work was trying to answer the question of how certain societies maintain internal stability and survival over time, came up with the philosophy of mechanical solidarity and organic solidarity to refer to social bonds based on both a common and different task people perform (Kingsbury & Scanzoni, 1993). Durkheim argues that people are brought together by the task they perform either the same or dissimilar. In this context, Atharaka people may be brought together by what they do in common and what they do differently. Focusing on these cultural aspects; people who do music may be brought together by that task only and the same thing can happen to those who value clanism and age-set. On the other hand, the same community can be brought together if people perform different functions. That means if the two dynamics are put together, the society can run well and it is useable. The above argument alludes

that politicians or leaders may take advantage of this situation of togetherness to mobilize their supporters.

The central concern of structural functionalism as explained by Durkheim is to bring stability and cohesion among the members of the society. To him cultural phenomenon functions to work together (Malik & Malik, 2022). In this case, people who composed music, use clanism and age-set as sources of the bond they do it to bring social stability in as a society. The bond in each set may be used collectively by an individual (politicians) to consolidate the votes. The conformity of this study is that the compactness of culture is a catchment for politicians to mobilize their voters.

Talcoh Parsons while describing structural functionalism believed that the social system is made up of the actions of individuals. He stated that functions of the individual have choices and these choices are influenced by social factors (Holmwood, 2014). In this case, the intense use of cultural aspects like music, clanism, and age-set may control other activities like politics. Parsons added that one can fulfil different roles at the same time. He further developed the idea that the collectivity of roles complement each other to fulfill the functions of the society (Parsons, 1985). The conventionality of this argument is that music, clanism, and age-set roles complement each other during political mobilizations.

The theory has not gone unchallenged. The critics argue that it has not explained the source of social change in the society (King, 2011). The concern of this study is that it will value the social changes happening in the societies but not the source. The concern is how the social changes have influenced the voters during general elections. The theory has served the study with explanations and regulation of human behavior through the structures of society.

CHAPTER THREE

METHODOLOGY

3.1 Location of Study

The research was conducted in the Tharaka constituency. Tharaka constituency is among the three constituencies in Tharaka Nithi County. The other two constituencies include Maara and Chuka Igambang'ombe. Tharaka is known as the hub of culture since it embraces it even in modern times (Moywaywa & Akaranga, 2017). Some cultural tieslike music, clanism and age-set systems are known to control the emotions of the Atharaka. It is from this standpoint that the study was carried out in two sub-counties, which comprises Tharaka North and Tharaka South sub-counties. The study will mostly cover places in named sub-counties that is Chiakariga wards in Tharaka South, while in Tharaka North, the research will cover Nkondiwards. These parts of Tharaka have enjoyed political leadership for a long. Chiakariga had two members of parliaments who served for the following years: Hon. Njeru 16 years (1963-1979), and Hon. Kawima 14 years (1988-1997 and 2002-2007) while Nkondi had Hon. Njagi wa Kiondo (1979-1988).

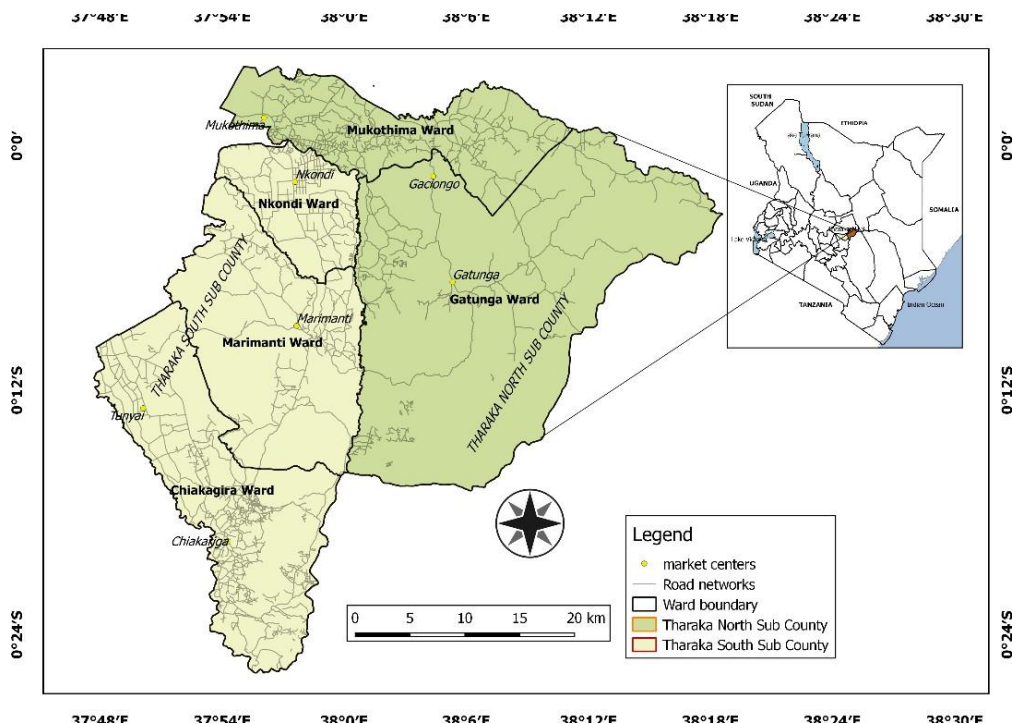


Figure 1: Map showing Tharaka North and Tharaka South Constituency
Source: kikiGITs, 2024

3.2 Research Design

The study was guided by a descriptive research design. The design was used to examine the role of music, analyze the role of clanism and find out how age-set systems were used in political mobilizations during general elections among the Atharaka community. The design was crucial in this study since it was used to describe, record, analyze, report and present the findings of the study as they exist.

Kothari (1985) pinpointed that descriptive research is concerned with describing, recording, analyzing, reporting and presenting the features of particular conditions as they are. Primarily, descriptive design entails fact-finding inquiries. Kothari (2004) noted that descriptive research is mainly used to describe the current state of affairs. Using this method, the researcher only reports what happened. This design allowed the researcher to organize the data into common patterns that emerged during data analysis. The patterns of change were analyzed without manipulation. This design suited this study since the study aimed at getting the information from the respondent that is valid and reliable.

3.3 Target Population

The target population is a proposed set of people, events, or objects where the researcher wishes to generalize the results of the study (Borg & Gall, 1989). The government of Kenya estimates the Tharaka population in 2019 to be about 133,595 with 74,010 voters (Kbs, 2019). Tharaka people mainly live in Tharaka's north and south sub-counties. The two sub-counties are under one constituency (Icheria, 2015). The research narrowed down the population sampled from Chiakariga and Nkondi ward. This target population includes the informants who have the information on either of the study objectives.

3.4 Sampling Procedures

Sampling is a process of selecting units from a population that one wants to study (Thompson, 2012). The study sampled respondents from two sub-counties: Tharaka North and Tharaka south because that is where Tharaka people live. Furthermore, Tharaka people embrace their culture in their social-cultural and political functions. The study used non-probability sampling procedures and techniques, which include

purposeful sampling procedures and chain techniques, to identify respondents. According to Nyimbili, & Nyimbili (2024), purposive sampling enables the researcher to identify a suitable sample that will be used for specific needs. In this study, a purposive sampling procedure aimed at identifying the informants who have interacted with Tharaka culture was turned into a political tool. In addition, purposive sampling procedures were also used to identify respondents who have been composing or singing political songs in order to mobilize voters. Also, purposive sampling procedures were used to identify people who have ever used clanism and the age-sets system as a way of wooing voters during electioneering periods.

The study targeted the informants who have information on the following electioneering periods, 1961, 1963, 1969, 1974, 1979, 1988, and 2007 general elections. Snowballing or networking was very useful here since it helped in identifying people with vital information for the study (Parker, Scott & Geddes, 2019). By snowballing, one respondent was directing the researcher to the next respondent, who connected to another until when data saturation was achieved. The sampled group gave the study the most relevant, accurate, and reliable information on the use of Atharaka cultural ties in political mobilizations.

3.5 Sample Size

In this study what mattered most was the quality and reliability of the information that was received from the respondents. The knowledge ability of the respondents to a particular objective counted much when sampling. The sampling was anchored on the idea of Kathuri and Pals (1993) who stated that the minimum number of respondents for a minor group is 20-50 cases while for that of a major group, the minimum threshold is 100 cases. Tharaka Nithi has a population of 393,177, while Tharaka community's estimated population is the population of 133,595 with 74,010 voters (Kbs, 2019). The sampled wards are Chiakariga and Nkondi with 18,564 and 9,543 voters respectively (Kbs, 2019). In this case, the study categorized them as a minor group in the Tharaka population. Compared to the population of Atharaka voters, the population from these wards becomes a minor group. Therefore, the study used 20-50 respondents. The exact number of respondents depended on the time when the data would be saturated (Morse, 1995). Data saturation will be achieved when information becomes repetitive and no

more new information is coming from the interviews (Guest, Bunce, & Johnson, 2006). Therefore, a sample size of 40 respondents were interviewed.

3.6 Research Instruments

3.6.1 Interview Guide

All the interviews were conducted in the language that the informants understood better. In that regard, the Kitharaka language was highly used. The interviews were carried out with people who voted from 2007 backward. Open-ended questions were encouraged. Open-ended questions do not limit the informants on the information they may have (Hoffmann, 2007). The interview schedule had four sections; Section A had the demographic status of informants, section B covered the questions on the role of music in political mobilization, section C had questions on the role of clanism in political mobilizations section D had questions on the role of age-set in political mobilizations.

3.7 Data Collection Procedures

After approval of the research project, the researcher will obtain an introduction letter from Chuka University and thereafter obtain a research permit from the Ministry of Sport, Culture, and Heritage. The researcher will now notify the Assistant county commissioners of every ward about the study. The researcher will then visit the targeted respondent before the actual day. The researcher conducts face-to-face interviews. The data for this study will be collected according to objectives.

3.7.1 Primary Sources

3.7.1.1 Oral Sources

Oral sources enable people to share what happened and why it happened (Portelli, 2002). The primary data was acquired using oral interviews with the sampled respondents to give information on the role of Atharaka cultural ties on political mobilization in the Tharaka community. The respondents who voted from 2007 backward were very crucial in giving first-hand information. Therefore, the researcher used information passed through word of mouth to understand the role played by some Atharaka cultural aspects in political mobilization.

3.7.1.2 The Archival Data

Archival data enables the researcher to have deep understanding of the subjects (Moore et al., 2016). The archival data were gathered from the Kenya National Archive. The information from the archival centers catered to the nature of elections that used music, clanism, and age-set systems in the Tharaka constituency from 1961 to the early 1990s. Archival sources were also used in this part to add more information on the study objectives.

3.7.2 Secondary Data

The researcher used libraries starting from Chuka University library, published books, scholarly journals, websites, articles, dissertations, and historical reviews to gain insight into the depth of the main cultural and political mobilizers in the Tharaka community during elections. The researcher used electrical archives to gather more information. Reading various secondary data conveyed a sense of time and discusses which provided important information for the study. In addition, secondary sources provide an understanding of the historiographical context that facilitates the historical interpretation of what is studied (Galgano, Arndt, & Hyser, 2012). In this regard, the researcher sought documents that had relevant information on the use of cultural aspects in political mobilizations.

3.8 Data Analysis

The study generated qualitative data; hence, qualitative data analysis was used. The analysis of data was a continuous process even when collecting data by grouping it into themes. Thematic analysis was used to analyze qualitative data. The thematic method has procedures that are used for analyzing qualitative data that involve reading through a set of data and looking for patterns in the meaning of the data to find themes (Vaismoradi et al., 2016). Thematic analysis was used to analyze and present the research findings from oral sources and it was corroborated with archival sources and secondary sources to enrich the preciseness of the information acquired. The thematic analysis started with the transcription of the recorded data into texts. Textual data was subjected to content analysis which encompasses coding and arranging the coded data into categories based on the objectives of the study. After the researcher familiarized themselves with the coded data categories, the patterns were formed to come up with study

themes. The analyzed data took a historical trajectory. Qualitative data from interview guides was analyzed using descriptive narratives to bring out credible information on the study area. Finally, interpretive analysis and thematic descriptions were used and the findings were presented thematically after all interpretations and corroborations of the data were done.

3.9 Ethical Considerations

The researcher obtained a clearance letter from the Chuka University Ethics Committee which was later used to seek a research permit from the National Commission for Science, Technology, and Innovation (NACOSTI). The researcher presented an introduction letter to each informant that informed them of the purpose of the study. With the consent of the respondent, the interviews were conducted after booking an appointment. The researcher conducted face-to-face interviews. In addition, care was taken to ensure that interviews were conducted during leisure time and informant convenience time to minimize disruption of the respondents from their daily activities. The researcher observed ethical standards by seeking consent from the participants. The nature of participation was voluntary, and participants were given the right to withdraw from the process. Data collection and information were exclusively used for this academic work. Scanlan (2006) noted that to curb the issues concerning plagiarism and academic fraud, the researcher should ensure there are proper citations of various sources while acknowledging the original author.

CHAPTER FOUR

THE ROLE OF MUSIC IN POLITICAL MOBILIZATION DURING THE GENERAL ELECTIONS IN THARAKA CONSTITUENCY FROM 1961 TO 2007

4.1 Demographic Characteristics of the Respondents

Table 1: Respondent Age

Age	Frequency	Percent
70	15	37.5
50-70	12	30
30-50	13	32.5
Total	40	100

The above shows the age of the respondents who were interviewed, 70 and above (37.5%), 50-70 (30%), and 30-50 (32.5%). These respondents gave a sequence of political events where music, clanism, and age-set systems were used in political mobilizations. The category of age was important in order to value the intense use of culture from the time of Kenyan independence up to the current generational of voters. Different ages were important and they gave a deep understanding of the Tharaka culture and how it turned out to be a tool in political mobilization. The oldest person in this group is around 95 years by named Ntamuzege Ntamoga from the Kamurige clan. He accounted for the coming of Europeans and how they established the colonial administration in Chiakariga, Tunyai, and Marimanti. According to him, it was during this time, that Atharaka used segments of their culture to organize themselves in order to respond to the colonial master. It is from these aged people the study got the real purpose of the songs and dances before they were turned for political mobilizations. In addition, they provided information on how clanism and the age-set systems was used to mobilize voters during general elections. The 70 years plus also accounted for the raise of local chiefs whose administration was oppressive to the Tharaka people and how the Tharaka people communicated back to them through the use of various cultural ties. Tharaka used all the methods including the use of songs communicate to colonial masters so that they could leave the Tharaka people alone. In additions, they accounted for the raising of Mau Mau movement in Tharaka and their camps and how they assisted people to re-organize themes

It is from these purposefully sampled people the study was enriched with information on how Mau Mau songs brought people together in order to respond to colonial masters and later how the songs were used in political mobilization when general elections were introduced. In addition, this group of people had information about the voting of Bernard Mate in 1961 and the elections of the first Tharaka Member of Parliament Hon. Njeru Gituriandu. They shed light on how music, clanism, and age-set were used to mobilize the voters in the politics of the early 1960s and 1970s. The age blankets of 50-70 occupy 30% gave much information based on oral tradition and others as first accounts especially the politics of the 1980s and early 1990s. The group of 30-50 comprising 32.5% gave more information on politics from the late 1990s up to 2007. This group also gave dates and exact places where events used to occur.

Table 2: Respondent Gender

Gender	Frequency	percent
Men	30	75
Women	10	25
Total	40	100

The Table 2 shows that the highest number of respondents are men 75% while women took 25%. The issues of gender signify the division of labor among the Atharaka community. During cultural activities, men and women takes different roles and women issues are mostly home-based. Men were responsible for all the issues affecting the Tharaka society and they organized themselves on the basis of clanism and age-set systems which were later used as an organized groups for political mobilizations. From the findings, men participated in political activities than women. It is in this regard that men were more interviewed because of full participation in political issues than women. In Tharaka society, leadership has been reserved for men through clans. Clans formed a group for political support during general elections. In the colonial period the headmen were the leaders of the clans. No way could a woman lead the society because they were not allowed to lead a clan. KNA/PC/6/4/5/1925 supports this assertion by stating that Tharaka leadership was preserved for men. They first had information on how some segments of culture have been manipulated by politicians to support politicians.

Women here also gave very vital information since they directly or indirectly participated in political mobilizations. Direct participation occurred in almost all aspects of Tharaka culture. In the Tharaka community songs and dances are done by both men and women like Njai, Muriri, Mboboi, Ncungo, and Authi. Any can be a soloist. In this case, the study found that the incorporation of the women was very vital for the study. On clanism, every Atharaka is a member of a certain clan. That means even women are members of a certain clan and when issues of that clan are being discussed they can be fully involved or partially informed about the decision clans are making. On age-set, women also had an age-set like that of men. Women's circumcision in Tharaka minimized significantly in early 2000 also some practice it silently even in the current time. Women belonged to age-sets and they had something to contribute. In that regard, women take center stage in political mobilizations.

Table 3: Respondent Education

Level of education	Frequency	percent
Level of education	15	37.5
Secondary school	6	15
Colleges	8	20
University	6	15
Masters	4	10
Ph.D	1	2.5
Total	40	100

The Table above shows the level of education of the respondent. The lower primary has 37.5%, secondary 15%, colleges 20%, university 15%, masters 10% and Ph.D. D 2.5%. The respondents revealed that, regardless of the level of education an individual had, Tharaka cultural ties like music, clanism, and age-sets systems are used to mobilize them politically. The level of education of the respondents in this study is important. The researcher sought the level of education since education is an indicator of a deep understanding of social-political issues of the societies. From the findings, it was deduced that a large number of respondents agreed that Atharaka value their culture and they use it in daily life activities. Some respondents claimed that clanism and age-sets are parts of consideration when making a political decisions in Tharaka community.

Table 4: Occupation of the Respondents

Year	Frequency	percent
Farmers	20	50
Teachers	7	17.5
Engineers	1	2.5
Lecturers	2	5
Administrators	5	12.5
Politicians	5	12.5
Total	40	100

The table above shows the occupation of the respondents who have been voting to check whether they have been influenced by cultural ties. They were analyzed as the following, farmers 50%, teachers 17.5%, engineers 2.5 %, lecturers 5%, administrators 12.5% and politicians 12.5 %. From the above respondents, the occupation did not matter much during political periods in the Tharaka community because music, clanism and age-sets systems take center stage during political mobilizations. These informants gave deep-rooted responses to the use of cultural ties in political mobilizations majority being farmers. From the 1970s to the 1990s respondents showed the theme of awakening periods in Tharaka politics. Graduates started seeking for a Member of Parliament seat. For instance, in 1988 Engineer Francis Kagwima came to oust Hon. Njagi wa kiondo whose level of education was upper primary school. Although these respondents showed much value on development issues when electing a Member of Parliament, many respondents agreed that cultural ties played a significant role in electing leaders in the Tharaka community. People turned music, clanism, and age-sets systems to be used as a political tools while seeking the consent of the voters.

Table 5: Location Of Repondents

	Frequency	percent
Tharaka North	18	45
Tharaka South	22	55
Total	40	100%

The above table shows the respondent locations. Tharaka north had 45% while Tharaka south had 55%. These respondents gave information on the use of Atharaka cultural ties in political mobilization. The research sought to know the level at which the people of Tharaka are influenced by cultural ties during the time of elections. Those who agreed described Tharaka culture as part of life in all aspects including political periods.

Some of the users of these cultures were campaigners of some politicians at one time. Ndereva (O.I, 2024) asserts that they used Mau Mau songs to lure people to join the movement in order to expel the white man so that Kenya could get independence. He adds that these Mau Mau political songs were used in the 1961 and 1963 general elections in order to campaign for Bernard mate, James Njeru and President Mzee Jomo Kenyatta. Mucege (O.I, 2024) affirms that clan portrays the ownership and age set shows the person of the same age. In that regard, these informants showed the intensity of the use of culture during electioneering periods. These informants showed the emergency of independent thinkers who are hardly influenced by the cultural ties in the society. The researcher found that some of these people make decisions independently.

4.2 The Historical Background of Atharaka People

Tharaka is Bantu Bantu-speaking group of people that belong to the Meru sub-ethnic group situated in Tharaka Nithi County (Moywaywa & Akaranga, 2017). According to oral traditions, Tharaka people migrated from Mbwa and then migrated through Aria Itune (Red waters) to a place called Shungwaya. The Tharaka sub-group originated from their original place known as Mbwa (an imaginary place near Lamu where Tana river waters enter into the Indian Ocean) together with other Meru sub-groups like Igembe, Tigania, Imenti, Chuka, Mwimbi, Igoji, and Muthambi. From Mbwa they settled at Shungwaya (Mburu & Kaguna, 2017). It is from Shungwaya where Atharaka were given clan names like Gankina, Kamurige, and Muuruguru, with the inclusion of others before dispersing to various directions. These are the clans that are used currently for political mobilizations in general elections. Tharaka people called Shungwaya *Igaironi* (the division point) because they believed it was a dispersion point to various places although Tharaka people believe to have come through Kamba land (current Kitui County) to the current places (Mitambo O.I., 2024).

Champion (1912) also reveals that Tharaka people originated from a small island called Mbwa on the Coast of Kenya in around 3rd century. Karoki (2014) pinpointed that the Meru people originated from Mbwa and they were expelled by people wearing red clothes. Mukaria & Mukaria (2019) assert that Nguo Ntune were people who were very stern and they spoke in a language that could not be understood by people. Rukungi (O.I., 2024) buttresses that the red people were wearing red clothes on their waist and

shoulders. On their arrival, they subdued Tharaka people with other Meru sub-tribes. After conquering them they turned them into slaves. The “red people” used them to transport goods along the coast, plowing their farms and working in the farms. The traditional narration states that, the worst thing that the red people used to do was killing of suspected rebels with guns, taking their cattle, children and women. It is out of these frustrations, that they orchestrated how to unchain themselves and move away. Today's coordination and togetherness of Atharaka are mostly featured in cultural ties like music,clanism, and age-sets.

Mugwe was perceived as a prophetic man who led people to move from Mbwaa to Shungwaya (Rita 2014). In Shungwaya, they met with Gallas and due to frequent attacks, they opted to migrate (Hobley 1910). Mitambo (O.I., 2024) argued that the Tharaka people together with other Meru sub-tribes feared to be enslaved again once they get defeated by Gallas at Shungwaya. Meru sub-tribes coordinated themselves and they started migrating because of the fear. Tharaka clans were manufactured here and every clan was led by an elder as they migrated. Tharaka source of unity based on clans started this time. Fadiman (1973) argue that the Atharaka opted to migrate to Kamba region where they passed through Thagicu (part of Kitui County) to the current place they stay in Tharaka constituency. When interaction with the oral sources the respondent stated that,

Tharaka encountered with red people at Mbwaa (a place where river Tana enters into Indian Ocean) although they mistreated them a lot causing their migration. He added that Tharaka people learnt trading activities from the red people and that why even after settlement tharaka people walked through Kamba land to coast to trade with Arabs. They carried ivories as the main trading item (M’mucege O.I., 2024).

Fadiman (1982) buttressed that Ngue Ntune (red cloths) were Arabs people who had settled around Lamu island giving a connotations that perhaps Mbwaa was a place around Lamu island. Currently there is no Tharaka man who has real information where Mbwaa is situated.

Mwana (O.I., 2024) stated that not all Tharaka people migrated from Shungwaya. Some were found in Kijege hill around Chiakariga. These people are believed to be Gumbas and are the ones who showed all other clans where to settle within the Tharaka

land. The Gumba belong to the following clans, Kagunda, Kanyaki and Gankuyu. These clans are initial inhabitants of Tharaka land. The togetherness of these clans were later used as a political tool.

According to Mitambo (2024), Tharaka people believe they have the following ancestors; the first one is Waa, Tii, Tene, Kirindi, Kambugi, and Murutu. Kambugi generation includes Tharaka, Chuka, Muthambi and Mwimbi while the Murutu generation includes, Tigania, Igembe, Imenti and Igoji. Tharaka people had different relationships with other sub-groups. For instance, Tharaka and Chuka believe that they are born with the same father but different mothers. Ciambandi was the mother to the Chuka while that of Tharaka was known as Ciangoi. In addition, Atharaka have a blood relationship with the Muthambi community and they call each other, *Giciaro*. These two communities are not supposed to intermarry (Maigallo & Kithinji, 2019). These relationships are narrowed down to the clans and age-sets systems. In Tharaka, there are some clans that do not intermarry. In addition, there are hierarchy in Tharaka age sets. The oldest age sets are more respected. During political periods, politicians turned these relationships to be a center of political mobilizations.

During the colonial period, Tharaka was put in the Meru district and it was counted as the sub-tribe of Meru (Champion, 1912; KNA/PC/CP/1/9/1/1908). It is believed that Tharaka people settled around the grand fall of the Tana River (Thagana) during the iron-age period (Champion, 1912). Tharaka people migrated together with the other Meru sub-tribes to the current settlements. The oral tradition states that Atharaka loved semi-arid areas due to their skill in hunting and gathering and livestock keeping making them love to settle at their current places (Rukungi, O.I., 2024). Lowthwel (1974) states that the first explorers of the 1890s and early 1900s treated Tharaka as a tribe. It is the colonialist who put the Tharaka community as a Meru sub-tribe to enhance its administration.

4.3 Tharaka Migration and Settlement

According to Giarelli, (1994), the Atharaka first settled at Thagicu round river Tana in the current Kitui County after migrating from Shungwaya dispersal point. This information was also corroborated by KNA/DC/KTI/3/27/1923 which states that Meru

sub-tribes originally lived around the Tana River. This was the recent major migrating point for the Tharaka people. Iron working was done at Kamanyaki and Thagicu meaning that, during the Iron Age, Tharaka people had concentrated settlements in these areas. Even today some Atharaka people live in Thagicu (Kithinji et al., 2016). Later Atharaka migrated in different directions and some went to Tharaka North and others went to Tharaka South (Icheria, 2015). After the land division to enhance administrations during the colonial period, it was found that Tharaka people lived in almost all districts that were surrounding Meru districts. It was noted that on September 27th, 1927, the colonial government was still pushing the Tharaka people living in Embu districts to go back to their land (KNA/PC/CP/6/4/5/1925). The migration of Atharaka was based on clans. Clan members migrated and settled in certain villages. After settlements, they carried on with their cultural activities that were later used as a political tool (Kabisani, O.I., 2024)

KNA/PC/KT/1/2/1/1927 states that Tharaka people who are living in Thagicu are supposed to be served by administration from the Meru districts. Meru districts recognized them although it was difficult to put administration there due to inaccessibility. River Tana was the major challenge since it was very expensive to build the bridge connecting the Meru and Kitui districts. According to Icheria (2015), the Atharaka live in the current Tharaka north and south although some Atharaka live in other counties. Some of Atharaka live in Igambang'ombe in the Chuka Igambang'ombe constituency, others live in the Maara constituency around Kaare and Mikui. In Meru County, Tharaka people live lower part of Mitunguu and others in Tigania and Egembe. Kathungu (O.I., 2024) suggests that the cultural set of the Atharaka affects the politics wherever they will be including those who live outside their constituency and county.

Before the coming of the Europeans, the Tharaka people were living in the current Tharaka constituency and its surroundings (Champion, 1912). According to Mugao and Kithinji (2021), Tharaka people had a heterogeneous economy ranging from local manufacturing, peasantry, and pastoralism. M'mucege (O.I., 2024) added that hunting and gathering supplemented food in Tharaka society. Giarell (1994) also argues that Tharaka's leadership had no vacant. Every home was headed by a father. Several families formed clans that were headed by a clan head known as *Aba Mukuru*. Political

authority in Tharaka was exercised by elders (Biana bia akuru). These clan leaders were the ones that shouldered the mandate to choose the senior council in that society (kiama gia akuru). Tharaka's political setup was based on clanship and their leadership had no chiefs. Kanampiu (O.I, 2024) validated the above data by stating that clan heads were responsible for decision-making in Tharaka society. When politics were introduced in 1961, the politicians used the original architecture of Atharaka's cultural ties to lure people for political support.

4.4 Colonial Establishment in Tharaka

Tharaka community experienced colonial administration like any other community in Kenya. The first white man to pass through Tharaka land was in 1889. The white man passed through Thagicu and crossed river Tana, then passed through parts of Tharaka north and vanished towards Meru region. The first man to move around the Tana River upwards to Meru were J.R.W. Piggott, Karl Peters and Herman Tiedemann, who passed briefly through the Tharaka region in 1889. Peters, ' main agenda was an exploration of Africa. He was known for his mistreatment and upon reaching Tharaka, he confiscated six hundred head of cattle. He disarranged the original set of Atharaka leadership which was anchored on clanism and age-sets systems. He successfully defeated Tharaka warriors in their attempts to retrieve their livestock as he fought his way out of the district (Lambert, 1944).

The second group that came through Tharaka was led by William Astor Chanler, an American, in 1892. His caravan was composed of two Europeans, four Somali guardsmen armed with rifles, and about sixty Swahili porters. The third group of white men who stepped on Tharaka land was Dr.Horne in 1908. He came through Chuka, Muthambi and then to Imenti before moving down to Tharaka (Fadiman, 1982). The oral interview from the Tharaka people states that,

Dr. Horne rode in white horse and he could ride for a very long distance in a day. He was surrounded by tall gentlemen who Atharaka perceived as Maasai warriors (Muchiri, O.I., 2024)

The above data was corroborated by Rukungi, Kagumo, Mitambo, and Kilonzo (O.I, 2024) who stated that when the white man came he settled at Rukenya near Chiakariga in 1890. People were astonished when they saw a person who resembles a newborn

baby. They called him Kiuno (newborn child) because he appeared to be red in color something Atharaka have never seen before. They stated that the mother of all wonders was that baby like a person was big and could speak although they did not understand his language. People failed to engage him because of fear. Horns were blown to signify the presence of the enemy. Atharaka under the guidance clan heads held a meeting at the slopes of Ntugi Hill to spread the information. They sang songs that spread the information to the neighbors about the invasions of the unknown red people. They concluded that what they were hearing from the neighbors about the coming of the unknown red people in Embu had now reached Tharaka. They expelled them. They went through Tigania to Meru. The above sentiments were echoed by Bernard (1972) who stated that Tharaka people were known for their aggressive activities. They first repelled the first European visitors by force in 1889 and 1909.

Ndereva (O.I., 2024) states that the serious visit to Tharaka land by a white man was done by Dr. Horne in 1909. He came from Meru after he had put his camp at Meru town. He passed through Charia, Mitunguu, Tunyai, Chiakariga, and then Marimanti. People in Meru had nicknamed him Kangangi (wanderer) because of his nature of travelling for long in every part of Meru using a horse. He also argues that when Dr. Horne came he converted some Tharaka headmen into chiefs who collected hut tax and recruited people to build roads and camps. He used the existing leaders of the clans. He further states that the first administrative camp was built at Chiakariga and it was used as recruitment center for the laborers.



Photo of D.R. HORNE. Kangangi.

Source. Adopted from Lambert 1947

KNA/PC/CP/1/9/1/1908 corroborated the above information by stating that Dr. Horne and his colleagues were coming to establish administrative camps in Tharaka because Tharaka was to be handed over from Embu districts to Meru districts in 1909. His journey also aimed at understanding the map of Tharaka land so that he could establish a road that would connect Embu to Meru through Tharaka. For him to get intelligent, Dr. Horne used the heads of Kiama. He picked a few starting with Kiare wa Muchunu from Mwerera, Kithamba Irumi wa Maingi, and Ruito from Chiakariga in 1908. By 1916, these headmen were converted to chiefs. This is the time colonial administration started working officially in Tharaka. These headmen were responsible for the recruitment of labor from the Tharaka people. He converted the present Tharaka leadership by then to be his force. By 1913, road cuts from Meru to Tharaka had started. In 1918, Meru Tharaka road was complete. This enabled the white man to operate in Tharaka. The colonial government built an administrative camp at Chiakariga. Kilonzo (O.I., 2024) supports this by stating that the heads of the clans decision was final and when the white man came, he took advantage of the situation by converting a few heads of clan to rule on his behalf.

4.5 The Role of Atharaka Music in Colonial Period before the emerging of Elective Politics in Tharaka.

Tharaka community incorporated songs and dances in their social, economic and political activities. In social activities, the intensity of the songs was used during circumcision ceremonies. In the pre-colonial period, circumcision was a fundamental activity that was used transit boys and girls from the childhood to adulthood. Circumcision did not happen the same day that ceremony was pronounced. After the pronouncement, people started preparing the functions ten days earlier (Icheria 2015). Women were involved in food preparations, brewing of local beer like *Maroa* (the kind of brew prepared using grains and it takes seven days), and collecting firewood and water. Men were given supervisory roles although they participated in doing some jobs while called upon to assist. During this time men and women were allowed to sing and dance in that home until the circumcision day. Songs and dances were also used in child naming and marriage ceremonies (Penina Kajiita, O.I, 2024).

Kagumo (O.I., 2024) songs were used as the source of entertainment during the months of the dry season (thaano) although Tharaka had a unique way of naming these months. Thaano here refers to the dry season when people have little activities after collecting the farm produce from their farms. These are names Atharaka people used to name their months.

Ikumi- January	Mwiringo-June	Mugaano-November
Muganwe- February	Mukathara-July	Kenda-December
Mudodo- March	Munthanthatu-August	
Muchuchuma- April	Mukungugu-September	
Muuo- May	Rugwanja rucege-October	

Songs and dances were also used to embrace economic activities. For instance, during farm preparations all the way to harvesting people used songs to embrace these activities. Songs like Muriri were used mostly during this time. The other serious economic activity done in the Tharaka community is livestock keeping (Rukungi O.I., 2024). When the white man established the colonial administration in Tharaka in 1910, he used local chiefs, headmen and home guards to enhance his administration. Colonial masters and colonial chiefs were very powerful. Atharaka had to work on new ways so that they could entice and embrace the leadership of colonial masters. Singing and dancing for the leaders were introduced among the Atharaka. Songs and dances that were earlier used to enhance social and economic activities changed and they were converted to please leadership of colonial masters and their allies. Songs and dances started being used to usher in and out of leaders (Kabisani, O.I., 2024).

4.6 The White Man and His Contribution to the Use of Music in Atharaka Politics

Tharaka people experienced the torture of white men in early 1910 when a white Man by the name of Dr. Horne put administrative center that was manned by colonial chiefs and home guards (Lamberts, 1947). According to Muchiri (O.I., 2024) Dr. Horne who was later named Kangangi after he settled at Meru town came and later settled at Tharaka Rukenya in Chiakariga before travelling back to Meru 1908. People were amazed to see a ‘red person’ who resembled a new born child. They called him *kiuno* (a child who has not grown enough to be born). People were not happy when he convinced the local head of Ukuujiu clan the Kiare wa Muchunu from Mwerera to work as his home guard and later he made him a chief. Kiare took the advantage and forced

fellow Atharaka to carry Dr. Horne using their local carrier known as *itarati* around Ntugi, Kamaratara, Mwerera and Tunyai. People felt they were being misused to carry a human being who is not of their nature from one place to another. According to Rukungi (O.I., 2024) people composed songs that aimed at criticizing the leadership of local chiefs for allowing penetrations of white men into the Tharaka land. Songs like Authi, Njai, and Ncungo were done literally for their cultural activities like the circumcision of boys and girls were converted to check out the actions of the leaders. They were coined in a way that they could be used to criticize the local leaders.

Mucee (O.I., 2024) argues that Dr. Horne used guns to frighten people. He carried guns that he used to shoot aimlessly and once they produced sounds people felt unsafe. Rukungi narrates a story that says that

One day as Horne was passing through Ntugi to Rukenya, he came across a very big bull. He shot it with the gun and it fell down. People were frightened by the power of that gun. That how they ended up obeying the colonial masters (Rukungi O.I., 2024).

He further states that not all Atharaka people obeyed the orders of Dr. Horne. Some perceived him as an unknown enemy. The Atharaka sang hunting songs. They assembled their warriors so that they could fight the white man. They came out with bows and arrows trying to expel him. The idea of expelling Dr. Horne did not materialize because he had converted many Atharaka people to his leadership who frightened and also killed the rebels. Machira (O.I., 2024) noted that it was from this time that Atharaka started using songs to praise the leadership of local chiefs and colonial masters. Songs started being used for political purposes.

When Tharaka people heard about the death of Dr. Horne in 1947, they were very happy (Machira O.I., 2024). Dr. Horne died in 1947 (Lambert, 1947). The information about his death came from ex-soldiers of second world war who first stayed in Meru guarding the white man before they dispersed to their homes. Before they fully celebrated Horne death, a very brutal man nicknamed by the name '*Akiamungu*' came in 1949 and settled at Chiakariga (Kagumo O.I., 2024). His real name was Mr. Powys. KNA/D/MRU/2/3/1948 corroborated the above information by stating that Mr. Powys was appointed to head the Tharaka division and his headquarters was at Chiakariga.

Ndereva and Rukungi (O.I., 2024) enriched the above information by stating that '*Akiamungu*' employed Tharaka people as home guards led by M'tamaingi from Ntugi.

Rukungi says that

N'tamaingi was my father and he was employed by the white man to guard his camps all the way from Mitunguu, Tunyai, and Chiakariga. He was one of the first people who were taught how to shoot and kill anybody who had a wish of rebelling the white man. When he walked by, men and women broke into songs and sang for him. He was a very powerful man. He used to walk while carrying a gun everywhere even when coming home (Rukungi O.I., 2024)

Mr. Powys appointed chiefs who were very powerful like Runguma and N'tamburugu to punish Tharaka people who were against the white man rule. These chiefs banned the use of songs, especially during the circumcision of girls. The colonial government wanted to do away with the circumcision of girls in Tharaka (Kagumo O.I., 2024). The epitome of tension in Tharaka started when the colonial masters built a prison at Marimanti just before the state of emergency in 1952. Tharaka were imprisoned here and they were punished heavily by the white man. When the state of emergency was declared, the white men and local chiefs became more brutal to locals. Some of the Tharaka people responded by joining Mau Mau which was first brought by General Munai Mukangu from Kibung'a Tharaka south. General Munai was employed at Kirinyaga as a casual laborer at the onset of Mau Mau (Mucunku O.I., 2024). Mucee (O.I., 2024) asserts that when Mau Mau movement started, general Munai was in Kikuyu land. He had taken oaths and he was sent to come to Meru to recruit members. When he came he found that the colonial administration in Tharaka had planted colonial camps with chiefs that were very brutal to Atharaka. They even used to collect taxes from them by force and forced labor in colonial camps was rampant. Songs were composed in order to support the Mau Mau warriors and communicate to the colonial masters about the plight of Atharaka. These songs took a centre stage during early political mobilizations (Ndereva O.I., 2024).

KNA/MRU/2/3/1950 confirms that by 1949, penalties and punishment were induced on people who had not paid tax in Tharaka. The documents also confirm that the colonial administration noticed the influx of unknown people. The archival document states that,

21/7/1953 Chief Mburugu has reported that there are men returning from Nairobi and they are behaving like heroes. They are also saying the chief can't touch them (KNA/MRU/2/3/1953).

These people were the Mau Mau recruits who were staying at Kikuyu land. Atharaka songs like Ncungo, Authi, and Njai were sung to criticize the leadership of Chief Mburugu and his colonial masters while praising the Mau Mau warriors. People were mobilized to join the Mau Mau movement by the use of songs and dances. Songs were sung even in the circumcision field until the time the white man put a regulation of the circumcision of men and women in 1952. People were supposed to borrow permission before circumcising their young boys and girls. The colonial masters felt that circumcision songs were being used to criticize the white man administrations while recruiting rebels. During the onset of 1961 politics that led to the first general elections in Kenya, politicians used some Atharaka songs to mobilize their voters (Ndereva O.I, 2024).

4.7 Contribution of Mau Mau Songs in Atharaka Political Mobilization

In the early 1950s Mau Mau songs were very influential KNA/D/MRU/2/3/1953 because they were expressing the pressing issues that colonial masters imposed on them. Ndereva stated that,

I was a staunch member of the Mau Mau. I was a major. I was called Major Battalion Kabira. I used the word Kabira to hide my identity from people who knew me so that they may not sell me to a white man and his chiefs. He continued to state that they used to sing so that people could understand their purpose and aim of the Mau Mau movement because many people perceived them as thieves. Songs were the source of our togetherness (Ndereva, O.I., 2024)

According to Mugao (O.I., 2024) Mau Mau songs were used in political mobilizations among the Atharaka during pre-independence time in Kenya. The mau mau people sang

<i>chakurania muchungu</i>	<i>select and kill the white man</i>
<i>utige mbari nyakairu</i>	<i>leave the black people</i>
<i>ni urimo bainagu.</i>	<i>They do not what they are doing</i>

This sentiment about African fools in that song came out because white men was walking around guarded by the Africans. African fools here are the Atharaka who guarded the white man residences at Mitunguu, Tunyai, Chiakariga and Marimanti.

Similarly, Machira (O.I., 2024) claims that these Atharaka (Africans) who guarded the whites were not aware that the Mau Mau were fighting for independence. They thought that since Mau Mau members lived in the forests, they were just thieves and they were called *Biaji wa bushi* (the men from the bush). The Mau Mau people had known that KANU was coming to liberate them from the wraths of the white man and local chiefs. The white man known as Akiamungu used African soldiers (Atharaka) led by askari N'tamaingi from Kamatara Ntugi to kill the fellow Atharaka who had joined Mau Mau. He argues that people were happy when Bernard Mati vied for a seat to represent Meru people in 1961. They used to sing “

toboa toboa niukite the person who will tell the white man is coming.
na Mate geria mono mati try at your best

M'mucege (O.I., 2024) posits that people were happy to elect Bernard Mati in 1961 because people were tired of ruthlessness of the white man. In addition, people were tired of Mau Mau who were forcefully invading people in the villages aiming at capturing strong men whom they trained and take oath so that they could go to fight the white man who had settled and made administrative camps in Tharaka. They thought that electing a black person would solve their issues in the legislative council because African issues would be discussed and solved. Although he did not recall the real lyrics of the songs, he confirmed that they sang Authi, Njai and Ncungo at Chiakariga while welcoming Bernard Mati. The information corroborated with Ndereva (O.I., 2024) who asserts that 1961 and 1963 election songs played a fundamental role in persuading people to elect KANU including Jomo Kenyatta. He noted that President Kenyatta was perceived as a savior. He says

Kenyatta made us move out of the forest to our homes. On the day of independence, we were at Charia on our way to Meru to carry an attack on a white man who was forcing colonial chiefs to take our property (Ndereva (O.I., 2024).

In addition, Mucee (O.I., 2024) states that at the onset of independence, the Tharaka community was given a constituency and the top candidates who sought the seat were James Njeru and Mathew Mugiira. James Njeru allied with KANU while Mathew Mugiira joined KADU. The Mau Mau never believed in any information from non-members except the old men who they used as informers in the villages. They never believed whether James Njeru was pro KANU and for him to confirm he was brought

to the Mau Mau center at Nguuru (place at Kithino-Gakirwe in Chiakariga ward) to take an oath (muuma). He was also introduced to Mau Mau songs which he later used to mobilize his followers Mathew Mugiira did not want to be associated with the oath. Ndereva states that,

I was one of the people who used to recruit new members through the oath and Njeru came and took Mau Mau oath without any hesitations. He believed in us and we believed in him. The oath was the blood of the goat mixed with flour of every grain starting with millet, sorghum, maize, beans, and cowpeas. The person used to go around the house built by Mau Mau seven times. They used to be told, “Thungira aga maita mugwanja noogo Africa ithungagiira.” That means enter here seven times this is the entrance door for the real Africans. The administrator of the oath would say, “Tuthu tuthuka ta nthenge waumbura gukauragwa ta nthenge.” Jump like a he goat that is in process of being killed, and if you say anything you will be killed (Ndereva O.I., 2024).

During this process, political songs featured in Tharaka songs like Authi, Njai, Ncungo and Kirarire were sang. The songs aimed at a political persuasion to the members to elect KANU candidate. These songs spread in all parts of Tharaka making Njeru have upper hand than Mathew Mugiira (Machira, O.I., 2024).

4.8 Use of Atharaka Songs in Political Mobilizations during Electioneering Periods of early 1960s

Kagumo (O.I., 2024) confirmed that in 1961 and 1963 general elections, people used to sing Atharaka songs like Kibucho, Mboboi Ncungo, Mutuuru, Njai, Kinguri, Authi and Kirarire to pass political messages aiming at the supports of their favorite candidates while on the other hand mocking the opponents. Mucege (O.I., 2024) confirms that it was difficult for Tharaka people to sing political songs since colonial chief N'tamburugu and the white man known as Akiamungu were very tough on Africans.

The idea of liberation had spread and it reached many people in Tharaka. The liberation ideas were mostly spread by Mau Mau participants (Wa Githumo, 1991). Agesa (2019) noted that songs during the early 1960s focused on political mobilization to unite the people having conquered the colonial government. The effort by an African to chase the whites was received with heavy weight and people supported their leaders without

hesitations (Machiira O.I., 2024). M’ucege (O.I., 2024) confirms that Bernard Mati was the first African to see campaigning and talking ill about the white man openly. He was campaigning to be elected as member of legislative council representing Meru (the current Meru county, Tharaka Nithi, and parts of Kitui known as Tharaka ya thagicu). They used to sing

<i>mubeberu gukaathi</i>	the white man must go
<i>turienda kwathwa</i>	we want
<i>imuntu u mwiru tawe mati</i>	we want to be governed by black man

The songs were sang mostly by Mau Mau warriors and people who were secretly ant-colonialist. Bernard Mati was firstly elected to represent central Kenya in 1957 and after the split of central, Embu and Meru, Mati opted to represent Meru people his place of birth in 1961 (Gathogo, 2020; KNA/DC/LMU/2/1961). People composed songs to sing for Mate during his campaign in 1961 (Machiira, O.I., 2024). Kilonzo (O.I., 2024) agreed the above information according to the narration he got from his father by adding that people were joyful in 1961 when Bernard Mati was first elected to represent the people of Meru and the current Tharaka Nithi in the legislative council. He says when Mati came to Chiakariga in 1961, people used to sing Authi (a type of song in Tharaka sang by both men and women especially during ceremonies and circumcision period) “

<i>kiraani kii ki! Kiraani kii ki!</i>	let us be quiet we wait
<i>Twentere toboa niukite.</i>	the person who say it all openly is coming

Bernard Mati was called ‘*toboa*’ because he used to speak openly the ill about the white man on their presence. The above arguments was supported by Mugao (O.I., 2024) who confirmed that 1961 people were very happy when they heard that they are electing one of their own (African) to represent them in the legislative council. People used to sang

<i>mucunku naathi</i>	<i>let the white man go</i>
<i>muntu umuiru aathane</i>	<i>the black man to the seat and rule</i>

In 1963 Atharaka people sang in support of KANU (Ndereva, 2024). They sang,

<i>tukathura jogoo</i>	<i>we will elect hen (KANU)</i>
<i>gaturekeeria Ngala angie</i>	<i>let us leave Ronald Ngala</i>
<i>majimbo ma acunku</i>	<i>spreading majimbo of white man</i>

The ideas of KANU spread and that how they ended up electing Jomo Kenyatta. In the same note, they sang songs praising Hon. Njeru who was KANU flag bearer in Tharaka against Hon. Mugiira who used KADU as ticket. Tharaka people sang

Mugiira akuja na majimbo ma acunku ikaaba Njeru *Mugiira has come majimbo of white man better we elect njeru*

The songs were sung by both men and women (Kagumo O.I., 2024)

In 1963 when Tharaka was given a constituency covering the current Tharaka, Thagicu (part of Kitui county that has been occupied by Atharaka) and Igambang’ombe today part of Chuka Igambang’ombe constituency, and Iriira in Mbeere in Embu county, two candidates with different political parties showed the interest. KANU was introduced in Tharaka by Chabari wa Ciangundu from Chiakariga who was a regional assembly representative at Embu. Tharaka was newly formed as a constituency and James Njeru was proposed to take the mantle. He noted that to introduce KANU and make sure it is accepted by majority, KANU members from Chiakariga were taking oaths at Nguuru, a Mau Mau center that was situated at Kithino the current Gakirwe sub-location, those from Marimanti and Tharaka north went Kiau and Gikingo hills respectively. Njeru Gituriandu came with KANU while Mathew Mugiira came with KADU as political parties respectively. People felt that KADU ideologies were hand in hand with those of white men. Mau mau songs were sung to embrace the occasions (Ndereva, Kilonzo, Machira, O.I., 2024)

4.8.1 KANU and KADU Political Songs and Their Influence on Tharaka Politics

Kanyinga (2014) noted that the politics of Kenya on the eve of independence was controlled by two political parties that is KANU and KADU. KANU members swiped all the political seats in central Kenya including Meru where Tharaka was part of mainly because the leader Jomo Kenyatta was from central Kenya. This means that people who vied for the seat using any other political party in central Kenya rather than KANU were not elected. By 1963, Mau Mau people who were in the forest started coming out to educate people about the importance of electing leaders of KANU. They thought KANU leaders would liberate people from the hands of white men (Ndereva, O.I., 2024). They used to sing

<i>ndairagwa ntigakethie</i>	<i>i was told not to greet KANU</i>
<i>kanu na nkumekethia</i>	<i>i have greeted it</i>
<i>Gera muti kwa nguku utige</i>	<i>let vote for the hen</i>
<i>njogu ikianganagia</i>	<i>leave elephant loitering</i>
<i>na majimbo ii</i>	<i>with majimbo</i>

The hen was the symbol of KANU and elephant was the symbol of KADU. In Tharaka, the songs were in support of KANU candidate Hon. James Njeru. Out of these vigorous political mobilizations through use of songs, he defeated Mathew Mugiira. Njeru became the first Tharaka Member of Parliament. People voted Hon. Njeru against Mathew Mugiira because they were shown the importance of voting him through Atharaka political songs (Kagumo O.I., 2024)

According to Kilonzo (O.I., 2024) Tharaka people felt that the ideas of KADU resembles that of colonialist. Atharaka used to sing “

<i>Tuticooka ara twatwire</i>	<i>we can not go back</i>
<i>tukiathawa imucunku</i>	<i>to be ruled by a white man</i>
<i>muntu Atari nkuma,</i>	<i>a thankless man</i>
<i>Ngala terateria</i>	<i>Ngala pave the way</i>
<i>Kenyatta akuruke</i>	<i>for Kenyatta</i>

Atharaka felt more save when they elect KANU leaders. The KANU ideologies were sold in Tharaka by Chabari wa Ciangundu who was regional assembly representative at Embu and the ideas had sunk to people (Rukungi, Mucee, Ndereva O.I., 2024)

In 1969 general elections, Tharaka politics became competitive due to entrance of Njagi wa Kiondo who enjoyed mass support from Tharaka North. Both ran with KANU ticket but hon. Njeru defeated Njagi wa Kiondo (Machiira O.I., 2024). Njagi supporters used to sing Authi “

<i>Njeru ii njeru twetu</i>	<i>njeru is not ours</i>
<i>I kathenge gakuuma</i>	<i>he is a borrowed he goat</i>
<i>thagicu</i>	<i>from thagicu</i>
<i>naringue thagana</i>	<i>let him cross river Tana</i>
<i>acoke kwao.</i>	<i>and go to his birth place</i>

The song was confirming that hon. Njeru had come from parts of Kitui not a real Tharaka man (Ndereva O.I., 2024). Mugao (O.I. 2024) also fortifies by stating that hon. James Njeru was teaching in Thagicu Kitui but he was brought to Tharaka by Chabari wa Ciangundu who was his uncle and a member of Regional Representative. He asserts that Hon. Njeru was very powerful since he was the assistant minister for defense. His supporters were very loyal and they used to sing Authi responding to Njagi wa Kiondo supporters by saying

<i>twithuura njeru</i>	<i>we are electing njeru</i>
<i>mwene muciii</i>	<i>the owner of the house</i>
<i>ntungiiri gaciikunje</i>	<i>let the foreigner go.</i>

Similarly, Kabisani (O.I., 2024) confirms the above sentiments by asserting that in 1969 Hon. Njeru political symbol was aeroplane and that of Njagi wa Kiondo was a lamp. Njeru supporters composed a Mbobo song (Atharaka song sang by both men and women when they are in a circle). They sang

<i>Ndege ciauka ii ciauka</i>	<i>when the aeroplane take off</i>
<i>Ndege ciauka ii</i>	<i>when the aeroplane take off</i>
<i>ciauka taa cionthe</i>	<i>all the lamps</i>
<i>igauka machere</i>	<i>will be crushed</i>

Gichenga Mugao (O.I., 2024) also continued to state that Njagi wa kiondo supporters responded to this song and they sang “

<i>ijiii njeru nakanue</i>	<i>let Njeru ne warned</i>
<i>ijiii njeru nakanue</i>	<i>let Njeru be warned</i>
<i>kuuja na ndeke</i>	<i>never try to land with aeroplane</i>
<i>thiguru ya kiondo</i>	<i>in the land of kiondo</i>

These two songs carried political connotations and they mobilized the voters from either side to vote for their candidate (Mucee O.I., 2024).

In 1974, the politics of Tharaka were diversified due to the entrance of many candidates including scholars like Kaburiere Matumo. Kaburiere Matumo was the first Tharaka man to join the university in Kenya and later became a lecturer at the University of Nairobi (Kabisani O.I., 2024). Tharaka people perceived him as the brightest Tharaka man in the universe. He intensively competed with hon. Njeru and Njagi wa kiondo. He lost narrowly to Hon. Njeru (Kilonzo O.I., 2024). Kaburiere supporters used to sing mbobo during campaign time

<i>bura Kaburiere akuthoma</i>	<i>what Kaburiere could read</i>
<i>na igoti</i>	<i>from the back of his head</i>
<i>njagi na Njeru</i>	<i>njagi and njeru</i>
<i>batiumba kuthoma</i>	<i>can not read</i>
<i>baicukitie metho</i>	<i>with their naked eyes</i>

Njeru supporters also composed songs aiming at criticizing Kaburiere (Kabisani O.I., 2024). They sang

<i>waukagia mbogo ciakii</i>	<i>you used to wake up sleeping buffalos</i>
<i>ciaki na</i>	<i>why</i>
<i>migwi utaiji kugera</i>	<i>and you do not know how throw arrows</i>

The meant that kaburiere was unable to campaign to the level that he could defeat njeru.

Agesa (2019) noted that in 1970s musicians created songs reminding Kenyans of the independence struggle and the sacrifices that had resulted in self-rule. This was more under the rule of the first President Jomo Kenyatta. The song written in the 1970s by Enock Odengo was serving as a patriotic song and also reminded Kenyans not to be distracted by the opponents of the government. They sang “*Wimbo huu ni wimbo wa historia watu mnaombwa sikize kwa makini, Ilikuwa October 1952 watu wote tulisikia Kenyatta ameshikwa*”. This is a historical song reminding people how Kenyatta was arrested in 1952. The song reminded people about the oppression that Kenyatta and other Kapenguria six members. Maingi supported this argument by saying.

“Since I was the candidate to vie for the councilor seat in 1974, we had to compose songs to praise Kenyatta and other local leaders like Hon. Njeru who was a powerful assistance minister for internal security (Maingi O.I., 2013).”

Tharaka composed Authi songs “

<i>nwabura ukauga ii</i>	<i>we will do</i>
<i>nwabura ukauga Kenyatta</i>	<i>what you will say Kenyatta</i>

After praising the president they would now narrow down to the mp. They sang

<i>nwabura ukauga iii</i>	<i>we will do</i>
<i>nwabura ukauga</i>	<i>what you will say</i>
<i>Njeru gwetu</i>	<i>what you will say njeru</i>

The songs were composed to praise President Jomo Kenyatta and then Tharaka Member of Parliament hon. Njeru . The song was urging people to re-elect hon. Njeru and his associates (Maingi O.I., 2024).

Kilonzo (O.I., 2024) noted that in the 1979, hon. Njagi wa kiondo defeated Hon. Njeru who has been member of parliament since independent. Njeru slogans and songs made him unpopular because he was insulting the opponents directly. His supporters used to sing mboboi

<i>Njagi wa kiondo</i>	<i>kiondo</i>
<i>twakinya kuurani</i>	<i>when we reach at the polling station</i>
<i>ukaira nyukwe</i>	<i>you will go back and tell your mother</i>
<i>bura gwonire</i>	<i>what you have seen</i>

According to Kathungu (O.I., 2024) Atharaka were unhappy for being associated with their mothers who should be respected. People felt insulted and those who supported

hon. Njeru got divided and some supported Wa kiondo. Njagi wa kiondo took this advantage and his supporters composed a song reminding people that Hon. Njeru was not a real Tharaka he was a borrowed he goat. They used to sing

<i>Kathenge gaka</i>	<i>this he goat</i>
<i>kaari ga kuromba</i>	<i>was borrowed and we no longer need it</i>
<i>ituakuririe nthenge yeetu</i>	<i>ours</i>
<i>tayo njagi wa kiondo</i>	<i>ours has grown</i>

In the 1979 elections, Hon. Njagi wa Kiondo campaigners used songs to unite people from Tharaka north against Hon. Njeru who was from Tharaka south. They believed that Njeru was temporally borrowed from Tharaka people who lives at thagicu Kitui. The song united people from the north and some in south and they voted hon. Njeru out. The song awakened people senses and they felt that Hon. Njagi wa Kiondo is more of Tharaka than Hon. Njeru (Kathambi, Mwiti (O.I., 2024). Kabisani (O.I., 2024) confirms that the songs spread this idea like bush fire and powerful njeru was unseated.

Mucunku (O.I., 2024) says that 1988 general elections, Francis Kagwima who was a staunch supporter of hon. Njagi wa kiondo came in and opposed him. Hon. Kagwima comes from Chiakariga ward near Tunyai and immediate neighbor to Hon. Njeru. He took advantage of boundary conflicts between Tharaka and Meru people that happened at Muuro jwa Muugu at Kibung'a in 1986. Many people were killed that day, maimed and others were arrested and Tharaka people felt that Njagi wa Kiondo complied with District Commissioner who wanted the Meru boundary to be put at Kibung'a market. Njagi infuriated people when he agreed with the government by saying 'mwanka nurutwe' (let the boundary be demarcated). He stated that,

"I was a assistance chief of kibung'a during this time. I informed the DO of Tharaka south about the tension of this meeting and he informed district commissioner who was situated at meru. The administration assumed this intelligent report. When they came, Tharaka people had come from every corner at kibung'a and when the DC landed, the fight started. Tharaka people shot using bow and arrows, others had sharp pangas and blunt objects. People were killed including police officers and others were maimed (Mucunku wa Nduru O.I., 2024)".

The Tharaka people felt as if they were orphans and they had no leader to represent and talk of their issues. During campaigns, Kagwima supporters composed songs to criticize Njagi wa Kiondo (Kiriri wa Gitundu, O.I., 2024). They sang ‘

<i>Kawima nwee</i>	<i>it is kawima</i>
<i>akuathurana</i>	<i>who will separate</i>
<i>koiko (meru people)</i>	<i>tharaka from meru</i>
<i>Tharaka,na njagi</i>	<i>let njagi go</i>
<i>Naathi oje viimba</i>	<i>collects corpses</i>
<i>Muro jwa Muugu arie</i>	<i>that were killed from Muuro jwa Muugu</i>

According to Kabisani (O.I., 2024) political tension started when hon. Francis Kagwima declared to vie for the Member of Parliament seat. Since he was the second graduate after Kaburiere Matumo to vie for the seat, people perceived him as a person who will able present Tharaka grievances in parliament using English language. People composed Njai songs to demean Wa kiondo by saying

<i>njagi ii njoka ya miromo iiri,</i>	<i>njagi is a snake of two mouths</i>
<i>njagi ii njoka ya miromo iiri,</i>	<i>njagi is a snake of two mouths</i>
<i>ariria miiru na akaria Tharaka,</i>	<i>he eating both from tharaka and meru</i>
<i>njagi ii njoka ya miromo iiri,</i>	<i>njagi is a snake of two mouths</i>
<i>akiandika karani nwanga</i>	<i>when employing clerk</i>
<i>akarea nthenge</i>	<i>he ask for goat</i>
<i>njagi ii njoka ya miromo iiri,</i>	<i>njagi is a snake of two mouths</i>
<i>akiandika mwalimu nwanga</i>	<i>when employing a teacher</i>
<i>akarea nthenge</i>	<i>he must eat goat</i>
<i>njagi ii njoka ya miromo iiri</i>	<i>njagi is a snake of two mouths</i>

According to Mitambo (O.I., 2024) songs had very power information since they portrayed the seating Member of Parliament as betrayer of Tharaka people and also as man of kickbacks wherever he helps people. He notes that Kagwima was elected by majority in 1988 because he was able to prove that he will help in solving the boundary issues and Represent tharaka issues in the National Assembly.

The serious penetrations of Christian religion among the Atharaka from late 1980s affected the cultural practices in Tharaka beause of introduction of Christian songs that accompanied their daily activities. People who were converted to follow the new religion hardly sang tradional music during campaign time. They converted Christians songs to fit as a campaign musicl especially in their churches (Kabisani O.I., 2024). Kiruchu (O.I., 2024) noted that in 1992, 1997, 2002, and 2007 general elections were accompanied by mix of both tradional music and religion music. While singing for hon. Kagwima in 1992 and 2002, Christians composed a song from the Bible Psalm 1:3 which says that *he will be like a tree firmly planted by the stream of water that its leaf does not wither*. The sang ,

<i>Kagwima weetu</i>	<i>our son Kagwima</i>
<i>Ni muti mwande</i>	<i>is like a tree</i>
<i>Jwanditwe ruujine</i>	<i>planted by the stream</i>
<i>Na jutienyenyeke</i>	<i>and it can not wither</i>

In addition, folk songs were frequently used to enrich campaigns especially in 2007 and general elections. People used to sing in support of former Member of Parliament hon. Muiru while belittling hon. Kagwima and Francis Kiambi who were his main competitor in 2007 general elections (Gakii O.I., 2024). They used to sing,

<i>Na mwiru weetu ntimurekia</i>	<i>I will not leave Muiru</i>
<i>Nangatumanwa kagwima kana</i>	<i>even if kagwima and</i>
<i>Kiambi akaaja</i>	<i>Kiambi comes</i>

4.8.2 Use of Atharaka Songs on Political Mobilization Based on Boundary Issues

KNA/DC/MERU/2/4/6/1954 argued that the Tharaka community has been experiencing boundary conflicts with people from Imenti and Tigania and the rift between these communities was portrayed during political periods. Kabisani (O.I., 2024) noted that the 1988 general elections songs were more intense and they were based on boundary issues between Tharaka and the neighbors. The right man of by then Tharaka Member of Parliament hon. Njagi wa Kiondo Francis Kagwima ran for the seat. Fortunately, the 1986 fight between Tharaka at Kibung'a Muuro jwa Muugu escalated the intensity of 1988 politics. People believed that Hon. Njagi Wa kiondo contributed to the mess by allowing by then District Commissioner who was based at Meru town to show the boundary between the Tharaka and Imenti people. People sang,

<i>Njagi nathi akooje maiti</i>	<i>let njagi go and collect corpses</i>
<i>mara mairagirwe</i>	<i>of people who were killed</i>
<i>akiendia Tharaka</i>	<i>while he was selling tharaka</i>

Kagwima took advantage of the situation where he encouraged men and women to sing these songs and spread the idea that by then current Member of Parliament was betraying his people (Muchunku wa Nduru O.I., 2024)

Another boundary conflict was experienced in between Tharaka and Tigania (Kiriimi, 2005). In Tharaka north, people were being evicted from their homes at Kindani, Kianyungu, Macabini, and Mpunguru, by intruders from neighboring communities in 1997. These places were earlier occupied by Tharaka community. This eviction escalated the political temperature in Tharaka community. The northerners felt that they are left out because the political class comes from Tharaka south where there is minimal

boundary crisis. They felt it is better they elect their own person to deal with their boundary issues. During peace making, by then current Member of Parliament Francis Kagwima said Tharaka have spread too much to other regions and they should discontinue from doing it. People from Tharaka north were very agitated and they felt that they should elect one of their own. The lawyer Murango Mwenda from Tharaka north vied for the seat and he defeated hon. Kagwima. Although he does not remember the real lyrics of the songs, he asserts that song were used to praise Murango Mwenda because he is a lawyer demeaning hon. Kawima. They claimed that hon. Kawima was an engineer to engineer grabbing of Tharaka land. Tharaka songs were composed to demean Hon. Kawima while praising Murango Mwenda (Kiruchu, Muthike O.I., 2024)

4.8.3 The use of Atharaka Songs based on Education for Political Mobilization

Up to 1988, Tharaka politics had been dominated by non-graduates. The first graduate to seek to be a member of parliament was Kaburiere Matumo in the 1974 general elections although he did not win. He lost to Hon. Njeru. The entrance of Francis Kagwima in the race for member parliament in Tharaka as a graduate in 1988 escalated emotions among the Atharaka. People had connected their problems such as poor roads and infrastructure, little social amenities and frequent attacks of Tharaka people with poor representatives by the people who are not well educated. By then political aspirant Francis Kagwima who was a young engineer, was perceived as a man who would speak in English and outline Tharaka problems in the parliament (Mugwika O.I., 2024).

People used to sing Njai

<i>ndaratwire kuthuura mujumbe</i>	<i>i have been electing mp for long</i>
<i>niindi ndamenyire</i>	<i>but I have known</i>
<i>mujembe ii digrii</i>	<i>a good mp must have a degree</i>

The other Kagwima campaigners composed a songs while belittling Hon. Njagi level of education by saying

<i>I yaai gui, iyaai gui Kawima akithoma</i>	<i>when Kawima was studying</i>
<i>kiondo nwe nakabaga uramba</i>	<i>kiondo was crushing a bao baob</i>
	<i>fruits</i>

This was a demeaning song portraying that Kiondo had insufficient education. People who were in universities and colleges supported more zyked by these songs and they ended up supporting Francis Kawima (Kabisani O.I., 2024).

Mugambi (O.I., 2024) posit that politics in Tharaka cannot be lively without music. Tharaka music like Ncungo, Njai and Authi are commonly usher in and out leaders during campaign period and when there is a function. The organized group mostly led by men and women sing these songs. He says

“I firstly voted in 2007. I only wanted to vote Kagwima out and put Matanka (the upcoming politicians by then) in and we used songs to mobilize our followers (Mugambi O.I., 2024).”

One of the song was

*matanka ariuria naata nduthite, Matanka is asking what I have
done that make you need me this
much*

*Tharaka ikauga turienda maendeleo tharaka people answers that they
want development*

He asserts that these songs are sang by both men and women in the present and absent of the politicians during eve or onset of political periods. Although songs and dances mobilize people politically, sometimes they do not automatically makes the candidates to be elected. One may use many songs during campaign time and still fail to be elected due to other underlying factors like regionalism, charisma of a leaders, and clanism (Kithinji, Munene, Njeru O.I., 2024).

4.8.4 Conclusions

Atharaka music has been used to bring people together from pre-colonial to post-colonial periods. People come together when doing music for various celebrations. Politicians take advantage and turn the initial purpose of the songs for political mobilization. Politicians use songs to pass the information to the opponent and also encourage their supporters. Music has been used for a long time during political mobilizations since they are used as a source of communication to the audience. Music influences the perception of the voters towards a certain candidate and they may vote those candidates either in or out. On the contrary, it has emerged from the study that good use of music in politics does not guarantee a candidate a win. One may use good songs and still fail to clinch the seat.

CHAPTER FIVE

THE ROLE OF CLANISM IN POLITICAL MOBILIZATION DURING GENERAL ELECTIONS IN THARAKA CONSTITUENCY FROM 1961 TO 2007

5.1 The Background of Use of Clans

Tharaka social and political organizations are based on clan ties. Clan ties in Tharaka are used to trace the ancestral ties. The Tharaka people believe that clan serves as a unifying factor since people believe to have come from the same ancestor (Lambert, 1947). People of the same clan view each other as a brother and a sister joined by sharing an ancestor. Tharaka people believe that people of the same clan share the same ancestral blood. Clan identity determines social and political relationships in Tharaka society (Middleton, 1953, Icheria 2015, Mwiti O.I., 2024). Members of the clan are treated equally in all circumstances unless when leadership and age are involved although there are some things that everybody is prohibited from doing like marrying a clan member. Although the members of the clan may clinch leadership positions, it does not mean that they are better than other members but they are treated with respect by virtue of occupying that seat (Mugwika, Munene O.I., 2024).

Lowenthal (1973) states that Atharaka members of the clan were given different roles according to the age and also sharpness of an individual. Every clan had an elder (Aba Mukuru) who was taking care of the clan. For instance, the head of the clan was very important in that clan. He was a judge and he also carried all the blame when the members of the clan did unacceptable things in society like stealing, insults, adultery, and any inappropriate behavior. The other groups played the role of being warriors to protect the community while the young ones were taking care of the livestock. Women were given home-based chores and taking care of the children and farms.

Among the Atharaka community, punishments for the member of the clan was either communal or single approach. Any member regardless of the age could punish a wrongdoer if the punishment was approached communally. Before the punishment, the head of the wrongdoers were covered so that they could not see the people who were punishing them. Any available clan member participated in administering the punishment. This draws to the conclusion that every task in the Tharaka community originated from clans (Munene (O.I., 2024). Kilonzo (O.I., 2024) enunciates that a clan

is like a bible and it is a source of discipline and guidance. The clan is used to bring people together with well-put guidelines, especially on marriages, how to protect the old, and respecting women, children and elders. When politics that involved elections were introduced in 1961, the compactness of clanism started being used to mobilize the members. Clans gathered so that they spoke in one voice.

Mugao (O.I, 2024) supports the above sentiments and affirms that the main purpose of Tharaka clans is to bring people together and also make them speak in one voice while responding to any internal and external phenomenon. Kabisani and Maingi (O.I, 2024) enriched the same idea by stating that clan unification was a measure of togetherness. The togetherness of any clan was a measure of the ability or inability of people to handle the security of their people. The more the united clan, the more powerful they are politically especially those who have big numbers like Muuruguru clan, Gankina and Kamurige. The togetherness of the clan also shield them from being sidelined even in political activities. Kinyua (O.I., 2024) states that the clans that are more united are able to frontline their candidates, campaign and vote for them.

5.2 History of Clanism in Tharaka

The source of Atharaka clanism started at dispersal point known as Shungwaya (lambert, 1947) Clan is made of many families (micii) that believe that they originate from the same ancestry. The Tharaka word clan (mwiriga; singular) or miiriga (plural) literally means gate (house hold) refers to people who comes from the same house hold (Icheria, 2015; Lowenthal, 1973). Some clans share an originating ancestry for instance Kagunda, Kanyaki and Gankuyu all originate from Doga (Mitambo O.I., 2024). The other clans that share the same characteristics Kamurige Ndathe, Kamurige Nthimbu and Kamurige Mwirijia they all belong the same ancestor (Kanampiu, O.1, 2024). Mitambo (2024) identified Atharaka clans as the followings;

Gankina	Kamugwe	Kathoga	Ncuria
Gankuyu	Kamurige	Kitherini	Ndegi
Gantue	Kanjiru	Kithuri	Nyaaga
Igoro	Kanjogu	Mbaaru	Ukuujiu
Kagunda	Kanthakame	Mbura	Utonga
Kamarao	Kaanyaga	Muuruguru	Kagunda
Kirundu	Mbogoni	Rurii	Kamugemia
Kanyaki	Mwagitiri		

All these clans there is way they relate to each and even interact during political periods. Tharaka word for sub-clan is Riiko (plural; mariiko) which literally refers to a group around a fire place. This means that Riiko is being enclosed by the clan (Mwiriga). Riiko is presumed as the son of the clan because they are born from the same clan. Mariiko are the siblings of the clans. The relationships are rarely left out during electioneering periods. People are attached to their clans and they end up supporting members of their clans politically (Kathanya, O.I., 2024).

Tharaka community is exogamic (Gakii O.I., 2024). It is alarming for an individual to marry from the same clan the act is like marrying from your family and it's regarded as an inappropriate act. In addition to that, there are clans that don't intermarry. The research looked for a few cases. For instance, the Kamurige clan cannot marry from clans like, Gankuyu, Kamugemia, Kamugwe and Kanjiru. Gankina and Kanthakame too do not intermarry. Nyaaga clan and Utonga clan can not intermarry or even exchange bitter words even in time of crisis or politics (Mukami O.I., 2024). Kamugemia and Kamurige could not touch each other even at the time of doing songs and dances on cultural ceremonies. There are clans that intermarry but they can not do harm to each other through fighting. Fighting is prohibited because if any harm the other to the extent of shedding the blood, the goat must be slaughtered to prevent ancestral curses. Kamurige clan and Ukuujiu, Mbura, and Gankina can intermarry but cannot fight and if it happens people slaughter the goat to cleanse the mess (Mugwika, Kanampiu, Mitambo, O.I., 2024).

According to Mwana (O.I, 2024), every clan in Tharaka has a clans that they do not intermarry with. All these activities aim at making people live friendly in society without harming each other. The intermarriage of the prohibited clans would lead to the loss of bride price rights and obligations would be erased and many people are unwilling to give a daughter for no return. These restrictions go beyond the Tharaka community. Tharaka and Muthambi communities from Maara do not intermarry. They call each *Giacharo* (blood brotherhood). The above measures taken by clans have been used during times of politics and people were mobilized politically based on clans membership and relationships.

5.3 Political Organization of Atharaka

The smallest political unit in Tharaka is known as *mucii* (house) and *micii* in plural and it is headed by the father. Every vital decision in a family was made by the father of that family. Many families form *Riiko* (fireplace) *Mariiko* in plural. Many *Mariiko* forms clans (*mwiriga*; singular; *miiriga*: plural). The political system of Tharaka was taken care of by the council of elders (*Akuru*) who came from different clans and made any judgment on issues that emerged on their lands. The oldest living age set was regarded as the wisest because they were the people who had repeatedly solved a lot of conflicts among the families and clans (Giarelli, 1997). The elders used to make a political decisions through mutual agreements although politics narrowed down to clanism because every member belonged to a certain clan. Gichenga (O.I., 2024) noted that it is hard to convince an individual to go against the wishes and desires their clan members. Mutual agreement was more embraced in decision-making within the clan and among the other clans. After the circumcision, Atharaka formed an age-set and the new age-set was living in *Gaarua* (warrior house). In each age-set, they had *Mugambi* in singular or *Agambi* in plural who are selected because of their wisdom and honesty in dealing with matters of the society. These people (*Agambi*) are entitled to speak on behalf of age set on military matters or disputes among the members. They were decision-makers in those camps (Lowenthal, 1973; Gichenga, O.I., 2024)

5.4 The Role of Mugwe/Ugwe in Political Mobilizations

This was Tharaka prophesy in the Tharaka community and the clan that was entrusted with it was Kithuri clan and its lineage. *Mugwe* was used to bless leaders and leadership (Kilonzo, 2024). They are empowered even to bless individuals. The *Mugwe* office was jurally inherited by primogeniture (the right of succession belonging to the firstborn child). The first son of the eldest *Mugwe* took the lead in case of in eventualities from the eldest *Mugwe* (Mitambo, 2024). The figure below show the list of several numbers of *Mugwe*.

The mugwe	the lineage/fathers
Mbai ndia wa Bataku	Came with people from Bwa
Nthetei Mbai	Son of Mbai
Kirura Nthetei	Son of Nthetei
Mwiga Kirura	Son of Kirura
Ncundu Mwiga	Son of Mwiga

Cangeene Ncundu
Mutuampea Cangeene

Son of Ncuudu
Son of cageene and was the first mugwe to
receive the white man in Tharaka.

Mwoga Mutuampea
M'Rwanda Mwoga
Nthuku M'Rwanda
Mwamba M'kunyia
Mitambo kathuu

Son of Mutuampea
Son of Mwoga
Son of M'Rwanda
Member of the clan
The present



Figure 2: The m'kunyia. Tharaka Mugwe.

Source: Daily Nation September 5th 2012

All mugwe participated in blessing the leaders before they took their position. Their advices were highly valued by council of elders. Council of elders had a lot of political power and influences but these powers could not work without the blessings of Mugwe. For instance, if elders declare a new leader, then the Mugwe is necessary to ensure the activity is successful through performing of rituals. If Mugwe disassociated with the leadership of newly appointed leader, elders had no choices rather than changing. Rather than blessing leaders, he blessed the warriors (Njuuri), the circumciser, on set of planting and rainfall. Even today the words of Mugwe counts in Tharaka political leaderships. During political campaigns people are always eager to hear the voice of Mugwe and the person they may voice in support may be in a better position to be elected because he carries Mugwe blessings. The political decision of Mugwe influences political decision among the Atharaka (Kilonzo, O.I, 2024, Mucee, O.I, 2024)

5.6 Use of Clans in Atharaka Political Mobilization

Clans in Tharaka are a source of identity and a source of origin to its members (Lowenthal, 1973). If a member of the clan seeks a political seat, the other members are likely to embrace him or her in that leadership position being sought (Mugambi, O.I., 2024). Many Tharaka people believe in the leadership of their clan rather than being led by other clans. The member of the clan who seeks political support is more likely to be elected by the clan members than the non-member (Kaanake O.I., 2024). Mwiti (O.I., 2024) asserts that Tharaka people believe in clanism. Mucee (O.I., 2024) states in the 1961 general elections, Atharaka clans were not competing amongst themselves but clan heads sensitized their clan's members to come out to elect Bernard Mate to be a member of the legislative council.

The person who seeks for the seat do prior consultation with the clan members before going to the field to seek support from other clans. Typical Atharaka man must belong to a certain clan, that why when out of your clan you enter into other clans. He also states that the person who gets the political leadership is perceived by other members as the father of that clan by virtue of being in that position. His firm example was Gankina clan which embraced hon. Njeru as there leader (1963-1979) because he was a Member of Parliament for that period of time. Muuruguru and Kanjogu clans showed the same behavior when their members became Members of Parliaments. Hon. Njagi wa Kiondo was perceived as a leader of Muuruguru clan after clinching power in 1979 to 1988 and Kagwima (kanjogu clan) 1988 to 1997 and 2002 to 2007.

Mucee (O.I, 2024) confirms that clan with majority members is likely to produce a leader in Tharaka. Munene (O.I, 2024) enrich this information by saying that clan with majority has a simple landing because they assemble all the members and even adds from the clans that have no candidate. Mitambo (O.I, 2024) says that the clan with majority and that embrace togetherness than the others is likely to produce a leader in tharaka.

Tharaka politics has been enriched by use of clans since independence. In 1963, hon. Njeru mobilized his member clans (Gankina) and hon. Mugiira from kanjogu clan mobilized their members. Hon. Njeru won because Gankina clan is one of the clan with

many people comparing to Kanjogu clan. Clan and its associate voted in hon. Njeru and he won elections against Mugiira (Mugao, O.I 2024).

5.6.1 Clan Associate Political Mobilization through Marriage and Birth

Mugao and Maingi (O.I, 2024) narrates that the person who brought Hon. Njeru in Tharaka was Chabari wa Ciangundu (Kamugemia clan) from Chiakariga. Chabari wa Ciangundu was a Regional Representative for the assembly in Embu before 1963. His sister now the mother to Njeru was married to Gankina clan. Chabari wa Ciangundu went for child of his sister to come and vie for a seat in Tharaka. By that time Njeru teaching and living in Thagicu (place in Kitui County that is occupied by Atharaka). Although his sister was married, Chabari wa Ciangundu went to look for his people who were associated through marriage. Kabisani (O.I., 2024) asserts that Chabari wa Ciangundu believed that Gankina people will elect Njeru and he will win since they are many. Gankina and other associate clans teamed up based on marriage to elect Hon. Njeru in 1963.

In 1969, the competition was between two people who comes from big clans. Hon. Njeru from Gankina clan and Njagi wa Kiondo from Muuruguru clan. These clans are one of the most populated clans in Tharaka. The competition was intense but the Hon. Njeru clan (Gankina) is more flexible because it can marry many clans compared to the Muuruguru clan. The associates of Gankina were many and that is why they outnumbered the Muuruguru clan (Mugao, O.I, 2024).

In 1974, Hon. Njeru won the elections narrowly because all the most populated clans presented their candidate. The following were candidates and their clans, hon. Njeru (Gankina), hon. Njagi wa Kiondo (Muuruguru), Muthengi Kauna (Kamugao), Joseph Mucee (Kamurige) and Kaburiere Matumo (Kanjogu). During this time, even the associate clans through marriage from big clans had their own candidates that why elections was very competitive and the margin of winning reduced. Hon. Njeru won seconded by Njagi wa Kiondo and Kaburiere Matumo and Joseph Mucee took position three and four respectively (Machira, Mugao, Ndereva O.I., 2024). The above information was corroborated with Mucee who revealed that

“I was a candidate for the seat of Member of Parliament in 1974. I was defeated because I did not include my clan

(Kamurige clan) as hon. Njeru and Njagi wa kiondo did to their clans. Although my clan has population up to date, I felt that they are not united. I went to seek support from the churches. Little did I know that even some of the church members who do not belong to my clan did not elect me. Clans have been the center of tharaka politics for long. Even some women who were married in our family from Gankina and Muuruguru clan did not vote me although I got some votes from my siblings from my immediate family who have been married from other clans (Mucee O.I., 2024)."

Mugambi supported above sentiments by saying that

My mother belong to Muuruguru clan but is married to Kamurige clan. During the voting time you can not tell her anything outside their clan peripheral if one of their clan member is vying for a seat. She will also elect their people. He attest that it hard to elect a person from his wife side when their people are vying (Mugambi O.I., 2024)."

Maingi (O.I., 2024) noted that one can go and seek support from the people where your siblings are married. One is likely to have a smooth landing comparing to a person who has no attachments.

The turning point of Tharaka politics happened in 1979. The famous Hon. Njeru was defeated by Hon. Njagi wa Kiondo. James Njeru was accused of insulting people with their mothers. He used to tell them *"If you do not know me well go and ask your mothers"*. He was intimidating the opponent by telling them, *"if you don't elect me the rough situations that will invade you, you will only tell your mother"*. The in-laws, his clan members and associate clans felt that Njagi was very abusive and he had no respect for in-laws. In the Tharaka community associating a man with their mother in that manner is regarded as an insult. Tharaka men reported their alarming issues to their fathers but not their mothers. People were divided and some of the Gankina clan members supported Njagi wa Kiondo and he won elections (Kilonzo (O.I, 2024).

In the 1988 general elections, hon. Francis Kagwima defeated Njagi wa Kiondo. Kagwima consolidated his clan members (kanjogu) with its associate to defeat Njagi wa kiondo. Francis Kagwima convinced Gankina clan to join him since their kin pin Hon. Njeru was in United States of America doing business. He told them *"Njeru has gone to America and he has told me to take his seat before he comes and take over"*.

Gankina people believed that once Njeru lands in Kenya, he will seek election and defeat every candidate. Gankina clan, Kanjogu and their associate teamed up to elect hon. Francis Kagwima. Njagi wa Kiondo was accused of assisting his clan members only. Other clans led by Gankina which has been enjoying the power and leadership through the hon. Njeru felt neglected (Mitambo, Mwana, Macimo, Kabisani, and Kathenya, O.I., 2024)

The informants like Muchunku Nduru, Mugwika, Gichenga Mugao, Nthaama, Maingi, and Mucee (O.I, 2024) agreed that 1992, 1997 and 2002 politics of clans support was rampant but major politics was much controlled by parties waves and developmental issues. Although clan politics played a parts, it was not pronounced as before. Mugambi (O.I, 2024) confirms that in 1997, Nyaaga clan were enticed to vote for their person of his clan hon. Murango Mwenda. He asserts that his father and extended family who belong to the same clan campaigned with a lot vigor to make sure his clan's man is elected.

In 2007 general elections, politics of clans resurfaced. Kamurige clan which is among the biggest clan in Tharaka felt that they have been supporting other clans to get into leadership and now it is their time to lead. They brought Mburi Muiru (Kamurige) and he defeated by then the current Member of Parliament hon. Francis Kawima (Kanjogu), Francis Kiambi (Kanjogu), and Gataya Mwenda (Muuruguru). Since Gankina had no candidates their votes were scattered to various candidate but Kamurige got the most. Kamurige clan spoke in one voice (Njeru, Mugao Gichenga, O.I, 2024). Kithinji states they were assembled as a clan in order to get a command so that they can elect one of their own. He says,

“all members of Kamurige clan in my village were called for a meeting by our fathers and grandfathers to be commanded to elect Mburi Muiru who is the member of my clan (Kithinji O.I., 2024).”

Macimo (O.I, 2024) argues that in 2007 general elections, Ukuujiu clan the associate of Kamurige clan through marriage got opportunity to elect their leaders. He adds that their mothers who belong to Kamurige clan coaxed them to elect Mburi Muiru. He enriches the above sentiments by saying,

“Kamurige are our mothers. Many of clan are given birth by the

daughters of Kamurige and it was the time to pay back (Macimo, O.I., 2024)."

The clan with majority is likely to have many associate from their people they have married or from (Kathambi O.I., 2024). The person may choose to elect people from where they are married or go back to their mother clan. People may turn the associate clan to be their member (Gichenga, O.I., 2024). Mugambi adds that the clan where a person has married can influence voting. He says

"my mother comes from Muuruguru clan and my father comes from Nyaaga clan. In 2007, my mother was a campaigner for Gataya(Muuruguru) who comes from Tharaka north at the expense of kanjogu candidate (hon.kawima) who comes from my neighboring village (Mugambi O.I., 2024)."

Real clanism in Tharaka is patriarchal. That means from the father to the son or the daughter. People inherit the clans of their fathers, not their mothers. Clans describe the real route and the source of the individual. One can not dump their clan and join the other. Even the other side of the clan cannot allow it. It's like bringing a blemish goat to purely colored goats. It is not acceptable since you cannot change the birth place (Maingi O.I, 2024). Members of the clan discuss their family issues together and political issues are not excluded. During the political period, members of the clan will convince their people to elect a leader whose leadership can be owned by the family members. They say that *"biri uru bitiri ukabi"*. Meaning when property is with bandits/enemies they are not in our houses". It is from this point Tharaka people work hard to make sure the political seat is within their clan. It is also a source of pride to have a leader who originates from your ancestors. Politicians take this advantage to convince their people. Tharaka people say *"wega gumaga na mucii"* that means that good things start from home. In that regard, visionary politicians must seek blessings from their families before joining politics (Mugao O.I, 2024).

5.6.2 Political Mobilization through Clan by Adoption

People in Tharaka used to adopt a child in different methods. Firstly when they found a thrown-out child they used to collect. The people who collected the child counted the number of the clans and the majority won the ownership of the child. If the person who collected the child was a lone, the child becomes a member of his clan. In a scenario where a woman collects a child, the husband clan takes the position (Kagendo O.I.,

2024). The child is connected with that clan and he/she becomes a member of that clan. The father who will adopt the child produces a goat to slaughter for clan members and the child will be fully accommodated in the clan. Secondly, when a lady gets a child while at home, the child is given the clan of their mother. They are called “*Ana ba ari*”. Meaning the children of the daughter. This child was taken very important especially when that family had issues that required taking oath. They refer to them “*karinga muuma*”. This means that spoiler of the harmful oath. This person will be the one to take an oath if taking it will affect the family. The family will not be affected by the oath since this child does not genetically belong to that family (Kilonzo, O.I 2024).

In addition, when a woman is married with a child, the child takes the clan of the new husband. When there is a talk in the family about politics they are included since they are a member of the family. In addition to that, children were gotten out of wed lock and it is known, that the child was given the clan name of their father. The child may grow in the home where he/she was born or go home to their father's place through consensus. When the child grows, he/she may support the candidate from either side if any member joins politics. The attitude of the child depends on how he/she received treatment when he/she was young. During political periods, these adopted family members can be easily convinced when required for political support (Muthike O.I, 2024).

5.6.3 Political Mobilizations by Use of Sub-clans

In the Tharaka community, the most populated clans have sub-clans that are attached to one major ancestor. For instance, the Kamurige clan has three sub-clans, Ndathe, Mwirijia and Nthimbu who they believe were three brothers born from the same father known as Kamurige. They count themselves as one family (Mucee O.I., 2024). In many cases, these clans tend to be loyal to the mother clan if the political candidate comes from the same main clan. These sub-clans are regarded as the members of the same family. Although many people argue that it has a small impact, the impact is recognized. For instance, in 2007 all Kamurige sub-clans gathered together to rally for the political support of their member by the name Mburi Muiru and he won the elections. During the election period, they may end up combining efforts to elect one of their own (Mitambo, O.I., 2024).

5.6.4 Political Mobilizations by use of Clans that do not Intermarry

In Tharaka community, every clan has a clan that do not intermarry. These clans treat each other like a family. These clans build bonds that are unlikely to break (Mwana O.I, 2024). According to Munene (O.I, 2024) he argues that their clan Kanthakame can not have a gut to stand and go against the wish of Muuruguru clan when they are facing each other. In this case, people from Kanthakame clan are likely to support any candidate from Muuruguru clan. Although this issue of clan cannot be easily noticed, people hide on it.

Kamunyu (O.I, 2024) supported this argument by saying that Utonga clan can't face the Nyaaga clan in a negative way. He says that in 1997, he was forced by clan issues to support former Member of Parliament hon. Murango Mwenda. Mitambo (O.I., 2024) states that Kamurige clan does not intermarry with Gankuyu, Kamugemia, Kanjiru, and Kamugwe. These clans may not support each other politically but an individual cannot walk in a broad daylight and start to castigate each other thus offering a simple landing for the conviction from any member during political periods. If a politician goes to seek votes from either members of the clan will tend to have a soft landing due to the fear of the ancestral spirit that may harm them. There is no warrant that it is a must for each of the clans to elect the other because politics in many cases are guided by the interest. All said and done, some people respect this situation and elect the candidate on the basis of fear of unknown evil spirits.

5.6.5 Tharaka Clan Land Issues in Political Mobilizations

Smucker (2002) noted that before the land tenure in Tharaka, the settlement was under the custody of patrilineal descent groups Miiriga (singular; mwiriga) usually translated as the clan. Clans had the authority to grant and also restricts land use and government has never contested this idea from the colonial periods. Elders had a lot of power when dividing land

Every clan in Tharaka have its original place where they had occupied. For instance, Kamurige clan their ancestral land is Kamanyaki at banks of river Tana, Gankuyu clan homeland is at Chiakariga (surrounding Kijege hill), Kithuri clan is at Kaguma near Chiakariga, Kanjogu clan occupies places at Matiri, Muuruguru is mostly in Nkondi

and Mukothima, Kitherini clan at Kanyuru, Kamugao Ntugi, and Kanyaki clan are mostly concentrated at Kanyuru (Kagumo O.I., 2024). These clans influence their neighbor perception.. If the clans had been betrayed by each other during the time of land division, their candidate might not get support. Although the character of an individual is looked at, the actions of forefathers are sieved because they believe that person has the same blood as that of their father. If their fathers were ruthless, the same family is even to date perceived as the same and if their fathers were good to people, the electorate would welcome them and they may vote them in (Mitambo O.I., 2024).

Land issues among the clans have brought friction among the clan members. Some clans tend to occupy the arable land and leave unfertile land to the neighbors. The clan that will be discriminated against in terms of land will tend to hate the other. During political periods, these clans may fail to walk together or support each other. The group of clans may gather to dismantle each other politically (Kilonzo O.I., 2024). Mbugi njeru (O.I, 2024) says that land issues had made some clans to stay in bad blood for long time. He adds that these cold blood have been minimized since clan member can buy a land and live at any place of their wish. Land issues have minimal impact on political mobilization although few cases are happening in Tharaka community up to date.

5.6.6 Political Mobilization Bases on Boundary Issues with Neighboring Communities

Tharaka has been experiencing boundary issues with neighboring communities like Imenti, Tigania and Igembe (Kibaara, 2010). As noticed earlier, Tharaka people lived together on the basis of clans. Although there is no specific clan that lives in this area, those who live there always anticipate a leader who will facilitate their security. People feel safe when leadership is at home (in their clans). During voting people may vote their clan member in anticipation that they will protect them from the attack of other communities (Muthike, O.I, 2024). In 1979, Muuruguru clan members voted for their own hon. Njagi wa Kiondo whom they believed that he will solve boundary conflicts between people from Tharaka north and Tigania. Some clan voted expecting their land issues will be solved by their members (Kiruchu O.I., 2024).

5.6.7 Political Mobilizations through Clans Competition for Resources

Competition for resources carried the day during colonial and post-colonial periods. When land tenure in Tharaka commenced every clan wanted to be represented to make sure their people had a lion's share. These competitions turned to be political and they created enmity that was pronounced during political periods (Gaati O.I., 2024). People from clans that were given responsibility to divide the land and they used that opportunity to amass wealth get criticism by others up to date. Some were corrupts to extent of commanding to be given goats to eat and on top of that some asked for money. Small clans got small lands compared to the populated clans. These actions did not auger well with clan members that got small lands. The other source of conflict that was outwardly seen was the control of the water bodies that happened to be someone's land. The owners of these resources could choose whom to use them or not. Those who were not allowed to use the property ended up harboring hatred for the owner of the property. During the political times, these clans antagonize each other. They ravage each other in a political setup where they mobilize their members to vote in certain directions (Kilonzo, O.I, 2024).

5.6.8 Conclusions

The source of clanism in the Tharaka community is the family level. These are people who believe they have come from one person. When a clan member seeks a political seat, many clan members perceive it as a family affairs. They firstly mobilize other family members to support one of their own because they value each other as a family. From the analyzes of the study, although people supported their clan members, it was not automatic for the candidates to be supported by all clan members and their associates. People also looked at the charismatic characteristics of the individuals before electing them in political post.

CHAPTER SIX

THE ROLE OF AGE SET IN POLITICAL MOBILIZATION DURING THE GENERAL ELECTIONS IN THE THARAKA CONSTITUENCY FROM 1961 TO 2007

6.1 Pre-initiation Age-set

Lowthwel (1973) states that there was pre-initiation age-set in Tharaka. The oldest pre-initiation set was known as *Nkinyanthi*. The second pre-initiation set is *Mbuinjeru*, the third *Gikurukiumo* and the youngest age-set is *Mwenji*. *Nkinyanthi* were old boys who were ready for initiations and their leader was elected among the young boys. It was difficult to differentiate them with the newly circumcised boys since they were big enough to be circumcised. *Nkinyanthi* was the leader of *Rugu*. *Rugu* are big boys who had gone pre-initiation known as *Kumerua* (to be swallowed). Moywaywa & Akaranga (2017) state that *kumerua* is a teenage rite of passage among Tharaka boys and is never practiced by other Meru sub-tribes. Icheria (2015) argues that the mythical creature said to swallow boys is known as *Kirimo*. When they got swallowed they were secluded for four days in the forest. During this time, young boys are taught some disciplines and the ways of the society. After here, these boys are no longer supposed to enter into their mother's houses since they have stopped being children. The above information was corroborated by Mwiti, Kilonzo, Mitambo, (O.I, 2024) by saying that *Nkinyanthi* was elected or chosen by other members of that group. During political periods, politicians tend to mobilize the members who belonged to the same pre-initiation group.

During the circumcision period all the members of *Nkinyanthi* would be initiated although in some circumstances the first two sets would be circumcised according to the demand of warriors. The period of circumcision was determined by invasion of enemies, drought, famine and migrations. The elders had tactical method to communicate to the boys about the reasons of postponing the circumcision celebrations. They used to tell them that *the devil had spoken ill things about this activity (nkoma iciraririe)*. This meant that there was a danger ahead after doing the act of circumcising boys. These boys were not supposed to stay in their mother's houses because they were big enough to stay in an excluded place known as *Kibuuru Kia Aiji* (the house of boys). These boys could interact with each other during functions that enabled them to know each other for a while. During political periods, people who are

seeking election post had soft landing because they were going to seek for political supports from people they are aware of by even their names (Mwana, O.I., 2024)

6.2 The Initiated Age-sets

When Atharaka man got circumcised he became *Nthaka* (circumcised young man) meaning that they are ready to marry and also protect the community (Icheria, 2015). Circumcision of boys and girls in pre-colonial and colonial Kenya took place in the months of August. This time was chosen because people were not engaging much in economic activities like farming since it is counted as dry period. Even to date, this period of time Tharaka area receive no rain. Secondly, they chose August because people had a lot of food that would be used to feed people during the time of ceremonies. People were fed freely regardless of where they come from during this time of cerebrations (Kabisani O.I., 2024). It was also source of interaction for both people who were attending the cerebration ceremonies and those who were circumcised together. Those who were attending were likely to develop friendship that bided them for a long time. Atharaka had hierarchy of interactions. The age-set were regrouping according to their ages. There were no haphazard interactions because it was regarded as crime for young men to stay together with the aged unless while needed by the elders (Kilonzo O.I., 2024). In case of emergency, the council of elders sat together to streamline the issues of the society this time of cerebrations because they were able to meet in large numbers the same time. In addition, during this time, young men and wome who were not married had chance to identify each other for courtship either that time or later. When boys were circumcised they joined the group of young warriors who protected the community from all the attacks (Mugao O.I, 2024).



Figure 3: Tharaka warrior.

Source: Atlas of Humanity

According to Mitambo (2024), people who got circumcised the same time call each other '*muntu wa nthuke yeetu*' meaning a fellow initiate of a same season. In Tharaka, every circumcised man has a god-father known as *Bamo*. Icheria (2015) supports the same arguments by stating that the god-fathers (Bamo) were and still remain the sponsors of the initiates. Mwana (O.I, 2024) supplements the arguments by stating that Bamo was responsible for the taking care of the initiate (son) during this period of time. Icheria (2015) argues that before the son get out of the secluded house to join the others, his god-father is supposed to give him name "*Riitwa ria uthaka*" meaning a name of the circumcised. Such names are denoted by *M'* which is pronounced '*nta*'. For instance, M'chabari, M'mwangangi and many others. In many occasions, these people joined together during the time of politics hence creating a voting block to certain candidate.

The age-set period name was given according to the nature of events that happened that time. For instance, *Kiambia* of 1917 (the coming of money) was named after the arrival of first money in Tharaka, *Kiandeke* of 1935 (the aeroplane) was the time aeroplane to passed through Tharaka land. The initiates had to wait for more days because people were frightened to extent that goats were not taken to the grazing fields. People were worried because they had never seen aeroplane before. *Kiarutha* of 1953 (to borrow

permission) was the time when Tharaka used to get permission from the colonial chief N'tamburugu and white man by the name 'akiamungu' before circumcising the children. Every age-set name had a meaning (Mitambo, Rukungi, Kilonzo, O.I, 2024)

Both new and old initiates shouldered the responsibility of the society. The new initiates were recruited to become warriors who defended the community from the external aggression and also took certain roles in the community. They were regarded as semi-complete people since they were not fully equipped with the full ways and traditions of the Tharaka community. This is the group that required a lot of guidance from the elders before they married. This was the group that was supposed to marry before the onset of other initiates. It was regarded as abnormal when one married without being circumcised. The newly married men here were given four days to visit their wives at home and come back to warrior barracks known as Gaaru. People who were initiated the same time tend to form a political block during electioneering periods (Chabari O.I, 2024).

6.3 Gaaru/Atharaka Warrior Barracks

Gaaru was the barracks for the different age sets. Circumcised men in the Tharaka community never used to stay at home and those who visited homes were given permission. People who were circumcised together formed a group known as *nthuke*. Within *Gaaru*, relationships among different ages were well structured and strict observation of seniority was adhered to (Lowenthal, 1973). The senior age set was described as elders by juniors and they could receive any command without hesitation including that of launching an attack although the serious attack was reserved for the council of elders. The senior warriors were known as *Nthaka cia mwanka* (the warriors of fire). These were the people who were given the mantle to maintain the fire in the barracks. They were also responsible to put it off in case of the attack to enable them prepare in order to respond to their enemies while hiding (Machiira, Mitambo, Kilonzo, O.I., 2024).

Nthuke was considered to be an elder in the barracks (Gaaru) when the first daughter got circumcised and was able to join the warriors in singing and dances. Songs and dances were the part of courtship. During this time, men and women used to seduce their

partners because marriage was necessary immediately after circumcision. When the daughter of any person from this *nthuke* start singing with the warriors, the whole *nthuke* leaves Gaaru and they immediately becomes the elders. It was considered inappropriate for the father to sing in the same place with his daughters; be it his own daughter or the daughter of his *nthuke* (*mwana wa nthuke*). No way could a man marry a daughter from his *nthuke*. It was like marrying your own daughter (Kabisani, Mugao, Augustine mwana, O.I., 2024).

Before the newly elders were released from Gaaru a ceremony known as *Ntako* was done in order to hand over fire to the next senior elders in Gaaru. Before they go they used to provide and slaughter a bull for the warriors to feast. To get a bull, they used to cultivate in elders farms where they were given a bull and grains. After the release, these elders took permanent residence at their homes (Lowenthal, 1973). These people knew their fellows in almost every parts of *tharaka* because Gaaru used to meet each other. When the politics came newly manufactured politicians could identify people of their age and use them in a campaign team especially in 1961 and 1963 elections. The age set from Gaaru was turned to be a political tool in the early politics of *Atharaka* (Mitambo, O.I., 2024)

6.4 Tharaka Age-Sets

Atharaka value age-set (*muntu wa nthuke*) and they use age-set in all aspects of life especially on cultural ceremonies. The highly valued age set is the people who were circumcised at the same time. These people are unified by that act and they respect each other. In the *Tharaka* community, the age set is counted for both men and women. People of the same age-set interact freely and through these interactions they support each other and politics are not excluded (Mitambo, Nduru, Kilonzo O.I., 2024).

Mitambo (2024) listed the following age sets in the Tharaka community

Age-set	Period of age-set
Guantai	1865
Ntagi	1867
Rima	1869
Ngucuma	1872
Mbaringi	1875
Ntaitumu	1878
Mungatia	1881
Gichuru	1884
Guntai	1887
Miteu	1890
Munge	1893
Miriti	1896
Kobia	1899
Kaburia (the first)	1902
Kinyua mbithi	1905
Kiraithe	1908
Kang'ori	1911
Murango	1914
Kiambia	1917
Marangu	1920
Nkongge	1923
Kiruuja	1926
Kiangajo/kianthama	1929/30
Kiandere	1932
Kiandeke	1935
Kiambamba	1939
Kianjuri	1941
Kiangige	1945
Kaburia (second)	1948
Kiarutha/kiandindi	1952
Kiavita	1953-55
Kiandwano /ciarwembe	1958
Kiarwagi	1961
Kiahuru/ muuka na nyaki	1963
Kiamaguna	1968
Kibabu na gichunge	1972

Ntamucege (O.I, 2024) in his narration about nthuke, confirms that 90% of the named age set. He adds that the age-set is a source of unity and the age-set that came during the middle of colonial periods contributed much on political mobilizations in early 1960s politics. He also noted that hierarchy of command among the age-set was trickle

down that is from the aged to the young one. Young age-set used to receive commands from the senior elders and they responded uniformly.

6.5 Age-set Based on Circumcision and its Influence on Political Mobilizations

The epitome of age set in the Tharaka community are the people who were circumcised at the same time because they endured the challenges of pain together. Age set was the key source of relationships and leadership. Relationships among the Atharaka were structured but they had no structured leadership before the colonial period. Leadership was controlled by the head of the clans and the council of elders. The change in Tharaka's leadership style was brought about by the white man in 1908 when he appointed Africans as colonial chiefs, head men, and home guards (Champion, 1912; Lambert 1947).

Elections in pre-colonial and colonial Tharaka was through acclamations. Leadership in various groups started from the young children. People were chosen to lead others all the way from pre-initiation age-sets. The uncircumcised big boys used to elect their leader by the name *Nkinyanthi*. He was the in charge of discipline and bridge for communications from the seniors (Mwiti O.I., 2024). The person with the majority votes won and he was give the mantle to lead others. This means that elections were done silently in Tharaka community although it was not pronounced as it is today (Mitambo O.I, 2024).

When boys were circumcised, they used to go barrack known as *Gaar*. This was a place chosen to keep the strong men who were perceived as warriors of the community. They used to stay together for easy access and equal administration of the discipline. Every gaaru had a leader and he was chosen among the men (Mugwika O.I, 2024).

When men got out of Gaaru they used to join other elders in the community. Not all the elders had the power to lead. Every clan used to select their leader who would represent them on the council of elders meeting (Kagumo O.I., 2024). The senior elder was chosen by people through acclamations (Machiira O.I., 2024). That means the Atharaka have been involved in selecting their leaders. During the colonial period, the white man chose a leader who was proposed by the local community guided by the elders. It was the local people who were choosing the colonial chiefs. This humble

activity of doing elections was pronounced during the edge of the colonial period and post-colonial period (M'mucege, Mitambo, Kabisani O.I., 2024).

Machira (O.I., 2024) argues that the politics of age-set in Tharaka started when they were electing the regional representative to the legislative council in Embu 1961. Chabari wa Ciangundu was the first to be elected in 1961 and he belonged to the age-set of Kiambamba of 1939. Mutiria (O.I, 2024) the grandson of Chabari wa Ciangundu echoed the above sentiments by stating that, it was the age set of Chabari wa Ciangundu that proposed him to be elected in 1961 as regional representative. After he was elected he took that opportunity to convince other age-sets that were junior to him to allow him to bring his sister's son Njeru Gituriandu to vie for the Member of Parliament seat in Tharaka in 1963.

Mugao (O.I, 2024), agrees with the above sentiments by stating that Chabari wa Ciangundu belonged to age-set of Kiambamba and they are the one who presented him to the people in order to be elected. He also added that hon.Njeru belonged to age-set of Kaburia of 1948. Machira (O.I, 2024) argues that although Njeru was brought by his uncle Chabari wa Ciangundu in Tharaka south, the people of age set (Kaburia) played much in his campaign in order to be elected as the first Tharaka Member Parliament in 1963.

In the 1969 elections, Tharaka politics was characterized by politics of age sets. The competition was between Hon. Njeru and Njagi wa Kiondo. The latter was young he belonged to the age set of Kiarutha 1952 (Mugao O.I., 2024). Machiira (O.I., 2024) noted that *Kiarutha* age-set was not many compared to the age-set of Kaburia. Kiarutha were few because people were not circumcised in Tharaka. New rules were introduced by colonial masters where people had to borrow permission from the colonial chiefs and the white man before they circumcised their children. Mass circumcision was not done during this period which may have affected mass support for Njagi wa Kiondo although he pressed on 1979 and he won the seat (Kagumo O.I., 2024).

Mucee (O.I., 2024) states that in 1974, people who belonged to the age set of Kiarwagi 1961 and Kiahuru 1963 respectively came in and sought to be elected. This team was led by Kaburiere Matumo from Igambang'ombe and Joseph Mucee who was a teacher

and neighbor to Hon. Njeru. The two candidates wanted to bring generational change because they felt that Hon. Njeru was not representing them well. Although they tried to campaign vigorously, they did not achieve because Hon. Njeru was re-elected. Hon. Njeru was able to bring together a bunch of age-sets together and they voted for him. Secondly, he was re-elected because he was very powerful in Kenyatta's government. Maingi (O.I., 2024) confirmed that the politics of age-sets works among the Atharaka. He asserts that in the early 1960s, 1970s and 1980s one could hardly do politics without involving the supports of his age-set.

According to Kabisani (O.I, 2024), politics of age-sets counted in tharaka politics of 2007. He affirms that they were fed up by then current Member of Parliament (Francis Kagwima) and they planned as a young generation on how to remove him from the seat. Voting block of hon. Francis Kawima was disrupted when people of the same age set led by Mburi Muiru sought to be elected as the Member of Parliament seat in Tharaka constituency. Other people who joined Muiru were, Kabisani, Francis Kiambi (Matanka), and Gataya Mwenda. These aspirants were former staunch campaigners of hon. Francis Kagwima. After elections, Mburi Muiru won the elections and he became the fifth Tharaka Member of Parliament. He says

“our age-set led by Francis Kiambi (Matanka), Gaicura, Gataya Mwenda, Mburi Muiru and I sought to be elected strategically aiming at removing by then mp Francis Kawima so that the person of our age-set could rule. We campaigned to make sure one of us has become a leader. Hon. Mburi muiru won. We were happy to see one of our own in leadership (Kabisani, O.I., 2024).”

6.5.1 Age-sets based on Education and its influence in Political Mobilizations.

People who went to schools the same time formed a group that was perceived as or converted an age-set. During early colonial period education was not appreciated since there were no schools in Tharaka. The first primary school in Tharaka was Chiakariga primary that was built in 1941 (Machira O.I, 2024). Mitambo (2024) agrees with that information by stating that the first primary school was built at Chiakariga and the others followed. Tharaka politics of 1963 and 1969 had no much consideration of levels of education since very few people had gone through a system of education. In 1974, Tharaka politics was characterized by education due to the introduction of a degree holder in Tharaka politics by the name Kaburiere Matumo. Few people who were

schooling with him and they had known the importance of education contributed much on electing Kaburire Matumo (Kabisani O.I, 2024).

Another election that was characterized by age sets based on schooling time was the 1988 elections. People who were studying together with former Member of Parliament Francis Kagwima decided to elect one of their age set. Kabisani says that

“Although Kawima was older than us, those who were in universities and colleges we gathered together in order to elect Kagwima. We were led by graduates who were studying together with him. They made us to trust hon. Kagwima because they had a lot of confidence in him. Our age-set supported his ideas. We wanted degree to be respected. The earlier leaders had just basic education (Kabisani, O.I., 2024).”

Kilonzo approves of the above information by saying

“I was a KANU chairman in 1988 representing Tharaka South. We wanted to elect Njagi wa Kiondo back but young boys who had gone to school teamed up and they elected their person against our wish (Kilonzo, O.I., 2024).”

Mwiti (O.I, 2024) also confirmed the above sentiments by saying that it is hard to go against your classmates even the time of politics. He adds that Tharaka elites who happened to go to Tharaka boys’ high school have a high scope of supporters because many Atharaka people have passed through that school. Hon. Francis Kawima was helped by his class mates and school mate from Tharaka boys to clinch the seat in 1988.

6.5.2 The Child of a Person of my Age-set (Mwana wa muntu wa nthuke) in Political Mobilization

The dynamics of Tharaka politics also count when considering the son or daughter of person who is born by the person of “my” age-set (mwana wa muntu wa nthuke). People supports these “children” counting them as their children. They pay back the respects they had with their fathers when they were growing especially the people of the same age-set who were staying in the same Gaaru. People created a social link that was not broken easily and this link was also transferred even during the time of politics. People ends up supporting the children of a friend of the same age-set politicaly (Kabisani, O.I., 2024).

6.5.3 Conclusion

The real age-set in Tharaka community during pre-colonial, colonial and post-colonial periods contributed much on political mobilizations during general elections. The age-set was the source of boldness between people. When politics that required general elections were introduced in Tharaka society, politicians used the founded age-set to be a tool for political mobilization during general elections. Mobilizations of age-sets was used as tactic to lure people for the supports. During political periods, people were skewed to support their age-sets in Tharaka community. On contrary, the use of age-set was a contribution of the failure to some political candidates because not all the people described to this idea. People of the bad characters were known by their peers that making them to sell their political ideas with them difficult and they ended up not to be elected.

CHAPTER SEVEN

SUMMARY, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE STUDY

7.1 Summary

This study sought to analyze the use of cultural ties majoring on music, clanism and age sets in political mobilization in the Tharaka constituency Kenya from 1961 to 2007. Tharaka community was chosen in this study because of its eminent use of the variety of cultures in different functions. The objectives of the study were well met in this region since music, clanism, and age-sets systems have big roots in Tharaka culture to the extent that politicians have to incorporate them into their campaigns. The idea of the study was given birth due to the researcher's observations on contemporary politics in Kenya where politicians are using all available avenues in the society to convince people while seeking votes. The researcher identified the trends of political activities in the Tharaka constituency since 1961 have been characterized by the use of cultural ties.

Chapter One showed the background where the research was anchored. Various studies have showed that music, clanism and age-sets system have been used in various countries in the world to enhance politics. Studies showed that these cultural ties are ladders to make leaders. The clarity of and the purpose of the objectives were well outlined in this chapter. The study also discussed the significance of the study both to the Tharaka society, Kenyan government and the whole world.

Chapter two and three anchored the literature review and the research design respectively. Through the literature the study identified the gap after analyzing what has been done by other scholars in other communities. The review identified that Tharaka cultural ties have been identified but their use in political mobilizations during electioneering periods have not been researched. In addition, the theory that anchor the study was also discussed here. The theory showed how the segment of the cultures are pinpointed and are used to meet political goals of the people. The methodology for the study captured the procedures on how to get the data and analyze them.

Chapter four the study narrowed down to the demographic data of the respondent. The sample size was 40 respondents. The respondents gave a variety of information based

on how Tharaka politicians have been exploring cultures that are mainly used in the Tharaka community as a political tools. Secondly the chapter examined social, economic and political organizations of Atharaka during pre-colonial period. From this chapter, the findings explained that before the coming of colonialists, Atharaka social, economic and political organizations were intact and profound. The social life of the Atharaka was well structured and people used to live in harmony guided by rules and regulations. The study found that Tharaka culture had pillars that made it stay intact. The study found that songs and dances accompanied most of the activities during this time. The study identified the common songs and dances that were practiced in the Tharaka community. These songs include Authi, Njai, Kirarire, Mbobo and Ncungo. These were the major songs that were sung during the circumcision period and they are sung up to date but Authi leads. The songs were sung by both men and women during the eve and the exact period of circumcision. The study found the depth of these songs was so high to the extent that most of these songs are known by the majority of the Atharaka people.

The second type of song that was commonly used was Njai. This is kind of the song that its main participants were women although men accompanied them. They sang them during female circumcision periods. These were also used to communicate to men through sarcasm in them although they carried different themes. The other types of songs that were commonly used to communicate a variety of information were Mbobo and Ncungo. These songs were sung by men accompanied by women. Drums and horn-blowing were the major instruments that accompanied these songs. It was the best song to seduce women. The study found that all ceremonies in the Tharaka community were accompanied by the use the songs.

The homestead of Atharaka was made of several families who belonged to the same clan. If the root is a clan, then these people are believed to have come from the same ancestry. Every home was led by a father. Children in the Tharaka community belonged to the community. It was the responsibility of every individual to protect the children found in their peripherals. Although children were identified by their fathers, the study found that a foreigner could not pinpoint whose child was because children lived together although boys and girls lived separately. Boys lived in a place called *kibuuru*

kia Aiji (the house young men). In most cases girls stayed together with their mothers. Fathers had their own house called *Nyumba mukuru* (the house of the elder) which was somehow distance from the others. During pre-colonial and early colonial periods people in Tharaka were wearing skins in forms of cloths covering only in front and behind. So it was easy to show the nakedness that why old people were distancing themselves from the young children. In addition, when young girls meets with the aged men who were of the same age of their fathers, they used to steer in the other direction as they pass. The same happened to young boys to the women of age of their mothers. It was perceived as indiscipline to meet eyes with the elders.

The study found that marriage in the Tharaka community was a very much respected activity during this period. The Atharaka marriage was exogamous. Nobody was allowed to marry from their own clans whatsoever. The clans that were allowed to intermarry intermarried without problems. The clan that was not supposed to intermarry never tried the activity since it was against the norms of the community. The respondents gave examples of the clans that have not been intermarrying from the time of migration. For instance, the Kamurige clan and Kamugemia don't intermarry under whatever circumstances. The findings concluded that every clan in the Tharaka community has clans that they don't intermarry and marry with. In addition, polygamy was a norm of the day in the Tharaka community. The man with many wives was highly respected. Marrying was a methods of expounding families and relationships. These relationships increases connections between the people.

The economic structure of the Tharaka community was well structured. Atharaka kept livestock and farming. Livestock like cows, goats and sheep's were the main livestock kept by Tharaka people. These animals were the main source of food in terms of meat. The livestock were used in trading activities especially exchange with food crops. Moreover, during marriage, livestock were used to pay dowry. Currently, dowry stands at 48 goats and five cows. Although there are also other accompaniments, livestock was considered as the major pay for married daughters. Livestock were also used to build friendships. One could slaughter any livestock for a friend just to eat and create bold especially the people of the same age-set. Medicine men and rainmakers also use goats to enhance their activities. To increase the source of livelihood, Tharaka people used to hunt and gather in the forests. These resources supplemented food at home.

The political structure of Atharaka was built on the basis of clanism. Each clan was represented by Mugambi who accompanied other Agambi from other clans. These are people who managed the society and made it stable. It was through these Agambi of the kiama that acted as the source of the guidelines for the society. Young boys who were circumcised together formed an age-set that automatically became warriors of the community. These warriors of the community used to go on raids, fight the infiltrating enemies and guard the community. This group of people was not staying at homes; they lived in groups of Gaaru (the house of warriors) for easy accessibility when needed. Gaaru was the central point of the command. They never used to stay here permanently because there was a time they could walk out to go and mingle with other Gaaru. People from Gaaru could move and go to sing in different places (gutuuria rwimbo) where they could stay for even seven days. They were fed by the women and young girls from the places they had gone to sing.

In Gaaru they had no distinguished leaders but Agambi represented and advised them in all activities. Mugwe also accompanied Agambi because he was needed to bless the warriors before they go for dancing, hunting and also to fight. Mugwe advisory was taken with a lot of weight than any other elder. Whatever was cursed by Mugwe was not accepted in the Tharaka community and nobody assumed.

The findings state that the social, economic and political structures of Atharaka people started changing with the infiltration of the white man. The first and second group of white man to cross through Tharaka land was 1889 and 1892 respectively but went to Meru region. The third group came in 1908 when a white man by the name Dr. Horne. The first group was perceived as an enemy who resembled a young child and in the process, one white man was killed. The third bunch of 1908 came and built a camp at Rukenya near Chiakariga and stayed for a few days before going back to Meru. When they came back they identified the richness of the Tharaka community and they had to build camps. They approached the leading Agambi in some clans and made them headmen one of them being Kiare wa Muchunu from Mwerera and Ruito from Chiakariga and the others came in later. This was the first time white men started using local leaders as the administrators in their governments. The structure of the Tharaka administration started changing from this time because Tharaka had no structured

administration because there was no tax collection in Tharaka leadership. The introduction of hut tax was brought by the white in early 19th century to Tharaka people. Leaders who were collecting these taxes were chosen by the white man. These act did not auger well with Tharaka people. These chiefs were resisted by the locals although the punishment was brutal to those who resisted.

The study identified that after the headmen, the white employed chiefs who ruled others among the Atharaka community. Tharaka community had no chiefdom; it was introduced by the white man. Chiefs started being the key leadership in Tharaka society. Chiefs had many defined roles starting with collection of taxes, recruiting young men to labor especially building of the roads especially Meru Tharaka road that started in 1914, building of the camps (at Chiakariga, Tunyai and Marimanti), and building terraces because the white man wanted new methods of farming to be introduced in Tharaka. All these activities disrupted the social-cultural and political structures of the Tharaka community. Songs and dances that were used to embrace Tharaka cultural activities like naming of a child, circumcision of both boys and girls, tilling and harvesting, and source of general entertainment also changed their course to embrace colonial leadership and local chiefs. Initially, Tharaka people never entertained the elders who guided the communities since these elders were also the participants of these songs.

In addition, the study found that the oldest age set was the one that was giving directions in the Tharaka community. The order of the day was changed by the colonial masters in 1910 they used even to appoint the young generations as chiefs, headmen and home guards. The importance and the magnitude of the age sets were watered down by the white man.

Taking people to the camp also destroyed order of the labor to the Tharaka people. Both men and women participated in doing different works but the colonialists made them do the same jobs like planting trees, opening road networks and building the camps. Men were agitated by this approach of making women do hard jobs in front of them. Moreover, the findings found that men felt being done wrong when they were forced to stay in the camps together with women and children. Initially, only the elders stayed at

home with the company of women and children. Energetic men were staying at Gaaru. It was not the order of the men to stay together with their women serving the white man. One of the respondents stated that it was wrong for a man to go to the toilet while seen by the women and children. People used to go to the bushes, and every group of age had their bushes to go. Men had their preserved thick bushes where children could not go. Most of the children believed that their father don't pee it's the children that does the same. This believe was broken and people were not happy about it.

The study found that the sensibility of political building in Tharaka community was started by the bunch of people who went to Second World War and people who had gone to central Kenya to seek for employment in farms. The men from world war had gotten clearly the intentions of the white man to African and they built a clear picture of what Africans can do to set themselves free. Secondly, people who were in the central province interacted with people who were involved in discussions about resisting the whites and the formation of political parties like KAU. The top-notch of them are the bunch of people who were in areas where the Mau Mau movement was being formed.

Another finding is that the death of Dr. Horne in 1947 marked a new dawn for the Tharaka people. They thought that the forced labor through local chief M'runguma was slowly coming to an end but this was not achieved. A new colonial administrator who replaced him by the name Powy came and camped at Marimanti where he built a big camp at a place called Muramba jwa Nkungu. He also expanded camps at Chiakariga and Tunyai. He became more ruthless to the people. He achieved this after appointing a new chief in 1948 by name M'mburugu who was also ruthless. One of the respondent attest that chief Mburugu was a walking devil. He punished people ruthlessly by collecting more taxes and even taking their livestock as way of punishment. Tharaka people nicknamed Mr. Powy 'akiamungu' because of his frequent use of the word when punishing people. People had no choice but to accept and cope with his leadership.

One of the respondents by the name Ndereva (a Mau Mau battalion) says that the 1952 state of emergence was a political turning point for the Tharaka people. People who were in Kikuyu land came home led by a new Mau Mau recruit and warrior by the name of General Munai wa Mukangu from Ntugi Tharaka South. Munai had gone to

Kirinyaga to seek employment as a casual laborer and when the Mau Mau movement found him there he took oath and he was recruited as warrior. After taking the recruitment, he was ordered to come and start mau movement in meru together with other Mau Mau leaders like Mwariama representing Tigania, Baimungi (Imenti), Kibamba (Chuka) and Njagi (Muthambi). General Munai retreated at the middle of the struggle and his seat was occupied Mugiira Charimu (Tharaka). These people were fearless because they confronted the white man by face. They stopped colonial masters from taking of taxes, opened for the people who were in camps and stopped people from attending the colonial jobs. They even recruited more people by force. They were called Biaji wa bushi (the men who stayed in the forest). They were so secretive to extent that only a person who had taken oath could know when these Mau Mau warriors are around because they used to stay in the thick forest. They had their Njuri (informers) who updated them on any intended move by colonial administrations with intentions of maiming them. Revolutionary songs started in Tharaka during this time sensitizing people on the importance of expelling the colonial administrations. One of the famous Tharaka Mau Mau song was “*chakurania muchunku utige mbari nyakairu ni urimo bainagu*”. Meaning that kill the white and leave Africans (black people) what they are doing they don’t know. They are just fools.

The interference on the order of the age-set in 1952 did not auger well with Tharaka people. The colonial masters had put rules that were aiming at stopping the circumcision women. Secondly, people who wanted to circumcise their boys had to go to colonial chiefs to get permission. That why the age-set that was circumcised this time was called Kiarutha (with permission) and very few people were given permission. Those who went against the rule were arrested and put in a colonial camp in Marimanti.

The campaigns of 1957 and 1961 were awakening political instruments for the Tharaka people. Few people led by Mau Mau warriors were well informed on what was happening since they used to get information from Nairobi. Songs were sang to celebrate the first nominated regional councilors especially Chabari wa Ciangundu who was representing Tharaka at Embu assembly. Tharaka songs like Authi, Njai, Kirarire, Mbonoi and Ncungo were coined from initial purpose and they started praising leaders. Elections of Bernard mate in 1957 and 1961 was honored with a lot praises from the

Tharaka people. They praised him with song and dances. When ushering in Bernard Mate in they to sing *“tukire toboa niyukite”* meaning let us keep quiet the person who say it all is coming. Hon. Mate used to address the white man with a lot of courage while castigating him for the wrongs he used to do to Africans. This made Tharaka people very happy. When KANU was formed, Tharaka people composed songs praising Mzee jomo Kenyatta while casting KADU with its members. They used to sing *“nairirwe tigakethie KANU na nkumekethia”* meaning that I was advised not to greet KANU but I have done it.

Another finding is that in 1963, the politics of KANU and KADU were very intense. KANU and KADU were led by Njeru Gituriandu and Mathew Mugiira respectively. Tharaka people felt that supporting KADU is equal to supporting the white man ideas. The common song that mobilized voters was *“gera muti kwa nguku utige njogu ikianganagia na majimbo”* meaning that vote for the hen and you leave elephant way wagging with majimbo. Hen and elephant were the political symbols of KANU and KADU respectively. Literally, people were urged through songs to vote for KANU candidate and leave the other one. People perceived that putting KADU members in leadership is like planting the leadership of colonial masters in their midst since the ideas of KADU resembles that of a white man.

The study identified that the use of songs in campaigns did not stop after these elections. In 1969 general elections, the competition was in between Hon. Njeru and Njagi wa kiondo whose political symbols were airplane and a lamp respectively. Hon. Njeru supporters used to sing Mbobo and say *“ndege ciauka ii ciauka taa cionthe igauka machere”* meaning that when aeroplane take off the lamps will be crushed. This gave Njeru supports morale that they will defeat Wa Kiondo in elections. Wa Kiondos supporters composed a song to respond to Njerus supporters song. They use to sing *“jii gui njeru nakaanue, kuuja na ndeke nthiguru ya kiondo”* meaning that let Njeru be warned to come with the airplane to the land of Wa Kiondo. Njagi wa Kiondo brought analogy of Gatue (northerners) and Igoki/kathundini (southerners). Njagi wa Kiondo was from Tharaka north while Njeru came from Tharaka south. The political competition was between people from Tharaka north and south. These songs and many others mobilized the voters on either side.

The study noted that in 1974 and 1979 politics took the angle of the same analogy that is north and south although there was inclusion of the songs that praised councilors. The election of councilors started in 1974, before that time they were nominated by the political parties. Almost all the songs were based on regionalism issues since the main competition was between the two candidates. People from the north were convinced that Hon. Njeru had left Tharaka North and concentrated on developing Tharaka South. People from the north and a few from the south voted in hon. Njagi wa Kiondo and he became the second MP for Tharaka in 1979. Songs were used to convince people during this time on the basis of the regionalism that is north and south.

The study also found that the 1988 elections were characterized by the use of songs and dances. It was noted that Tharaka boundary issues with Imenti and Tigania took center stage in Tharaka politics. People were killed in 1986 at Muuro jwa muugu and people counted the cause as the negligence and loose talk of Hon. Njagi wa kiondo who had agreed with the Meru DC and Tharaka DO to demarcate the Meru-Tharaka boundary. When the DC came the boundary was extended to Tharaka land up to Muuro jwa Muugu at the current Kibung'a market. The act did not auger well with Tharaka people. People felt that the boundary has been extended and the land of Tharaka had gone under the watch of their Member of Parliament. Tharaka people responded by coming with bows and arrows. They shot at the national administration and Meru delegates who were there. People were killed and others were maimed. Francis Kagwima took this advantage and started seeking for member of parliament seat. People composed songs castigating Njagi wa Kiondo by saying "*kura cionthe icia Kawima njagi nagiire maiti muuro jwa muugu*" all the votes belong to Kawima let njagi go and pick his corpses at Muuro jwa Muugu. Hon. Francis Kagwima defeated Hon. Njagi wa kiondo in 1988. 1992 politics was party-based politics while that 1997 and 2002 was about change. Much of the local mobilization did not work much. Although many people counted songs as the main mobilizer in the Tharaka community, other issues like development were also counted. Songs could not only mobilize. There were other underlying factors that made them vote the way they voted.

Secondly, the study found that the politics of clanism is a deep-rooted activity practiced in the Tharaka community wherever the time of elections arises. Tharaka clans are 32

in number and there are big clans that have bigger populations than the others. The big clans include Gankina, Muuruguru and Kamurige. These three clans have the majority of the Tharaka population. The other clans that follow with population are Kanjogu, and Nyaaga. These big five clans assisted by their associated clans are the ones that have ruled Tharaka politically since independence up to 2017.

The findings analysis shows that in 1963, the competition was between Hon. Njeru from Gankina clan and Mathew Mugiira from Kanjogu clan. Njeru was able to mobilize other clans than Mugiira and he was elected. In 1969, the competition was in between Hon. Njeru (Gankina clan) and Njagi wa Kiondo (Muuruguru clan). The election was intense but Hon. Njeru won. In 1974, the people who sought to be elected were Hon. Njeru (Gankina clan), Njagi wa Kiondo (Muuruguru clan), Kaburuire Matumo (Kanjogu clan) and Joseph Mucee (Kamurige clan). The competition was very intense because the big clans participated in elections and hon. Njeru won narrowly although he was accused of malpractice. In 1979, many clans surrendered and they were left Muuruguru led by Njagi wa Kiondo and Gankina led by Hon. Njeru. Other clans assembled and elected Njagi wa Kiondo because they thought that Njeru had become very powerful and he had overstayed. In this election hon. Njagi wa Kiondo leading Muuruguru clan won the elections.

In 1988, Gankina clan had no candidate. The candidate were hon. Njagi wa kiondo (Muuruguru clan) and Francis Kagwima (Kanjogu clan). Francis Kagwima associated himself with Gankina clan by telling them that their leader hon. Njeru has left for him a seat and once he comes from America he will take over. Gankina clan joined Kanjogu and Francis Kagwima was elected up to 1997. From 1997, Murango Mwenda from Nyaaga clan took the mantle up to 2002. Hon. Francis Kagwima came back up to 2007. From 2007 up to 2017, Mburi Muiru from Kamurige clan was elected. The study showed that it the big clans that have been ruling Tharaka politically in Member of Parliament seats. Although main clans took powers, they never did it alone. The associate clans either by adoption, and marriage associations also counted in these elections.

Not all the respondents that found that the politics of clanism valid from time to time. Some argued regionalism, and soberness of the candidates while addressing people

counted much. For instance, Francis Kagwima was firstly elected because he seemed to understand Tharaka issues more than any other candidate by that time. He was the first graduate to be elected as Tharaka Member of Parliament. People thought that being a degree holder he understand issues affecting Tharaka community than his predecessors who were class seven graduates.

Out of three cultural ties, the age set (Nthuke) was more sensitive. Electing a person by age set and the son of the person's age (mwana wa muntu wa nthuke) was more common in early 1960s and 70s. The study found that age-set of Kaburia (1948) stood with Hon. Njeru while that of Kiarutha (1952) supported Njagi wa Kiondo. The outward support of age-set was seen 1988 where people who had gone university and colleges by this time supported Francis Kagwima. The others elections that portrayed use of age-set was 2007 elections. New working class of Tharaka elites joined hands to elect out hon. Mhuri Muiru. One the respondent from this group said that they planted a candidates to seek election from all the corners where Kagwima had majority votes in order to split them. That how they succeeded to elect Hon. Francis Kagwima out in 2007 general elections.

7.2 Conclusion

The study has concluded that music, clanism and age-set systems are frequently used by Atharaka in political mobilizations during the general elections. Political mobilizations in Tharaka are enriched by these cultural ties. On the other hand, the research has found there some times when these cultural ties are used to demobilize the voters hence candidates getting fewer votes than the others.

7.3 Recommendations of the Study

- i. It is important to notice parts cultures that are used in all the affairs of the society
- ii. During political periods, parts of culture that may cause mayhem in the community should be noticed earlier
- iii. Although culture should be enriched, it should have limitations meaning that is should not be used as a political tool
- iv. Attachment to the culture should not be used as measure of good governance.

7.4 Suggestions for Further Research

- i. Atharaka used a lot of time in entertainments especially on use of music. People used to camp for days in a foreign land while doing music. It is important to investigate how music contributed to economic under development Atharaka
- ii. In Tharaka community, people attach themselves on the clans they belong too much. It is prudent to investigate how clans brings social stability among the Atharaka
- iii. During colonial periods, colonial government affected continuations of formation of age-set systems. It is essential to investigate how colonial policies affected age-set systems in Tharaka.

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APPENDICES

Appendix I. Archival Sources

Archival sources of information

KNA/DC/KTI/3/27/1923-name and particulars of people in Tharaka location

KNA/DC/KTU/2/7/1923- emigration and migration of Tharaka people

KNA/PC/KT/1/2/1/1927-Kitui Districts record book part 1

KNA/PC/CP/6/4/5/1925- native affairs. General policy. Tharaka administration

KNA/DC/MRU/1/2/3/1948- Tharaka safaris

KNA/DC/MERU/2/16/4/1930-1963- Tharaka epidemics

KNA/DC/MERU/2/4/6/1954-boundary dispute; Abothuguchi, Tharaka, Tigania

KNA/PC/CP/1/9/1/1908-political records-Meru districts

KNA/DC/LMU/2/1/1961-publicity African Elections

KNA/DC/MRU/3/11/1953-handing over reports

KNA/PC/CP/6/4/7/1925-Tharaka in Embu districts

KNA/DC/MRU/2/3/1948-1953- real issues in Tharaka

KNA/DC/KT1/3/14/6/1962-Tharaka location council

Appendix II: Oral Sources

List of Informants

Name	Sub-county	Date	Age	Gender
Augustine Mwana	T/S	17 th July 2024	40	M
Benjamin Muthike	T/N	19 th July 2024	80	M
Charles Kathenya	T/S	22 nd July 2024	57	M
Chery Ngugi Mugao	T/S	27 th July 2024	31	F
Dr. francis Kijogi Kabisani	T/S	23 nd July 2024	56	M
Elijah Ndereva Rungika	T/S	26 th July 2024	86	M
Erick Kithinji	T/S	25 th July 2024	38	M
Gerand Murithi Maingi	T/S	24 th July 2024	82	M
Gichenga Mugao	T/N	25 th July 2024	50	M
Gitonga Muthike	T/N	44 th July 2024	41	M
James Njeru	T/N	28 th July 2024	42	M
Jeremiah Mugao Kamwangi	T/S	23 th July 2024	79	M
Joseph Mucee	T/S	28 th July 2024	80	M
Josphine Gakii Kabira	T/N	22 nd July 2024	52	F
Josphine Kathambi	T/N	22 th July 2024	51	F
Kagumo M'cheria	T/N	29 th July 2024	90	F
Kanampiu Mugwika	T/S	27 th July 2024	85	M
Kennedy Munene	T/N	26 th July 2024	33	M
Kilonzo Nabea	T/S	26 th July 2024	75	M
Kiriri Fred Kitundu	T/S	29 th July 2024	35	M
Kiruchu	T/N	28 th July 2024	63	M
Leonard Kamundi	T/N	30 th July 2024	57	M
Lydia Mukami	T/N	29 th July 2024	35	F
Machiira	T/S	25 th July 2024	83	M

Magrate Rukungi	T/N	19 th July 2024	75	F
Moses Muchiiri	T/S	20 th July 2024	60	M
Mucunku wa Nduru	T/N	20 th July 2024	76	M
Mugambi Karea	T/S	19 th July 2024	60	M
Nancy Gachiura	T/S	18 th July 2024	40	F
Nelly Kathambi	T/S	21 st July 2024	32	F
Newton Mwiti	T/N	28 th July 2024	50	M
Ntamucege M'mooga	T/S	24 th July 2024	95	M
Peninah Kajiita	T/N	27 th July 2024	61	F
Peter Muchungu	T/N	23 nd July 2024	38	M
Iraria Gaati	T/N	25 th July 2024	82	F
Robert Mutiria	T/S	18 th July 2024	37	M
Rukungi Maingi	T/N	28 th July 2024	86	M
Simon Ndonco	T/S	30 th July 2024	58	M
Stephen Mugambi	T/S	28 th July 2024	43	M
Winfred Mugwika mwoga	T/S	30 th July 2024	72	M

Appendix III: Interview Guide

The interview guide questionnaire will intend to collect data on music, clanism and age-set system as a political mobilizer in Tharaka constituency from 1961 to 2013. It has three parts. The respondent will be requested to give honest information on each question.

SECTION A

Demographic Data

1. Name of respondent
2. Age

65-above	
51-64yrs	
35-50yrs	
21-34yrs	

3. Location

Tharaka south	
Tharaka north	

4. Occupation
5. Gender
6. Leadership positions where applicable

Religious leaders	
Political leaders	
School administrators	
Others/specify	

7. Education

University	
college	
Form four	
Class eight	
Lower primary	
None	

SECTION B

1. Which songs and dances were sang when ushering in and out leaders?.....
2. Did the songs and dances carry a particular message? If yes what was the kind of the message?.....
3. Did the music and dances have particular participants?
 Yes
 No
 If yes can you recall those participants?

.....
.....
.....

4. Did the Tharaka people use music and songs during general elections?

[] Yes

[] No

What kind of the songs? Who were they targeting?

.....
.....
.....
.....

5. Where did the songs and dances take place? Why did they choose that particular songs?

.....
.....

6. Any songs that have been used in Tharaka community mobilize voters during elections?

.....
.....

7. Do you believe that songs can persuade voters to vote for a candidate?

.....
.....
.....

8. Do politician who use songs during campaigns likely to be elected than the one who doesnot use songs?

.....
.....
.....

SECTION C

Influence of clanism as a political mobilizers in the Tharaka community

1. What are the main purpose of a clan in Tharaka community?

.....
.....
.....

2. Do people use clan membership as a ticket for leadership in Tharaka community? If yes,how

.....
.....

...Is there any political period clan membership has been used as a key qualification to join politics?

Any, why.....

.....

3. How do clan count during elections in Tharaka constituency?.....

.....

.....

4. Do the Tharaka people use clan membership to woo the voters?

Yes []

No []

Any, why.....

.....

5. Any known dominant clans in Tharaka that has been dominating Tharaka political leadership?

.....

.....

SECTION D

1. Do Tharaka people had age-set systems? If yes can you mention them?

.....

.....

2. Do different age-sets systems strategize and struggle to gain political power?

Yes []

No []

Any, how.....

.....

3. Do Tharaka people have the tendency of voting in members of the same age-sets? If yes why?.....

.....

.....

4. Do you belief that age-sets bring together the members?

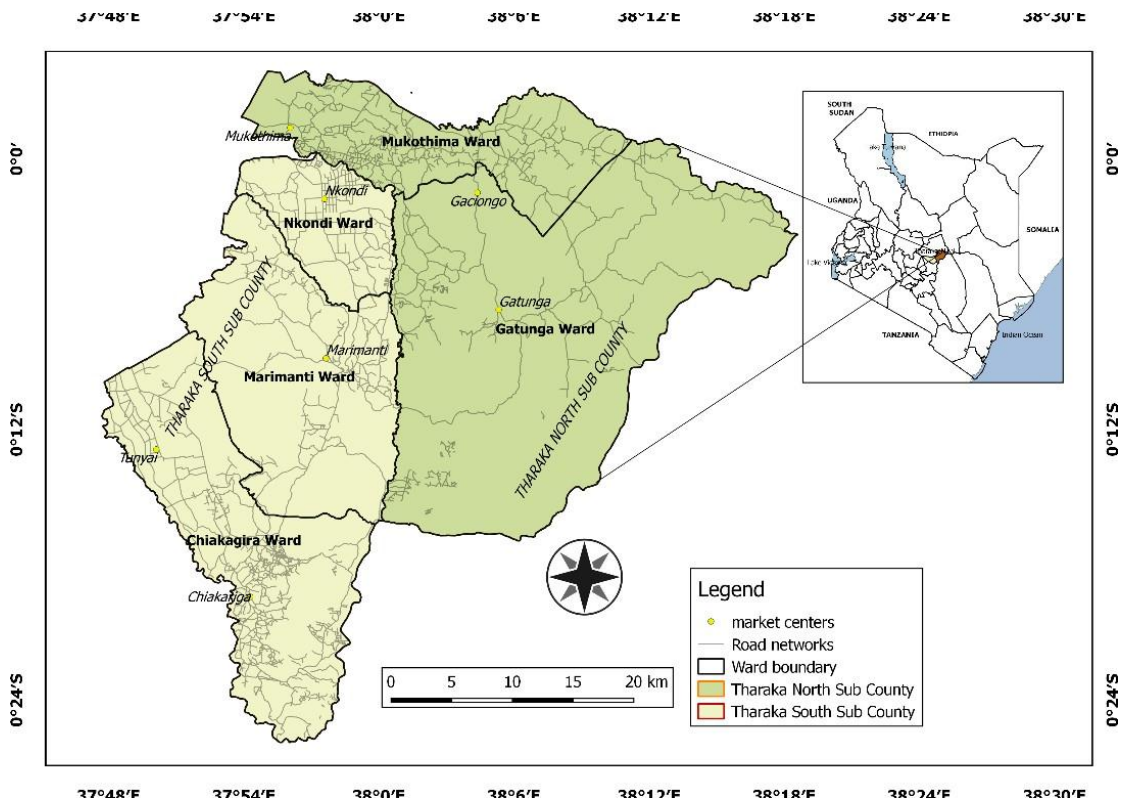
Yes []

No []

Any, how.....

-
-
5. Do people in Tharaka community practice the politics of age-set up to date?
 Yes []
 No []
 Any, how.....
-
-
6. Do age-set based politics have influence in the contemporary Tharaka society?
 If yeshow?.....
-
-
7. Is age-set grouping encountering challenges in the contemporary Tharaka society?
 Yes []
 No []
- Any, how
-
-
8. Do age-set system change the dynamics of Tharaka politics up to date?
 Yes []
 No []
 Any, how
-
-

Appendix IV: Map showing Location of Tharaka



Appendix V: Ethics Review Letter



CHUKA UNIVERSITY INSTITUTIONAL ETHICS REVIEW COMMITTEE

Telephones: 020-2310512/18

Direct Line: 0772894438

Email: info@chuka.ac.ke

P. O. Box 109-60400, Chuka

Website: www.chuka.ac.ke

5th June, 2024

REF: CUIERC/ NACOSTI/555

TO: Kirunguru Raphael

RE: The Role of Atharaka Cultural Ties in Political Mobilization During the General Elections in Tharaka Constituency, Kenya

This is to inform you that *Chuka University IERC* has reviewed and approved your above research proposal. Your application approval number is *NACOSTI/NBC/AC-0812*. The approval period is 5th June, 2024 – 5th June, 2025.

This approval is subject to compliance with the following requirements;

- i. Only approved documents including (informed consents, study instruments, MTA) will be used
- ii. All changes including (amendments, deviations, and violations) are submitted for review and approval by *Chuka University IERC*.
- iii. Death and life threatening problems and serious adverse events or unexpected adverse events whether related or unrelated to the study must be reported to *Chuka University IERC* within 72 hours of notification
- iv. Any changes, anticipated or otherwise that may increase the risks or affected safety or welfare of study participants and others or affect the integrity of the research must be reported to *Chuka University IERC* within 72 hours
- v. Clearance for export of biological specimens must be obtained from relevant institutions.
- vi. Submission of a request for renewal of approval at least 60 days prior to expiry of the approval period. Attach a comprehensive progress report to support the renewal.
- vii. Submission of an executive summary report within 90 days upon completion of the study to *Chuka University IERC*.

Prior to commencing your study, you will be expected to obtain a research license from National Commission for Science, Technology and Innovation (NACOSTI) <https://oris.nacosti.go.ke> and also obtain other clearances needed.

Yours sincerely


Dr. Benjamin Kanga
SECRETARY

Appendix VI: Research Permit from NACOSTI

 <p>REPUBLIC OF KENYA</p>	 <p>NATIONAL COMMISSION FOR SCIENCE, TECHNOLOGY & INNOVATION</p>
Ref No: 988065	Date of Issue: 16/July/2024
RESEARCH LICENSE	
	
<p>This is to Certify that Mr. RAPHAEL NYAMU KIRUNGURU of Chuka University, has been licensed to conduct research as per the provision of the Science, Technology and Innovation Act, 2013 (Rev.2014) in Tharaka-Nithi on the topic: The role of a Tharaka Cultural Ties in Political Mobilization During the General Elections in Tharaka Constituency, Kenya (1961-2007) for the period ending : 16/July/2025.</p>	
License No: NACOSTI/P/24/37714	
Applicant Identification Number 988065	 Director General NATIONAL COMMISSION FOR SCIENCE, TECHNOLOGY & INNOVATION
	Verification QR Code 
<p>NOTE: This is a computer generated License. To verify the authenticity of this document, Scan the QR Code using QR scanner application.</p>	
See overleaf for conditions	

Appendix VII: Researcher's Kenya National Archive Entry Permit



**Kenya National Archives
and Documentation Service**

**OFFICIAL ENTRY PERMIT TO
ARCHIVES SEARCH ROOM ONLY**

Permit No.
AR-BVS67

Reg Date
20 JUNE 2024

Nationality:
KENYAN

Address:
CHOGORIA

Full Name
RAPHAEL
NYAMU
KIRUNGURU

Valid from.
20 JUNE 2024

To
20 JUNE 2025



Issued by