TRENDS IN YOUTH POLITICAL MOBILIZATION IN THARAKA NORTH SUB-COUNTY, THARAKA NITHI COUNTY, KENYA, 1895 -2022

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DECLARATION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

DECLARATION

This thesis is my original work and has not been presented for examination in any other university.

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RECOMMENDATIONS

This thesis has been examined, passed and submitted with our approval as university supervisors.

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DEDICATION

I dedicate this work to the Almighty God and my Loving parents, Joel Mwangangi and Damaris Muthakye for their sacrifice and tireless efforts they have made to ensure I achieve the best in my academics. Their prayers, moral and financial support came in handy.

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ABSTRACT

Kenyan youth have remained central to electoral and political mobilization. Kenyan youth have been a key constituent for political mobilization since the country's independence. Politicians across the country have, in most cases, co-opted the youth in electoral competitions to either retain or wrestle power from opponents. Despite their numerical strength, importance and historical relevance, little attempt has been made to analyze trends in youth political mobilization in Tharaka-North sub-County, Tharaka Nithi County, Kenya, between 1895 and 2022. The main objective of the study was to investigate the Trends of Youth Political Mobilization in Tharaka-North sub-County, Tharaka Nithi County, Kenya between 1895 to 2022. The significance of this study was to help youth increase their political participation, help scholars to understand on how to overcome challenges that hinders youth participation in politics and to provide a comprehensive analysis of youth political Mobilization so as to take historical trajectory. This study adopted an exploratory research design. The study employed both primary and secondary data to accomplish its goals. The respondents for the field interviews were selected using stratified random and purposive sampling approaches. Stratified random sampling was used to select 90 probability ample respondents who comprised of ordinary youth residing in Tharaka North-Sub-County in the period under study. This was backed up by purposive sampling technique which was used to select 10purposive sample respondents mostly youth leaders and elders. Research instruments to be used included questionnaires and interview schedules with open ended questions. Qualitative methods of data analysis and interpretation were used. Anchored on the theory of patron-client relationship this study found that the political class take advantage of the desperate situation of the youth to promise goodies if propelled to positions of power and distribution of public resources by officials to supporters in exchange for their staunch loyalty. Based on these findings the study recommended that the government should put in place strategies will improve youth participation in the political process rather than treating them as a stepping stool for politicians to ascend to power.

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS AND ACRONYMS

AISF-   All India Student Federation

CCM-   Chama Cha Mapinduzi

CDF-   Constituency Development Fund

CPI-   Communist Party of India

CPP-   Convention Peoples Party

CSP-   Congress Socialist Party

DPK-   Democratic Party of Kenya

FORD-A-   Forum for the Restoration of Democracy- Asili

FORD-K –   Forum for the Restoration of Democracy- Kenya

IEBC-   Independent Electoral and Boundary Commission

KANU-   Kenya African National Union

NARC-   National Rainbow Coalition

NAY-   National Assembly of Youth

ODM-   Orange Democratic Movement

PNU-   Party of National Unity

RUF-   Revolutionary United Front

TNA-   The National Party

URP-   United Republican Party

ZANU-   Zimbambwe African National Union -Patriotic Front

CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION

1.1 Introduction

This chapter introduced and set the background to the study. The statement of the problem was tackled, research questions, study objectives and research assumptions were also outlined. Justification and significance of undertaking the study was given and scope and limitation of the study was presented.

1.2 Background to the Study

The political engagement of the youth has been studied by academics globally. Sloan (2018) criticized the growing lack of interest among young people in politics in the United Kingdom. Young people between the ages of 18 and 24 had an alarmingly low general election turnout, according to the author. Young people continue to be engaged in politics and are involved in other forms of political participation. Here the question of youth political engagement is raised.

According to Jackline (2008), increased political engagement and civic education was to be attributed to the rise in young people's voting participation in the 2008 presidential election. The author adds that previously, young people all around the United States appeared lost in political matters, as evidenced by the poor voter turnout in the past presidential elections. In post-cold war Russia, youth represented progress and provided assurance for a socialist future. The communist party was directly governed by youth. However, as Communism and the Soviet Union began to fall apart in the late 1980s, youngsters lost interest in and apathy toward politics (Görkem Atsungur 2013).

In contrast to widely held perceptions of youth alienation and detachment, Kunduri (2017) documented that young people in India are actually extremely interested in political matters. This contrasts with events in the US and the UK, where it appears that young people do not vote. Wilkinson (2019) documented that the All-India Student Federation (AISF) was a dramatic demonstration of student power at the national level as well as a successful attempt to combine the already-existing student organizations in colonial India.

During the final ten years of the British Raj, this student movement evolved into a forum for the negotiation of young people's political and religious identities. In response to broader political change, particularly the power structure of political parties, Indian students and their student leaders looked for distinct political spaces for youth. Garalyte (2016) adds that this student movement became an arena for the competing efforts of adults and youths to mobilize students, especially by the Communist Party of India (CPI) and the Congress Socialist Party (CSP).

Goldstone (2010) asserted that old leaders cannot overlook the advantages of youth power in Africa, where the median age is 19 compared to 42 in Europe and where two-thirds of the population is under 35 years old. Africa has been dubbed the "youngest continent", making young people the king-makers while also being outsiders to the palace due to the continent's youth bulge, which is caused by a combination of its high reproduction rates and low life expectancy rates. This is due to the fact that youth made up a large proportion of the population and that they have numerous socioeconomic requirements that go unmet, leaving them severely impoverished due to unemployment (Bessant, 2004). As a result, senior politicians take advantage of young people's poverty when they run for government, promised to give them greater work opportunities before abandoning them after winning an election.

Resnick and Casale (2011) stated that "relatively little scholarly attention was given to the impact of generational identities on political behavior in Sub-Saharan Africa," despite the fact that a mountain of data demonstrates that the majority of autocratic older African politicians have come to power or have clung to it with the help of the youth. Abdulaye Wade and the Senegalese urban youth "blue marches," Daniel Arap Moi's dependence on Kenyan "young vigilantes," and Robert Mugabe's use of youth camps to organize for terror against Zimbabwean opposition party members are a few of the more prominent examples. Due to their numerical dominance in Africa's population, young people are unquestionably an invaluable resource for adult politicians seeking power, particularly authoritarian ones (Ojoka, 2017).

Quintelier (2007) lamented of the negativities associated with youth in political mobilization. The author narrated that the most prevalent discussions about youth are largely gloomy and rife with terms like "lazy," "inept," "apathetic," "criminal,"

"disrespectful of traditions and elders," "bad-mannered," and so forth. The above sentiments arise from the perception that that young people make up the majority of criminals and that their unemployment makes idleness frequent. Some studies noted that youth are less likely than adults to vote or be members of a political party but more likely than all other population groups to lead protests or uprisings against unpopular regimes (Resnick & Casale, 2011).

It cannot be denied that most of the elections in Africa were violent with young people dominating both as the perpetrators and victims of the violence. Election-related violence has included voter intimidation, physical assault, detention, and murder of voters, rival candidates, and media personnel. It is well known that the political class which is mostly composed of old men who offer money, jobs, food, clothing, shelter, and other incentives to hopelessly impoverished young people who agree to terrorize rivals and shoulder all associated social blame. However, society will only blame the youth for electoral related violence paying little attention to the role played by old politicians in youth mobilization (Paducel, 2015). There is need to debunk common narratives on youth and electoral violence in Africa. This calls for research on how the youth are mobilized in politics in Africa. This study will address this gap in knowledge.

According to Onodera et al. (2018), the Middle East and North African countries, which are predominately Muslim, have been challenged by young political action over the past 20 years. It is observed that, given that youngsters make up 60% of the population in the Middle East, demographic realities there have boosted this latent potential. Young people are portrayed as rebellious automatons in Conner and Rosen's (2016) "generational narrative" of the Middle East. They are ostracized by economic downturns and brutalized by oppressive regimes. Here, youth are portrayed as irrational revolutionaries destined to upend societies.

Despite the numerical importance and historical relevance of youth political mobilization of generational identities within the area, Resnick and Casale (2011) argued that very little is actually known about the political participation of Africa's youth. They document that young people in Africa tend to vote less and display less partisanship than older residents, which is consistent with research on young people in other parts of the world.

Youth political mobilization in Africa can be directly linked to colonial liberation movements, claims Clapham (2006). He observes that nationalist leaders frequently included disgruntled youth in their fight for independence. Youth also served as a source of legitimacy for post-colonial administrations. During the colonial liberation movement and into the post-independence era, youth were first to being co-opted. Resnick and Casale (2011) concentrated on extreme kinds of political engagement by the youth living in African democracies in a paper on the political participation of Africa's youth. They speak directly to the political preferences and preferred methods of engagement of young people. They focus on three key facets of political engagement in this study: voting in national elections, partisan affiliations, and protest activities.

In a study of youth political involvement in Nigeria, Afolayan (2018) found that young people had historically participated in, contributed to, and spurred substantial changes in political systems, dynamics of power sharing, and economic prospects. Despite this, Nigeria's young people still had to deal with prejudice, unemployment, poverty, and other issues. These obstacles had hindered youth political engagement, turning them into passive political observers at the mercy of the political class. The youth in Africa have frequently utilized violence and war to disturb the peace (Ojok and Acol T, 2017). Both the genocidal Interahamwe in Rwanda (Roessler 2005) and the Revolutionary United Front (RUF) in Sierra Leone (Richards 1996) were founded by disillusioned and unemployed youth, respectively.

The paradox of ineffectual youth involvement in Uganda, despite their numerical electoral domination, was discussed by Mugisha et al. (2016). They came to the conclusion that high levels of underemployment, which had fueled youth poverty and subsequently cemented clientelist political systems, were to blame for ineffective youth participation in political and development processes. Although he was defeated by the incumbent Yoweri Museveni in the most recent presidential elections, Uganda had the youngest presidential contender in East Africa.(Ibid, 2016)

Anyimadu (2016), writing about politics and development in Tanzania, observed that the CCM, the country's dominant party, had highly centralized decision-making, but that this is hampered by vested interests among its cliques, the majority of whom were

older. Young people had been deterred from participating in municipal and federal politics as a result of this.

There were numerous studies on Kenyan youth and politics The youth played a crucial and obvious part in the political calculations of many African politicians, as illuminated by Kagwanja (2005) and Foucher (2007)'s research on youth and generational politics in Kenya. In particular, Kagwanja provided evidence that President Daniel Moi used KANU young wingers who possessed more clout than the police during the Single Party Regime.

Rasmussen (2019), documented on youth political participation in informal settlements in Nairobi, Kenya. The author demonstrated how young people may get involved in politics, carve out a political space, and provide for their needs. By doing this, the author critiqued the widely accepted neo-patrimonial myths of youth radicalization and exploitation in relation to mobilization in the political processes.

Kanyinga and Njoka (2002) noted that ethnicity had influenced party politics and organization since the colonial era in Kenya. However, they admitted that modernization and urban setting that had encouraged youth involvement in politics had tended to in some ways weaken ethnic-based interests especially in the last decade of the 20th Century. Unlike their rural counterparts who supported their local ethnic elite, urban youth supported persons based on broad criteria.

The above sentiments were however disputed by the ethnic-based factions that were reactivated with the return of multi-party politics in the early 1990s. Even in urban regions where political elite in both the 1992 and 1997 elections mobilized the urban youth on ethnic basis. Evidence of political mobilization of the youth in Kenya on ethnic basis existed abundantly. According to Bayne, Obonyo, and Landau & Misago (2009), the post-election violence in the Rift Valley and other significant metropolitan areas of Kenya, particularly the informal settlements of the country's capital Nairobi, was greatly influenced by the youth. The youth in Kenya were actively mobilized to commit atrocities in the 2008 post-election violence which resulted in close to 500,000 people being displaced and more than 1500 deaths. The political class on both sides of the political spectrum financed youth to commit terrorist actions. Nyanchoti (2015) undertook an evaluation of political mobilization strategies employed by vigilante groups in Kisii County during the 2013 Kenyan elections. The

author stressed the importance of the youth in mobilizing votes for politicians in the 2013 general election in Kenya.

Kanyinga (2014) observed that the youth in central Kenya were very instrumental in voter mobilization for the Jubilee coalition in the 2013 general elections. It is added here that a majority of the youth in the region identified themselves with the youthful leadership of Uhuru Kenyatta and William Ruto who ran as President and deputy President respectively. This demonstrated the importance of youth in the electoral process in Kenya. Kanyinga further observed that youth engagement in politics was quickly becoming more prominent in discussions about democratic government, and there was rising belief that involving young leaders in these organizations will improve the quality of services provided, particularly to youth. It was becoming increasingly obvious that adults cannot speak for young people's best interests and democracy functions better the more inclusive a polity is in addressing the different interests of its constituents.

According to the study by Mworia and Ndiku (2012) on interethnic conflicts in Kenya among Atharaka and Tigania communities, it was observed that politicians instigated the youth to cause tribal clashes which consequently resulted to loss of lives, properties and serious injuries inflicted to the residents. In spite of the existence of literature on youth political participation in Kenya little attempt was made to examine youth political mobilization in Tharaka North sub-County, Tharaka Nithi County. It is against this background that this study analyzed trends in youth political mobilization in Tharaka North Sub-County between 1895 and 2022.

1.3 Statement of the Problem

Different social groups participated in politics in one way or the other. There was tendency by scholars to concentrate efforts in studying the role of social cleavages such as gender, ethnicity and religion in Africa, Consequently the impact of generational identities on the political process received relatively little attention compared to other social cleavages. Young Africans made up more than 60% of the population demographically. Youth political mobilization had not been adequately addressed in spite of their numerical advantage and historical relevance. Most significant were the changes that had occurred in youth political mobilization over

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time. The political class in Africa had frequently used the youth as a tool to gain political support. In the political calculations of African politicians, the youth constituency was crucial. The African youth continued to be marginalized in local and national politics despite their numerical advantage and historical significance. Is this situation by default or by design? This study attempted to solve the problem of youth exclusion in politics by examining the trends of youth political mobilization in Tharaka North-Sub-County, Tharaka Nithi County, Kenya between 1895 and 2022.

1.4 Objectives of the Study

The objectives that guided this study were to:

(i) Examine youth political mobilization in Tharaka North Sub- County in the colonial period from 1895 to 1963.

(ii) Assess the nature of youth political mobilization during the *defacto* and *dejure* Single party era in Tharaka North Sub-County, between 1963 and 1991.

(iii) Assess the impact of the re-introduction of multi-party politics on youth political mobilization in Tharaka North Sub-County between 1991 and 2022.

1.5 Research Questions

(i) How were the youth in Tharaka North Sub-County politically mobilized during the colonial liberation struggle from 1895 to 1963?

(ii) What was the nature of youth political mobilization during the *defacto* and *dejure* Single party era in Tharaka North Sub-County between 1963 and 1991?

(iii) How did the re-introduction of multi-party politics impact on youth political in Tharaka North Sub-County between 1991 and 2022?

1.6 Research Assumptions

(i) The youth in Tharaka North were actively mobilized in the colonial liberation struggle in Kenya between 1895 and 1963

(ii) Political Patronage and authoritarianism influenced the nature of youth political mobilization during the single party regimes in Tharaka North Sub-County between 1963 and 1991.

(iii) The re-introduction of multi-party politics in Kenya beginning 1991 had fundamental impacts on youth political mobilization in Tharaka North Sub-County,

1.7 Significance of the Study

According to Ebata et al (2005), over 60% of people on the continent of Africa comprised the youth. Young people were politically significant and had a numerical advantage generally in Africa and Kenya in particular. The importance of youth political mobilization could not be ignored as youth need to have a stake in Leadership. A study on youth political mobilization in Tharaka North Sub-County, Tharaka Nithi was ideal and Critical.

Tharaka North-Sub-County was selected for a number of reasons. To begin with the Sub-County faced a number of politically induced challenges such as violent political campaigns, ethnic conflicts and cross border conflicts (NCIC, 2017). Secondly the region was known for its economic potential especially with the production of sorghum and millet. In terms of settlement, it is moderately populated with a big population of its youth engaging in informal business. The youth in Tharaka North-Sub-County were known to be politically vibrant since independence. The importance of a study on the political mobilization of youth in Tharaka North was wanting.

The year 1895 marked commencement of British colonial rule in Kenya. To give the study a strong historical background it was imperative that the place of young people in the pre-colonial socio-political organization be examined. The year 2022 marked the last time Kenya held a general election. The period 1895 to 2022 provided adequate time to analyze youth political mobilization in Tharaka North Sub-County.

The importance and significance of this study had to be emphasized. This study on youth political mobilization will help the youth to increase their political participation. A study of this nature would also be beneficial to scholars and students of politics especially political participation of different social groups. The challenges that hindered effective youth participation in politics in Kenya in spite of the widening of the political space will be helpful to scholars in understanding how they can be overcome. This study would further emphasize to scholars that for a comprehensive analysis of youth political mobilization in Kenya there is need to take a historical trajectory.

1.8 Scope of the Study

This study focused on youth political mobilization in Tharaka North-Sub-County, Tharaka Nithi County, Kenya between 1895 and 2022. The study traced the background to youth political mobilization in colonial liberation struggle, the nature of youth political mobilization during the Single party era and the impacts of youth political mobilization with the re-introduction of multi-party politics in Tharaka North-Sub-County was evaluated. Owing to a large population of young people in Tharaka North Sub-County, the study drew sample from four locations and interviewed 100 respondents.

1.9 Limitations of the Study

Two limitations were identified in undertaking a study of this nature. To begin with some respondents became un-cooperative in giving the needed information; however, the researcher explained the usefulness of the study and encouraged them to give the needed information. Secondly biased information by respondents was also a challenge. This was overcome by corroborating secondary data with primary data. Biasness was eliminated through theoretical probing and interrogation of the information given. This study was limited to the youth residing in Tharaka North-Sub-County.

1.10 Operationalization of Terms

Clientelism- The exchange of goods and services for political support. It involves an asymmetric relationship between groups of political actors described as patrons, brokers, and clients.

Group Action- Refers to a situation in which a number of agents take action simultaneously to attain a common goal through coordinated actions.

Neo-Patrimonialism- System of social hierarchy in which the political elite (patrons) use state resources to secure the loyalty of the voters (clients) in the political process.

Politics – Refers to the set of activities that are associated with making decisions in groups, or other forms of power relations between individuals, such as the distribution of resources or status.

Political Mobilization- Refers to a process through which a group moves from being passive collection of individuals to active participants in public life. Such groups could include class, religion, ethnicity, gender and for this case the youth.

Political Participation -Refer to those voluntary activities by which members of a society share in the selection of rulers and, directly or indirectly, in the formation of public policy.

Social Group- Refers to two or more people interacting with one another and sharing similar characteristics and collectively have a sense of unity.

Social Movement- Refers to a loosely organized effort by a large group of people to attain a particular objective.

Youth- The 2010 constitution of Kenya defines the youth as being individuals between the ages of 18 and 35 years. However, the age bracket of being a youth remains contested. This study takes this into consideration.

CHAPTER TWO: LITERATURE REVIEW AND THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

2.1 Introduction

The chapter presented a review of related literature under the following subheading; the historical background to youth political mobilization in colonial liberation struggle, the nature of youth political mobilization during the Single party era, the impacts of the re-introduction of multi-party politics on youth political mobilization. The theory that guided the research was also presented.

2.2 Review of Related Literature

2.2.1 Youth Political Mobilization in Colonial Kenya, 1895- 1963

Whitney (2009), noted that in France, youth were at front line of French politics for two decades following the First World War as Communist and Catholic forged the most important movements. The youngsters engaged themselves more fully, joining the youth movements in unprecedented numbers. Youth emerged as a central component of political mobilization. The interwar era made youth prominent in the European world.

Literature on the involvement of youth in colonial liberation movements in the Third World abounded. Hourani, Khoury, and Wilson (2004) documented that in the Middle East the youth were at the vanguard of violent protests against British and French colonial dominance. Young people-led groups started organizing nationalist protests in the late 19th and early 20th centuries. These protests directly opposed the imperial power of the British, French, and even Ottoman Turks. These overt imperial presence challenges were guided by the organizations' ideological leadership. Consequently, Arab nationalism rose to popularity among young intellectuals in Syria, Lebanon, and Saudi Arabia. The three scholars above shed light on the role played by young people in strengthening Arab nationalism in colonial Arab World. This pattern was to be witnessed in the Arab spring beginning 2011 in Arab dominated North African countries of Algeria, Egypt and Libya where the youth were at the forefront in the revolt.

Van Gyampo and Anyidoho (2019) documented on youth political mobilization in colonial liberation movements in Africa. They both agreed that since the independence fight, African youth had been a political force that had pushed for reforms and adjustments. They echoed examples of young political engagement in movements of political contestation, resistance, or uprising in, among other nations, Burkina Faso, Senegal, Niger, Togo, and South Africa. According to Asante (2006), young people involvement in politics was not a new phenomenon. In fact, young people were active in politics in pre-colonial African civilizations and, most famously, they led the pro-independence movement and the anti-apartheid movement in the 20th century. Additionally, history showed that the political involvement of young people had frequently been restricted and appropriated by the political elite.

Ahwoi (2008) and Cooper (2008) concur, adding that young people were frequently enlisted to fight risky political battles, frequently as "foot soldiers" for political parties. In the worst circumstances, they were recruited or seduced into acts of terrorism and armed combat. Reviewing the nature of youth political participation and noting the difficulties many young people face in trying to engage meaningfully in politics at different levels remained crucial to this study.

Gyampo and Obeng-Odoom (2012) divided youth political activities in Africa into four stages: pre-colonial period, around 1620s, when young people had distinct roles within age-based societies; the colonial period, which focused on the encounter and resistance of Africans against colonialism and saw the establishment of mostly voluntary trans-ethnic youth groups; and the period of political independence, during the 1950s and 1960s, saw the growth of government-sponsored youth organizations.

From as early as 1920s, African youth were both the intellectual and ground forces in the nationalist and Pan-African movements (Boahen, 1979). This author pointed at the Gold Coast as an illustration, where local elite who had studied law in Britain and joined the West African Student Union as active members (WASU). In order to analyze the issues, the colony was facing, this group of young people strongly supported the establishment of the National Assembly of the Youth.

 Chazan (1974) and Awoonor (1990) added that those younger nationalists, frequently favored alternative techniques than older nationalists. The youth employed unique

techniques in contrast those used by older nationalist such as Nigeria's Nnamdi Azikiwe, Guinea's Sekou Touré, Mali's Modibo Keita, and Ghana's Kwame Nkrumah, to rally the youth to resist colonial control.

Burgess and Burton (1990) discussed the youth migration to urban areas in colonial Africa in Tanzania. They contend that as young people in Africa moved to towns and cities in greater numbers, their exposure to a new world of urban tastes, sounds, and stimuli as well as their new encounters with various people and circumstances resulted in relative anonymity and frequently in a process of self-reinvention and the adoption of new identities. Young people actively participated in movements for urban protest.

Clapham (2012) documented of young people in colonial Uganda flocking to the streets to demand change in response to the erosion of human rights and increased unemployment, Ugandan youth across the nation and especially in the urban areas founded a number of political movements. Young activists were detained, and many of them were tortured and murdered. There were numerous inspiring instances of liberation movements throughout Africa that engaged in protracted, frequently traumatic conflicts with colonial, oligarchy- or authoritarian regimes.

Urban youth's contribution to Kenya's Mau Mau uprising has been well documented. According to Amanda (2007), the radical group attracted Kenyan adolescents mostly from the numerous Kikuyu ethnic minority. This organization occasionally organized violent attacks against the colonial government. Many of these young people were arrested, some of whom were killed. According to Robert Dix (1983), the majority of the elder leaders continued to use the Kenya African Union (KAU) and non-violent tactics in contrast to the confrontational means adopted by the youthful leadership of the Mau Mau.

According to Wachanga (1975), young radical youth in Central Kenya held meetings for the forest fighters and gave educational lectures on how to use a weapon properly and why it was a significant sign for the future that they were willing to suffer in squalor and miserable conditions in order to establish a free Kenya. It was impossible to undervalue the part that young people played in the struggle for colonial independence.

In discussing the Mau Mau and the land struggle in Kenya, Kanogo (1987) asserted that an elite group of primarily young people who served as the revolution's decision-makers and public face led the movement. The revolution's direction was determined by the actions of a number of young, prominent Mau Mau leaders as well as by other individuals who were not directly involved in the organized guerilla battle. The majority of the Mau Mau participants were young, Kikuyu-speaking peasants from the countryside. Young men who fought in the Second World War made up a large portion of the Mau Mau generals. Generals Kago, Mathege, China, Kariba, Tanganyika, and Kimathi were among them (Ibid, 1987). The Mau Mau insurrection was the subject of antagonism on the part of the colonial authorities and European settlers because to their violent and confrontational posture towards the colonial state, as well as their growing popularity and influence among urban and rural youth. As a response, the colonial authority enacted a variety of sanctions to restrain the youth's political activity. The current study sought to specifically establish the role of the youth in colonial liberation struggle in Tharaka North Sub-County.

2.2.3 Nature of Youth Political Mobilization in the Single Party Regime in Tharaka North Sub-County, 1963-1991

According to the study conducted by Robertson (2009) on youth political participation in Romania, young people were a large feature of the mass demonstrations especially in December 1989 Revolution in Romania. Previously, the Romanian Communist Party was the legitimate and dominant political party and was established as a major and leading force in Romanian society. Youth were involved in the fall of Communism, and the execution of former communist dictator Nicolae Ceausescu during the bloody Romanian Revolution of December 1989 which ended the one-party dictatorship.

A majority of African countries attained independence under a multi-party system of governance. However, following independence most African nations showed a consistent pattern of replacing multi-party systems with one-party ones. The newly elected African leaders argued that imposing one-party control would strengthen national identity and togetherness among the populace (Widner, 1992). According to Mbai, (2003) the ruling class feared that multiparty politics would cause the young, multiethnic African states to become divided.

As a result, one party government dominated the political landscape in the majority of African nations during the 1960s and 1990s.

In Ghana Kwame Nkrumah institutionalized a one-party socialist regime making the Conventional People's Party (CPP) synonymous with the state. Malawi became a one-party state in 1966 under President Kamunzu Banda, with the Malawi Congress Party being the only recognized party. Widner (1992) added that it is in the same fashion that Jomo Kenyatta oversaw Kenya's transition from multi-party democracy to single-party rule in 1964 by pleading with members of the opposition Kenya Africa Democratic Union (KADU) to disband their group and join the ruling KANU (Ibid, 1992). The above studies brought to the fore the shift from multi-party systems to single party dominance in post-independent African countries. The nature of governance during the single party era in Africa will guide this study in analyzing youth political mobilization in that period.

Maringira and Gukurme (2020) examined the dynamics of youth patronage and violence as tools of political mobilization through Mugabe's ZANU-PF in urban space. In this study, these scholars showed that Mugabe was able to stay in power because he was able to transform his political position into a source of opportunity for his political clients. Young people had been mobilized through party structures to combat violence against those perceived as opponents of the ZANU-PF.

According to Nyirabu (2002), Tanzania's 1961 independent constitution established a political and legal history of elected government, parliamentary rule, competitive multi-party system, and liberal democracy. The Nyerere Government enacted the Republican Constitution of 1962, which established the presidential system, with the president having the powers of head of state and head of government. Such a pattern was evident in many of the early post-independence African countries. Youth participation in politics during the single party dominance in number of African countries was constricted as the political scene was dominated by the ruling elite most of who were old nationalists.

One-party dominance in Kenya was marked by the rule of Presidents Jomo Kenyatta and Daniel Moi from 1964 to 1991. Although Kenya achieved independence under a Westminster parliament, Kenyatta rule had within a year changed the constitution to

make the country a republic under presidential system. By altering the constitution, the executive branch of government was chosen over the legislative branch, which diminished the influence of parliament in choosing the president. Consequently, the single party system replaced the competitive party system that was in place after the dissolution of the main opposition party KADU (Mutua, 2008). The consequence of the above developments was the emergence of an authoritarian single party state that was intolerant to criticism. This study finds it interesting to examine how the emergence of authoritarian single party regimes defined youth political mobilization in Tharaka North Sub-County.

Although KANU won the independence elections, KADU and other small ethnic parties which had limited impact at the polls formed the opposition. Kenya was essentially a two-party state at the time of independence. However, according to Ojwang (1981), the multi-party system in situ remained ineffective and feeble. He argued that multi-party did not function in a meaningful way during the brief time between independence and the dissolution of KADU. Particularly, neither the government nor the opposition adequately performed their respective functions.

Arguing in the same fashion, Kanyinga (2003) noted that ethnic rivalry, cronyism, and tensions between the concepts of national unity on the one hand and ingrained ethnic and regional inclinations on the other were the key features of Kenya's first phase of party pluralism. Youth political activism in Kenya during this time was centered more on ethnicity than generational politics. The situation got worse because there were no underlying social structures, such a network of civil society organizations that supported youth political mobilization.

Scholars had attempted to trace the rise of single-party regimes in Africa. From Gartzel's (1969) perspective, the rise of Kenya's one-party system was gradual as President Jomo Kenyatta intervened to centralize and monopolize political power. On November 10, 1964, KADU was compelled to disband itself as a result of political maneuvering and arm-twisting by KANU (Oloo, 2007). Kenya became a de facto one-party state after KADU was disbanded and combined with KANU. Kenyatta implored upon KADU to dissolve itself to 'enhance national unity' by crossing the floor and joining KANU. The conservative wing of KANU was dominated by old led by Jomo Kenyatta leaders while the radical wing was dominated by young leaders led

by Oginga Odinga. The conservative wing of KANU trumped over the radical wing. During the reign of Jomo Kenyatta old leaders dominated the political scene at the expense of young people. Surrounding Kenyatta were the old leaders of his native Kiambu District. They were the main beneficiaries of his regime, both politically and economically. Kenyatta regime came to an end with the death of its founding father on August 22, 1978. This started the president Moi's State in Kenya.

Clearly different from the Kenyatta era, the new regime saw KANU emerge as a dominant force in the political process (Widner, 1992). Moi embarked on a program to make KANU relevant in Kenyan minds. KANU became an important arena for political engagement. Although its popularity as a mass movement declined during the Kenyatta period, it re-emerged under the Moi regime. The party managed to dominate both the state and civil society, to the point where it became almost the sole political agent in the political process. KANU was sustained by a powerful Provincial Administration and Civil servants most of whom were young people.

Moi attempted to incorporate the youth in mainstream politics. Political mobilization of the youth during the Moi regime increased.(Widner, 1992). Contrasting Kenyatta's and Moi's style of leadership, Mwangi (2002) noted that while president Jomo Kenyatta was a civil service man, president Moi was a party man. Kenyatta ruled through the civil service dominated by old men while Moi ruled through the party in which he tried to incorporate young people into party structures. What emerged during the Kenyatta regime was a gable of autocratic rulers dominated by a group of old political-economic elite. Moi rejuvenated KANU which had been largely moribund during the Kenyatta era by incorporating the youth in party structures.

As a result, the KANU Youth wing was formed as part of the party's restructuring. The purpose of the KANU Youth wing was to use the party to exercise social control (Widner, 1992). The KANU Youth Wing's mandate revolved around supporting the party and monitoring dissent. Youth wingers took an active part in the crime-fighting activities a task that was preserved for the police. They could arrest law-breakers and acted as vigilante groups in major towns. The youth wingers were widely used by politicians in the party elections. The KANU youth wing helped in the political mobilization of the youth.

Adar and Munyae (2001), noted that by 1981, all the ethnic centered welfare association were banned among them the Gikuyu ,Embu and Meru Association (GEMA) of central Kenya. Additionally, the period 1989 to 1991 recorded the worst human rights violation in history. Champions of multi-party politics were arrested and detained under inhuman conditions without trial. Ngugi wa Thiongos play ''Ngaaika Ndeenda''(I shall marry when I want)was banned after accused of attacking post-independence dictators .Moreover, Moi's regime ruled against Universities Academic Staff Union (UASU). In Mount Kenya region youthful lawyers like Kiraitu Murungi, Gibson Kamau Kuria, Gitobu Imanyara, Kathurima Minoti defended the union which sought to promote academic freedom and professionalism in Kenyan universities. The youth played a crucial role as they regularly protested the detention and violation of human rights. It was against this background that the current study sought to explore the nature of youth political mobilization during single party regimes in Tharaka North Sub-County.

2.2.4 The Impacts of the Re-Introduction of Multi-Party Politics on Youth Political Mobilization in Tharaka North Sub-County, 1992- 2022

The 1990s brought a democratization wave that led to a series of political reforms in various African countries, including Kenya. A new wave of democratization beginning in Portugal and Spain in the 1970s brought about multi-party politics that surged over the developing world in the 1980s and 1990s. Kenya, like other African nations, was compelled to embrace party pluralism and widen the political sphere. The youth in numerous African countries were direct participants in demonstrations and revolts against single party dictatorships. Members of the civil society and professional bodies which were dominated by young leaders such as the Law Society of Kenya (LSK) demanded for political reforms (Maina,, et al, 1990).

In several African countries, the extension of political liberties and political involvement became necessary with the reintroduction of multi-party politics due to the then-current global conditions. With the deletion of Article 4 of the constitution to permit the formation of competing parties, Zambia returned to multiparty politics after 18 years (Kabemba & Eiseman, 2004). Nyirabu documented that in Tanzania, Article 3 of the Constitution, which had previously only allowed for a one-party system, was changed to allow for a multi-party system in May 1992. In December 1991,

Kenya ,section 2(A) to reintroduce multi- party politics (Mbai 2003). Kenya, like other African nations, was compelled to embrace party pluralism and widen the political sphere. The youth in numerous African countries were direct participants in demonstrations and revolts against single party dictatorships. Members of the professional bodies and civil society which were dominated by young leaders such as the Law Society of Kenya (LSK) demanded for political reforms. The role played by the youth in Tharaka in the struggle for the re- introduction of multi-party politics in Kenya will be examined.

The return of multi-party politics led to the formation and registration of numerous political parties. At first, the Forum for the Restoration of Democracy (FORD), a former pressure group that led the fight to reinstate party pluralism, served as the focal point of Kenya's opposition forces. Wide-spread support from Kenyans who were politically dissatisfied with KANU's one-party dictatorship was transferred to FORD a political outfit that was seen to be progressive. For the 1992 general elections, FORD transformed itself into a strong opposition force to take on KANU and Moi. For instance, Odinga dominated the FORD-Kenya party which was mainly associated with the Luo and the Bukusu sub-tribe of Luhya. Two political parties in Kikuyu; Democratic Party (DP) and FORD -Asili party were led by Mwai Kibaki and Kenneth Matiba respectively (Apollos, 2001). Most of the supporters of the new political parties were urban-dwelling young people who desired change in the way politics was practiced in the nation. Kenyan youth flocked to the streets to demand change.in response to the erosion of human rights and mounting unemployment. As a result, youth political participation in Kenya grew in numbers and magnitude. The rise in youth political mobilization in the advent of the re-introduction of party pluralism in Kenya will be tackled by this study.

Party politics in post-independent multiparty Kenya was influenced and informed by ethnicity. Competition between the different ethnic communities was evident in the 1992 general elections. The emergent opposition parties had the highest support in areas that were dominated by people from ethnic communities of their presidential candidates. Political mobilization of the youth during this period revolved around ethnicity as opposed to generational politics. (Kimenyi and Ndung'u 2005).

Questions had been raised as to whether multi-party politics re-introduction resulted into any substantial change in the political landscape of Africa. Throup and Hornsby (1998) observed that the transition to multi-party system from one-party system did not bring about the expected significant change. The political landscape did not change significantly beside opening of political space. In most African countries, this did not result in real change of regime. To them, it was a representation of a continuation rather than discontinuation. There were no significant changes in political activity in Africa.

 It remained a big question as to whether the multiparty politics re-introduction increased youth political mobilization. This study interrogated the relationship between competitive politics and youth political mobilization. The question as to whether the multi-party politics re-introduction represented a continuation rather than a discontinuation in youth political mobilization was addressed (Throup & Hornsby 1998).

The period begging 2003 in Kenya marked a new chapter in party politics in Kenya. Kenya was governed for the first time since independence by a new political party. The end of Moi and the KANU era was met with a lot of positive expectations by many Kenyans. To many this was the Kenya's third liberation. When President Mwai Kibaki ascended to power Kenyans expected a lot of positive changes as the NARC, government was very popular (Murunga & Nasong'o, 2006). The results of the 2002 elections produced a sense of national unity and euphoria and unlike any prior election. The youth in Kenya played a leading role in the so called third liberation. This was demonstrated by the large youth turn out in the 2002 elections. The post- Moi era in Kenya gave the youth an opportunity to mobilize and participate in local and national politics. President Mwai Kibaki was eventually declared the winner in the subsequent elections giving hope to the youthful voters that change had finally come.

Kagwanja (2010), documented on the roles played by the youth in the 2007 general elections and the post-elections violence of 2008 in Kenya. He concludes that the youth in Kenya were mobilized by the political elite to engage in acts of violence. This brings into question why the youth in Kenya have remained objects of mobilization by the ruling elite. In the same vein Bosire (2012) documented of

preference by politicians to involve the youth in political campaigns in the 2007 general elections. He mentioned well-funded and politically connected youth groups such as *Warembo na Kibaki.* In the 2007 post-election violence, Kenyan youth were criticized for their part in the politically motivated and election-related ethnic clashes. They were also criticized for acting violently as ethnic warriors. However, what receives less attention is the fact that the youth although criticized, continue to be the majority of casualties and victims.

It cannot be denied that a majority of those who lost their lives and suffered displacements were women, children and young people. The prevalence of electoral violence in Kenya has been acknowledged by numerous scholars. However, little is known about the nature and scope of youth involvement in electoral violence beyond the observation that youth are almost always the one social group that is most visibly involved and used to penetrate and spread violence. (HRW, 2008).

Odhiambo (2010) argued that President Kibaki's government failed to incorporate youth in his administration. Youth who actively held demonstrations, campaigns and protest to get Kibaki into government were agitated as they did not get a fair share for their effort. Instead Kibaki gave lucrative positions to old and retired personalities majorly hard core and business tycoons from Kikuyu, Embu, Meru elites and tribes that were politically regarded as GEMA from Central Kenya. The study found out that Kibakis administration rewarded old personalities from GEMA with lucrative positions in government but the current study focused on how the youth in Tharaka North Sub-County had been sidelined by the government from post-colonial period. Moreover the study investigated and documented how the youth continued to suffer during the time of multiparty state in Tharaka North Sub-County. This will contribute to political history of Kenya and help to increase youth active participation in politics.

In the 2013 General elections in Kenya saw one of the biggest youth mobilization shows by the political class. This trend was a continuation of youth mobilization during the Kibaki era. Kanyinga (2015) opined that the 2013 general elections pitted the old generation against the young generation in reference to the contest between Raila Odinga's CORD and president Uhuru Kenyatta and deputy president William Ruto's Jubilee Coalition. The implication was that the youthful politicians triumphant over the old generation. This trend continued in the subsequent elections of 2017.

It was interesting to see how the youth in Kenya in general and Tharaka North-Sub-County in specific would, continue to be mobilized in the upcoming 2022 general election.

2.3 Theoretical Framework

African political studies had received a great deal of attention from many scholars. Various approaches had been taken to analyze and understand the political dynamics of the continent. Studies of African politics were largely state-centric during the 1970s and 1980s. This approach downplayed the importance of societal dynamics in determining the political setting and institutional framework that the state functions in while emphasizing the state as the primary factor in the political process in Africa. (Ake, 1982; Rosberg & Jackson, 1982).

Statists in the analysis of African politics emphasized the central role of political factors. They used the concept of "statism" to examine the state apparatus, the exercise and misuse of power, as well as its expansion. It was believed that the state operated based on interests, accomplishments, capabilities, and weaknesses. Notably, they focused on patterns of institutionalization, leadership styles, and the relationships between patrons and clients. Some argued that the conventional definition of the state didn't fully apply to the African state because of its limited control over its citizens within its jurisdiction.

Claude Ake (1982) argued that it was challenging to precisely define the state in post-colonial Africa due to its limited autonomy and hegemony. Ake proposed that what existed in Africa were states in the process of formation. A recurring theme in nationalist discussions was that the structural and institutional weaknesses inherent in African states were responsible for the continent's problems. Mkandawire (1998) attributed the economic and political crises on the continent to the neo-patrimonial, predatory, or prebendal nature of the African state. This discourse followed a similar trend where the exclusionary tendencies of the 'neo-patrimonial' elite dominated academic discussions in the 1970s and 1980s (Bayart 1985; Chazen and Rothchild 1988).

Statism being an analytical strategy had its own shortcomings. This approach tended to examine the African state from the standpoint of modernization. It is common to consider African events in light of Western history particularly that of colonial powers, as well as Western customs and ideals. Statism failed to acknowledge the truth that the African states' evolution was different from West. It payed little attention to how the political context of the continent has shaped the present and foreseeable course of social formation

processes. This made this approach unsuitable for this study. A new school of thinking known as the "governance school" started to emerge in the early 1990s (Kanyinga, 2003). This school of thinking gained popularity due to the involvement of International Monetary Fund (IMF) as well as the World Bank (WB) and in the institutional and administrative concerns of in the African governments. The International Monetary Fund and the World Bank used this paradigm as the foundation for creating the economic and political framework for aid discussions in Africa. The success of economic reforms in Africa, according to proponents of this school of thought, was dependent upon political liberalization.

However, there are certain problems with this neo-liberal approach to interpreting political developments in Africa. Democracy is linked with multi-party politics, and the level of political rivalry is used to assess the consolidation of democracy. With the shift to multi-party politics, it was anticipated that democratic values, culture, and practice would go on to define the political landscape (Throup & Hornby, 1988; Asingo, 2003; Mbai, 2003; Adar, 1999). A healthy civil society was also viewed as having autonomous political groups at its core. The institutions supporting the new wave of change and political transformation in Africa were hailed as civil society groups structured in the western tradition or autonomous and free associations. Such neo-liberal thinking, however, cannot be applied to examine and comprehend political occurrences in Africa. Because of this, this theory is insufficient for analyzing young political mobilization in Africa. This study finds it inadequate in analyzing youth political mobilization in the context of neo-liberal thinking.

The Theory of Patron-Client Relationship served as the foundation for the analysis of youth political mobilization in Tharaka-North sub-County. According to Sandbrook (1972) patron-client systems are set up by powerful individuals, both male and female, who cultivate and maintain the devotion of others in more subordinate positions. Both customers and clients see their relationship as a personal bond akin to the affection that binds members of a family or kin group. Contrary to families, where the connection is seen as permanent and frequently taken for granted, a patron-client relationship must constantly be maintained and renegotiated. Clients have always given patrons the labor, money, popularity, votes, political allegiance, and military backing they need to hold onto their positions of authority. Clients themselves have benefited from protection, access to tools or information, group identification, and career chances (Ibid, 1972)

Francois Bayart (1985) applied the theory of patron-client relationships in an analysis of West African politics. The scholar used the Cameroonian phrase "politics of the belly "to describe the nature of political relations between the ruling elite and the public. It was argued here that politicians deliver products, satisfying the appetites of their constituents in exchange for political allegiance. The political elite made use of 'clientelism' either on a group or individual level (or both) for political gains. One-way individual level 'clientelism' manifested itself is through a vote-buying deal, in which a politician offers a constituent with goods or services in exchange for the constituent's commitment to vote for the politician in the upcoming election. "Clientelism" could also be enforced and practiced on an individual level, according to Bayart, where residents were warned that they will be deprived of goods and services if they do not support a particular candidate or political party. This relationship could also go the other way, when voters pressurized elected officials to form "clientlist" alliances in exchange for their support. The youth in Africa were given benefits by the political establishment in exchange for their support. In this scenario, the youth organized politically to support the political class and helped them ascend to positions of power in exchange for political favors.

The patron-client form of politics, often known as clientelism, permeates modern political systems all throughout the world. The phrase describes an intricate web of close relationships between political patrons or bosses and their specific clients or followers. The patron provides excludable resources (money, jobs) to dependents and accomplices in exchange for their support and collaboration, and these relationships are based on mutual material gain (votes, attendance at rallies).

Due to his disproportionate influence, the patron had broad discretion over how to allocate the resources under his management. In contemporary democracies, the majority of patrons are not independent individuals but rather points on a wider network of connections, frequently acting as intermediaries to facilitate interactions

between local levels and the national center (Kettering 1988). Since they frequently had limited access to formal sources of assistance, the impoverished and marginalized segments of society are frequently pulled into these "problem-solving networks" as a practical way to find solutions to their everyday problems.

According to Migdal (1988), people were compelled to prioritize immediate spending and to forego longer-term and more abstract advantages by a shaky economic system. The inclination toward clientelism might be more affected by fluctuations in income rather than just poverty. Clientelism tends to emerge in precarious political and economic circumstances, whether in rural or urban settings. This connection is crucial for the "politics of survival" for both patrons and clients.

Elections were inherently competitive processes. This competitiveness was exacerbated by the 'winner takes all' approach that is a key feature of African politics. Thanks to the relentless energy, tremendous skills and knowledge of young people, they are inevitably the glue that binds the competition together in electoral politics. Unemployment and desperation of the youth as a result of poor governance exposed them to political; mobilization by the political elite for political gains. Consequently, the youth by their numerical strength comprised an effective standing army for hire by politicians.

CHAPTER THREE: RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.1 Introduction

This chapter discussed the study area, the research design utilized, the study locale, the population the researcher focused on, the sampling procedures used, the sample size, and the tools used for data collection. The establishment of reliability and validity, data analysis, and eventually the handling of ethical dilemmas were other areas covered.

3.2 Research Design

Since this was a case study, the researcher opted for an exploratory research design. Exploratory research was a methodological approach that explored research questions that have not been extensively investigated previously. This type of research often emphasized qualitative aspects. Nevertheless, an exploratory study with a substantial sample size may also incorporate quantitative elements. Due to its flexible and open-ended nature, it is sometimes referred to as interpretive research or a grounded theory approach. Exploratory research design allowed for the examination of youth political mobilization in Tharaka North sub-County. This was achieved by examining dynamics in youth political mobilization in Tharaka North-Sub-County, Tharaka Nithi County, Kenya between 1895 and 2022. This study specifically traced the historical background to youth political mobilization in colonial liberation struggle in Kenya between 1895 and 1963, examined the nature of youth political mobilization during the single party era in Tharaka North-Sub-County, between 1963 and 1991 and evaluated the impacts of the re-introduction of multi-party politics on youth political mobilization in Tharaka North-Sub-County between 1991 and 2022. The study reviewed both primary and secondary data to achieve these objectives. To draw conclusions data was analyzed and interpreted qualitatively.

3.3 Location of the Study

Tharaka-Nithi County is one of the forty-seven (47) counties in Kenya created by the Kenya Constitution 2010. The County is located in Kenya's former Eastern Province.

It borders the Counties of Embu to the South and South West, Meru to the North and North East, Kirinyaga and Nyeri to the West and Kitui to the East and South East.

The county lies between latitude 000 07' and 000 26' South and between longitudes 370 19' and 370 46' East. The County has an area of 2609 km^2 and a population of 293,177 (KNBS, 2019). Tharaka-Nithi County is the home to the Chuka, Muthambi, Mwimbi and Tharaka sections of the Ameru (Meru) community.

Tharaka-Nthi County is divided into six (6) sub-Counties namely; Tharaka South, Meru South, Maara, Chiakariga, Muthambi and Tharaka North which is the focus of this study. Tharaka North Sub County is the largest covering an area of 803.4 Km2 (GOK, 2013). The subcounty is subdivided into eight locations namely: Kathagachini, Gatue, Maragwa, Kanjoro, Gikingo, Mauthini, Thiiti and Ntoroni. Tharaka North Sub-County is located in semi-arid part of Tharaka Nithi County and has two rainfall patterns annually, namely short and long rains. Rainfall pattern ranges from 250mm to 1200mm per annum. January, February and September constitute the hottest months in the region. Average temperature ranges between 17C and 35C.

3.4 Target Population

Borg and Gall (2017) defined target population as a constitution of all members of a physical or assumed set of people, events or objects to which the researcher wishes to generalize the results of the research. The units for which the survey's results are intended to be generalized are defined by the target population. The target population in this study included youth in Tharaka North County. As per the 2019 census Tharaka North Sub-County has a population of 58,345 according to Kenya Bureau of Statistics (K.B.S 2019). From the census result 60% of the total population of Kenya comprised young people between the ages of 18 and 35. From this information Tharaka North sub-County had a youthful population of roughly 35,000 people.

3.5 Sampling Procedure and Sample Size

3.5.1Sampling Procedure

Sampling procedure refers to the technique the researcher adopts for selecting items for the sample from the population or universe (Kothari 2004).

Owing to the high number of youths in Tharaka North-Sub-County, it was not possible for the researcher to interview all the informants. Hence a sampling procedure was employed. This study used both stratified random sampling and purposive sampling technique. Stratified random sampling was used to select 90 Probability Sample respondents. This was supplemented by purposive sampling technique which was used to select 10 Purposive Sample respondents. They included ordinary youth, youth leaders and politicians from the region under study.

3.5.2 Sample Size Population

A Sample refers to a subgroup of the target population that the researcher intends to study for generalizing about the target population (Creswell 2012). The sample was drawn from Four locations in Tharaka North Sub-County namely: Kathagachini, Gikingo, Maragwa, and Gatue. In order for the researcher to generalize the research sample's results to the entire population, it was essential that the sample accurately reflected the population. The sample size was calculated using the formula from Mugenda and Mugenda's (2003) study, which is applicable to populations exceeding 10,000. Although there is no consensus among authors over the sample size for qualitative research the sample size should not be too small to prevent realization of data saturation. Equally, it should not be too large to make deep case analysis difficult. The researcher in this case interviewed 100 respondents. Although 100 was the sample size, the researcher was contented with data collected if the saturation point was to be reached. This was the point where information began to repeat itself hence no need for further data collection.

3.6 Methods of Data Collection

For the purpose of gathering data, a combination of primary and secondary data collection methods were employed. Secondary data sources encompassed books, journals, magazines, articles, unpublished theses, seminar papers, periodical reports, and pamphlets that addressed youth political participation. Secondary data was primarily utilized to establish a foundational understanding of youth political participation and complemented the primary data.

The secondary data primarily came from library resources and internet-based journals. This information offered valuable insights into youth political participation, serving as a supplementary source to the empirical findings from primary data. The initial chapters of the study guided the selection and

utilization of secondary sources within the literature review and theoretical framework.
Primary data, on the other hand, was collected directly from informants in the chosen sample group. Archival data was used to complement the primary data. Key informants played a crucial role in identifying additional key informants through a snowballing approach. Depending on the educational background of the respondents, interviews were conducted in either English or Swahili languages. To ensure the instruments used provided the necessary validity and reliability, it was essential that the questions were consistently aligned with the research objectives and questions. The limitations of primary data, such as reliability, bias, and subjectivity, were taken into consideration. Bias in primary sources was mitigated through theoritical probing and validation with secondary data.

3.7 Instruments of Data Collection

The main instruments of data collection comprised of interview schedules. The study made use of open ended questions that gave the respondents flexibility in answering the questions. Oral interviews were administered orally by the researcher and trained research assistants. Oral interview generated qualitative data was analyzed and interpreted qualitatively.

3.8 Methods of Data Analysis and Interpretation

The data gathered for this study underwent a qualitative analysis. Qualitative methods, specifically content analysis, were employed to draw conclusions and interpretations. As part of the data analysis process, documentary analysis of secondary data was conducted to enhance the credibility of the research findings. Additionally, memos derived from the interview notes were examined to identify emerging topics, forming the basis for various chapters in the final write-up. To ensure a logical conclusion, the researcher scrutinized the author's credibility and language usage to the greatest extent possible.

The analysis of data also involved theoretical probing, as some preliminary information in the study was derived from existing theory, while other insights were deduced from theoretical frameworks. The reliability and authenticity of the data were rigorously verified through continuous theoretical probing and the utilization of primary data to validate or reinforce the secondary data.

3.9 Ethical Consideration

To undertake this study the researcher sought the necessary authorizations from the National Commission for Science, Technology and Innovation ((NACOSTI) as well as the Directorate of Post-Graduate Studies of Tharaka University and other pertinent authorities. To ensure accuracy, the research was conducted with honesty and neutrality. Since the study involved human subjects, respondents were provided with confidentiality and given the opportunity to give their informed consent before participating. The study unwaveringly upheld participants' right to privacy and provided them with assurances about the security of the data they provided. The respondents were guaranteed of strict confidentiality in dealing with the information generated. Where applicable the researcher ensured confidentiality and anonymity of the respondents. The value of the study was explained to the respondents, and the researcher reassured them that the study's findings will only be utilized for academic purposes

CHAPTER FOUR: YOUTH POLITICAL MOBILIZATION IN THARAKA NORTH SUB-COUNTY IN THE COLONIAL PERIOD, 1895- 1963

4.1 Introduction

This chapter examined youth political mobilization in Tharaka- North sub-County in the colonial period between 1895 and 1963. To give the study a strong historical background, this chapter traced the place of the youth in public affairs among the Tharaka ethnic community in the pre-colonial period. Secondly, youth political mobilization during the colonial period between 1895 and 1963 was examined. This chapter captured the recruitment of the youth among the Tharaka in World War One. The resentment by the youth on failed promises after the war is captured. The political mobilization of Tharaka youth in colonial liberation movements in Kenya between 1945 and 1963 was assessed.

4.2 Youth participation in Public Life among the Tharaka Ethnic Community in the pre-Colonial Period, 1885-1895

The Tharaka are Bantu-speaking ethnic group in Kenya. They share common root of origin with the Chuka, Mwimbi, Imenti, Tigania, and Igembe communities' civilizations. The larger Tharaka community can be found predominantly in Tharaka-Nithi County which is located in the plains between Mount Kenya's western slopes and the upper Tana River to the east. The Tharaka sub-ethnic community traces its descent from the larger Ameru ethnic community. This being the case, the history of the origin, migration and settlement of the Tharaka is related to that of the larger Ameru ethnic community. The Meru people settled mainly around the Mount Kenya's northeastern slope (Icheria, 2015). The name "Meru" referred to both the people and the place as there was only one District for the Meru people in the colonial and a better part of the post-colonial period under Presidents Jomo Kenyatta and President Daniel Moi between 1963 and 1992. It was in 1992 that the larger Meru District was partitioned into two Districts mainly; Meru, and Tharaka-Nithi. The District inhabited predominantly by the Meru people increased to six by 2010 namely; Meru North, Meru Central, Meru South, Igembe, Tigania and Imenti South.

The promulgation of the Constitution 2010 created two Counties for the Meru people namely Meru and Tharaka-Nthi Counties. The Tharaka people predominantly occupy Tharaka-Nthi County which was the focus of this study.

Rukunga (2019) noted that myth is one common feature that united all African cultures and societies as it attempts to explain the origin of people and other phenomena around them. Most African myths basically rotated around divine heroes and sacred beings. The religious practices and beliefs of a people, revelation of the existence of spirits and supernatural beings or powers are closely connected to myth. In the very beginning of time these powers were believed to be instrumental in making things happen. Mythic figures have a structure of social life and reflect social reality.

Fadiman (2012) examined the Ameru myth of origin. This author described the Ameru 'Jewish like' mythological escape from a red-clad Nguo ntune people in a place known as Mbwaa. It is believed that the Ameru had been captured by the Nguo ntune and taken into captivity in the island of Mbwaa. Some analysts interpreted this "Red People" tradition as referring to Arabs. Accordingly, to the myth, the Ameru miraculously cross a river while being led by Koomenjue, a charismatic leader akin to Moses. Their migration and departure are integrally woven into every facet of the Ameru culture.

KNA/MSS/7/1/1937 supported the idea that the Ameru moved from somewhere else before they settled into their present homeland as noted below:

> *"Insights are provided by the complex oral traditons of multiple origins. The Meru sub-ethnic groups, the tharaka included believe in myths and legends of origin.Meru initially lived on the other side of the Tana River, somewhere towards the East. When the time came to go from Mbwaa, it is cross the Red Sea. Later, they traveled a path that led them across Marsabit's hills and eventually to the coast of the Indian Ocean. As a result of the weather and Arab threats they moved further south till they reached the River Tana basin. It has been argued that it is from the River Tana basin that the Ameru continued with their migration into the Mt Kenya area."*

Bernardi (1959) documented that, among the Tharaka, a clan's family unit was a crucial social institution. Families were typically made up of the father, mother, and children, although there had been instances of big families made up of numerous wives married to a single husband. The father's authority was definitive inside the confines of the family, albeit it was constrained by the elders' influence on matters

outside the family. In the clan's council of elders, the senior-most male represented and spoke for other family members.

The Tharaka were extremely devout people who loved their religious leaders dearly. They held to the notions of living beings, the Supreme Being, and ancestral ghosts. They held the view that Mt. Kenya was the home of their God. Other locations thought to be the home of God included holy sites like waterfalls, lakes, and marshes (Gichere and Ishida, 2007). Depending on the circumstances, the spirits could bring either a blessing or a curse. The Tharaka had a societal duty to keep the spirits happy at all times in order to avert any negative consequences that might result if they were angered. Kithinji noted that;

> *"Traditional priests among the Tharaka people occupied a special place in society. Priests could lead the community in religious functions such as praying for rainfall and good harvest and offering sacrifices to dispel evil spirits. Traditional priests and healers were in most cases older men who had been in the profession for a long time. However female priests and healers also existed and they were equally respected in society".(Kithinji, O.I, 28th April 2023)*

Were and Wandibba (1988) noted that initiation was a crucial rite of passage for boys and girls in the Tharaka community. At puberty, both boys and girls had initiation, and they were divided into groups based on the season in which they had their circumcisions.*"Muntu wa nthuke yetu"* was a term used by initiates of the same season to refer to one another (a fellow initiate of the same season). One of the most significant social occasions in every Tharaka sub-tribe member's life was circumcision. The men initiates remained in a single little tent following initiation until they recovered completely. After the young boys recovered, the parents of each initiate planned a social gathering.

Animals were slaughtered at the celebration and the invited guests were served with numerous gourds of beer. Additionally there was millet that had been carefully prepared by women and was boiled. The moral code of the society which governed how each member of it should behave was taught to the initiates. For example, a Tharaka man who had been circumcised was not supposed to enjoy his juniors' laughter (uncircumcised ones). The young guys received additional instruction on how to care for the family after getting married.

Icheria (2015) posited that the Tharaka people were divided into *iriika* or *nthuke;* according to the season of their circumcision. Individuals who underwent circumcision during the same season were regarded as belonging to the same *irika* or *nthuke.* Examples of *nthuke* among the Tharaka, include kianjuri, kaburia, and kiarutha. As peers of the same season, those who were initiated in the same season referred to themselves as *"Muntu wa nthuke yeetu."*The sponsors of the circumcised boys and girls gave them new names; the sponsors of the boys were known as *bamo* and the sponsors of the girls as *maami wa muthenya* (a daylight mother), respectively. The term *"bacigira"* was used by women in the same initiation season (Ibid, 2015).

Politically the Tharaka also had a well-structured system of governance. Gichere and Ishida (2007) argue that prior to the establishment of colonial rule the larger Ameru community had a sort of a federal system of government composed of nine sub-groups equivalent to states. These states were Imenti, Tigania, Igembe, Chuka, Mwimbi, Muthambi, Miutine, Igoji and the Tharaka who are our subject of study.

In this arrangement the family was the smallest political unit. The clans created by families with a common ancestor served as the fundamental political unit. The council of elders, which served as the society's ruling body, resolved disputes within the clan. Each age group had a council that collaborated with the council system. Both men and women brought their complaints to their respective age-based authorities (Fadiman, 2012). Therefore, boys, warriors, family heads, ruling heads and the youths each had councils that solved conflicts among its members Men might join the council of ruling elders if their sons had grown old enough to be warriors. The warriors who upheld communal choices were taught by their fathers, who made up the governing group. The ruling class sought advice from the remaining elderly men in their dads' generation on issues affecting the entire society. Murungi noted that;

> *"The Tharaka people were organized under a strong patriarchal setting. In this arrangement older men had the final say in decisions that affected the community. Women and the youth were relegated in decision making. The youth were reminded that there time will come hence they should emulate elders. The council of elders had the final say on political and social issue affecting the community". (* Muru*ngi, O.I.,May 1ˢᵗ 2023)*

The youth in Tharaka were socialized right from birth to respect their elders. The patriarchal system that gave precedence to generational leadership meant that the youth should acquire leadership skills as they prepare to be future leaders when time

for their generation came. This however did not prevent the youth from being actively involved in social and political issues in the community. In this respect the youth in Tharaka actively participated in political issues in society. Nevertheless leadership positions in society were a preserve of older men who were deemed to be wise and experienced. As noted by Kathomi an elder;

> *"There were specifically selected young people who were allowed to attend meetings of the elders. However such young people attended only as observers as they were not allowed to utter any word or even participate in the deliberations. Such young people were those who had been identified as brilliant and exceptional in society. They could not attend all meetings as some of the issues discussed were sensitive or even beyond their comprehension".(Kathomi , O.I. ,May 4th 2023)*

Among the Tharaka people, the clan historically played a significant role in their socio-political organization. At the same time that they entered the age-set system, young boys were circumcised. The new class stood out for its distinct interactions with junior and senior classes as well as among themselves. Based on their seniority, both groups received respect. The Tharaka people's highest judicial authority prior to colonialism was the council of elders. *Kiama,* the council of elders, was in charge of administration, law and order, and religious concerns.

In the Tharaka political arrangement the true representatives of the clan were the elders. The clan elders oversaw political and ceremonial events within the tribe. Only with the consent of the clan leaders were initiation rites permitted. The clan elders were also in charge of choosing the appropriate time and location for the sacrifice to be made in exchange for rain and other favors. Additionally, disputes within the clan were fairly heard, and decisions were typically made in conjunction with corporal punishment. The decision to execute him, however, was only made after extensive deliberation among the council's Njuri elders (Bernardi, 1959).

Tharaka society was highly was very stratified. The *mugwe, mukiama, and agaambi* lived on the upper floor. The ruling patricians built up this layer. The *Kiama* and the *nthaka* were placed second in the hierarchy. *Nthaka* belonged to the community's ruling Kiruka or Ntiba political parties. The women and children of the Tharaka village were at the bottom. At this level, the public complied with the *Kiama* and *Nthaka's* directives. The *mugwe, kiama*, and council of elders not only presided over

religious rites and rituals but also created the moral code that served as a standard for everyone in society (Gichere and Ishida, 2007).

From the above it was clear that the Tharaka people had a well-defined social and political structure during the pre-colonial period. There existed various social and political institutions that administered the society based on the community norms and traditions. Disputes that arose among the members of the community were impartially heard and determined at different levels of administration. This changed with the establishment of British colonial rule in the early years of the 20th Century. The imposition of colonial rule dismantled indigenous Tharaka social and political structures replacing them with the preferred British system of direct administration. In other instances some aspects of social and political structures were modified to serve the needs of the colonial establishment. The next section examines the establishment of British colonial rule among the Tharaka people.

4.3 Youth Political mobilization Among the Tharaka, 1895- 1963

Pearson (2012) noted that a significant turning point in the history of Africa was the colonization of the continent by European nations. Africans believe that comprehending the current state of the African continent and the African people depends largely on how colonization affected them. A close examination of the colonial phenomena is required to understand the extent to which colonialism influenced not only the economic and political growth of Africa but also the view of the African people as a whole.

It took centuries for Europe to colonize Africa through economic exploitation, settlement, or a combination of the two. Colonialism first emerged in the "era of discovery," which was launched in the 15th century by the Portuguese and Spanish empires. The idea of "New Imperialism," which was based on the concept of European expansionism did not foresee gaining new territories abroad until the 1870s. The height of imperial rule in Africa as from the middle of the 1800s to the early 1900(Ocheni, 2012)

The formalization of colonial rule was accomplished at the Berlin Conference of 1884–1885 when all the European powers met and partitioned Africa. .The Berlin

Conference laid the foundation for European countries' direct rule and occupation of Africa. Beginning in 1885 Great Britain acquired Kenya and Uganda as part of the Berlin settlement, creating the protectorate of East Africa. Kenya was ruled by the British from 1920 until her independence in 1963 (Falola 2022).

According to Carrey (2011) Christian missionary churches were used by the British as means of colonization. In some instances, missionaries utilized Christianity to help prepare the way for colonialism, while in others; colonial officials helped the spread of Christianity. Christianity promoted Westernization and denigrated native cultures. As a result, missionaries and colonial authorities collaborated to further their respective goals of colonization and evangelization. A significant part of British colonization was played by the missionary churches. The churches also competed for religious spheres of influence to propagate Christianity and Western culture, just like the Europeans did for Africa. Some missionaries saw colonization as a way to propagate formal education and Christianity. In most instances Bible messages were modified to meet the needs of the colonizer.

The missionaries conned illiterate chiefs into signing treaties that were ultimately utilized by British authority to conquer the indigenous people. Because they enjoyed the trust of the locals, some missionaries paved the path for colonization while others waited for conquering to occur before settling. Religious propaganda that was essential to Kenya's colonization was disseminated by missionary churches. The Bible turned out to be a more effective tool than military force to subjugate and dominate the indigenous people (Ibid, 2011)

Fediman (2012), documents that the establishment of the British colonial government in the greater Meru region officially began in 1908 with the arrival of a British colonial administrator by the name Edward Butler Horne. During this period present day Meru and Tharaka-Nithi Counties made up the larger Meru area. The British establishment appointed Horne as the first colonial Commissioner of the larger Meru region at the age of 26 years. The locals according to Fediman viewed him as an odd man and came up with numerous stories about him. The locals dubbed him "Kangangi" (The Little Wanderer) because of his little stature and odd propensity to roam across the villages on a white horse. From 1908

onwards, Kangangi consolidated his authority by directly appointing chiefs to represent various geographical areas of the greater Meru region (Ibid, 2012)

The larger Meru region was formally recognized as a District in 1910. It was named Meru District. It eventually came to be the sole district where the Njuri Ncheke and the colonial government worked together to control the colonial subjects. By selecting notable Njuri elders to the influential offices of colonial chiefs, the colonial administration skillfully attempted to subjugate the Ameru through Njuri Ncheke. Even if the direct beneficiaries of such interference with the old system of governance usually supported it, the rest of the community did not. Local residents first attempted to oppose, albeit their efforts were not well-coordinated. But it was clear that people were unhappy with the repressive colonial government.

Evidence of boundary disputes between the Tharaka and the Igembe after the estbalsihment of colonialism. As noted below attempts were made to resolve emerging boundary conflicts;

> "The area in dispute in this lower section is between road and the River Vra. This includes the section of the "Tigania./Tharaka linen between the much ragged (tazarind) tree, which is on the road-side, the River Vra — a distance of perhaps 30 yards consisting the steep slope of the river bank, The importance of dispute is apparent below. The lgenbe/Tharaka boundary is said by the lgembe to the self-gaze tree to a point on down river to the confluence with the TANA River: considerable area. The Tharaka say that boundary with the lgembe is the gaze park and that the lgembe do not cross either theor what can for the present be called the "Tigania/Tharaka. The "ack" in dispute between lgembe and Tigania has therefore a great bearing on the lgembe/Tharaka dispute: (KNA/DC/MS, 14/12/1956, Tharaka, Tigania Border Dispute)

The creation of the colonial establishment beginning 1908 followed by the introduction of Christianity and western education substantially impacted on the traditional political, social, cultural, and economic ways of the society. Kangangi teamed up with European missionaries to assist in the growth of the Methodist church in the greater Meru region. The Methodists launched their mission at Kaaga with the active assistance of the District Commissioner Kangangi. While some people did not like him due to his arbitrary administrative style and the demolition of the old socio-cultural systems, Kangangi is credited for building roads in Meru District. He succeeded in building a vast network of roads connecting the district's numerous areas, setting the groundwork for the area's quicker development. He is

remembered for his role in creating the first road system in the Meru region, today known as "Njira cia Kangangi" (Kangangi's Roads) (Fediman, 2012).

To consolidate colonial rule and make it viable the British in Kenya made a number of radical reforms to the traditional social economic structure. As a result, the colonial authorities passed a number of Crown land ordinances to formally take African land. Thousands of acres of land were appropriated as a result of these ordinances, becoming the white highlands. White highlands were appropriated by settlers as part of a plan to take advantage of the locals' unpaid labor for their capitalist system. Additionally, the colonial authorities changed the natives' mode of production to fit the colonial capitalist economy in order to facilitate the economic sustainability of the White Highlands. According to Mazrui (2008) this went against the identity, way of life, and sustenance economy of the indigenous people. In order to provide inexpensive labor for settlers' fields, the British also constructed the African Reserves, which were designed to enclose natives within certain communities.

The changes introduced by the British colonialists impacted negatively on the African population. The youth in Tharaka were most affected by the colonial changes. Intensified land alienation impacted negatively on young people who could not find land to build homes from where they could marry. This also affected their capacity to accumulate wealth. The creation of reserves and restrictions on movement also had a negative impact on the youth in Tharaka.

The colonial cash economy was established with capital as a crucial element. In order to raise money for colonial initiatives, the colonial authorities imposed the hut and poll tax. The inhabitants were compelled to give up their traditional subsistence economy and work for wages in order to pay taxes. Additionally, the colonial rulers enacted the Kipande System, or Pass, which required all locals to wear a metal around their necks that included papers with their personal identification, employment histories, and restrictions on movement (Anderson, 2005).

Capital was necessary for the colonial capitalist economy to prosper. To raise money for the colonial economy native wage labor was used to pay colonial taxes.

The 1901 Native Hut and Poll Tax required one rupee (0.2 dollars) to be paid in kind or via labor for each native hut (household). Natives who failed to pay their taxes might have their property attached or face three months in jail, according to a 1910 amendment to the Native Hut and Poll. Between 1915 and 1920, the Hut and Poll Tax was raised from five to eight rupees, resulting in a £100 rise to £658,000 in tax revenues (Elkins, 2005). The British taxation system was a colonial tool used to compel the indigenous population to support the capitalist system. Every male adult above the age of eighteen was obligated to pay his taxes on time. The Native Authority Amendment Ordinance of 1920 gave native chiefs the authority to levy taxes and mandate a sixty-day annual period of forced labor on every individual on behalf of colonial authorities. A chief received more recognition and trust according to the taxes he was able to collect (Anderson, 2005).

Cheap labor, according to Conchie (2002), was a major driving force behind the colonial. Native Africans were compelled to work for a living and pay taxes to the colonial government. Accordingly, the colonial economy was designed to be supported by native labor. Through the application of the 1906 Masters and Servants Ordinance as well as the 1918 Kipande system, natives were separated from one another, imprisoned in overcrowded reserves, and allowed only certain movements. The white overseers severely harassed, whipped, and denied basic requirements to the African squatters in the reserves who had lacked right of land occupancy. The native Africans' wages were too low to cover their daily necessities.

To regulate locals' travel and keep account of their labor history, the 1906 Masters and Servants Ordinance imposed the Kipande or Pass identity system. The Kipande system was put into effect in 1919 after being made a law in 1915. All inhabitants had to wear collars around their necks that hung a metal containing a red book. Name, finger prints, ethnicity, employment history, the signature of the native's current employer, and restrictions on movement were all included in the red book (Conchie, 2002). Native Africans' mobility was monitored, tracked, and confined within particular workstations using this humiliating, oppressive, and abhorrent colonial method of governance.

The onset of colonial control had profound political, social, cultural, and economic repercussions on the Tharaka traditional way of life. The colonial reforms on land ownership and use negatively impacted on the native population. Land is a factor that reflects all of these factors because of the value that the Tharaka customarily attach to it. The Njuri Ncheke preserved land among the Tharaka for the good of the general community, although the different families and clans served as the trustees. The entire community rose up in resolute opposition to any unjustified intervention with any piece of land. (Kithendu , O.I ,June 15th 2023)

The youth in Tharaka were in the forefront in resisting the discriminatory and exploitative colonial policies. Karani narrateed how his father was in the forefront to oppose the imposition of restrictions on movement by the colonial establishment in Tharaka region. The father according to Karani would group with other young men from the locality to protest to the colonial authorities of the punitive aspects of the policies. They were arrested and locked for disturbing peace (Karani, O.I ,April 25th 2023).

The youth in Tharaka also protested against the appointment of selected elders as chiefs or headmen a move they saw as a severe intrusion on their traditional form of government. The opposition to the move increased when some of the chiefs started using their power to enrich themselves and persecute other Africans. The use of other colonial agents *(Nchama)* as implementers of divisive colonial policies resulted in their equal detestation. They were viewed as the enemy's agents and called *"Ncaguthi,"* which means "enemy's agents" or "sell-outs," in a derogatory manner. Muthoni narrates that;

> *"A young person by the name Murithi from Kathwana engaged the colonial chief in a physical fight after refusal to work in the construction of a road. The colonial establishment reacted by giving Murithi a thorough beating. This did not go well with young people who later boycotted manual work assigned to them by the chief. A number of young men fled the area in fear of punishment for refusal to offer free labor".(Muthoni,O.I ,May 5th 2023)*

4.3.1 Tharaka Youth Political Mobilization, 1914-1919

In many ways, the First World War was a turning point in African history. The First World War was primarily a conflict between European countries that involved Africa, both directly and indirectly. Although the campaigns fought on African land very

little changed the general course of the war, the consequences for Africa were profound. These conflicts or campaigns in Europe involved more than a million African soldiers. To supply armies whose supplies could not be conveyed by traditional means such as road, rail, or pack animals, even more men, as well as women, and children, were frequently and forcibly recruited as carriers. According to Crowder (1966) more than 150000 soldiers and carriers perished with thousands of people hurt and rendered incapacitated during the war. By the time the war was over, every nation in Africa had legally sided with one side or the other, with the exception of the little Spanish colonies, which stayed neutral. The administrations of Belgium, Britain, France, Italy, and Portugal were more or less actively aligned against German possessions.

Summers and Johnson (1978) identified three techniques that were used to raise recruits for carrier service as well as fighting in French West Africa. The first was conducted entirely on a volunteer basis, with no outside coercion; Africans voluntarily gave their services. For example, if it would ensure their position as citizens, the Senegalese residents of the Four Communes of Senegal would be more than willing to embrace the entire requirements of the mandatory military service demanded of Metropolitan Frenchmen. They note that all 45000 of the French army's new recruits in Madagascar were volunteers. The vast majority of African recruits were forced into the various armies, either as conscripts or as "volunteers." In the same region Savage and Munro (1966) add that a sizable number of soldiers and carriers were legitimately conscripted.

 All African males between the ages of 20 and 28 in French Black Africa were required to serve four years in the military as part of a 1912 decree intended to establish a permanent black army. In order to ensure that black African forces would be available to serve in Europe in the event of conflict, garrison troops in Algeria were to be replaced by black African troops. Writing on British West Africa Crowder (1966), notes that in chiefs were given quotas of men to fill. To avoid enlisting their close relations, they started by gathering strangers and ex-slaves. When the quotas could not be filled, recruiters turned to all physically fit males, the majority of whom were viewed as idle. Due to the lack of birth registration, numerous men of military age and younger were enlisted.

KNA/MSS/ 1/7/1971/ supports the idea of Enlistment of Kenyan youth in colonial administration noting that;

> "As indicated in paragraph 6 of Manpower Circular Letter No.1 of 1st May 1945,Kenyan youth of British parentage on reaching the age of 18,will continue to be called for military service.this follows the United kingdom practice and is based on the following cosiderations ;military requirement to overrule all other considerations,relief for men who served longer period in the war to return to their home and that justice to be done to the 18 year olds who joined in 1939 and the succeeding years of war .A clear duty towards the young men whose carriers or training have been interrupted by war service ,and it is equitable that they should receive due consideration to enable them to resume their studies to find employment and that they should be followed in their proper turn by youth as they reach the age of call-up."(KNA/MSS/1/7/1971)

In British East Africa, Hodges (1986) provided documentation of the use of forced recruitment to enlist soldiers and carriers. All males between the ages of 18 and 45 were required to serve in the military under the 1915 Compulsory Service Order. This was expanded to include the Protectorate of Uganda in April 2017. Over a third of the adult males in the east African protectorate were serving as carriers for a significant portion of the war due to the forced enlistment of porters.

Savage and Munro (2009) documented that with the outbreak of World War I, there emerged a high demand of manpower resources from the British East Africa Protectorate and specifically subsequently the British colonial establishment enacted a policy known as the Native Followers' Recruitment Ordinance of 1915. This policy enabled the voluntary conscription of African males in the carrier corps. The British government recruited as many able bodies African men under the "Grand Levy" under the command of John Ainsworth. According to Conchie (1985) a significant amount of hiring in Kenya was done through chiefs, who were expected by the political officials to turn up the numbers demanded of them. Genuine volunteers were easy to find in certain places, but in other places, persons were presented to the political officers as volunteers after being inspired by the chiefs. Accordingly, chiefs' involvement in the recruitment of soldiers and carriers is largely responsible for their unpopularity in most parts of Kenya after World War I. This study did not find any evidence of forceful recruitment of young people in the First World War. Kinoti noted that;

> "Among the Tharaka thousands of young men ignorantly voluntarily joined the British colonial forces in World War I with most of them being shipped to the

war front in Burma. Conscription in the colonial force was not forced as one made a decision to join or not to join. The only problem was that these young people did not understand what they were fighting for. Most young men were duped into conscription with promises of rewards in form of land. The reality came when such promises were not honored after the world war. It is at this point that young men from Tharaka began to engage the British colonial establishment on the failed promises". (Kinoti,O.I, June 2rd 2023)

The above sentiments were supported by Fediman (1993) in an interview Meru elders who recall of the First World War "*Ndwaa ya Njirimani*" meaning the War against the Germans. The colonial government enlisted the *Miriti* age group, who were warriors at the time, to fight in the British East African Campaign during the First World War between 1914 and 1918. Most of those recruited were assigned as Carrier Corps to serve with British forces in Tanganyika which was a German colony. After the war, the ex-soldiers returned home with many new ideas acquired during their exposure and interaction with different peoples in foreign lands.

Hodges (1966) wrote of organized African resistance in confronting the forceful recruitment campaigns of colonial powers in Africa. The scholar noted of John Chilembwe who organized a rebellion against British carrier recruitment in Southern Nyasaland in 1915. It is added here that the multiple uprisings in Nigeria were significantly aided by the recruitment of troops and carriers and dissatisfaction with British colonial control.

The same is true of rebellions against Belgian control in the Congo during times of conflict. Between 1914 and 1917, there were 26 oppositional movements, 9 instances of armed resistance, and 9 actual or attempted uprisings in German East Africa, many of which had some connection to the recruitment of soldiers and carriers. On the first day of the conflict, the Giriama people of east Africa rose up in revolt (Ibid, 1966).

Among the Tharaka post World War I rebellion by the youth as a result of failed promises were recorded. The ex-soldiers no longer held the White man in such awe and reverence as they had prior to the war. This is after having fought alongside him and witnessed his strengths and shortcomings. The ex-soldiers' viewpoints on the White man and his purported superiority had evolved into an extreme one. The ex-soldiers expressed these radicalism songs that were written especially to make fun of the White guy.

The Council of Elders received a particular message in these warriors' songs that challenged their perceptions of the white man's superiority and invincibility. Particularly politicized by the songs and given the bravery to defy colonial authority were the young people led by the ex-soldiers. While the war directly caused a great deal of deaths and injuries, it was also responsible for countless indirect deaths as a result of the spread of the influenza pandemic which soldiers carried home (Muthomi, O.I,June 15th 2023)

The broad uprisings and protest movements that occurred during the conflict had a wide range of motivations. Revolts in some situations were simply the continuation of the main resistance to European occupation. The themes of the wartime uprisings include the desire to regain lost independence, resentment against wartime policies, particularly forced labor and compulsory military service, opposition to the war, reaction to the loss of traditional religious and cultural practices, reaction to the economic hardships caused by the war, and dissatisfaction with specific aspects of the colonial system, the full realization of which often coincided with the uprisings.

4.3.2 Youth involvement in Early African Political Activity in Colonial Kenya, 1919- 1945

Conchie (1985) traced African political activity in Kenya in early 1919. Resistance to colonial establishment was expressed through political parties, trade unions and opposition to European Christianity. This has been well captured in this section. Beginning 1919 Africans in Kenya began using political organizations to voice their complaints to the British colonial administration. These political organizations served as the forerunners of the political parties created in 1945. Bennet (1957) dates the inception of the first political organizations in Kenya to 1920s. In June 1920 Harry Thuku founded the Young Kikuyu Association (YKA). YKA was a non-violent organization which pursued peaceful and structured liberation struggle with the government. The principal priority of YKA was the protection of land owned by Africans. In July 1921, YKA underwent a name change to become the East African Association (EAA). Later on the Kikuyu Central Association (KCA) and the Young Kavirondo Association in Nyanza were founded in 1924 (Mutiso, 1975).

In 1920 Kenya became a colony a period that was followed with consolidation of colonial rule. Odhiambo, (1972) noted that during this period Africans in Kenya were subjected to harsh and discriminatory policies developed and carried out by the Kenyan Colonial State which included land alienation, denial of representation, and servitude. Africans were compelled by this to express their worries through these early political associations. Accordingly the grievances of the emergent political groupings gravitated along labor issues, high taxation and the introduction of mandatory 'native identification cards known as the *Kipande*. In as much as these grievances were initially socio-economic, they eventually became political.

Beginning the 1920s there was a growing popularity of the emergent political groupings in Kenya. The colonial establishment was particularly concerned of the growing popularity and influence among urban and rural Africans. The colonial authority consequently enacted a variety of measures to limit their political activities. Some of these political organizations had their leaders imprisoned and expelled (Mueller, 1984)

When political parties were banned African resorted to the use of Trade Unions to voice their concerns in exploitative and discriminatory labor practices. Under colonial administration, trade unions were formed as a means of protest against working conditions. In this case foreign employers were involved, and the working conditions were due to both outside interference as well as the chaos and unpredictability brought on by the expansion of money economies and commercial production. As a result the history of colonial trade unions to date is one of resistance to imperial government as well as to working conditions. These labor organizations emerged in reaction to a variety of stimuli, including tribal alliances, workplace interactions, industrial disputes, political campaigns, international labor movements, and labor administration (Goodman 1969).

The various labor unions established in Kenya at various times played significant roles in the nationalist battles that led to the local population achieving independence. As noted by Singh (1969) the majority of trade unions in colonial Kenya were first and foremost anti-colonialist political groups, and because of this, they enjoyed good relations with the political parties established to guide Africans in their liberation fights. Due to their political activism against colonial rule, trade

unions actively engaged in politics acted as subordinates of political parties and nationalist movements, becoming tools of those political parties in those nationalist conflicts.

According to Mutiso (1975) strikes were organized by unions in favor of the party's nationalist goals. With the assumption that independent African governments run by Africans themselves would take into consideration their complaints after they had achieved independence, trade unionists campaigned for a sudden transition that would overthrow colonial regimes. When the colonial administrations refused to carry out the demands of the workforce, they openly urged strikes in an effort to destabilize them and hand control of the nations over to the African people. Trade union movements also established militant nationalism initiated by militant nationalist labor leaders. Trade union leaders resorted in using strong pressure to achieve their grievances that were manifested in terms of economic and political spheres in which freedom was insisted to be a means of meeting their objectives (Conchie, 2002).

Kithendu an elder argued that, among the Tharaka, the articulation of colonial capitalism and traditional modes of production gave rise to the emergence of a large population of young men who depended on paid labor for their survival. Thousands of young people took advantage of paid labor to better their economic fortunes. This happened as land which was their means of sustenance had been taken away. Tax obligations also forced thousands of reluctant young men to join the colonial labor force. Generally colonial labor policies were resisted by all and specifically young people from the region(Kithendu, O.I,June 21st 2023).

This study noted that, in Tharaka, young men resisted the introduction of taxation by the British colonial authorities. There were uprising by the warriors over the way tax compliance was effected. The youth resisted the confiscation of their cattle by the colonial authorities. The warriors armed with spears, arrows and stones drove away the tax collectors. This prompted the colonial government to retaliate by sending troops armed with guns to crush the rebellion. In most encounters dozens of Tharaka youth died or were injured by the British guns. This ultimately led to compliance with taxation requirements. Young men consequently became the object of antagonism due to their militant and confrontational posture towards the colonial state.

Not all resistance during the early years of European colonial rule took the form of political groupings with direct political goals. There existed religious movements with the goal of halting the erasure of African cultures. Africans frequently turned to religious movements to oppose the actions or policies of the colonial authorities' African proxies in Europe. Tensions between African societies and the colonial government were caused by struggles to maintain political independence and cultural domination. In the majority of situations this resulted in Africans breaking their ties to the colonial world(Kagwima, O.I,May 16th 2022).

In Kenya the imposition of colonial rule had significant effects on traditional African political systems. Traditional African political structures in Kenya were significantly impacted by the intrusion of colonial control. The ethnic group, its leaders, and its institutions were all positioned within a hallowed cosmic order in the majority of traditional African communities. Political groups frequently adopted their rules and sanctions from a religious cosmology and the mythology that represented and supported it. Additionally, in some societies, the political figurehead served as the conduit for the ultimate forces that acted for society's good. As a result the separation of the political and religious elements was brought about by the disruption of ancient integrationist institutions brought about by the entry of western ideas and power (Mutegi ,O.I,may 11th 2023).

Like in other parts of Colonial Kenya, the inhabitants of the youth in Tharaka were in the forefront in opposing Christianity and the doctrines it preached. They were against the attack of traditional Tharaka religion by Western Christianity. Many viewed Christianity as a religion for the white man and that it did not have a place amongst Africans.Gakii noted that;

> *"The indigenous people in Tharaka initially opposed Christianity and Western education because they were seen as an invasion of their culture by outsiders. In terms of leadership, there eventually developed a conflict of interests between the traditional elites (Agaambi) and the educated elites (Athomi), as the colonial administration preferred the appointment of the latter group to top positions. This did not go down well with the traditional elites". (Gakii, O.I, April 28th 2023)*

Christianity peached against and condemned the treasured practice of female circumcision among the Tharaka. Tharaka traditional circumcision ceremony *(gutaana)* was fundamental to the religious institution as well as the political,

social, cultural, and economic organization of the community. All Tharaka male and female, were required to engage in the exercise. No matter their age, anyone who had not undergone initiation was considered a "mere kid" and had no influence over anything that the community-at-large dealt with. There was a lot of opposition to the church's and the colonial government's contentious proposals about female circumcision. It was perceived as a severe violation of the local people's traditional sociocultural values. The introduction of colonial rule interfered with and weakened the Tharaka traditional way of life leading to resentment and resistance by the people (Murithi, O.I, June 3rd 2023)

The attachment to African traditional cultural practices eventually led to the emergence of independent African churches among the Tharaka. Scholars have documented on the emergence of African independent churches in Kenya. Brett (2002), notes the spread of the cult of cult of Mumbo, the serpent god of Lake Victoria in South-west Kenya from 1914 to 1934. According to Brett the Mumbo cult terrorized Christian converts by threatening them with violence. The Mumbo sect was a movement of anti-colonial resistance that aimed to drive out the colonialist and eradicate Christianity in the areas where it had sway.

Simiyu (1997) studies the Dini Ya Musambwa (BYM) among the Babukusu of western Kenya. The author attributes the rise of DYM to religious, political, economic, and social complaints against the British colonialists by the Babukusu. DYM was created through the actions of the colonial government, Christian missionaries, and white settlers, much like other autonomous sects that emerged during colonial periods (Ibid, 1997).

Numerous African Independent Churches sprouted up in the Mount Kenya area at various points and in different places. According to Mwiandi (1993) the African Independent Pentecostal Church of Africa (AIPCA) also known as *"Indembeneti"* locally emerged as a powerful movement with its own churches and school. Its headquarters were located in Githunguri, Kiambu, and it was based in Kikuyu territory. AIPC through the *Arathi* (prophets) was active in Nithi division before eventually spreading to the southern parts of Meru region in the 1930s. The Independent Church Movement was well-liked by the locals in the Meru region

who desired to practice their own religion and pursue their own education free from the influence of Europeans or missionaries.

Ndubai (2016) documented that the new church provided "a good alternative to individuals who wished to continue practicing some aspects of African culture such as female circumcision and polygamy which had been outlawed by mainstream Christianity. In a study of African independent churches Independent churches were founded in the Abothuguchi area in Kirigara, Kirungurune, Kithaku, Githoyene, and Kibirichia. The leader of AIPC was Archbishop Nathan Mukunga, who was based in Kithaku Church. He was deputized by Toma (Thomas) wa Thiuru, M'Muthamia wa Kabua, and Naftaly M'Rimberia wa M'Mukaria (Ibid, 2016).

The AIPC Church had a sizable following of devoted local adherents. The sermons and songs, which were primarily taken from the Old Testament, were delivered in African local dialectics mainly the Kikukyu and Meru languages. The African independent church movement "gained much appeal with the inhabitants of the wider Meru region and Tharaka in particular because it was viewed as an additional platform for expressing their complaints against missionary and colonial dominance. Additionally they had a lot of political messaging. In the Mount Kenya region independent churches and schools were burned down or otherwise demolished by the colonial authorities when the State of Emergency was declared in Kenya in 1952. (Black 2013)

4.3.3 Role of Tharaka Youth in the Colonial Liberation Movement, 1945-1963

Right from its inception the British colonial settlement and capitalist economy in Kenya destabilized the natives' subsistence livelihood. This ultimately sparked a nationwide anti-colonial insurgency between 1945 and 1963. According to Elkins (2005) the Mau Mau insurgency, which started in the early 1950s marked the height of the uprising. There were other pockets of insurgency around the nation, while the Mau Mau uprising predominated in the Kikuyu ethnic group's Mount Kenya region. These insurgencies include the 1895–1905 Nandi insurrection, the 1913–1914 Giriama revolt, the 1947 Muranga women's revolt, the 1950 Kalloa Affray rebellion,

the 1918–1919 Gusii revolt, which was prompted by the Kengere famine, and others (Alam, 2007); Anderson, 2005) (Parsons, 2011).

Many Kenyan ethnic communities sought to end British colonial rule which was oppressive, exploitative and discriminatory. Such ethnic communities included the Maasai, Luo, Abaluhya, Agikuyu, Ameru, Aembu, Akamba, Miji Kenda and the Tharaka. The approach, level, and scope of each community's involvement varied from one ethnic community to another. Different ethnic communities reacted to colonial control in various ways depending on the local conditions at the time. They did this by adapting their customary defense strategies for survival and using those strategies to battle the colonial overlord. Ndubai (2016) noted that the Agikuyu, Embu, Ameru and by extension the Tharaka, used the custom of swearing allegiance and song-based communication to unite their people and exchange secret messages with other followers of the Mau Mau Movement. Kaajiu noted that;

> *"Among the Tharaka there was a big number of Mau Mau fighters, Young people innovated ways in which they could communicate with the Mau Mau without raising suspicion from the colonial authorities. Young men were very instrumental in composing songs that encouraged the fighters in the forest. Due to their youthfulness, they were bettere placed to relay messages to the Mau Mau". (Kaajiu, O.I., June 17th 2023)*

The Second World War radicalized many young people among them the Tharaka who previously did not show interest in national liberation movements. An increasing number of young people demanded liberation of their countries beginning 1945. African nationalists in the post-World War II era got inspired by national liberation movement in other parts of the Third World and especially India that got its independence in 1947. Subsequently young men from the peasant and working class increased pressure on African liberation leaders for reforms in the labor sector and complete independence. After the end of the Second World War there was a substantial increase in the number of young people engaged in waged employment in either European farms or in the upcoming urban centers in the region. The adverse economic condition that accompanied the end of the war hit hard most waged employees especially the young men who had just joined the growing labor force. Many young people joined labor movements and actively participated in industrial action whenever it was called. This was an indication that young people and especially the employed had increasingly become aware of the benefits of reforms in the labor sector. The only avenue for increasing wages and improving working

conditions was through fighting for complete independence from the colonial authorities.

Scholars had noted of the domination of the young and educated elite in colonial liberation struggles in Kenya. Conchie (1985) noted that in Kenya young people were in the forefront in the colonial liberation struggle.. According to Conchie they included; Eliud Mathu, B.A. Ohanga, Tom Mbotela, Francis Khamisi, and James Gichuru, Tom Mboya, Bildad Kaggia, Fred Kubai, Paul Ngei, and Oginga Odinga. As in other regions in Kenya the youth in Tharaka were also mobilized in to the colonial liberation movements. The youth were mobilized through the main liberation political parties namely the Kenya African National Union (KANU) and the Kenya African Democratic Union (KADU).

This study examined the contributions of young people in Tharaka in the colonial liberation movements. It was noted that although the young educated elite was in the forefront in the national colonial liberation movement a majority of young in Tharaka were only mobilized as party supporters and voters. Elective leadership positions were dominated by old and senior politicians. At the time of the struggle for independence a majority of young people in Tharaka had low or no education at all. This factor curtailed their participation in elective and leadership positions in political parties. In spite of this limitation young people were actively mobilized in political party rallies. Kendi noted that;

> *"As young people he attended most of the meeting called by political parties to agitate for reforms and independence. Politicians would mobilize young people to sing and dance in political gathering. Young people were also urged to register for identity cards that could enable them to participate in the first independence elections between KANU and KADU"(Kendi, O.I.June 20th 2023)*

CHAPTER FIVE: THE NATURE OF YOUTH POLITICAL MOBILIZATION DURING THE SINGLE PARTY ERA IN THARAKA NORTH-SUB-COUNTY 1963- 1991

5.1 Introduction

Chapter five examined the nature of youth political mobilization in the single party era in Tharaka North-sub-County 1963- 1991. This was the period of single party dominance in Kenya under President Jomo Kenyatta and President Daniel Moi. It was captured here that the single party regimes of President Jomo Kenyatta and President Daniel Moi perfected the art of patron client relations; rewarding loyalists and punishment for dissenting voices. State capture of the youth in this period was visible.

5.2 Youth Political Mobilization in the Single-Party Regime, 1963- 1991

This section examined youth political mobilization during the single party era in Kenya between 1963 and 1991. Two political regimes were captured here namely; president the Jomo Kenyatta and president Daniel Moi single party regimes.

5.2. 1 Youth Political Mobilization in Tharaka North Sub-County in the Single Party Era of Jomo Kenyatta, 1963- 1978

After winning the general elections with a majority vote the KANU party formed the first internal self-government in Kenya with president Jomo Kenyatta as the first Prime Minister. This government was modeled along the British Westminster party system. According to this model, the executive authority remained vested in the Queen. The powers of the British Queen in the country were however exercised on her behalf by the resident Governor-General. The Governor-General in turn was to be advised by the Prime-Minister and the Cabinet.

According to Gertzel (1970) the Independence Constitution negotiated at Lancaster House in London sought to create among other structures, a diffuse legislative structure that would not be susceptible to undue influence from the executive arm of the government. The whole idea as expressed in the independence constitution was to create a broad basis for executive accountability.

This was achieved through the demise of a regionalized state system that was underscored by first a two-tier central legislature comprised of the Upper House (Senate) and the Lower House (House of Representatives) with a provision for the Senate to work as an effective check on both the Lower House and the executive. And second, the formation of regional governments and assemblies which had decision-making and legislative authority over a substantial range of matters (Ibid, 1970). These structures were safeguarded by rigid amendment procedures which virtually imposed an embargo on constitutional change in respect of certain important matters.

The significance of the above arrangement had to be emphasized. To begin with under the independence constitution, the latitude of power exercised by the Central Government was in principle severely limited. It was difficult for the executive to make major policy decisions without the input of parliament, the regional assemblies or both. Parliamentary superiority was clearly demonstrated as Parliament was supposed played a major role in the working of the constitution. Not only was its co-operation essential in the exercise of emergency powers, but it also had the powers to bring-down a government through a vote of no confidence. (Gachiri, O.I., July 2rd 2023)

As was later observed the KANU government changed the constitution to curtail parliament's powers of electing the president. Consequently, the Executive became stronger as parliamentary powers were diluted. The motive behind amending the constitution to increase the powers of the executive remains a critical issue of inquiry for this study. The curtailing of the powers of parliament marked of the beginning of presidential authoritarianism in Kenya.

Historically, the youth played a significant role in the struggle against colonial domination in individual states and in the African continent at large. However after the attainment of independence in their respective countries, the youth were marginalized in the political process with older politicians writing them off as a lost generation associated with violence (Everatt, 2000). Consequently, young people were curtailed in their participation in politics in the first decades of the post-independent period in different African states.

According to Mauki, the people of Tharaka North welcomed Kenya's independence with a lot of optimism. There were expectations that with the departure of the colonial leaders and their place taken by indigenous leaders, all Africa problems will be solved. People were optimistic that poverty and unemployment which mostly affected the youth will be a thing of the past. The newly independent government led by Africans had made various promises to the youth revolving around improving their status by incorporating them in governance. This was not the case leading to huge disappointments among the youthful population. Gacheri noted that;

> *"There were a lot of expectations that independence would solve the problems that the youth in Tharaka North faced under colonial rule. This included unemployment and bringing to an end discriminative and exploitative colonial policies. Young people were optimistic that the newly independent government led by Africans themselves will be able to address their problems". (Gacheri, O.I.,June 7th 2023)*

Although KANU won the independence elections, KADU and other small ethnic parties which had limited impact at the polls formed the opposition. At independence therefore Kenya was basically a two-party state. Ojwang (1986) however observes that the multi-party system in place remained weak and non-functional. He adds that during the brief period between independence and the dissolution of KADU, multi-party did not function in a meaningful way. In particular, the opposition did not fulfill its role effectively, nor did the government take the idea of opposition seriously.

Scholars have attempted to trace the rise of single party regimes in Africa. In Ghana Kwame Nkrumah institutionalized a one-party socialist regime making the Conventional People's Party (CPP) synonymous with the state. Malawi became a one-party state in 1966 under President Kamunzu Banda, with the Malawi Congress Party being the only recognized party. In Tanzania then the President Julius Nyerere made a strongly rooted for a single party state which he believed could guarantee unity among Tanzanians (Nyirabu, 2002).

 In Kenya the main opposition party KADU dissolved and merged with the ruling party KANU to make the country a *de facto* one party state (Widner, 1992).The rise of the single party state in post-independent Kenya occurred as President Jomo Kenyatta gradually centralized and monopolized executive powers.

This study examined youth political mobilization during the *de facto* single party rule under President Jomo Kenyatta. As note in chapter four the youth in Tharaka North were in the forefront in the independence liberation struggle. The youth actively participated in both and non-violent means in the decolonization process. The Mau Mau resurrection included a number of young people from Tharaka North who were dissatisfied with oppressive and exploitative colonial policies. In spite of the great sacrifices made the youth were sidelined in mainstream politics by the older politicians after independence.

This study noted that the emergence of the a *de facto* Single party state in Kenya beginning 1964 created room for governance based on autocracy and personality cult. What followed were centralization, consolidation and personalization of power by the office of the President in Kenya. Jomo Kenyatta like many other founding presidents in Africa justified the one party state on the basis of cultivating unity among the ethnically diverse citizens of the country. This study finds it enriching to examine aftermath of the dissolution of KADU and the cross over to KANU. Beginning 1964 factions emerged in the ruling KANU over the way the country was being governed. Two opposing camps emerged; the communist bloc led by Vice- President Jaramogi Oginga Odinga and the capitalist camp led by President Jomo Kenyatta. Factionalism within the ruling KANU culminated in the famous Limuru Conference which led to the resignation of Odinga as the vice-President. The Odinga group would later break away from KANU to form a new party the Kenya Peoples Union (KPU) in 1966. The registration of the KPU marked the reemergence of opposition politics in Kenya (Widner, 1992; Conchie, 2005).

In the large Meru region and Tharaka North in specific, the influence of the new opposition party were not felt as the entire region remained under the strong grip of the ruling party KANU. Political mobilization and recruitment continued to be through the ruling party KANU.

The KPU was ultimately banned in 1969 and its leaders detained bringing to an end the brief period of opposition politics. Kenya remained a *defacto* one party state in the entire period of Jomo Kenyatta rule.(Mutuma, O.I., April 27th 2023)

This move negatively affected youth political mobilization in Tharaka North. Samuel Mbiuki narrated that the dissolution of KADU to join the ruling party KANU in 1964 and the banning of KPU in 1969, meant that the only platform for political mobilization was through the only existing KANU party. At independence senior old politicians had dominated the rank and file of the ruling party at the disadvantage of young people. This acted to limit the avenues through which the youth could mobilize in politics. This is a trend that dominated youth political mobilization in Tharaka North throughout the president Jomo Kenyatta regime.

In Tharaka North the political status and position of young people remained unchanged even after independence. The institutionalization of the single party autocratic state acted to marginalize and restrict youth political mobilization. The provisions of the independent constitution that provided for equal political participation of all citizens were never actualized. The newly independent government in Kenya did not seriously undertake to transform the status of young people. The emergence of an authoritarian and overly centralized and old men dominated political system that was hostile to youth participation in public affairs in the country. The emerging old generation dominated authorities consolidated political control and relegated young people to the margins. It further solidified the patriarchal structures that characterized the colonial period. According to Kiogora;

> *"The Kenya African National Union (KANU), the party in power failed to recognize the role that the youth played in the struggle for independence. Young people were not adequately represented in government. Independence presented was a continuation of marginalization that young people in politics. Old politicians dominated in most sectors of government. The Kenyatta regime seems not to trust young people with issues of governance and leadership. This was well expressed in the naming of the first Cabinet which was dominated with old people The only Cabinet Minister from the larger Meru ethic community was Jackson Angaine and old and senior politician"(Kiogora, O.I.,April 28th 2023).*

The youth from Tharaka North sub-County continued to be sidelined under the Jomo Kenyatta administration, especially in the political representation. Despite their significant population very few young people ran for office during the entire Jomo Kenyatta administration. The few who ran for political office were discriminated based on their age. The overriding assumption was that it was the old generation that was capable of offering good leadership based on experience. The majority of the

youth only participated in shouting and dancing in rallies, mobilizing voters and voting for the old politicians.

Young people were frequently left out of politics which was often considered a forum for politically mature and seasoned men. Young people were routinely marginalized due to their age, lack of prospects and perceived inexperience. The youth were subsequently left out of the local and national political representation.

In as much as the KANU government was not keen in encouraging young people into vying for political positions there were exceptional cases in which the youth had gone against the grain to ascend to positions of leadership. A good example was Bernard Mate a former school principal from Chogoria who won against senior old politicians from the larger Meru region (Conchie, 1985). Unlike women, the youth in Tharaka North did not have organizations that they could use to mobilize in politics which would have eventually increased their participation in the political arena. This study did not record of the existence of any youth self-help group in Tharaka North sub-County during the Jomo Kenyatta regime in Kenya. Consequently, the youth were left at the mercy of male politicians who used them for campaigns during elections. The Jomo Kenyatta regime did little to encourage and mobilize young people into youth organizations. Although the ruling party KANU had a youth wing, the youth were mostly used by politicians to mobilize voters and unleash violence on opponents.

The youth winger in the ruling party KANU would unleash terror on opponents and also engage in acts of hooliganism as reported in an incidence in Kakamega in December 24th 1964 by the Asst. Regional Goverm, Ent Agent, Luraioi Division.

> *"On the 24th December, 1964 at about 4 am gang of about 12 KANU Youth wingers raided houses at Ingotse Sub—Location and demanded bribes from those who were found to be in possession of ᵗᵗtemboᵗᵗ without permits. One person was badly beaten and is receiving medical attention at the Kakamega Hospital. Six of them have so far been arrested and are in the Police Custody. The chairman of the branch has been talked to and has promised to discipline the Youth wingers under his umbrella" (KNA/DC/KMG/2/181/1964)*

Newspaper reports supported the use of the youth in unleashing violence during the 1974 general elections. It was reported that;

> *"Police in Nyeri are questioning two youth allegedly been part of a gang of 30 youth wingers who terrorized Ruguru location on Friday night. KANU Nyeri chairman Mr Njogu Githinji who condemned the hooliganism said that in Mathira alone, 15 people had been beaten up or injured by youth wingers since*

the campaign started. Some were cut when stones were hurled into a bar. The 25 customers were forced to crawl under the table". (KNA, 16/9/1974 Daily Nation Tuesday, 16th September 1974).

The Daily Nation Newspaper also reported of leaders in Mathira,Nyeri District condemning the use of youth wingers in violence in the 1974 general elections.

"A campaign meeting held on the 17th of September 1974 attended by 5000 people at Kayiaba chief's center in Mathira division of Nyeri condemned acts of violence by youth wingers. The meeting was addressed by one of the three candidates contesting the Mathira seat, Mr Kareithi Munube. Some youth wingers supporting another candidate challenged Mr Munube supporters causing a clash in which two people were injured. Mr Munube told the meeting that parliamentarians were supposed to join hands with their people, initiate and carry out development projects. The meeting was also attended by the district KANU chairman Mr Njogu Githinji who condemned the violence". (KNA 18/9/1974, Daily Nation, Wednesday 18th September, 1974).

The Daily nation also reported of the Kimilili District Officer, Mr J Mwaniki sounding a warning to the youth who engage in violent campaigns. In a fundraiser meeting at Kibengei Friends Harambee Secondary School in Kimilili it was reported that;

"Youth wingers who harass or molest wananchi would be dealt with according to the law. The DO for Kimilili, Mr J Mwaniki, warned over the weekend. Mr Mwaniki called on members of the public to report to both the administration authorities in their areas and the police any youth wingers who harass them. He urged youth wingers to campaign for their candidate's peacefully and not to force wananchi to like or dislike any of the candidates". (KNA, 30/9/1974, Daily Nation, Monday 30th September, 1974).

In as much as the youth were widely used by politicians to unleash violence during campaign periods, this study did not find evidence of engagement of the youth in violent campaigns in Tharaka North during the single party era of President Jomo Kenyatta. Generally, the youth in Tharaka North had low political representation both at the civic and parliamentary levels. Political mobilization of the youth during this period was only on electoral periods where they were engaged in campaigning for old politicians. The majority of the youth merely participated in elections as voters, supporters, dancers, and mobilizers. This happened in spite of the numerical advantage enjoyed by the youth in Tharaka North. The old generation in leadership positions was deemed to represent the interests of the youth. In spite of this marginalization there were a number of young people who went against the odds and played influential roles in leadership positions in the Sub-County. M'Thura wa Rware narrates of one Lawrence Iguna from Chiakariga;

"Lawrence Iguna a young man in his late twenties who was actively involved in the politics of Tharaka North. The young Iguna was twice elected under the ruling party KANU as a civic councilor of Chiakariga for two consecutive terms. During his tenure he was able to mobilize the youth in the area to improve their welfare and living standards. Iguna was a good example that young people were capable of being elected as leaders" (M'Thura wa Rware,O.I,July 1ˢᵗ 2023)

The next section examined youth political mobilization during the single party era of President Daniel Moi between 1978 and 1991.

5.2.2 Youth Political Mobilization in Kenya in the Single Party Regime of President Daniel Moi, 1978- 1991

After the death of president Jomo Kenyatta, president Daniel Moi took over as the new President in October 1978. Analyzing the Kenyatta succession Maxon and Ndege (1995) observed that a theme of continuity marked the presidency of Daniel arap Moi emphasized by the choice of *Nyayo* (footsteps) as the watchword of his administration. Economic interest groups and classes that had been influential during the Kenyatta era kept their positions under president Moi. This was the case of the older generation of leaders and power brokers. President Moi took over government during a time that the county's economy had been hit hard by the global economic crisis of the mid 1970s which had been occasioned by caused by the rise in the prices of crude oil and the decline of agricultural products at the international market The resultant economic decline in the country left young people in Kenya and Tharaka North sub-County more destitute and desperate. This was because the youth who bore the greatest brunt by being heavily dependent on farming for their livelihoods.

A year after having ascended to the presidency Moi made major reshuffles in his Cabinet of Ministers. In a clear shift from tradition Daniel Moi appointed some youthful Ministers to his Cabinet. Among the youthful politicians that Daniel Moi appointed to his Cabinet included; G.G. Kariuki, Robert Ouko, Nicholas K. Biwott, Joseph Kamotho, Andrew J. Omanga and Henry Koske.

The larger Meru region was represented by Gilbert Kabere M'mbijiwe who came from central Meru was already an elderly politician. No young person from Tharaka North was appointed to the cabinet.

It is also important to note that most of the young politicians appointed to the cabinet by President Daniel Moi were those who had strong connection to the ruling party elite.

In light of the above, this study examined the political mobilization of the youth in Tharaka North sub-County during President Daniel Moi's single party rule between 1978 and 1991. The eventual declaration of Kenya as a dejure one party state after the enactment of Section II (A) is assessed. The contributions made by the emerging youth groups in the political mobilization of the youth are discussed.

In the footsteps of his predecessor president Jomo Kenyatta, President Daniel Moi began power consolidation, personalization and centralization of power on the executive arm of government. Fearing the formation of a rival political party the president Moi government in 1982 amendment the constitution by introducing Section 2 (a) making Kenya a *de jure* single-party state. This move made it illegal to form a rival political party. This move had negative implications on the youth who had been sidelined by old politicians in the ruling and only political party KANU, which in essence was the only avenue for political mobilization and recruitment to elective positions were negatively affected. The hope of young people to contest on alternative parties for positions of leadership was dealt a huge blow. Young politicians and critics of the Daniel Moi regime were either detained or pushed into exiles. This included youthful university lectures lawyers and journalists. Among notable youthful academics and lawyers from the larger Meru community included Gotobu Imanyara and Kiraitu Murungi. The two as will be discussed in the later section of this chapter were very instrumental in the struggle for democracy and expansion of political rights in Kenya.

Oduor (2016), notes of the efforts made by President Daniel Moi to make the ruling party stronger in governance. The author adds that beginning 1982, Daniel Moi began a campaign to strengthen the ruling party KANU and make it relevant in the mind of Kenya. Subsequently, the ruling party KANU became into a prominent venue for political engagement.

Even though KANU's appeal as a mass movement had declined under Kenyatta, it was strengthened under the Moi administration. The party succeeded in gaining control over the state and civic society to the point that it nearly replaced all other

political actors in the political system. KANU was supported by a strong provincial administration and the civil service. Kenyatta ruled through the civil service while Moi ruled through the party (Widner, 1992).

Having realized the potential of the youth in politics as a result of their numerical advantage, president Moi made attempts to incorporate them in the ruling party structures. The ruling party KANU in 1983 moved to strengthen the youth wing which saw youth wingers functions expanded. The Moi government hence forth used party youth wingers to spread and ensure that party policies reached the grassroots. The KANU youth wingers became increasingly powerful and could also handle security and criminal issues in conjunction with the regular police. The youth wingers acted as the military wing of the party where in some cases they meted 'discipline' to those who did not toe the party line. Most ruling parties across Africa had youth groups that were originally created to mobilize political membership and carry out political indoctrination. Youth wings are tasked with mobilizing support for politicians to win or retain elections. This has made politicians to come to value the organizational abilities of party youth wings when it comes to electoral contests (Bob-Milliar, 2014)

Scholars had immensely documented of party youth wings in Africa. Resnick and Casale, (2014) defined a party youth wing as an organized group of individuals falling within the defined age bracket of the youth and who subscribe to and are willing to execute the ideologies and objectives of a political party. They add that most of the party youth wings comprise of under-educated and unemployed youths. Gyimah-Boadi (2007) traced the origin of party youth wings in Ghana to the liberation struggle against British colonial rule. The author noted that the Conventional People's Party (CPP) under Kwame Nkurma mobilized a group of young men known as the 'Veranda Boys" into a party youth wing. The Veranda Boys were tasked with helping the CPP achieve its objective of political independence. After independence the youth wing was vigorously involved in party activities. This set the precedence of PYWs in Ghana. Since then, succeeding political parties have continued the tradition of having youth organizations allied with them.

Roessler (2005) argued that upon the ascendency to power; Mobutu Sese Seko patronized a youth militia responsible for the arrest, torture and death of thousands for

political reasons in Zaire. In the same fashion, President Hastings Kamunzu Banda of Malawi in 1963 formed the Young Pioneers also known as *chiswes* (termites) as the youth wing of the Malawi Congress Party (MCP). The mandate of the youth group was the mobilization of the young people in national development. The MCP youth wing was eventually transformed into a militia to persecute pro-democracy groups in the early 1990s (Ibid, 2005).

Kagwanja (2005) documented that in Kenya, from the 1960s, the ruling party KANU and the opposition KADU mobilized their respective youth organizations in heated struggles for state power. The youth have over the years been complicit themselves or manipulated by power-drank, self-seeking politicians. In 1983 the KANU Youth Wing was established as part of the party's reorganization. The purpose of the KANU Youth Wing was to use the party to exert social control (Widner, 1992). The KANU youth wingers were charged with maintaining party loyalty and keeping an eye on opposition. Youth wingers actively participated in anti-crime initiatives a task traditionally handled by the police. Politicians employed the youth wingers extensively in the 1985 party elections.

To support the above sentiments, KNA/Daily weekly Review/March 1988 on use of youth wingers noted that:

> *"Political violence remained a relatively minor issue in Nairobi until the year 1988. It was during this period that KANU's youth wingers began to emerge as prominent figures in Nairobi, particularly as primary instigators of political violence. These youth wingers were deployed to bus terminals in Nairobi under the pretext of safeguarding the public from harassment by touts. Paradoxically, this led to frequent clashes between the youth wingers and the touts they aimed to replace, resulting in a few reported cases of fatalities. The role of KANU's youth wingers became even more significant during the general election held in the same year. Some Nairobi politicians allegedly enlisted the services of these youth groups during the nomination campaigns to intimidate their opponents. Consequently, the nomination day witnessed a notable increase in violence across various polling stations in Nairobi, with numerous individuals sustaining injuries as a result."(KNA/Daily weekly Review/March 1988)*

This study examined the strengthening of the KANU-youth wing in Tharaka North by the president Moi regime beginning 1983. The political mobilization of the youth through party youth wings was investigated. The study noted that the KANU youth wing during the single party rule in Tharaka North was connected with a multitude of activities aimed at advancing the objectives and goals of their parent parties. According to Johnston Mwongera a former KANU official, these activities included;

creating awareness on party ideologies, partaking in elections related matters like voter registration, elections monitoring agents, promoting party manifestoes, engaging in peaceful and violent protests, providing security to politicians and engaging in electoral violence. PYWs also served as breeding grounds or launching pads for political leaders hence contributing to leadership modeling (Kathenya, O.I., on June 23rd 2023)

Although political party wings were a noble objective of incorporating the youth into mainstream politics, such an objective was not achieved. Ideally party youth wings were to essentially create an avenue for the youth to participate and develop their skills through the main party structures in a number of ways. To begin with youth wings were to act as a powerbase for the youth within the party. Second, they were intended offer a training ground for young members in advancing their political careers. Third, youth wings were to provide a platform for young people to influence party policy development and leadership selection. Last, youth wings were to recruit young members to increase party strength. These objectives were never achieved as politicians in Tharaka North misused the KANU youth wingers for short term political goals.

Kibaara supported the above assertion by noting that KANU youth wingers in Tharaka North were used to undertake illegal activities by the party. Kibaara narrates that;

> *"Party youth wingers during the single party regime of Daniel Moi in Kenya engaged in the illegal seizure and control of public facilities. Youthful party foot soldiers typically illegally seized patronage facilities like bus terminals in order to seek rent for themselves and their allies as compensation for their support for the ruling party KANU. The youth wingers were notorious for unleashing violence on opponents of the ruling party. The KANU youth wing was utilized by President Daniel Moi to monitor and publicly persecute political opponents and those who disagreed with him. KANU youth frightened and demanded money from vendors and hawkers as well as the proprietors of commuter buses, taxis and other small businesses companies". (Kibaara, O,I April 26th 2023) .*

This study observed that KANU youth wingers comprised a very powerful group in Tharaka North during the single party era of President Daniel Moi and especially the period between 1983 and 1991. They charged with overall security of bus terminus and were also engaged in the crackdown on illicit brew in the area. The youth wingers had the power to arrest persons and lock them in without pressing any charges.

This power was often misused against critics of the government. The youth wingers also extorted money from offenders and innocent people. This is well noted by Kawira;

> *"It was common for the youth wingers to engage in operations to arrest those brewing illicit alcohol. They could do this with or without the police. To avoid being arrested one had to pay protection fees. The youth wingers had the power to arrest you and press charges in court. This was a group that was highly feared and nobody could stand in their way. They even controlled local markets and extorted money from small business people for them to be able to acquire stalls in those markets". (Kawira, O.I. ,May 3rd 2023)*

It was noted that KANU-youth wingers were mostly involved in anti-crime activities a jurisdiction that fell in the hands of the regular and administration police in Tharaka North. In conjunction with the area chief the youth wingers could apprehend law breakers and also performed the role of vigilante groups in urban centers. The youth wingers could extort money from business people and residence claiming that they were providing security in the area. The KANU youth wingers were widely used by politicians in political campaigns in the 1985 and 1988 general elections in Tharaka North. They were very instrumental in mobilizing voters to support specific candidates (Kageni, O.I.,June 1st 2023)

In spite of the importance of youth wings, political party leadership in Tharaka North never took the youth seriously during the president Daniel Moi single party era. Whenever young people in the party would disagree with party policy or position they were expelled from the party and in some cases the local branch of the youth wing banned or reconstituted. This happened at the will of local politicians who had the leverage to choose who the youth wingers were. A respondent gave an account of a popular young man from Tharaka North who was expelled from the local KANU-youth wing for challenging local leadership on development issues.

Mwiti narrated that;

> *"Philip Itere was a young man who had won the hearts of residence. He was actively involved in grass root mobilization of the youth on development matters and poverty eradication. In the run up to the 1988 snap elections, Itere challenged the incumbent councilor on the plight of the youth in the region. He went further to declare that he was going to challenge the civic laeder in the upcoming elections. This was not taken lightly as he was accused of colluding with robbers and engaging in criminal activities and expelled from the youth wing". (Mwiti, O.I.,May 13th 2023)*

During the Daniel Moi single party rule it was assumed that the mandate of the youth wings was limited to mobilization of voters during campaign periods and recruitment of new party members. Party youth wings were not given powers to influence nomination processes, set agendas or contribute in the formulation of party manifestos. When youth wings are supported by the political elite they fail to provide an environment that could overcome challenges that young people faced in participating in electoral and internal party processes.

In Tharaka North the KANU-Youth Wing was the main channel through which the ruling party coordinated patronage of resources to mobilize support for the re-election of the government in the run-up to the 1992 multi-party elections. This will be discussed in detail in chapter six of this study.

This study examined youth mobilization in Tharaka North during the clamor for political reforms during the president Daniel Moi's single party regime. Scholars have immensely documented on youth political mobilizations during the struggle for multiparty. Obudho and Aduwo (1992) document that the youth political mobilization in urban spaces is influenced by shifting socio-economic fortunes in major urban areas in Kenya. Population growth coupled by the high rural to urban migration resulted in a strain in urban shelter and high unemployment rates especially among the youthful population The growing population of the unemployed, the underemployed and the overworked youth provided a ready army for political mobilization and hire by politicians for political tasks.

According to Nyong'o (1989), the youth became politically active joining the pro-reform crusaders beginning the 1980s confronted by a myriad of problems blamed on the states' inability to reduce the cost of living. The politically charged urban youth cheered the movement for change. Urban youth joined the emerging pro-reform groups battling the Daniel Moi single party regime at the local levels.

Kanyinga (1994) adds that pro-reform crusaders banked on youth numbers in making their meetings a success and in countering the police and the ruling party youth wingers. Kanyinga and Njeru (2002) argued that the pro-reforms movements of the early 1990s were led by young professionals popularly known as the "Young Turks" who comprised lawyers, university lecturers and business persons keen to have political reforms in the country. Taylor, (1992) asserted that the main tool of pushing

for political reforms was the use of the urban youthful crowd. The numbers became very effective in the reform struggle Demands for political reforms appealed to the youthful urban crowds and subsequently insulated the youth from ethnic mobilization that was associated with the elderly and senior politicians Efforts by the urban youth finally paid when the Daniel Moi government gave in to political reforms in late 1991.

In Tharaka North the youth were actively involved in the pro-reform struggles against single party dictatorship. The reform crusade brought hope to thousands of disillusioned youth who saw hope in change. Young people were actively involved in mobilizing residents to attend the pro-reform meetings most of which were violently dispersed by the police. The youth in the area could congregate in urban centers and actively dialogue on political issues. Gakundi recalled that;

> *"In the evening the local shopping centers were filled with young who gathered to listen to foreign news from the BBC on the progress on the pro-reform struggle. The KBC being government owned could not air anti-government news. Young people would afterwards congregate in bars and continue with the reform conversation as they enjoyed their liquor late into the night" (Kakundi, O.I.May 11th 2023,)*

The youth in Tharaka North took part in anti-government protests at the local and also at the national levels. Young people operating small business mainly hawkers and touts in the transport sector rebelled against the government and the KANU-Youth Wingers manning bus terminus and extorting them of protection fee and party membership fee in the area. In agitating for change the youth could at times paralyze public transport through street demonstrations.

Gradually the political mobilization of the youth in Tharaka and especially in urban centers gained momentum. Grievances revolving around unemployment and hopelessness acquired a political character. The youth demanded for the removal of the youth wingers who controlled and regulated the informal sector with the support of the ruling party KANU which was also the governments. It is this demands that formed the basis for the organization of opposition politics focused on the re-introduction of multi-party politics and opening up of the democratic space by expansion of rights and freedoms. Youth mobilization during the pro-reform period revolved around two antagonistic groups. The result was the emergence of two distinct politically mobilized youth groups.

On one hand was the KANU youth wing that was keen to maintain the status quo while on the other hand was the opposition cheering crowds that supported reforms in the political system. The two antagonistic groups struggled for the control and influence especially in urban areas. An observable trend was the emergence of a poor urban youth group that served as an inspiration for those promoting multi-party politics.

To counter the growing popularity of the opposition, president Moi through KANU organized two parallel youth organizations namely; the youth for KANU 92 (YK 92) and Operation Moi Win (OMW). These two youth organizations became the main platforms for coordinating KANU's campaign in the run up to the December 1992 Multi-party elections. The KANU allied youth groups were also tasked with countering the militancy associated with youth groups associated with the opposition (Kanyinga, 1994). Led by youthful politicians and business persons notably Cyrus Jirongo and William Ruto among others, the YK 92 politically mobilized the youth with promises that the ruling part KANU was poised to change from within which would in turn create employment opportunities for the youth and other marginalized groups. The YK 92 was able to stamp its presence at the local and national level with the support of the local provincial administration and state funded campaign finance. Some of the leaders of the organization enriched themselves financially through their position at the expense of improving the socio-economic positions of the youth (Kanyinga and Njeru, 2002).

The YK 92 was disbanded after KANU and Moi won the 1992 general elections albeit with a slim margin. The move to disband the outfit was aimed at deflating the inflated political image of its youthful leaders which worried senior politicians within the ruling party KANU. In as much as Moi and KANU benefited from youth support in the run-up to the 1992 general elections, they offered nothing in return. Although young people are predominantly organized within the framework of party youth leagues for political mobilization, such youth leagues are not adequately structured and institutionalized. Additionally, their mother parties view them with suspicion and disinterest. Consequently the youth wings of political parties have little influence on decisions and development of their mother political parties.

CHAPTER SIX: THE IMPACTS OF THE RE-INTRODUCTION OF MULTI-PARTY POLITICS ON YOUTH POLITICAL MOBILIZATION IN THARAKA NORTH SUB-COUNTY, 1991 TO 2022

6.1 Introduction

Chapter five had examined the nature of youth political mobilization in the single party era in Tharaka North Sub-County, between 1963 and 1991. Chapter six assessed the impacts of the re-introduction of multi-party politics on youth political mobilization in Tharaka North Sub-County between 1991 and 2022. This chapter argued that the wind of change in Kenya in the 1990s brought high expectations that the re-introduction of multi-party politics accompanied by expansion of civil liberties would lead to improved institutions and improved governance. It was also expected that this would positively impact on youth political mobilization in Tharaka North sub-County.

6.2 Youth Political Mobilization Tharaka North Sub-County During theMultiparty Era, 1991- 2002

As mentioned in chapter five the end of the 1980s was marked by agitation for reforms. There emerged a movement towards the agitation for an increase in the political space. Reform crusaders concentrated their energies towards fighting for the reintroduction of multiparty politics and periodic elections based on universal suffrage and democratic ideals. The youth in most African countries were very instrumental in the democratic struggle. This has been handled in chapter five.

The end of cold war politics between the United States and the United Soviet Socialist Republic (USSR) in the end of the 1980s ushered in a wave of democratization that brought with it a number of political reforms in different countries of Africa, Kenya included. The new wave of democratization resulted in the adoption of multi-party systems of governance which replaced single party regimes that were prevalent in the African continent. Beginning the early 1990s a new wave of democratic change swept sub-Saharan Africa precipitating political reforms.

Scholars had documented on the wave of democracy that led to the transition from single party regimes to a multiparty democracy. Huntington (1991) captured the four waves of democratic change that began from Eastern Europe and spread to sub-

Saharan Africa replacing authoritarian single party regimes with democratic forms of governance. Bratton & Van de Walle (1997) narrated how the emerging the neo-liberal global order put pressures on single party authoritarian regimes to embrace democratic reforms. An emerging popular belief in anew trajectory in global politics defined by multiparty politics became the order of the day (Kanyinga, 2003).

According to Maina, et al (1990), the emerging democratic wave beginning in Portugal and Spain in the 1970s revolutionized politics in Africa. The youth in numerous African countries were direct participants in demonstrations and revolts against single party dictatorships. The liberation movement which was dominated by young leaders was at the forefront in demanding for political reforms. Consequently, party pluralism became synonymous with good governance. The significant changes in the political landscape redefined youth political mobilization generally in the African continent and Kenya in particular. Kenya, like other African nations, was compelled to embrace party pluralism and widen the political sphere. The youth in numerous African countries were direct participants in demonstrations and revolts against single party dictatorships. Members of the civil society and professional bodies which were dominated by young leaders such as the Law Society of Kenya (LSK) demanded for political reforms.

Despite the fact that the clergy and a few politicians joined hands to press for the re-introduction of multiparty politics in the country to which the State was strongly opposed pluralism KNA Weekly review of December 1991 asserted that:

> *"To quell the voices advocating for multi-partism, the KANU government took deliberate steps to enlist additional youth groups with the explicit purpose of intimidating and physically assaulting proponents of the multi-party system. Newspaper reports from 1991 were replete with accounts of these youth groups engaging in acts of harassment, intimidation, and violence against individuals known or suspected to support multi-party politics, particularly in specific areas of Nairobi. In response to the pervasive disruptions of political rallies, each opposition party began recruiting its own youth groups to counter the attacks orchestrated by KANU and to ensure the safety of their members during their activities. Consequently, the Kamukunji rally held in late 1991, which was organized jointly by opposition parties, witnessed a surge in violence. The clashes that unfolded pitted the police, the General Service Unit (GSU), and KANU-affiliated youth groups against a united front comprising supporters, sympathizers, and youth groups affiliated with opposition parties who had gathered for the event. The repercussions of this confrontation were grave, with ten individuals losing their lives, and hundreds suffering injuries in the ensuing melee. Moreover, property amounting to millions of Kenyan shillings was plundered both within the city and in the surrounding neighborhoods."(KNA Weekly review of December 1991)*

Young people continued to unleash violence as evidenced by KNA Weekly review of April 10 1992 which noted that:

> *"As anticipated, instances of violence erupted in various locations within Nairobi's slum areas, including Kangemi, Kawangware, Dagorreti, Githurai, Mathare Valley, and the nearby Eastleigh residential areas. During these incidents, law enforcement authorities engaged in confrontations with groups of young individuals who engaged in acts such as pelting vehicles with stones and setting up roadblocks using burning tires. In Kangemi, for instance, there were reports of five vehicles being set on fire, including a Falcon security van and a Kenya Post and Telecommunications (KP&T) corporation van. Additionally, a tourist van traveling along the Nairobi-Nakuru road sustained severe damage, and its occupants were robbed of their belongings. In Githurai, a group of young individuals attempted, unsuccessfully, to damage a railway bridge before targeting a Kenya Breweries truck transporting beer from the company's Ruaraka facility to Kawangware. Another KP&T vehicle faced significant damage in Dagoretti, and multiple private cars were subjected to stone-throwing incidents. Throughout these events, riot police and members of the paramilitary General Service Unit found themselves engaged in clashes with the youthful rioters along Juja Road, which serves as the dividing line between the Eastleigh residential area and the Mathare Valley slums."(KNA Weekly Review of April 10 1992)*

In several African countries, the extension of political liberties and political involvement became necessary with the reintroduction of multi-party politics due to the then-current global conditions. Kabemba and Eiseman (2004) give an example of Zambia where Article 4 of the constitution which was amended to reintroduce political pluralism in December 1990. Nyirabu documents of Tanzania that amended Article 3 of the constitution to allow for competitive politics in May 1992. In December 1991 the Daniel Moi regime in Kenya repealed Section 2 (a) that had previously banned party pluralism to allow competitive party politics in the country (Mbai, 2003)

As noted earlier the youth in Kenya by being direct participants in demonstrations and revolts against single party dictatorships, were also the greatest beneficiaries in the emerging political landscape. This study found it enriching to explore the changes in youth political mobilization from a global perspective as a result of the reintroduction of multiparty politics. This enabled this study to make a comparison between the two eras and to have a clear understanding of the resultant changes in the political landscape.

The political engagement of the youth in the post-cold war era has been given considerable scholarly attention globally. Sloan (2018) decried the growing lack of interest among young people in politics in the United Kingdom. Accordingly young people between the ages of 18 and 24 have an alarmingly low general election

turnout. The youth continue to be engaged in politics and are involved in other forms of political participation. Here the question of youth political engagement is raised. Dycke-Norris (2008) documented on the 2008 presidential elections in the Unites States. The author identifies increased political engagement and civic education as causes of the rise in young people's participation in voting in the 2008 presidential elections. It is added here that previous to this young people all around the United States appeared lost in political matters as evidenced by the poor voter turnout in past presidential elections.

According to Görkem Atsungur (2013), in post-cold war Russia, youth represented progress and provided assurance for a socialist future. The communist party was directly governed by youth. However, as communism and the Soviet Union began to fall apart in the late 1980s, youngsters lost interest in and apathy toward politics.

In contrast to widely held perceptions of youth alienation and detachment, Kunduri (2017) discovered that young people in India are actually extremely interested in political matters. This contrasts with events in the US and the UK where it appears that young people do not vote.

In Kenya the return to competitive party politics led to the formation of a number of political parties. The original opposition forces converged and formed the Forum for the Restoration of Democracy (FORD), a pressure group that was converted into the first opposition party after the repeal of Section 2 (a). FORD was seen as a progressive force by Kenyans who were dissatisfied with the ruling party KANU authoritarian tendencies. Power struggles within FORD would later lead to the emergence of FORD-Kenya (FORD-K) and FORD-Asili (FORD-A). Other political parties that emerged during that period included the Democratic Party of Kenya (DPK), the Kenya National Congress (KNC), the Kenya Social Congress (KSC) and Party of Independent Candidates of Kenya (PICK) (Apollos, 2001). The main support base for the newly formed opposition parties were young urban dwellers across the country. Young people joined the opposition ranks for desired change. Kenyan youth flocked to the streets to demand change.in response to the erosion of human rights and mounting unemployment. As a result, youth political participation in Kenya grew in numbers and magnitude.

This study tackled rise in youth political mobilization in the advent of the re-introduction of party pluralism in Tharaka North sub-County. This study noted that the main political parties in competition for political power in the larger Meru region included the ruling party KANU and the two opposition parties DPK and FORD-A led by Mwai Kibaki and Kenneth Matiba respectively. According to Nyamu the ruling party KANU had an upper hand in comparison to the two opposition parties in Tharaka North sub-County. This he attributed to patronage and use of state resources to buy political support in the region.

The respondent added that in as much as the old generation strongly supported the ruling party KANU, most of the youth in the region identified with the opposition party DPK (O.I. Nyamu, Kathuana, 4th May, 2023). This is echoed by Wawira who noted that;

> *"The old generation who preferred a status quo was easily bribed with goodies such as foodstuffs and cheap money to support and vote for the ruling party KANU. In contrast, most young people from the region openly showed support for the opposition party DPK led by Mwai Kibaki. They did this despite the fact that DPK did not use a lot of oney in its campaigns as compared to the ruling party KANU. This was a clear indication that young people wanted change"* (Wawira,O.I May 21st 2023)

The return of multiparty politics in Africa brought with it a number of significant changes. These included; registration of rival political parties, expansion of political rights and freedoms, open political mobilization and freedom of the press. The above changes had a great impact on youth political mobilization in the continent in general and Kenya in specific. Kalyango and Adu-Kumi (2012) documented of increased youth political mobilization with the advent of multiparty politics in Ghana after many years of President Jerry Rawlings single party rule. Kabemba and Eiseman (2004), noted of an emerging vibrant youth political movement in Zambia that they attribute to the return of multi-party politics. Accordingly the youth were visibly present in political campaigns and voting in the 1991 general elections that led to regime change. The youth were instrumental in the defeat of President Kenneth Kaunda by opposition leader Fredrick Chiluba (Ibid, 2004). Discussing political participation in Tanzania after the return of multiparty politics, Nyirabu notes of the role played by the youth in political campaigns. Mbai (2003) and Kanyinga (2003) noted that the return of multiparty politics in Kenya increased youth awareness in politics. This had the effect of increasing youth political mobilization countrywide

whether in support of the ruling party KANU or the opposition. The youth in Kenya were direct participants in political campaigns and direct voting in the 1992 general elections.

This study examined the significant changes brought about by the return to multiparty politics on youth political mobilization. Ngugi noted of that;

> *"The widening political space gave the youth an opportunity to mobilize and assert their influence in the politics of the region. Prior to this the youth in Tharaka North sub-County had limited opportunities in terms of access and participation in politics. The respondent added that in the single party state the only platform for recruitment to politics was through the ruling party KANU which was dominated by old politicians. In this case the old politicians were the ones who decided the extent to which young people could participate in politics"(Ngugi, O.I., 6th May, 2023)*

The opening of the democratic space in the country acted as a boost to the youth in Tharaka North to actively mobilize and participate in politics. The number of youthful candidates in the 1992 general elections both for parliamentary and civic positions increased. This was confirmed by Richard Mutegi who claimed to have contested a civic seat in the defunct Chuka Municipality on the opposition party DPK in the 1992 general elections. Mutegi notes that although he lost the contest he proved that young people (Mutegi, *O.I.*, 14th May 2023).

This study noted that Mutegi was not the only youthful candidate in the parliamentary and civic elections of 1997. Mwenda Murungi a retired politician confirmed that in the 1992 general election the DPK fielded 26 youthful civic candidates across the larger Meru region with 2 contesing in what ids Tharaka North sub-County today (O.I. Mwenda Murungi, Kathagachini,18th May 2023).

From the above it can be noted that the number of young politicians contesting for political positions increased in the 1992 general elections. This reinforces the argument that the return of party pluralism in Kenya had a positive impact on youth political mobilization. Consequently the youth in Tharaka increased their political mobilization. In as much as there was an increase in the number of young people contesting for political positions, all most of them were candidates in civic positions as opposed to contesting parliamentary seats.

Another observation which was also supported by field interviews was that most of the young people aspiring for political positions were sponsored by the opposition parties and not the ruling party KANU. This was a clear indication that despite the expansion of the political space the ruling party KANU leadership in Tharaka North sub-County continued to be dominated by old and conservative politicians. The young and revolutionary politicians were mostly domiciled within opposition parties.

This raised the question as to whether the re-introduction of multi-party politics resulted into any substantial change in the political landscape in Kenya. Throup and Hornsby (1998) observed that the transition from single party to multi-party system did not bring any meaningful change as expected. The political landscape did not change substantially besides opening up the political space. In Kenya the expected regime change did not take place. According to Murunga and Nasong'o (2006), there was no substantial change in the way politics in Africa was conducted. It remains a big question as to whether the re-introduction of multiparty politics increased youth political mobilization. This study interrogated the relationship between competitive politics and youth political mobilization. The question as to whether the re-introduction of multi-party politics represented continuity rather than a discontinuity in youth political mobilization was addressed. Murage notes that;

> *"There was no substantial change in the manner in which the youth mobilized in politics. What were witnessed were the same strategies used. The emerging opposition parties which claimed to be fighting for reforms were not different from the ruling party KANU. This was witnessed in the way in which they conducted their nomination processes which were marred by violence and other irregularities. The emerging opposition parties in the same way as KANU gave the young people a raw deal. Getting a nomination slot in the major parties in Tharaka North depended on the wealth status of the candidate and connection to the party leadership which gave old politicians an advantage over the young and poor politicians"* (Murage , O.I. 26th May 2023)

In representative democracies recruitment to political positions is through political parties. Such a party-centric leadership recruitment system worked against young people in Tharaka North sub-County. This is due to the fact that such political parties are dominated and controlled by old men who also have the advantage of controlling substantial wealth. Party primaries therefore became the biggest barriers to young people ascendency to political office.

6.3 Youth Political Mobilization in Tharaka North in the post-KANU Era 2003-2013

The era of Daneil Moi Presidency and KANU came to an end in January 2003. As noted in the previous section the president Moi led KANU government did not seriously take steps in enhance youth participation in politics. Consequently youth mobilization in politics remained low. Young people were only mobilized during electoral periods to hunt for votes for old and influential male politicians. Surprisingly, President Daniel Moi settled on a young politician Uhuru Kenyatta as his preferred successor. This would turn out to be KANU waterloo as the decision sparked a rebellion within the ruling party with some members of the party joining hands with the opposition National Rainbow Coalition (NARK) led by Mwai Kibaki. Subsequently NARCK defeated KANU in the 2002 general elections making Mwai Kibaki to be the third President of Kenya.

The exit of Moi and the entrance of Mwai Kibaki to the throne represented the youth with an opportunity to enhance their political mobilization. The 2002 general elections were historical elections for being the country's first post-multiparty transition elections. As required by the constitution, President Moi, having served two consecutive terms was ineligible to contest. Therefore, his successor was the main focus of all political developments. A lot of political activity was also evident throughout the election year as parties and politicians repositioned themselves ahead of the elections.

According to Ndegwa (2003), the period starting 2003 in Kenya marked a new chapter in party politics in Kenya. To begin with the country was for the first time since independence being governed by a new political party other than the independence party KANU that had been in power for close to forty years.

The transition from KANU and Daniel Moi to Mwai Kibaki and NARC was greeted with a lot of pomp and fanfare coupled with positive expectations by a majority of Kenyans. Many Kenyans dubbed the transition the Third liberation. When Mwai Kibaki came to power the NARC, government was very popular and Kenyans expected a lot of positive changes (Murunga and Nasong'o, 2006). The election results produced euphoria and a sense of national unity unlike any prior election. The

youth in Kenya played a leading role in the so called third liberation. This was demonstrated by the large youth turn out in the 2002 elections. The post-Moi era in Kenya gave the youth an opportunity to mobilize and participate in local and national politics. Mwai Kibaki was eventually declared the winner in the subsequent elections giving hope to the youthful voters that change had finally come.

This study examined youth political mobilization in Tharaka North Sub-County during the 2002 general elections. It was noted that the dormant political parties in Tharaka sub-County during the 2002 general election were the ruling party KANU and NARC. It was noted that both parties opened their doors to youthful politicians in both civic and parliamentary elections. Nkatha supported this by arguing that

> *"There was a substantial increase in the number of young people going for elective posts in both parties. Comparatively NARC had a higher number of young people than KANU aspiring for political positions in Tharaka North. Even more NARC had a strong presence in the area as compared to KANU. Most of the youth in the region were seen to be identifying more with NARC than KANU. This could be attributed to the revolutionary promises made by NARC. This was reflected in the final outcome of the 2002 general elections in which NARC carried the day in the region"(Nkatha, O.I. , 31st May 2023)*

This study observed that there was active youth mobilization by both political parties in Tharaka north sub-County in the run up to the 2002 general elections. The youth were very vibrant in mobilizing votes for individual politicians and attending rallies. The youth was also in many cases hired by the political elite to unleash terror on opponents.

The pattern of employing young people in violence still existed even in the sun-set days of KANU. However, the outcome of the 2002 general elections did not reflect much on a significant increase in youth political representation. Overall youth political mobilization remained low. In Tharaka North sub-County young people spectated as old male politicians tightened their hold on political power as they continued to marginalize and exploit them. The belief that young men were still not ripe for leadership positions seemed to hold. Subsequently, the youth continued to be marginalized in political participation.

Within less than six month of President Mwai Kibaki's regime cracks began to emerge in NARC. NARC captained on a platform of ending corruption that was mostly associated with KANU, enacting a people driven constitution, ending ethnicity

and nepotism in government appointments and creating a free and democratic society (Daily Nation, November 22nd , 2002). Most important of these promises was the enactment of a new constitution as the fulfillment of the other promises was highly depended on this. The memorandum of understanding (MOU) which was to be honored through expansion of the executive to accommodate summit members through the creation of new positions such as the Prime Minister and Deputy Prime Minister could only be possible through enacting the constitution (Wanyande, 2006).

The decisive factor in the disintegration of the NARC government was its failure to enact a people driven constitution in 100 days as promised. The ability of NARC to stand as strong coalition was tested with the 2005 Constitutional referendum. Voting in the November 2005 referendum was pegged on voting YES represented by the symbol of the banana and NO represented by the symbol of an orange. The YES side was championed by the government while the NO side was supported by the opposition. The government side lost the referendum to the opposition leading to the final disintegration of the coalition.

The youth in Tharaka actively mobilized in the November 2005 constitutional campaigns. Youth political mobilization mostly revolved around the NARC faction of government considering that region was the stronghold of the then President Mwai Kibaki. This did not however mean that they were no opposition supporters in the region.

Muturi recalled of how they could wake up every day to campaign for the constitution to go through. We were paid an allowance for what we did throughout the campaign period. The provincial administration through the local chiefs was instructed to ensure that the government project carried the day. Senior politicians mobilized young people to campaign, attend meetings and vote for the 2005 constitution. The sad thing is that the government side lost the vote (O.I., Muturi, Maragwa 14th may 2023).

After losing the 2005 referendum the then President Mwai Kibaki dissolved and reconstituted his Cabinet. Mwai Kibaki took the opportunity to rid his government of ministers who had openly campaigned against the government draft constitution. The NO side of the referendum campaign identified by the orange symbol broke from government to form a formidable opposition, the Orange Democratic Movement

(ODM) to challenge the incumbent president in the December 2007 general elections. The youth in Kenya was subsequently mobilized in the hotly contested general elections of 2007 which pitted president Mwai Kibaki led Party of National Unity (PNU) and Raila Odinga led ODM. The elections were followed by violence that threatened to turn into a civil war. The impasse was only successfully broken by the African Union's intervention through a mediation mission led by Kofi Annan with the occurrence of post-election violence in Kenya in 2008.

Scholars have documented on political mobilization of the youth in the 2007 general elections and the post-election violence of 2007/2008 in Kenya. Bosire (2012), noted of the preference by politicians to involve the youth in political campaigns in the 2007 general elections. He mentions well-funded and politically connected youth groups such as *Warembo na Kibaki.* Bosire adds that even the ODM side led by Raila Odinga actively mobilized young people in its campaigns.

Kagwanja (2010), documented on the roles played by the youth in the 2007 general elections and the post-elections violence of 2008 in Kenya. The author notes that the youth in Kenya were mobilized by politicians from government and the opposition to engage in violence against opponents and innocent people. The youth were condemned in past politically instigated election related violence in Kenya. The have been condemned for engaging in violence as ethnic warriors.

What has been less acknowledged is that young people have been the biggest casualties of electoral violence as a majority of them have lost their lives or suffered serious injuries. The role played by the youth in Tharaka in the 2007 general elections and the violence that followed was investigated by this study. Kagwira had the following to say;

> *"In the entire Tharaka North the campaigns and voting during the 2007 was generally peaceful. There were few incidences of skirmishes between rival candidates on allegations of vote rigging. In the post-election violence that followed the region remained peaceful as other parts of the country erupted in violence. This could be attributed to the peaceful nature of the Tharaka people".* (Kagwira, O.I., 15th May 2023).

In the 2007 post-election violence, Kenyan youth were criticized for their part in the politically motivated and election-related ethnic clashes. They were also criticized for acting violently as ethnic warriors. However, what receives less attention is the fact

that the youth although criticized, continue to be the majority of casualties and victims.

It cannot be denied that a majority of those who lost their lives and suffered displacements were women, children and young people. The prevalence of electoral violence in Kenya has been acknowledged by numerous scholars. However, little is known about the nature and scope of youth involvement in electoral violence beyond the observation that youth are almost always the one social group that is most visibly involved and used to penetrate and spread violence.

It has been noted that the Mwai Kibaki administration did not have the interest of the youth at heart. Odhiambo (2010) argued that president Kibaki's government failed to incorporate youth in his administration. Youth who actively held demonstrations, campaigns and protest to get Kibaki into government were agitated as they did not get a fair share for their effort. Instead Kibaki gave lucrative positions to old and retired personalities majorly hard core and business tycoons from Kikuyu, Embu, Meru elites and tribes that were politically regarded as GEMA from Central Kenya.

6.3.1 Emerging Trends in Youth political Mobilization in Tharaka North sub-County, 2013- 2022

The period begging 2013 marked a new era in the politics of Kenya. Prior to this a new constitution was enacted in August 2010 to prevent the country from sliding into another post-election violence as witnessed in the year 2007. Beginning 2008 efforts were made to enact a people driven constitution. The revised harmonized draft constitution by the Committee of Experts was subjected to a national referendum on August 4th 2010. The new constitution was backed by 67% of voters in Kenya. The promulgation of a new constitution in Kenya in August 2010 was greeted with a lot of expectations that youth political participation and representation was going to be improved. It was the feeling of many that a substantial increase in youth political representation in the country was going to be achieved.

A majority of young people overwhelmingly voted in favor of the August 2010 constitution because of the promises made to them. The youth were to enjoy benefits that they previously did not enjoy thanks to the new constitution. These included the

establishment of elective nominated seats in the National Assembly. The constitution also prohibited discrimination based on age, gender or disability. The 2010 Constitution was adopted as a result of mounting political and popular pressure to remedy the shortcomings of the post-colonial democratic system marks a significant turning point in Kenyan politics. Increased calls for democratization and a more inclusive, rights-based paradigm of state-society relations were mirrored in opposition forces and a youth movement that was becoming more active.

The 2013 general elections were conducted under a new constitution that provided for a devolved structure of government. The devolved structure provided for the establishment of 47 County governments and count assemblies. The legislative arm of government consisted of two chambers; the National Assembly and the Senate. It is under the new constitution that Tharaka County was created.

Scholars have documented on the connection between elections and violence in Africa. The main perpetrators of electoral violence were the youth. Maringira and Gukurume (2020) examined the dynamics of youth patronage and violence as a tool of political mobilization by Mugabe's ZANU-PF in urban spaces. In this study these scholars show that Mugabe has been able to remain in power is through his ability to transform his political position into a source of opportunities for his political clients. The youth they argue were mobilized through party structures to mate violence against perceived opponents of the system. ZANU-PF had a huge network of political clients who mostly included the youth.

Raleigh (2016) observed that in a number of African countries politically connected militia groups have been the main agents of politically induced violence. Although militia violence in Africa was largely attributed to reactions to disorder during civil wars, the occurrence has been a feature of emerging democracies without civil wars. The main objective of political violence is changing of the political landscape, increasing political power for the political elite, protection of supportive ethnic communities and punishment of opponents. The use of violence is in these instances rewarded by the political class in democratic institutions in Africa. Politically connected armed groups assist the political elite through the use of illicit violence. By design, such militia groups promote violence with the objective to either conform to

or confront regime agenda (Dodez, 2021). The existence of militia induced violence help to understand power struggles and completion for power in African countries.

Periods of electioneering in most African countries have been accompanied by heightened political mobilization. Turnbull (2021) analyzed gubernatorial elections in Nigeria. The author notes of conditions in which the political class recruit prominent social movement personalities igniting pre-election violence. In Nigeria it is added, gubernatorial elections are hotly contested with incumbent governors and the local ruling party politicians use state patronage to ignite political violence to gain advantage over the opposition.

In Ghana Bekoe (2012) and Lindberg, 2006 explored the political violence during and after general elections. This scholars attributed such electoral violence to vigilante youth groups within the mainstream political parties and main political competitors.

The use of vigilantes and politically connected militia groups has been instrumental in the perpetration of politically instigated violence before, during after electoral periods in Kenya. In Kenya Mwangi (2008) and Mariba (2010) identifed militia groups such as the Taliban, Kamjesh and Mungiki. Kegoro (2009) studied the Chinkororo vigilante group and electoral violence in Kisii region. Anderson (2002) notes of the instrumental use of rival politically connected militia groups, namely the Mungiki and the Taliban in igniting political violence in informal settlements in Kenya. Oyugi (1998), Kilonzo, (2002) and Danielle (2014), documented of the use of armed militias in ethnic cleansing in Likoni located in the coast of Kenya in 1997. According to Kagwanja (2003), Kenya's political elite's use of violence is what transformed the Mungiki movement from a "moral ethnic" movement into a "politically tribal" movement.

The 2013 General elections in Kenya saw one of the biggest youth mobilization shows by the political class. As opposed to the 2007 general elections the 2013 elections were rather peaceful. This trend was a continuation of youth mobilization during the Kibaki era. Kanyinga (2015) opines that the 2013 general elections pitted the old generation against the young generation in reference to the contest between Raila Odinga' CORD and Uhuru Kenyatta and William Ruto's Jubilee Coalition. The implication was that the youthful politicians triumphant over the old generation. The same tend was witnessed in the 2017 and 2022 general elections.

According to Alex Mugendi the 2013 general elections in Kenya presented the youthful population from Tharaka North with the opportunity to contests political seats and especially the newly created position of Member of County Assembly (MCA) that replaced the civic councilors. More and more young people developed interests in vying for political positions.

In Tharaka north Alex Mugendi noted, there were a total of 18 young men who contested in The Party of National Unity (TNA) nominations. Out of these two young men were able to be elected as MCAs (O.I. Kaberia, , Gatue,18th May, 2023). Kamunda adds that;

> *"Although the youth had the opportunity to vie for political positions there were obstacles that stood in their way. To begin with was lack of funds; two was the perception that the youth glorified violence. Third was that the major political parties in the general elections were controlled by old politicians. These worked against young people vying for political positions in Tharaka North"(. Kamunda , O.I ,June 25th 2023)*

The same tend was observed in the 2017 and the 2022 general elections where the youth continued to be used by senior politicians to mobilize votes for them.

CHAPTER SEVEN: SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

7.1 Conclusions

The general objective of this study was to examine trends in youth political mobilization in Tharaka North sub-County, Tharaka Nithi County, Kenya between 1895 and 2022. This study set three specific objectives. To begin with this study examined youth political mobilization in Tharaka-North during the colonial period between 1895 and 1963. Secondly the nature of youth political mobilization during the single party era in Tharaka North-Sub-County, Tharaka Nithi County, Kenya between 1963 and 1991 was examined. Thirdly this study evaluated the impacts of the re-introduction of multi-party politics on youth political mobilization in Tharaka North-Sub-County, Tharaka Nithi County, Kenya between 1991 and 2022.

The following conclusions were made;

On the first objective which was to trace the historical background to youth political mobilization in colonial liberation struggle in Tharaka North Sub- County from 1895 to 1963, it was noted that in the colonial period patriarchy determined and influenced the participation of young people in public affairs. During this period the youth in Tharaka were socialized to believe that leadership positions were reserved for the old and senior males. The patriarchal structure of Tharaka society acted as a barrier to the ascendancy of young men to positions of leadership. As a consequence of this, youth political mobilization was low. Under patriarchy generational leadership that put emphasis on age and experience meant that young people were to wait for their chance in leadership.

It was observed that the establishment of colonial rule greatly impacted on the Tharaka people. Socio-economic policies introduced by the British colonial government had great implications on the local population. The young people in Tharaka were in the forefront in resisting colonial policies such as land alienation, creation of reserves and labor regulations such as the pass laws. It was further noted in the post-World War II period the youth in Tharaka were at the forefront in the agitation for independence. Young people mobilized in their numbers in the colonial liberation movement.

The second objective examined the nature of youth political mobilization in the single party era in Tharaka North-sub-County 1963- 1991. This study noted that although the youth in Tharaka North played a significant role in the colonial liberation struggle in Kenya, they continued to be marginalized in the political process by the successive regimes of Presidents Jomo Kenyatta and president Daniel Moi. The political status and position of young people remained unchanged even after independence. The institutionalization of the single party autocratic state acted to marginalize and restrict youth political mobilization. During this period it was observed that the ruling party KANU mobilized young people through the party wing. This study noted that the KANU-Youth Wing was the main channel through which the ruling party coordinated patronage of resources to mobilize support could mobilize the youth in Tharaka North to engage in violent act against opposing politicians. In Tharaka North the youth were actively involved in the pro-reform struggles against single party dictatorship. The reform crusade brought hope to thousands of disillusioned youth who saw hope in democratic change.

The third and last objective assessed the impacts of the re-introduction of multi-party politics on youth political mobilization in Tharaka North Sub-County between 1991 and 2022. This study found that the youth in Tharaka North by being direct participants in demonstrations against single party dictatorships, were also the greatest beneficiaries in the emerging political landscape. The return of multiparty politics acted to increase youth political mobilization in Tharaka North. Consequently there was a substantial increase in the number of young people vying for political positions in Tharaka North. However, although the re-introduction of multi-party politics accompanied by expansion of civil liberties it did not substantially change the nature of politics in Kenya. Young people in Tharaka North continued to be marginalized in political representation.

7.2 Recommendations

The study makes the following recommendations;

(i) The government should put in place strategies will improve youth participation in the political process

(ii) Young people should be encouraged to vie for political positions as this increases the level of youth political representation.

(iii)The government should institute affirmative action to increase youth representation in parliament.

(iv)Political parties should reserve party positions and elective seats for young people

(v) Civic education should be geared towards making young people political aware.

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APPENDICES

APPENDIX I: RESEARCH INTRODUCTORY LETTER

JACKLIN MWIKALI,

THARAKA UNIVERSITY ,

P.O. BOX 193-60215,

MARIMANTI.

Dear Sir/ Madam,

Re: **<u>Data Collection</u>**

My name is Jacklin Mwikali Mwangangi o Registration number AMT14/03154/20,

taking Master of Arts (History) , Tharaka University. I am conducting a research on

the Trends of youth political mobilization in Tharaka NorthSub-County Tharaka

Nithi county, Kenya 1895-2022.

Kindly Provide me with the information required to enrich my study.

Yours Sincerely,

Jacklin Mwikali

0746985522

APPEDIX II: ARCHIVAL SOURCES

KNA/DC/KMG/2/1/181/1964	Meru annual reports
KNA/MSS/7/1/1937	Meru names stages of individual" s life-culture
KNA/DC/MS, 14/12/1956	Meru minutes
DC/MRU /MRU/2/4/6/1949	Meru LNC minutes
DC/KAPT/1/13/13/1966	Public political meetings
KNA/WR/JAN-DEC 1988	Weekly Reviw
KNA/WR/JAN-JUNE 1975	Weekly Review
KNA/WR/JAN-DEC 1992	Weekly Review
KNA/WR/JAN –DEC 1997	Weekly Review
KNA/DC/MRU/7/1/1938	Meru , norms customs and values
KNA/PC/6/4/5 1957	Enlistment of Kenyan youth

Introduction

My names are Jacklin Mwikali. This interview is aimed at collecting data on Change and Continuity of Youth Political Mobilization in Tharaka North Sub- County, Tharaka Nithi County, Kenya, 1895-2022 for a master project. The data will be used for academic purpose only, and will be treated with strict confidence. You are requested to participate in the study by providing answers to the items in the sections as indicated.

Instructions

Kindly fill your response in the space provided or tick (√) as appropriate. All the information provided here will be considered private and confidential for the purpose of this research ONLY.

Section A: General /Demographic data

1. Name

   (Optional)..

2. Age in years

   20-30 [ ]   31-40 yrs. [ ]   41-50yrs [ ]   51yrs and above [ ]

3. Gender

   Male [ ]   Female   [ ]

4. level of education

   None   [ ] Primary   [ ] Secondary   [ ] Tertiary college   [ ]   University [ ]

Section B:

1. What role do youth play in political parties?
2. How successful were youth's political activities?
3. Did youth face any difficulties in their political activities? Yes [ ] No [ ] If so, explain.
4. Why is youth voting important?
5. What is meaning of political engagement?
6. Why is political participation important to democracy?

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7. How can youth be motivated to join politics?

8. How can youth help government?

9. Does government support youth in their political activities? Yes [ ]   No [ ]

10. Do youth support one another? How Yes [ ]   No [ ]

11. When did colonialism arrive in Tharaka North Sub- County?

12. How did youth respond to colonial liberation struggle in this region?

13. Did colonialism improve or worsen the position of youth? Yes [ ] No [ ]. Show How?

14. What aspects of colonialism affected youth in their political participation in Tharaka North Subcounty? How did they respond to them?

15. Were there any initiatives taken by Government to enhance youth political participation?

SECTION C

1. What is single party system of government?

2. Are there merits of Single party system? If any explain

3 Can a One-Party state be democratic? Show how

4. Describe the nature of youth's participation in politics in post-independence period in Tharaka North Subcounty?

5. what was the reaction of youth on single party regime? Explain

6. Which basic changes have taken place in youth's political enrolment since 1963 in Tharaka North Sub County

7. Did youth's political experiences become better after independence In Tharaka North Subcounty? yes [ ] No [ ] If so, explain how.

8. Has youth's political involvement improved in any way during and after independence In Tharaka North Subcounty? If any, explain

9. Are there some cultural, economic, political or relations beliefs that discriminate or promote youth's role in politics In Tharaka North Sub County?

10. Did youth resist single party rule in Tharaka North sub- County? Yes [ ] No[ ].
if yes show why

11. Did single party regime had any impacts on youth in Tharaka North Sub- County?
Explain.

SECTION D

1. What is multi-party politics?

2. What led to re-introduction of multi-party politics in Kenya?

3. Did youth in Tharaka North play any role in re-introduction of multi-party politics?
If yes show how

4 Are youth in Tharaka North Sub County interested in party politics? Yes [ ] No [ ]
If so, explain.

5. Did youth vie for legislature positions during the last two general elections? Yes
[ ] No [ ]

6. Explain challenges encountered by youth while vying for these positions

7. What are some of the negative effects of low participation of youth in political
affairs in Tharaka North Sub-County?

8. Are there any attempts being made by the youth in this area to increase their
participation in politics In Tharaka North Sub County? Are they effective?

9. Are there any youth groups in this area? If so, are these centres of political
mobilization? Who are the members of these groups?

10. Are there any attempts made by the different regimes to enhance youth's
participation in political affairs?

11. Do the government support youth's political endeavors? Yes [ ] No [ ]If so,
how successful are they?

12. Are youth interested in politics in Tharaka North Sub County? Yes [ ] No [ ] If yes, explain.

13. What are some of the negative effects of low participation of youth in political affairs in Tharaka North Sub County?

14. In your own opinion, what can enhance youth's political participation in Tharaka North Sub County?

APPENDIX IV: RESEARCH LICENCE

REPUBLIC OF KENYA

NATIONAL COMMISSION FOR SCIENCE, TECHNOLOGY & INNOVATION

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Date of Issue: **26/April/2023**

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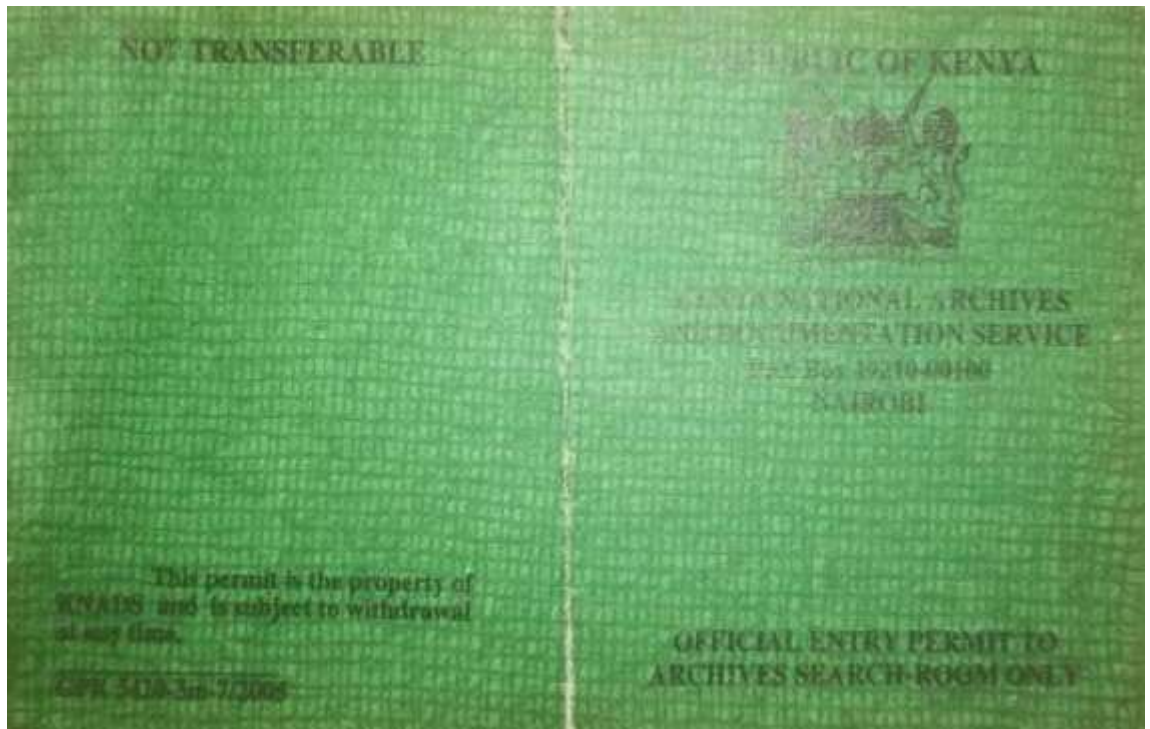
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RENEWALS DATES:
1 ....
2 ....
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APPENDIX VI : MAP OF THARAKA NORTH SUB-COUNTY
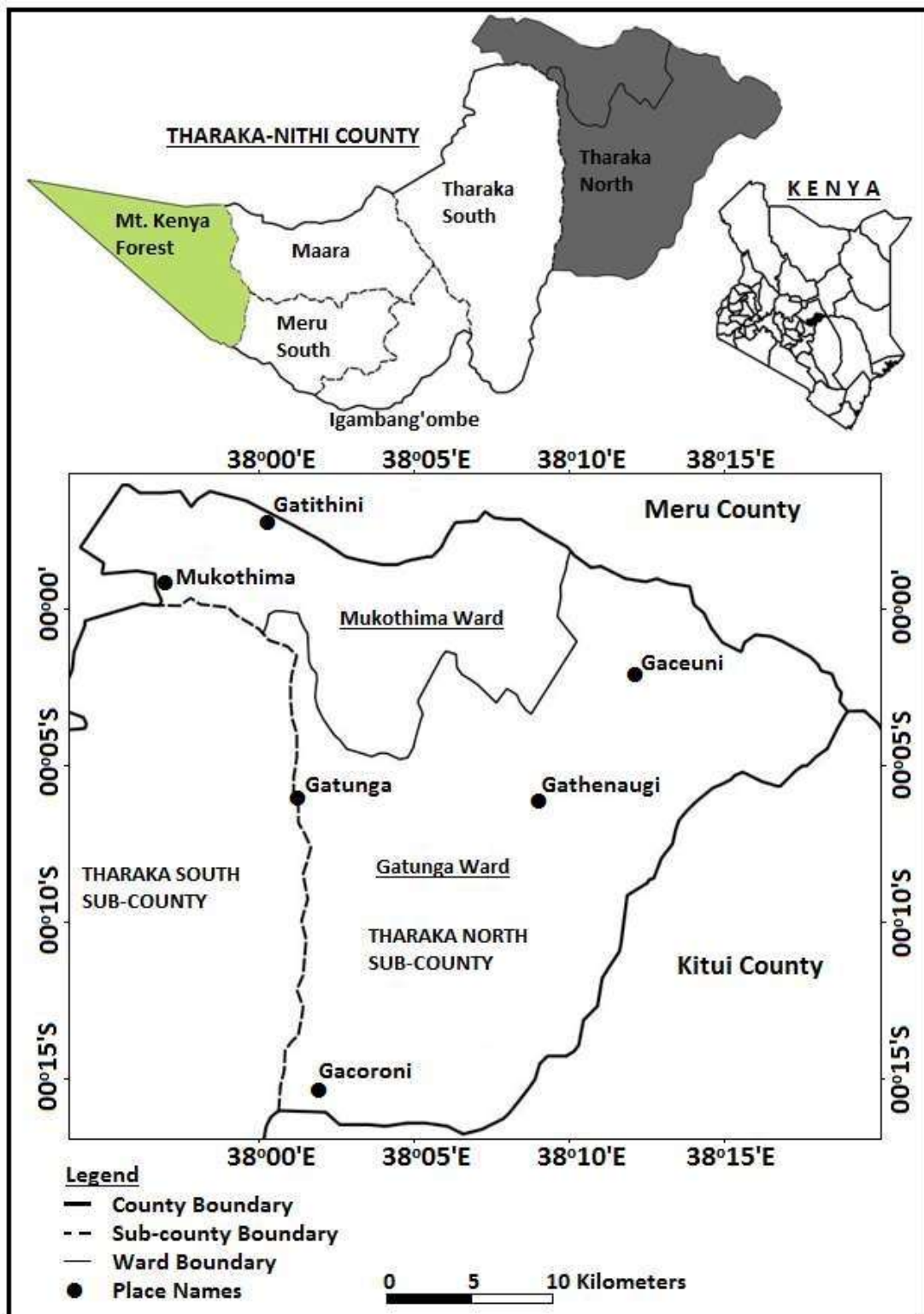
Source: Tharaka-Nithi County Integrated Development Plan (2022-2027)

LIST OF TABLES

TABLE 1: GLOSARY OF TERMS

THARAKA WORDS	TRANSLATION INTO ENGLISH
Muntu wa nthuke yetu	means the person of the same age group and who were initiated at the same time
Ndwaa ya Njirimani	Means the War against the Germans
Nthaka	A term used by Tharaka people to refer to an initiated young man
Mugwe	Refers to a spiritual leader among the Tharaka people
Gutaana	circumcision ceremony
Agaambi	traditional elites
Athomi	educated elites
Mau Mau	An African militia against British colonial rule in Kenya
Kipande	A pass that was mandatory for natives to carry while moving out of reserves in British Colonial Kenya
iriika or *nthuke*	Means according to the season of their circumcision. Individuals who underwent circumcision during the same season were regarded as belonging to the same *irika* or *nthuke*. Examples of *nthuke* among the Tharaka*,* include kianjuri, kaburia, and kiarutha. As peers of the same season, those who were initiated in the same season referred to themselves as *"Muntu wa nthuke yeetu*
Bamo	The sponsors of the circumcised boys
maami wa muthenya (a daylight mother),	A tharaka term mainly used to refer to the sponsors of the girls
Bacigira	A kitharaka term was used by women in the same initiation season
Ncaguthi	*","* which means "enemy's agents" or "sell-outs," in a derogatory manner
Nchama	Refers to colonial agents used as implementers of divisive colonial policies.

TABLE 2: PROBABILITY SAMPLE RESPONDENTS

	NAME	DATE	PLACE OF INTERVIEW
1	Joseph Murungi	1/5/2023	Maragwa
2	Jeremiah Kithinji	28/4/2023	Gatue
3	Josec Kirugi	26/4/2023	Gatue
4	Andrew Kinoti	2/6/2023	Gikingo
5	Josepth Muthomi	4/5/2023	Kathagachini
6	Guantai Murithi	20/5/2023	Gatue
7	William Kirimi	21 /5/2023	Gatue
8	Justus Miriti	27/4/2023	Gikingo
9	Jackson Murungi	22/6/2023	Kathagachini
10	Patrick Mauki	7/6/2023	Gatue
11	Samuel Mbiuki	3/7/2023	Maragwa
12	Duncan Mugambi	19/6/2023	Gatue
13	Alex Kiogora	27/4/2023	Gikingo
14	M'Thura wa Rware	28/4/2023	Maragwa
15	Ruth Igoji	18/6/2023	Maragwa
16	Johnston Mwongera	20/6/2023	Gatue
17	Samsom Ikiara	4/7/2023	Kathagachini
18	Mercy Kawira	30/6/2023	Gatue
19	Cosmas Muriithi,	24/5/2023	Maragwa
20	Evans Ngugi	21/5/2023	Gikingo
21	John Nyamu,	15/5/2023	Gatue
22	Evageline Mutegi	14/5 /2023	Maragwa
23	Peter Muturi	23/6/2023	Gatue
24	Winnie Kagwira	1/7/2023	Gikingo
25	Fridah Kinya	26/5/2023	Gatue
26	Purity Kendi	11/6/2023	Kathagachini
27	Alex Mugendi	21/6/2023	Kathagachini
28	Faith Kinanu Marigu	23/5/2023	Gatue
29	Nelly Nyawira	10/6/2023	Maragwa
30	Japheth Munya	9/6/2023	Gikingo

31	Nathan Mutuma	20/5/2023	Gatue
32	Charles Kamunda	24/6/2023	Maragwa
33	Irene Kananu	19/6/2023	Gatue
34	Faith Makena	13/5/2023	Gatue
35	Emaculate Kathomi	14/6/2023	Kathagachini
36	Timothy Gikuura	12/6/2023	Gikingo
37	Evans Karani	28/5/2023	Maragwa
38	Grace Kairu	29/5/2023	Kathagachini
39	Rhaphael Mumenyeri	30/5/2023	Gatue
40	Brian Munene	12/6/2023	Maragwa
41	Agnes Rita	31/5/2023	Gikingo
42	Charity Muumbi	27/5/2023	Gatue
43	Jacob Kathare	13/6/2023	Gatue
44	Ivyone Karithi	16/5/2023	Kathagachini
45	Jane Mbithe	17/6/2023	Maragwa
46	Lazarus Mutuma	21/5/2023	Gikingo
47	Harriet Nyawira	27/6/2023	Gatue
48	James Mutembei	25/6/2023	Gikingo
49	Anne Kanana	4/7/2023	Maragwa
50	Kennedy Munyuaki	3/6/2023	Gatue
51	Ambrose Mutegi	6/6/2023	Maragwa
52	Benson Kamwara	18/5/2023	Gikingo
53	Branton Mukundi	13/6/2023	Gatue
54	Anne Kanyua	17/5/2023	Kathagachini
55	Gideon kinyiri	19/6/2023	Maragwa
56	Samson kithiji	16/6/2023	Gikingo
57	Benson kamwara	30/6/2023	Gatue
58	Patricia Kagure	2/7/2023	Gatue
59	Titus Makembo	6/7/2023	Maragwa
60	Ignatius kavuata	9/6/2023	Gatue

TABLE 3: 10 PURPOSIVE SAMPLE RESPONDENTS

S/N	NAMES	DATE	PLACE OF INTERVIEW	STATUS
1	Peninnah Gaciri	21/6/2023	kathagachini	Elder
2	Denis Kagwima	16/5/2023	Gatue	Youth leader
3	Benard Kaajiu	3/7/2023	Gikingo	Youth leader
4	Abraham Mutwiri	23/5/2023	Gatue	Elder
5	Mitchelle Kaari	13/5/2023	Maragwa	Youth leader
6	David Kithendu	8/6/2023	Maragwa	Elder
7	Samuel Kathare	29/5/2023	Gikingo	Elder
8	Grace kaini	2/7/2023	Kathagachini	Youth leader
9	Timothy Nthiga	12/6/2023	Gatue	Youth leader
10	Lucy kairuthi	19/6/2023	Maragwa	Youth leader