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RESERVE

LUO ETHNIC FACTOR IN THE 1979 AND 1983 ELECTIONS
IN BOND0 AND GEM - KENYA

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LŪO ETHNIC FACTOR IN THE 1979 AND 1983 ELECTIONS
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By

Patrick O. Alila

ABSTRACT

This discussion is based on the prior analysis of social transformation in Luoland with specific reference to Bondo and Gem. It is aimed at demonstrating the role of Luo ethnic factor in modern elections, in particular the 1979 and 1983 General Elections in the two constituencies.

The discussion reveals a dominant role of Luo ethnic factor in these elections. This is particularly true regarding participation in elections in that organisation of the electorate is based on clan allegiance under the influence of elders. Likewise, in terms gaining a leadership position clan support is significant. It is however not sufficient because there is also a consideration of modern elements especially the contribution by the leadership aspirant to development effort in the constituency. This latter consideration can be said to form a basis of influence of the educated elite in electoral politics, while the elders derive their influence from traditional norms.

The evidence shows that local leadership comprising both the elders and the educated elite play a crucial role in election campaigns. By the way they interpret the election issues they also determine the outcome of elections. A major issue indicating this is the political position of Odinga in Luoland which has contributed to the rise and fall of various political leaders in a number of constituencies in Luoland not just in Gem and Bondo. This has resulted in personality cult in which ethnicity is a crucial variable and has become a prominent feature of Luo politics.

Prelude to the 1979 Elections

The happenings in the period between the 1974 and 1979 Elections provide useful background to a proper understanding of the 1979 Elections. The happenings revolve around the choice between two alternative leaderships for the Luo broadly viewed as pro-Odinga and anti-Odinga. And the issue of which leadership can best serve the interests of Luo unity and progress within the national political context.

It should be noted to begin with that immediately after the 1969 Elections, an attempt was made to force one common leadership which did not exclude Odinga and his detained colleagues in the interest of Luo unity and progress. But as the 1974 elections approached a division started emerging which increasingly widened thereafter such that by the time of the 1979 elections one could definitely talk of there being two opposing camps. On the one hand there were those who were for and on the other hand those against Luo leadership headed by Odinga.

The division leading to the actual rift in Luo leadership started taking root among the Luo MPs following the 1974 elections. This can be attributed in part to actions by the Executive which blatantly favoured individuals well known to be in the anti-Odinga camp and at the same time were apparently meant to spite those considered to be in the Odinga camp.

Thus Omamo after losing in the 1974 elections in Bondo to Ougo he was still appointed a nominated MP. The trend is further borne out by ministerial appointments. It was a common practice at that point in time in Kenya's political history that a candidate who beat a cabinet minister in parliamentary elections ended up being appointed a minister. A case in point is Daniel Mutinda who beat Ngala Mwendwa in the 1974 election and was appointed a minister. Ougo received no such recognition. On the contrary, it seemed that it was Omamo who lost that was rewarded.

In the same vein in South Nyanza it was Okiki Amayo who was appointed an assistant minister while Onyango Ayodo and Odero Jowi, both former cabinet ministers, who had lost in the 1969 elections but recaptured their seats in 1974, were not reinstated to ministerial appointment. The common belief particularly in Luoland was that the two failed to be reinstated because they had developed leanings towards the Odinga camp. It was in fact argued that without Odinga's blessing they could not have regained their seats.

*The theoretical framework and the historical basis for the analysis in this paper are in WP 403. I wish to acknowledge financial support from the Ford Foundation for fieldwork and thank J. Juma, B. Okaro and K. Ooko who worked as my Research Assistants.

The manoeuvres of anti Odinga MPs and their supporters became clearly evident through KANU party elections. They came out openly and contested the 1977 KANU elections making deliberate effort to build their own independent support. These elections for party re-organisation from the grassroots therefore led to accession to party leadership, at the branch level and below, by these anti Odinga elements while Odinga himself was excluded from the local level party leadership.

Likewise Odinga was excluded from the abortive party elections for national officials. But the interesting point here is that instead of ganging up behind Odinga individual Luo leaders for example Omamo, Okero and Ayoki, independently of Odinga, vied for national party posts. This can be seen as signalling their strong aspirations provide an alternative leadership for the Luos not only at the local level but at the national level as well.¹ It is significant to also note in connection with these national party elections that Omamo as one of the leadership aspirants did not make up his mind at the outset as to which party post he should run for and consequently switched from wanting to contest the party Treasuryship to Secretaryship. This would seem to indicate that although like the other leadership aspirants they may have had supporters at the community level they had not built political power base above that level and were apparently not sure of themselves.

The fact that two groups of leadership had emerged, one which supported and the other did not support Odinga, was also clearly manifested by the Oyugi's Declaration. At a public rally organised by Onyango Ayodo at Oyugis, the largest trading centre in his Kasipul/Kabondo constituency those present declared that Odinga should be the unanimous leader of the Luo. Those in the opposing camp did not want to entertain the idea and therefore challenged this stance. This is evidenced for example by Okiki Amayo's vehement rebuttal statement that Odinga should accept him as a leader or "go to hell"².

¹ The Weekly Review 30/9/83 p. 21.

² Atieno-Odhiambo, The Luos in Politics in African Perspectives, No. 1 Sept.-Oct. 1977. p. 32.

The opponents of Odinga having gained some measure of cohesion started going on the offensive. There were for instance the rallies which this group held at the headquarters in South Nyanza, Kisumu and Siaya, the three Luo districts. The key figures in this move were Okero and Amayo. The essence of their divisive campaign was that the Luo were disloyal to the President, the government and KANU implying that they themselves and their followers were not. Okero who was the leader of the group put the matter pointedly saying that the meetings were being held in response to the challenge posed by Odinga through the Luo Union and were therefore meant "to end the Odinga myth once and for all"³.

The Luo Union was indeed the next target of their offensive having perceived Odinga threat as coming from that quarter. In March 1978 they blocked a delegation of the Luo community arranged by the Luo Union to visit the President at State House to pledge loyalty to him, the government and the ruling party KANU.⁴ Another move was to change the leadership of the Union by installing a caretaker committee headed by Odongo Omamo in place of Paul Mboya and his constitutionally elected committee. The caretaker committee was surprisingly registered, despite vehement opposition by the Paul Mbuya committee and the Luo community generally and it started asserting control over the two main institutions of the Union namely, Ramogi Institute of Advanced Technology (RIAT) and the Ofafa Memorial Hall.

The Luo community received all this with great dismay seeing the trend of events as the work of outside forces bent on dividing the community. There was consequently a strong negative feeling against members of the group within the community who were by now being regarded as dissidents. As regards specifically those of them who were MPs an idea that they should not be returned to parliament in the next general elections was gaining popularity very fast.

There was, however, a dramatic turn of events and a new climate in Kenya's politics which affected the political outlook of the nation, the Luo community included. This emanated from the sudden death of President Kenyatta in August 1978 which led to the accession to the presidency of his vice president, Daniel arap Moi. As the new President, Moi made certain

³ The Weekly Review. 26/5/78

⁴ Ibid.

politically strategic moves which had direct implications for the Luo community. The first move was the release of all political detainees which meant that both Achieng' Okeo and Wasonga Sijeyo who had served long detention terms were set free. Secondly, after staying in the political cold for over ten years Odinga got a political appointment as the Chairman of the Cotton Lint and Seed Marketing Board. These two actions, especially the latter, raised very high hopes within the Luo community of political rehabilitation and an end to the KPU stigma which had led to virtual political banishment of the Luo.

The pronouncement of the new Nyayo era of President Moi had a special meaning to the community. It was seen as a God-given chance for the community to come back to the political mainstream as the new era would bring to an end the collaboration between dissidents within the community and outside forces that had worked to the detriment of the community. It must have therefore come as a rude shock when after only a few months the issue of KPU was again revived to bar Odinga from contesting KANU party elections for national leadership. Furthermore the elections seemed to favour the dissident group led by Okero who was able to secure the post of KANU party national Chairman. The mood of high expectations within the community consequently changed to one of cautiousness and it became a matter of concern as to what the future holds for the community in the new era. This concern was the major underlying factor in the 1979 elections held shortly after the new regime assumed power and through which it was seeking from the electorate its own mandate to rule the country.

The 1979 Election in Gem and Bondo

GEM

Candidates

The line up of candidates for this particular election was as follows:- Omolo Okero, Otieno Ambala, Ongili Owiti, Okeno Osare, Oluande K'Oduol, Obare Asiko and Owino Ger. It can be observed to begin with that compared specifically to the previous 1974 election the number of candidates increased by one and were therefore even more than in 1974. Thus the 1979 election became the one with the highest number of candidates in the history of Gem constituency. This can be attributed mainly to leadership crisis which had become particularly acute within Gem itself. A useful pointer to the crisis is the fact that small group interests organised around clans and even subclans became dominant groupings in the 1979 election politics thereby precipitating an amorphous political situation.

The diversity of political groupings is borne out by the clan origins of the candidates for this election. If we consider first the two main clan lines of division we find that Kojuodhi had a disproportionately large number of candidates than Kwenda. Five candidates viz. Omolo Okero, Okeno Osare, Oluande K'Oduol, Obare Asiko and Owino Ger all came from Kojuodhi line while only two viz. Ongili Owiti and Otieno Ambala belong to Kwenda line. A closer look at Kojuodhi candidates reveals that three of them, Omolo Okero, Obare Asiko and Owino Ger come from Kagola clan while both Okeno Osare and Oluande K'Oduol are from Kakwany. It will be recalled that Kagola and Kakwany groups have a common ancestry from Adhaya.. This has been the basis of a long standing alliance which has been considered the major factor contributing to Kojuodhi dominance of leadership in Gem. But it is in fact Kagola which due to cunning manoeuvres has over the years had an upper hand in this dominance and therefore reaped benefits and not Kakwany. This

has increasingly become a matter of concern within Kakwany which has resulted in a growing feeling of rivalry between the two traditional allies. Kakwany producing its own candidates can be seen as partly a consequence of this rivalry. Likewise rivalry between Kagola lineages helps explain why Kagola produced as many as three candidates. It is interesting to note that the homes of two of the candidates, Omolo Okero and Owino Ger, are literally separated by fences. In other words even Kagola clan itself is not a homogeneous entity.

In the case of Kwenda candidates clan position is quite clear. Ongili Owiti comes from Kanyikwaya while Otieno Ambala belongs to Kathomo, the arch rival of Kanyikwaya within Kwenda. The only complicating factor is the common belief not only within Kwenda but in the whole of Gem that Ambala is strictly speaking a "Jadak" (settler) from Alego (Ja Alego) and is therefore not by origin genuinely from Kwenda or Kathomo and even Gem for that matter. There are those who argue that his links with Alego have in fact been very strong. They say, for example, that his brother went back to Alego and settled on their land there. Also it is alleged that Ambala himself when going for further studies abroad solicited financial contributions from Alego people which he apparently valued more than help from Gem people. This was interpreted as an attitude of neglect towards Gem people, and an indication that he cherished blood ties to Alego.

The existence of a leadership crisis in Gem is evident from the fact that most of the candidates supported by the diverse groupings were political unknowns even within the constituency. Those known politically included first, Omolo Okero who had been the MP for Gem since 1969, had been a cabinet minister and was the KANU party national chairman. Secondly, Otieno Ambala who contested the 1974 elections and came second to Omolo

Okero was well known politically in Gen especially due to his continued political campaign even after losing in that election. Thus unlike Okero who was known politically both within and outside Gen he was only well known within the constituency. Thirdly, Oluande K'Oduol, received publicity in Luoland through association with Odinga in the KPU followed by his detention and also working for Lolwe Bus Services. He was therefore to some extent known politically in Gen and in most parts of Siaya and Kisumu districts.

The remaining candidates were political unknowns even within Gen. It can however be said that Okeno Osare's name was well known both within and outside Gen due to the fact that he had been Provincial Commissioner in the North-Eastern Province and subsequently was appointed Chairman of the Kenya Sugar Authority. Ongili Owiti was also known but to a very limited extent and mainly in South Gen where he had participated actively in harabee projects notably the Ramula Health Centre. In addition he was a general manager of Coca - Cola Bottling Company and had been actively involved in a leading role in the campaign for Ambala in the 1974 election. Thus the offices they held and exposure to the public could contribute to relatively more people knowing Okeno Osare and Ongili Owiti than Obare Asiko and Owino Ger who were the least known even within Gen itself. But all these four including even Oluande K'Oduol were politically unknown quantities in Gen politics. This is in contrast to Onolo Okero who was well known politically in the whole of Gen and had a stronghold in North Gen. Likewise Otieno Ambala who had built a stronghold in South Gen was also known politically in Gen.

Election Campaigns

It can be argued that campaign rallies constitute the best indicator of campaign organisation of election candidates in a situation where small group interests based on clan cleavages dominate politics. It is in these campaign meetings that one can identify interactions of a political nature because other interactions tend to be personal in nature. But even more important is the fact that the latter interactions are haphazard and rarely occur in an organised pattern and in places accessible to the researcher. They therefore do not easily lend themselves to systematic observation. A special attention was therefore paid to the organisation of campaign meetings in the Gen election as well as Bondo.

The most striking fact about the 1979 Gen election meetings is that Omolo Okero and Otieno Ambala held individual separate campaign rallies. The remaining five candidates (5-Group) viz. Okeno Osare, Ongili Owiti, Oluande K'Oduol, Obare Asiko and Owino Ger held joint rallies sharing the same platform. It was said that all this came about because of Okero since he was the one who insisted on holding his own separate meetings while all the other candidates were for the idea of joint rallies. It was then that Otieno Ambala in view of the step taken by Okero followed suit and also asked the administration for his own separate meetings. Thus Gen candidates organised three separate rallies, Okero's rallies, Ambala's rallies and rallies of the 5 - Group. This had certain significant implications.

In the first place politically unknown candidates had a separate platform from those politically known. This was interpreted by the 5 - Group to be out of fear on the part of Okero and Ambala of being exposed in joint rallies. In the case of Okero it was seen as a clear demonstration of his aloofness from

the people and a design to avoid his poor political record being discussed in his presence. As for Ambala it was argued that it clearly showed that he is not from Gen and could not therefore face the electorate in the presence of those genuinely from Gen. Those in the 5 - Group repeatedly stated in their rallies that they are the "Jogen Asili" (the true sons of Gen) who were humbly facing Gen people together as members of one family unlike the other two. It was from among them they argued, that the MP for Gen should come. Thus whether a candidate was genuinely from Gen or not developed into an election issue particularly in reference to Ambala.

Secondly, since the candidates were facing the same electorate, organisation of separate rallies affected the timing of the meetings. The administration was concerned about providing adequate security if more than one meeting was arranged to take place simultaneously. The rallies were therefore arranged for different dates and times of the day. The rallies of the 5-Group and those of Ambala took place at either 10 A.M. to 1 P.M. or 2 P.M. to 5 P.M. Okero's rallies were all held between 11 A.M. and 2 P.M. and were fewer in number than those of all the other candidates.

Thirdly, in the case of Okero and Ambala who organized separate rallies they were able to have prominent personalities supporting them listed in their rally permit to speak in support of their candidacy. Thus Wasonga Sijeyo featured prominently in Ambala's meetings while Prof. B. Ogot who was designated Chairman of Okero's meetings and his wife supported Okero. Both Okero and Ambala also had loudspeakers in their rallies. In contrast, in the 5 - Group rallies which were chaired by the Yala D.O., only the candidates spoke following a secret ballot draw, and there was no loudspeaker system. Yet the 5 - Group rallies tended to be bigger compared to those of Ambala and Okero because each of the five candidates attracted some supporters while Ambala and

Okeru's rallies which attracted mainly their own supporters, and were consequently smaller in size.

Fourthly, in terms of location of the rallies there were certain strategic places in the constituency notably Yala, Kambare and Dagoyier, where all the candidates held rallies. Yala is the centre of the whole of Gem while Kambare and Dagoyier which is near Akala Market, are important centres in South Gem. These are the places of greater social interaction and also where most opinion leaders are frequently found. Candidates therefore try to capture support in these places to enhance their popularity constituencywide.

Rallies were also held in places where harambee projects, for example a health centre is sited. Candidates who contributed towards the project would be emphasising their concrete action and urging the electorate to reward them by voting for them. Their opponents on their part would be arguing that if they are given support and win the election they would likewise bring benefits to the area and sometimes promising even greater things. In other words those who contributed would be trying to consolidate their support while their opponents would be trying to capture some of that support. There would similarly be struggles for support in places where a candidate has strong support by virtue of kinship or clan ties. In that case candidates from outside that kinship network would be trying to penetrate it.

The way a candidate has organised his campaign to gain the necessary support was manifested in the composition of the rallies and the goings on during the rally. It was clearly evident that candidates with a strong campaign organisation transported some of their supporters to most of their rallies. One could therefore see these same supporters in nearly all the rallies of that candidate. This was especially so just before the rally when people from the surrounding area had not come for the rally. These supporters would be singing and dancing in praise of their candidate to be joined later by supporters from that area. Thus one could gauge the support for a candidate in a particular area by observing this core group of supporters and

how it swelled. And going from rally to rally one could identify the strong and even leading candidates. It was not difficult to make such observations in the case of Okero and Ambala who organised separate rallies. For instance the strong support for Ambala in South Gen and the unpopularity of Okero in that area was abundantly clear from the poor turnout for the latter's rally at Dagoyier near Akala market. In the case of Ambala there was a large turnout and so much fanfare that it seemed more of a victory celebration than a campaign rally. But going to North Gen, Okero's stronghold Ambala had to be content with relatively modest turnouts. At any rate, the overall impression from all their rallies in both North and South Gen is that they were the two leading candidates.

If we turn to the 5 - Group, the following of each of the various candidates showed that the two leading candidates in that group were Ongili Owiti and Okeno Osare. As in the case of Okero and Ambala it was interesting to watch the contrasting strength of following for Okeno Osare and Ongili Owiti in North and South Gen, their respective strongholds. Another useful discussion to consider in judging the strength of the candidates in the 5 - Group rallies is that, unlike Okero and Ambala rallies, the supporters of the five candidates were mixed. Since the supporters would be cheering the candidate they support when he speaks, the response of the audience was an additional pointer to a candidate's strength. Apart from having transported a relatively larger number of supporters than the other candidates Owiti had a lively response during his campaign speeches due to his oratorical capability. In this regard Okeno Osare was no match for Owiti and this helped Owiti gain a lot of support at his expense and it proved to be Okeno Osare's main undoing.

It could be argued, and this is essentially correct, that a candidate's financial resources was a major factor determining the extent of transportation of supporters to rallies.

It should however be remembered that it is not just money alone that goes into keeping faithful followers in an election campaign. There is the kinship connection, organisation ability of the candidate, competent agents, contacts throughout the constituency etc. These qualities in a campaign organisation are reflected in campaign rallies. For instance the demonstration of strong support in rallies for Okero and Okeno in North Gen and Ambala and Owiti in South Gen has to do more with their kinship ties. Also if one looks closely at the composition of the rallies in Gen one finds that among Owiti's following there were relatively more women and youth while Okero had women speakers in his rallies. This has to do more with the two candidates' contacts and organisational ability.

Campaign Issues

The main issues in this election campaign can be said to be directly linked to the question of what kind of leadership Gen should have. There were those who still supported Okero for his education and national political status as a cabinet minister. But the feeling of most people in Gen was that Okero should be replaced. The only problem was however that there was lack of agreement as to who was the suitable replacement. This obviously left open the possibility that if for some people the replacement was not suitable they would fall back on Okero.

The strong feeling that Okero should be replaced can be explained in terms of his relationship with his constituents. In other words the Gen electorate was questioning his political record during the two terms he had served as MP of the area. The main question was his contribution to development of Gen. Okero was seen by the majority of the electorate as not being development conscious. There had hardly been any harabee organised by Okero and whenever there was any he contributed

meagre sums considered unbecoming of his status as a cabinet minister. Thus his poor performance in haranbee effort was the main cry against Okero. Gen people wanted to remain in a leading position in Luoland and therefore wanted more schools, hospitals, roads etc. These were not being built resulting in a widespread complaint that Gen was now dragging behind in development. Development within Gen was therefore a major issue in this election.

It was in the attempt to find a suitable replacement to Okero that Gen people were faced with other questions of leadership qualities. There was a general consensus that the person replacing Okero should be development conscious. In addition he should be social, close to his constituents and not have the arrogance, aloofness, and inaccessibility of Okero.⁵ There was however division among Gen people when it came to the question of whether the person should be from Kojuodhi or Kwenda. The people of Kojuodhi wanted to maintain their hold on the leadership while among the Kwenda, who saw Okero's failure as providing them with a golden chance to wrench the leadership from Kojuodhi there was enthusiasm to provide a Kwenda replacement. There was also division, mainly relating to Ambala, over whether the replacement should be a "Ja Alego" (settler from Alego) or he should be a true son of Gen genuinely from Gen. It should be added that although Ambala was the strong candidate from Kwenda there was no consensus even within Kwenda over his candidacy because of doubts over his clan origin.

This discussion of leadership qualities spread beyond the boundaries of Gen constituency and was linked to the issues of leadership and unity as well as progress in Luoland. The choice at this level was between pro-Odinga and anti-Odinga leadership. The general feeling in Luoland was that Okero and other anti - Odinga elements should be replaced and the pro - Odinga forces within Gen pressed for Okero's replacement

⁵ The Weekly Review 26/10/79

mainly on this basis.⁶ As already pointed out, for internal reasons Gen people felt the need to replace Okero. The source of problems with Gen people over choosing pro-Odinga leadership was that it seemed to favour Ambala who had Odinga's blessing and was also his son-in-law. Gen people were not agreed over Ambala's candidacy as he was not favoured by Kojudhi because he belonged to Kwenda and was considered Ja Alego by many people in Gen. These were matters of division within Gen as we have seen.

BONDO

Candidates

There were three candidates contesting the 1979 election in Bondo just as in 1974. The line up remained essentially the same as Odongo Omano and Ougo Ochieng' remained the key contestants. The only difference was the surprise appearance of G. Jalang'o Anyango on the political scene in Bondo. He was young, comes from Sakwa and was a political unknown while his other two opponents had become household names in Bondo politics. The desperate attempts of Odinga to get into the race failed at the eleventh hour. It could thus be only expected that this election would be a repeat of the previous 1974 election with the alignment of political forces remaining basically the same despite Jalang'o Anyango's candidacy.

Election Campaigns

The significant difference between the 1979 Bondo election meetings and those of Gen is that Bondo candidates agreed to joint rallies. As a matter of fact the rallies were not just exclusively for parliamentary candidates. The civic candidates in the location where the meeting was being held were also included and were the ones who addressed these rallies first.

6. Hilary Ng'weno, ed. "Election Handbook 1979" Weekly Review

They were then followed by the parliamentary candidates who spoke after all the civic candidates had spoken. Thus in the case of Bondo, Jalang'o Anyango who was politically unknown and the civic candidates were able to address large rallies to which the majority must have been lured by the presence of Oromo and Ongo. They were therefore able to reach more people than would otherwise have been the case if these two prominent candidates held separate meetings.

These Bondo meetings had similarities with the meetings organised by the 5 - Group in Gen. The administration chaired the meetings in Bondo in the person of the locational chief. Like in Gen the candidates also drew lots and the person who picked number one spoke first followed by the rest in a serial order. It was strictly only the candidates who spoke and there was no prominent personality speaking in support of any candidate as was the case in Okero and Ambala meetings in Gen. Also there was no loudspeaker system in these meetings in Bondo which at times turned out to be very large rallies and there was difficulty following a candidate's speech especially if he did not have a loud voice. "But there was similarity between all Gen and Bondo meetings in that they were located in strategic centres be they markets or sites of previous haranbee activity. The idea, as already argued, would be to capture greater support by reaching a bigger portion of the electorate. There was also similarity in terms of transportation of supporters to various rallies across the constituency. These supporters would arrive early and engage in song and dance until the rally started and after the rally. During the rally they would be actively cheering their candidate such that in certain rallies where a candidate had transported many supporters and was therefore being wildly cheered all through his speech one not familiar with the core group of supporters could get the wrong impression that that is that candidate's stronghold. If it was indeed that candidate's stronghold then there would be deafening applause and one could

more easily make that mistake. But unlike Gem, in Bondo there was often heckling of the other candidates giving the impression that these others had no support at all in that area. Yet the others did have supporters who were only afraid to stick out their necks by shouting in their support lest they are roughed up by the partisan crowd.

The situation in most Bondo meetings was that mainly because of his ability to transport supporters in his lorries Omamo had many people cheering him during the rallies. There were cases of heckling the other two candidates notably in the Uyoma rally at Mituri which resulted in a bitter exchange between the other two candidates and Omamo together with the administration. In short, judging from the rallies only, it seemed on the face of it that Omamo had widespread popular support in Bondo constituency and looked a sure winner.

Campaign Issues

In Bondo is where the problem of Luo leadership and unity and especially the position of Odinga was still very much at issue. Odinga's position became a matter of grave concern particularly in view of the happenings following the 1974 elections that seemed to favour his opponents and which culminated in Odinga being barred yet again from contesting the parliamentary elections. The apparent implication was that Odinga would be completely banished from even being an MP. of Bondo, an eventuality which Bondo people were evidently not ready for yet.

The bone of contention was consequently why Odinga was being barred from contesting elections and the prospects for his rehabilitation. The blame was squarely put on Omamo by Odinga's sympathisers as the one responsible for Odinga's plight. He was seen as working together with anti-Odinga forces.

This was revealed according to them by his role in the Luo Union politics and his nomination to Parliament after his defeat in 1974. The defeat was regarded as a major political triumph for Odinga and therefore his nomination was viewed as an attempt to fight back. Also as regards going to Parliament, this was seen as contrary to the wishes of Bondo electorate. It was further claimed that it was because of his presence in Parliament that the person elected by Bondo people had been eclipsed. The conclusion arrived at was that he had a personal ambition of being Bondo MP an ambition also manifested by his aspiration to KANU national leadership. Thus he was, it seemed obvious, the one working together with outside forces to bar Odinga from contesting elections. On that account he should therefore be rejected and a person without political ambition as Onano elected who would not block Odinga's political comeback. The choice was therefore really between Odinga and Onano just as in 1974.

There were in addition matters concerning Ougo as the outgoing MP for Bondo which were closely linked to this Odinga - Onano dilemma of choice. Ougo having had a parliamentary term after defeating Onano in 1974 had had a dismal political record characterized mainly by his quitness especially during parliamentary debates. This aspect of his political record was the focus of attack mainly by supporters of Onano who were opposed to Odinga - Ougo camp. The performance of Ougo in haranbee activity which had been worse compared to that of Onano particularly during the latter's 1969 - 74 term as Bondo MP was also the subject of vehement attack by Onano supporters. The crux of the matter as far as Onano supporters were concerned was that Bondo people should have a development conscious leader of Onano's calibre as their MP. To them therefore the issue was not choosing between Odinga, or even Ougo for that matter, and Onano.

Rather, the issue was the contribution the person elected would make towards development effort in Bondo.

It should however be borne in mind that matters of development were not of major concern in Bondo as they were in Gen. To be sure there was mention of problems of cotton production, water problem in Uyona, transportation across the lake from Asembo Bay to South Nyanza etc. But in Bondo it was more of a clash of personalities and whatever matters arose for discussion were inevitably linked to the person of Odinga and Omano in terms of their leadership positions not only in Bondo but in the whole Luoland.

1979 Election's Outcome: A Comparative Analysis

A comparison of the results of the 1979 Election is interesting if one recalls briefly historical and socio-economic factors which resulted in differences in social transformation in Bondo and Gem. As argued earlier, although Jodak were incorporated into Gem people, Gem had less heterogeneity in terms of kinship network than Bondo. This is mainly due to the origin of Gem people from one common ancestor, Gem, and having been ruled as one locational unit following colonisation. In Bondo at the constituency level most of the kinship blood ties originate from intermarriage across boundaries of locations. As in the case of Gem these locations were ruled for many years by the colonial administration but as separate entities.

The settlement of Gem people in the highlands and Bondo people in the lowlands on the lake shores meant differences in natural resources ~~endowment~~ which resulted in different ways of earning livelihood. The significant point here is that Gem people took to sedentary agriculture earlier and increasingly grew more dependent on cultivation of crops for their livelihood than Bondo. The location of their settlement in proximity to neighboring Luhyas who were mainly crop cultivators facilitated this process. In addition there was mutual cultural influence between the two ethnic groups and apart from intermarriage Gem people incorporated Luhyas as "Jodak".

In terms of contact with European colonisers, Gem had initial contact, again through their Luhya neighbours, and then collaborated with the colonisers in the subjugation of other areas of Luoland including Bondo. The major consequence of this is that Gem reaped a disproportionate share of benefits in terms roads, education, etc., accruing from the establishment of the colonial administration. This resulted in a markedly higher

rate of social transformation in Gem evidenced by Gem taking a lead in Luoland in terms of education and maize production.

The educated people of Gem participated in the colonial administration by way of wage employment resulting in a generally favourable outlook towards that administration. Gem therefore became conformist relative to Bondo which took a frontline position in both the economic and then political battles that Africans started waging against the colonial administration in the 1940s. It is the contention here that these different positions emanated from the historical disparities between Gem and Bondo. Another consequence has been observed in differences in their participation in post independence politics. Thus the 1979 Election results can also be explained in terms of the historical and socio-economic development in Bondo and Gem.

Focus on Gem

The results of the election were that in Gem, Otieno Ambala won collecting 13,664 votes. The runner up was Okero with 4429 votes. The votes won by the remaining five candidates were as follows: Osare 4,385, Owiti 2,634, Oluande K'Oduol 2,079, Obare Asiko 260 and Owino Ger 161. Thus Gem people elected Ambala and replaced Okero as their MP.

It has already been pointed out that Gem people were generally agreed that Okero should be replaced. This is indeed borne out by the fact that Okero lost heavily in this election trailing the winner by a margin of almost 10,000 votes. The growing unpopularity of Okero with the Gem electorate is further indicated by the fact that when elected MP for the first time in 1969 he had been given 77% of the votes cast. After a drop to 40% in 1974 by 1979 this had come way down to only

16% of the votes cast.

As already indicated the feeling of resentment towards Okero grew as a result of the type of leadership he had provided throughout the span of ten years that he was Gem MP. There were widespread complaints that Okero was not development conscious meaning that his contribution towards harambee activity left a lot to be desired. These complaints were heard even in the North where he comes from while in the South there was a feeling of complete neglect.

The actual basis of these complaints was that Okero had been a cabinet minister not an ordinary MP since his election to parliament in 1969. There was therefore much more expected from him at the constituency level than would normally be the case if he was just an ordinary MP. Likewise having been chosen a leader of Luo MPs, being the highest ranking Luo minister, and coming from Gem, there were very high expectations about his leadership in the whole of Luoland. He unfortunately did not live up to these expectations on both fronts and the effects were mutually reinforcing in that shortcomings at the constituency level were linked to those at the Luo community level and vice versa.⁷

He was for example accused of dividing not only Gem people but also the Luo community. The people of South Gem strongly felt that Okero looked down upon them claiming that he said they were backward and incapable of producing leaders of his calibre. They therefore concluded that they were considered less of Gem people than their kin in the North from whom they were apparently being separated while to members of his Kagola clan it was an embarrassment. He was also seen as dividing the Luo community due to his campaign together with Amayo against Odinga's leadership in Luoland. Thus his approach to leadership seemed to be one of division not unity.

7. Atieno - Odhiambo concludes that "Okero just did not have the where withal to translate his opportunity to a leadership of the masses". See Atieno - Odhiambo, "The Luos in Politics", op. cit. p 31.

There were additional problems with his leadership style. Complaints that Okero would not grant audience for discussions were heard everywhere in Gem. The story ran that if one requested to see Okero, after being allowed in, Okero would stand up in full view and turn around for the person to literally see him. Any attempt to explain the purpose of wanting to see him he would strongly rebuff saying that the person never asked for any discussion but only to see him therefore only that much was allowed and no more. The point that was being made in short was that for a leader, Okero was too proud, inaccessible and too impatient. This affected not only Gem people but the Luo community at large.⁸

However, Gem people felt most concerned having elected him twice as their leader and not realising benefits they hoped would emanate from his leadership. They could not liken him to great Gem leaders like Odera Ulalo, Odera Akang'o, Argwings-Kodhek etc. who saw Gem people as one. Also these leaders furthered the interests of Gem, keeping it in a pre-eminent position socio-economically, and were well renowned and respected in all Luoland. While because of these leaders Gem was shining Okero's leadership was seen as a great let down as Gem became a laughing - stock in Luoland and Gem people felt disgraced.

But although the campaign for replacement of Okero had reached fever pitch at election time the question that remained unresolved was with whom he was to be replaced. The problem can be said to have arisen partly due to the fact that Gem had been experiencing a high turnover of candidates during elections since the time Okero was elected in 1969. Thus the opponents of Okero in that year except Rading Omolo did not stand for elections again in 1974. And in the following election in 1979 only Ambala

⁸ Ibid

from among the five opponents of Okero in 1974 stood for election again. Thus the number of candidates increased and they were virtually all new faces lacking constituency wide popularity.

It is interesting to note for instance that Rading had been the runner up in 1969 and similarly Ambala was the runner up in 1974, seeming to suggest that being a runner-up made a candidate hopeful of winning and so made a second try. But they both had been very poor seconds considering the wide margin of votes by which Okero beat them. And Rading gave up after 1974 which was his third attempt to get elected Gen MP. The implication here is that there had been no one candidate who had distinguished himself in the political scene in Gen who could be an automatic replacement for Okero. Hence there was the problem of who to choose in 1979 to become Gen MP.

As soon as it was declared that elections were to be held in 1979 discussions started in Gen as to who was a suitable replacement for Okero. Gen public opinion initially seemed very much against Ambala succeeding to the position of Gen MP mainly because he was considered Ja Alego. Apart from Ambala it was only Okeno Osare who was thought a strong contender by many Gen people. This is mainly due to the fact that with Okeno Osare Gen people would get around the problem of replacing Okero with a person who is not from Gen. Also, since he comes from Kojuodhi he was the likely ouster in keeping with the historical trend of leadership in Gen. As a matter of fact before the campaign proper started public opinion in Gen seemed largely tipped in Okeno Osare's favour and it looked like the real choice was between him and Okero. It was the campaign proper that seems to have changed matters. As the polling day drew near the choice was between Ambala and Okero. This came about because it was during the election campaign that each candidate deployed his resources including personnel,

finances, transport etc. to drum up support for his candidacy and thus it became evident who was a popular and who was not a popular candidate. The election issues were discussed with a view to knowing what is the stand of each candidate on them. In addition a candidate's record including even his personal past was scrutinised. But the main concern remained performance in public life. In the case of one who had been elected to parliament it meant that candidate's record as an MP.

As a matter of fact the poor record of Okero as the MP for Gen was the major subject of discussion in the campaign rallies. He was criticised for being a leader who did not work closely with his constituents and the Luo community as a whole. The evidence of this as already pointed out was his virtual lack of contribution to development effort which had resulted in Gen, that used to be in a leading position in terms of development in Luoland, lagging behind. Those running against him therefore made great effort to convince the electorate that they would offer a brand of leadership that is totally different from that of Okero. They were all unanimous in urging Gen people not to return Okero to parliament. But the 5 -- Group as we saw earlier were telling the electorate that even Ambala should not be elected to parliament. The person to be elected to parliament should be from among them being Jogen Asili.

Since Okero's contribution towards harambee effort was the key issue his opponents tried to demonstrate to the electorate their suitability as replacements of Okero by way of pinpointing their harambee contributions and/or promising to perform better than him in this regard. In this case Ambala had more to show than the rest of the candidates and was therefore way ahead. Ambala had not given up after losing to Okero in 1974. He continued his campaign in the interim period mainly by way of participation in and organisation of harambee meetings and

making substantial donations. This he did in both South and North Gen but directed more effort to the South. All the same he had covered so much ground such that he could not really be compared to the other candidates on this score. However, one can mention Owiti as the only other candidate who had made significant contribution towards harambee but this was mainly confined to South Gen. Owiti actually greatly emphasised his role in harambee effort calling himself Owiti "Jagedo" (builder) in reference to his initiative to build a school, a health centre etc. He argued in the 5 - Group meetings that he was therefore different from the other four because while they were still only promising how they would contribute to development projects he had already started. And although the other four were also Jogen Asili he was the appropriate candidate to be voted in in this particular election to continue his already started development work.

The involvement of Owiti in harambee effort made him during the campaign an increasingly serious contender for the Gen seat. He had more to show in this regard than Okeno Osarc who for long before the official campaign had been seen as the appropriate replacement for Okero, if an outsider, a Ja Alego, was not to be allowed to represent Gen people. Owiti being a true son of Gen also was a match for Okeno Osare. In addition he had contributed to harambee which put him on a higher place than Okeno Osare. In this regard then the comparison and hence the choice was turning out to be between Ambala and Owiti.

Furthermore the oratorical ability of Owiti was an additional advantage. In this respect he was clearly better than even Ambala and had Ambala joined the joint rallies he would have had more to lose than gain. It was only Okero who could be his match in this regard had all the candidates agreed to joint rallies. Owiti demonstrated his oratorical ability

in the 5 - Group rallies where he swayed the crowd easily with his campaign speeches. He was in this way able to greatly outshine Okeno Osare. In fact as the campaign intensified and Okeno Osare saw his support being eroded he must have concluded Owiti was the main cause. The rivalry between the two of them actually became more bitter and they exchanged direct attacks between them.

A major attack on Okeno Osare that most of the candidates made and Owiti in particular kept harping on was the problem of sugarcane marketing especially transportation and prices. Okeno Osare before resignation to campaign for the Gen seat had been the Executive Officer for the Kenya Sugar Authority which is the parastatal in charge of production and marketing of sugarcane. He therefore became the target of attack for problems believed to have been caused by the organisation for which he worked.

In Gen these problems affected a sizeable proportion of the electorate because many people had taken to the growing of sugarcane as a lucrative cash crop. Unfortunately it turned out afterwards that the prices being paid were extremely low. It was even worse for those growers who could not find market for their cane which was consequently left to dry in the fields.

In any case to all the sugarcane growers the failure to get the expected cash meant above all inability to pay school fees for their children. The sugarcane issue was therefore quite a sensitive one with the electorate and one could easily see the enthusiastic response in rallies when it was being discussed. It can therefore be said to have greatly contributed to Okeno's support being eroded as the campaign progressed. In South Gen in particular it could have been a major hinderance to Okeno Osare building support there because of the feeling that they had been the victims to a greater extent than those in North Gen. The source of the problem was obviously the location of sugarcane factories, except the Rera jaggery, in North Gen. This put

South Gen growers at a disadvantage because they either failed to market their cane due to lack of transport or if transport was found it meant low net earnings due to high transportation costs not to mention the bad roads in South Gen.

The increasing loss of support by Okeno Osare did not however mean an automatic gain by Owiti. It meant increasing gain for Ambala. This was simply because the overriding objective was to replace Okero and he was seen more and more as the person who could replace Okero. The exposition of shortcomings of Okeno Osare lowered his standing with the electorate.

Owiti although a Jagen Asili was politically unknown particularly in North Gen which was Okero's stronghold. It was therefore unlikely that within the short campaign period he could dislodge Okero in North Gen especially having entered the race quite late. Ambala had gained some support there through harambee activity as already mentioned which now only needed consolidating. In addition to be able to do that meant deploying financial and personnel resources which again Ambala had to a greater degree than all the other candidates including Owiti and even Okero himself. Ambala was therefore the best bet in the realisation of the Gen objective of replacing Okero.

In the period of official campaign the greatest advantage Ambala had was the campaign personnel especially influential Gen local leaders. They campaigned for him mainly because he was the most promising candidate in the task of replacement of Okero. These leaders came from various parts of Gen, both from North and South. One that needs to be mentioned is Wasonga Sijeyo who was a former MP of Gen and had only recently been released from detention. The presence of these leaders in Ambala's rallies served him well. In view of the fact that he

he is himself not an orator the presence of a person like Sijeyo meant that the meetings were kept lively and the listeners could be swayed in support of Ambala. As a matter of fact in these meetings Ambala only introduced these leaders who talked at length and he then briefly addressed the meetings in the end. It was not obvious as was the case in Okero's meetings that the chief speaker was also the candidate.

These leaders also served an important purpose for Ambala of enhancing his credibility by articulating his position on various issues. It was a fairly easy job for them portraying Ambala to the electorate as a development conscious leader. His contribution to haranbee was dramatised by comparing it to Okero's, arguing that he had done much more than the incumbent MP. Therefore, if given a chance by being elected MP he would do much more. Even Ambala himself whenever he spoke this is the point that he emphasised. The argument he often made was that current politics involving matters of development is more difficult to handle compared to the politics for independence which simply meant shouting that the Europeans (Wabeberu) should go away. He was telling the electorate that he was the right kind of political leader who would be useful when development is the central concern of politics.

However when it came to the issue of whether he is really from Gen or Alego, Ambala avoided saying anything apparently sensing that he was vulnerable on this point. He instead relied on the influential leaders particularly Sijeyo to convince the electorate on his behalf. This was no easy task given the common belief that he was a Ja Alego and that all his opponents were really harping on this point. Sijeyo to change public opinion therefore, repeatedly explained Ambala's lineage in the campaign rallies emphasising that Ambala is actually from Gen. But the strongest point made in Ambala's favour was that Gen as is

customary among the Luo had "jodak" (settlers) who had become accepted as Gen people for all practical purposes. Ambala should therefore be no exception. Furthermore a warning was sounded that there was a danger of alienating this particular group of Jodak from the rest of Gen people and dividing Jogen. Since this was one of the main accusations against Okero it should therefore be avoided. There was also the immediate real danger for individual candidates of losing votes from this particular group in Gen. Condemnation of Ambala had therefore to be done continuously lest it is interpreted as a wholesale condemnation of all Jodak.

It was apparently because of this attack on Ambala as being Ja Alego which was considered personal that there were scathing personal attacks on his opponents during his rallies. This was again done by the influential persons like Sijeyo and was mainly directed towards candidates posing a threat to Ambala's victory. The major attacks were on grounds of theft in previous places of work and immorality in terms of marriage or sexual relations contrary to Luo custom. The idea here was to inform the electorate that the backgrounds of those calling Ambala Ja Alego were no better and actually made them less suited for leadership than Ambala.

There was also the line of attack in terms of disposition of Ambala's opponents towards Odinga which kept the issue of Odinga's leadership and Luo unity very much live in the campaign. As for Ambala it was commonly understood that he had Odinga's support being his son - in - law. The daughter of Odinga he had married was actually present at his rallies although she made no campaign speeches. In the case of Oluande, he was accused of having embezzled funds when working for Odinga's Lolwe Bus Company and they had therefore parted ways. This was said to be evidenced by the fact that although he was a former KPU Official

he was cleared and others like him barred from contesting elections. The implication was that somehow he had betrayed Odinga and the Luo cause of unity.

Okero was likewise accused of having betrayed Odinga and Luo cause of unity with his divisive campaigns combined with secret manoeuvres. Sijeyo charged that Okero had campaigned and got elected to parliament under the pretext that he would fight for his release from detention but this was all lies. It was due to the mercy of President Moi, he said, that he was finally released. He in fact made a point of thanking the President at every rally. But even as Gen MP it was said Okero had not furthered the Luo cause of unity and consequently became unpopular within the community. Gen people should not therefore elect such a person despite his much talked about education. Sijeyo scornfully added that he had not required that much education to be a good parliamentarian. In any case Okero was not the only one who was educated. Ambala himself had degrees from America and his wife was teaching those who would become lawyers like Okero. It is useful to add here that the other opponents of Okero also strongly attacked the glorification of his education, specifically his being a lawyer. Owiti for example argued in reference to Owino Gen that a lawyer had failed Gen people and should not therefore be given a chance.

These personal attacks it should be pointed out were not confined to Ambala's rallies. They were quite common in the 5 - Group rallies as well, making the 1979 election in Gen full of smear campaigns. It was only in Okero's rallies that an attempt was made to keep clear of personal attacks. Okero in particular avoided making this kind of attacks concentrating in his speeches on asking for votes. He emphasised that the Luo community and in particular Gen was honoured by his appointment to high office in the party and a cabinet post. He also pointed out projects whose realisation he said he was responsible for such as Yala Rural Health Centre, Siaya District Hospital, supply of

electricity to Yala and Siaya etc.

The other speakers in Okero's rallies also dwelt at length on the fact that he was a cabinet minister which was an honour for Gen. They also made reference to Okero's education and the claim that he was proud. They especially Mrs. Grace Ogot, argued that they saw nothing wrong with all this because it was characteristic of a person from Gen and this was very well known in all Luoland. They were not however able to completely avoid personal attacks which they mostly conveyed by way of Luo idious. The main point of the attacks was the involvement of Sijeyo in the campaign in support of Ambala and the backing that Odinga was apparently giving Ambala. Odinga and his former KPU followers including Sijeyo were criticised for having left the government and the feeling strongly expressed that Sijeyo and especially Odinga should leave Gen people alone to make their own choice of who to represent them. An ex-chief said of Odinga that he should stop going around Gen telling people "vote for the husband of my daughter".

A matter that was also of great concern within the Okero camp in particular was the wealth that Ambala was having and especially the finances that he deployed for the campaign. Okero's supporters argued that those who are wealthy are needed in a country but in the economic sphere and not in the political law-making sphere which they should leave for trained lawyers like Okero. In other words that there should be a division of labour whereby Okero can be left to play his role and Ambala will also have a role to play but not to replace Okero.

It was not possible as in any other constituency in Kenya to ascertain the campaign expenditure of each candidate but one could easily get the impression that Ambala spent more money than all the other candidates. The large number of people in his campaign organisation especially youth wingers must have

meant spending large sums of money to keep them on the campaign trail. There were also the campaign agents distributed all over Gen who liaised with subclan leaders. These needed money for themselves and campaign money to be distributed within their areas of operation.

The lack of the necessary financial resources was therefore a conspicuous contrast between the campaign of the rest of the candidates and Ambala's campaign. This was quite telling in their campaign organisations which unlike that of Ambala were confined to certain areas especially the area of clan origin of the particular candidate. Even Okero who was the closest rival of Ambala in this respect had his campaign organisation concentrated in North Gen. In South Gen he had only influential individuals who had been his staunch supporters over the years campaigning for him. "It is also useful to add that all was not well with the clan basis of Okero's campaign organisation in North Gen due to the death of Mzee Simon Nyende just before the election campaign. Nyende had been for many years quite influential in Gen especially North Gen. But above all he had become a living cult of rule over Gen by the Kagola clan and the clan's cohesiveness was therefore embodied in his person. This was demonstrated in the 1974 Election when he mobilised voters for Okero. He summoned influential elders, especially from Kagola clan, to his home before the elections admonishing them that Okero must be returned to parliament as the Gen MP in keeping with the tradition of Gen leadership coming from Kagola. The implication of his death was therefore that Okero could no longer count on a cohesive force of support of elders especially within his clan and much less from the rest of North Gen. Indeed this was the case going by the disproportionately large number of candidates from North as compared to South Gen, not to mention that Kagola clan itself had more than one candidate. It can also be said that following these developments it became easier especially in North Gen to openly question the tradition of leadership coming from Kagola.

Those not from Kagola were therefore ready to form an alliance with the other Gen clans to wrench the leadership from Kagola. This was a welcome turn of events to Kwenda people especially, seeing it as an opportunity to also partake of overall Gen leadership. They expressed open defiance towards Kagola people in particular but not to the other sub clans of Kojudhi with which they too saw it was in their interest to forge an alliance against Kagola. All the same despite forging an alliance with the rest of Kojudhi clans Kwenda stand was that it was high time Gen leadership shifted not just from Kojudhi but from North Gen to their location in South Gen. They were nevertheless able to see eye to eye with North Gen people due to the common overriding interest of replacing Okero. A candidate from the South, Ambala, was most promising so it was necessary to rally behind him.

To summarise, Ambala was able to win this particular election mainly because the timing of his strong candidacy coincided with the quest in Gen for a leader to replace Okero. The replacement of Okero was the overriding objective. This is even reflected in the mood in Gen in terms of the willingness to withdraw support from Okero who was a cabinet minister and national party chairman, was a true son of Gen and had glamorous educational background that Gen people had always cherished. They instead opted for a candidate venturing into national politics for the first time, whose clan origins within Gen they were questioning and whose education was not so glamorous compared to Okero.

Gen people were in dire need of a leader unlike Okero who is development conscious, could take initiative in harambee effort and make significant contributions. They also wanted a leader whom they could easily relate to and behind whom they could unite if the developmental goal was to be realised. They therefore resented a leadership characterised by aloofness and arrogance

which at the same time also fostered division amongst Gen people and even the Luo community at large. They could not with such a leadership forge ahead in development matters. Thus they could not realise the hope they still harboured that Gen could as until the death of Argwings-Kodhek occupy a pre eminent position in Luoland and not be disgraced in the eyes of the Luo community.

Among the candidates vying for the Gen seat in 1979 Ambala was the strongest candidate and received the greatest support above all because he could beat Okero. In other words his candidacy provided Gen people with the possibility of getting rid of a leadership most of them detested. This explains the move by influential Gen leaders to join forces with Ambala. Even some like Nyamango who initially had supported Okeno Osare switched support, saying he was a weak candidate, and gave a boost to Ambala's candidacy. It is also along these lines of the strength of the candidacy of Ambala that Odinga's support can be explained. It is simplistic to see the support in terms of Ambala being Odinga's son-in-law and worse still to attribute his victory to that relationship. Rather, Odinga went along with the popular wishes of Gen people concerning which candidate should win the election since all had a common interest of replacement of Okero anyway. It is instructive to recall in this connection that in 1974 Gen people returned Okero to parliament despite opposition to his candidacy by Odinga and his supporters in Gen. It could not therefore be expected that they could automatically vote for a candidate simply because he had Odinga's support. If Gen people were not rallying behind Ambala already for their own internal reasons his being Odinga's son-in-law would have been of little or no consequence at all for the final outcome of the election. In other words it was a mere coincidence that the candidate that emerged popular with Gen people was also a son-in-law of Odinga*.

* There was widespread uncertainty all over Luoland whether Gen people would vote out Okero until after the counting of votes and the announcement that Okero had lost. I heard it said many times one could not count on Gen people going along with the mood in Luoland. There was in fact an element of mistrust.

The critical point is that a winning coalition emerged out of Ambala's candidacy including Odinga and his supporters. In this coalition the influential Gen leaders facilitated the organisation of the campaign and it was they who actually played a crucial role in Ambala's victory. It was possible through them to make contacts and solicit support through clan leaders thereby ensuring that Ambala had a foothold in virtually all parts of the constituency. His campaign organisation was therefore constituency wide unlike the rest of the candidates.

It was also because of the support of these leaders that Ambala gained credibility in the eyes of Gen electorate despite a concerted campaign by his opponents that he is a Ja Alego. Gen people could easily trust the word of these leaders as opposed to Ambala himself. In addition, Ambala not being a political orator himself, the presence of these leaders in his campaign rallies was a great boost to his campaign.

On his part, Ambala through his haraabee effort had established a base for the campaign which those joining forces with him could build on. He could be easily seen as a development conscious leader. Furthermore his efforts were not confined to only a certain part of Gen indicating that his inclination was not to divide but to unite Gen.

In the campaign period he demonstrated that he was also accessible, raising the prospect that he would provide a responsive leadership. This he was able to do because of the financial resources he had at his disposal. The money distributed to chief campaigners, campaign agents, youth wingers and even voters could easily convince them he would be responding to their needs. Thus wealth became a major factor in Ambala's victory in 1979.

The results of the election in Bondo were that Ougo won the seat with 19,815 votes. He was followed by Omano who got 14,452 votes. Last came Jalang'o Anyango who got 1,253 votes only, clearly showing that the battle was in fact between Ougo and Omano. But all the same the people of Bondo retained Ougo as their MP for another term. "It should however be noted that unlike Okero in Gen Omano's popularity in Bondo since he was elected in 1969 had been fluctuating and not on a continuous downward trend. Omano received 53% of votes cast in the 1969 Bondo election which was less spectacular than Okero's 77%. Both men then experienced a drop in 1974, Okero having 40% and Omano getting 33%. But even though Okero retained his seat in this election he experienced a bigger popularity drop (37%) than Omano (20%) who lost to Ougo. Then came the 1979 election which showed a dramatic turn of events in the popularity of the two men with the electorate. Omano registered a positive gain (41%) while Okero's was increasingly negative going down to as low as 16%.

The changing trend of Omano's popularity was a reflection of Odinga - Omano dilemma of choice that Bondo people were faced with. When Odinga had just come out of detention and was trying to make a political comeback he had very many sympathisers who rallied behind him. They were all very willing to even give support to his proxy when he was barred from standing for parliamentary elections. One needs to add that it was in fact a fairly easy decision for them to make to vote for Ougo, the proxy who was a political unknown and therefore had no political record by which he could be judged in his own right. This was the time, 1974 election, when Omano's popularity was at its lowest while Ougo was riding on the crest of his popularity.

However, the state of affairs started changing significantly as at the time of campaign for the 1979 elections. This change can be directly linked to the common assumption in Luoland

and particularly in Bondo that Odinga would be allowed to stand for parliamentary elections in 1979. The assumption actually hinged on truth with the inauguration of the Nyayo era. Even Omano must have felt that Odinga was going to stand in Bondo for this particular election considering the decision he made and subsequent announcement that he was to contest the Kisumu and not Bondo seat during the 1979 election. In the case of Ougo there was seemingly no one talking about his candidacy for Bondo or any other constituency.

It therefore looked for some time as if Odinga would get elected unopposed and with ease become Bondo MP again. The problem which remained unresolved was whether he was this time going to get KANU party clearance in order to actually stand for the elections. This is the question which preoccupied the minds of Bondo people as the period for campaign proper approached and there was an air of tension especially in Bondo centre. In brief, the hopes of Bondo people were shattered. Odinga was once again barred from standing for elections. This barring of Odinga yet again must have raised doubts in the minds of most Bondo people as to whether he would really ever be allowed to contest parliamentary elections. Following from that concern there were those who were raising the question that without Odinga who could fittingly occupy the position of MP in Bondo leadership. These people it should be emphasised were not all necessarily losing faith in Odinga as a leader within Bondo, and even Luoland for that matter. They only wanted, given the circumstances, to choose a suitable MP. This worked to Omano's advantage and was the source of Omano's apparent gain in popularity such that his standing vis-a-vis Ougo in the 1979 was better than at the time of 1974 elections.

There were indications of Omano's gain soon after nomination day marking the start of the campaign proper. He was at least prepared, to enter the 1979 Election Campaign

He had expressed his intention to stand and had built his own following in Bondo after participating in two previous elections. This was unlike Ougo who apart from not having his own political base was apparently also caught by surprise by the unexpected barring of Odinga from entering the race. The high expectation that Odinga would stand meant that a large proportion of the electorate had ruled out Ougo's candidacy which he had in fact not declared. He was really late to declare his candidacy and most people only heard of his candidacy following the official nomination. A more fundamental problem was that he could not automatically count on support for this particular election from Odinga's following in the constituency which he had relied on in 1974. Since he had been an MP for five years his leadership qualities could therefore be questioned by the electorate on the basis of his record as an MP and not just consider the mere link with Odinga. Ougo was therefore facing an uphill task and even Odinga sensed this. It is said that he cautioned Ougo that the going would be rough in this election meaning that they would have to work hard to muster the necessary support and votes to win the election. He was actually right, judging from the reactions of the electorate towards Ougo during the campaign especially in the campaign rallies .

In the rallies Ougo's record as an MP was the major point of heated debate which Omamo greatly exploited by humorously making constant reference to. As already mentioned Ougo had not participated actively in parliamentary debates. He was attacked on this shortcoming by his opponents who said that people are elected to go to parliament to speak there on behalf of their constituents and one who declared that he preferred to keep quiet could not therefore be an MP. Omamo further pointed out that Bondo had always had as their MP prominent personalities, in particular Jaramogi Odinga and himself Arudhi Kaliech, that put Bondo in a nationwide pre-eminent position. In contrast Ougo's term had

reduced Bondo to a diminutive position equivalent to reduction from an elephant size to the size of a rabbit.

Ougo never denied having been a quiet MP. He actually admitted that he did not during his term try to engage in adventurism so as to be seen as a dynamic MP. He instead exercised moderation. He was even proud of the saying in Luo with which he had become identified that keeping quiet is better than answering back (Ougo "ling loyo duoko") which was an expression of his stand. It was also varied to say that Ougo Ochieng' had found keeping quiet to be a good thing (Ougo Ochieng' ling' berne). The argument of Ougo concerning this issue of keeping quiet was that during the time he was elected to be Bondo MP the circumstances were such that if he was a forceful and not a quiet leader Bondo would have seen greater troubles as things were already hot in Bondo. It was therefore fitting that Bondo went through a period of calm and serenity during his time so that things could return to normal. And this is what was actually happening.

Ougo was attacked by Omamo in particular over his contribution towards harambee effort. Omamo frequently referred to his own days of harambee the size of an elephant (Kaliech) saying these were no longer there due to Ougo's lack of initiative and failure to provide leadership. He even accused Ougo of having donated cement to a certain harambee project publicly but then went stealthily afterwards and took back his donation. This he said was the wrong kind of leader. A good leader he said should donate generously. Furthermore he should be a person who can invite other wealthy people to come and contribute towards project in his area and do likewise in return. In other words scratch my back I scratch yours, translated into Luo by Omamo as "Ndeta ta Ndeta". To say the least Ougo did not have much to show to counter accusations regarding his poor performance in harambee. He could only enumerate projects the government had completed during his term

as an MP such as laying tarmac on the Kisumu - Usenge road. The argument he advanced was that without the kind of peaceful leadership he had provided all these may never have come to fruition. But that was his own personal view as the listing obviously did not impress those attending the campaign rallies who interrupted him frequently and he always had great difficulty going through his list.

The remaining important parts of discussion during the campaign rallies related to Luo leadership and unity problem and the leadership position of Odinga. As already mentioned Omamo was believed to be working against Odinga with anti-Odinga forces outside Bondo and was therefore being blamed for Odinga's plight especially his being barred from contesting parliamentary elections. In the rallies also, attacks were directed against Omamo along the lines that he was power hungry and out to oust Odinga.

The person who spearheaded the attack was not Ougo but Jalang'o Anyango. And he did it with so much vigour and ruthlessness that as the campaign progressed more and more people were convinced that he had been planted with Odinga's blessing to campaign for Ougo.

Jalang'o Anyango charged that Omamo had all along been playing a divisive role within the Luo community especially by usurping leadership of the Luo Union. Furthermore that he had embezzled RIAT funds which he had used to build his own private magnificent house. He then concluded that since Omamo had been denounced by the Luo community for all these misdeeds and development requires cooperation between all Luo leaders he was not the right person to be elected Bondo MP and should therefore be rejected.

Ougo's major attack on Omamo also emanated from this leadership debate. The attack was sparked off by Omamo's criticism that Ougo as a leader was not always in the frontline position as the case should be if he were a good leader. He was instead staying at the rear and therefore not leading and the people following. Ougo scornfully retorted that he did not believe in Omamo's kind of leadership by which Omamo had been imposing himself on the people. He believed in the people choosing him to be a leader and then listening to them as he had always done so that whatever he does is in line with the people's wishes. He picked on Omamo's having been in the Caretaker Committee of Luo Union that ousted Paul Mboya and translated caretaker to mean in Luo "I have taken using my own strength" (Akawo gi tekra). Similarly, Omamo he said had taken over leadership of RIAT and also Bondo division KANU leadership. The same tactics he alleged Omamo was apparently trying to use to dislodge him and become Bondo MP. The evidence of this was said to have been the abortive secret manouvre by Omamo to have his (Ougo's) campaign symbol changed from Olith (Falcon) to a box. The box was taken to mean a coffin and interpreted as a sign of bad omen.

The attack on Omamo for trying to force his way into leadership position was linked to his wealth which seemed to concern his opponents greatly. Omamo was criticised in the rallies for using his wealth to buy support and reference made to the presence of so many of his supporters transported by his lorries to the rallies as a sign that he was indeed using a lot of money in the election campaign. Jalang'o Anyango charged that Omamo was not only buying off people but even hills and gave the example of Got Abon,. Another dimension of Jalang'os attack was that Omamo was enriching himself at the expense of Bondo people. Got Abon for instance would be for his own personal benefit and not the people of Bondo. This was also the case as regards the supply of milk to primary schools which Omamo had acquired for himself a monopoly of

again for personal gain. And on the idea of inviting other wealthy people to Bondo for harambee, Omano's "Ndeta ta Ndeti", Jalang'o argued this could be alright if say some one-hundred Bondo people stood to benefit and not just one person, Omano alone, was benefiting.

Omano remained undaunted by the virulent attacks on his wealth. He as a matter of fact, came out openly and defended his wealth in the campaign rallies without mincing his words. The point he was making was that he had wealth and would even accumulate more because he was using his wealth for the benefit of Bondo people. Thus he had undertaken the supply of milk not only because he was the only rich person interested in accomplishing such a task but also because he was the one who would not have liked to see children in Bondo failing to benefit from the free Nyayo milk programme. He was in the same spirit spending freely in his campaign because he wanted Bondo people to partake (Chuto jo Bondo) of the election campaign money he was allowed to spend by the authorities. The other candidates, especially Ougo, by not spending to the same tune as himself he lamented were being mean to Bondo people. He in fact urged his listeners to ask Ougo Ochieng' to let Bondo people partake of this money (Ougo Ochieng' ochutie jo Bondo). It was in effect a challenge to Ougo to spend more money.

It was also apparent in Omano's self praise to counter attacks on him for his activities in Luo Union and RIAT that he saw his wealth as an advantage and that there was nothing wrong about being wealthy. He saw himself as having done a good thing to have helped Luo Union out of a perpetual financial crisis resulting from embezzlement of funds. In contrast to those who were running the Union before him he claimed he had spent his own money to the tune of \$100,000/= which the Union still owed him as at that time. The money he said had been used to renovate

Cfafa Memorial Hall which he said had become so run down that bats from Kano and Kajulu had made it their mating ground. This he argued was a conspicuously disgraceful eyesore to the Luo community as a whole for which prominent Luos like himself were needed to remedy the situation. He concluded that he had therefore done a good and not a bad thing. Likewise he had done a good thing to have organized major funds drive for RIAT saying it had culminated in the enrolment of students at the institution. This he added was no mean task. And in an apparent reference to Jalang'o, he further said that such things should not be talked of lightly by those who were not even there when people struggled to collect funds.

In countering the various attacks mainly directed to his person the best thing Omamo had going for him was his oratical ability. This was coupled with having a loud voice that made him audible thereby facilitating communication of his message to the audience in spite of the lack of a loudspeaker. He in addition made frequent use of Luo idioms and it was quite common for him to break into hilarious Luo song and dance with his audience chanting in chorus. He also invented a skilful use of his election symbol which was a lamp. This included a song composed about the symbol and gestures involving opening up of the hands as if throwing a beam of light which he termed "di". Thus in his speeches after hitting hard at his opponent he would ask the audience to make this gesture ("nie uru di"). And at the close of his speech he would burst into song: "Piny ka piny, taya liel; Ot ka ot, taya liel"*

* "Piny" here refers to "pinje" or locations that the Luos were divided into during the colonial period. The translation of the song is that the lamp burns in every "piny" e.g. Uyoma Asenbo etc., and in every house.

But it should be noted that all the song and dance and loud applause from the audience would not have been easy if Omamo did not ferry many of his supporters to the campaign rallies as already mentioned. There were actually complaints heard when the rallies became rowdy in Uyoma and Yimbo that those causing trouble were people ferried from Sakwa. And when rallies became rowdy within Sakwa itself people from Omamo's Kapiyo clan were blamed. It was furthermore quietly whispered by some people that all those shouting in support of Omamo had been given money by him. The group of people raising voices of dissent did not join in the shouting when the rest of the crowd was in jubilation roaring back to Omamo "din, din, din". They were instead, not so loudly but defiantly, saying "idong', idong', idong'" meaning you are not going to be elected. And although they seemed an insignificant minority it turned out that they were right. Omamo ended up losing despite the impressive showing at the rallies indicating clearly the existence of a strong opposing force to his candidacy in Bondo. "This force did not openly manifest itself particularly in campaign rallies. This can partly be attributed to the fact that, unlike Gen, in Bondo only the candidate contesting the elections spoke at the rallies. Thus there were no influential persons addressing the rallies as in the case of Ambala in Gen from which one could deduce the alliances and hence the conditions. A useful impression was, however, gained from the composition of supporters of Omamo and Ougo in the rallies. It was evident that practically all supporters of Omamo were relatively youthful, and most of them originated from his Kapiyo clan. They were quite aggressive in their rounds of campaign, harsh to their opponents and even insulted them at times. The supporters of Ougo were only a handful at the rallies and quite few compared to Omamo supporters. They were more mature, much less aggressive and were devoid of the harshness which characterised Omamo supporters. They mainly concentrated on singing before and after the rally flapping their arms like wings of a bird to

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demonstrate Ougo's Olith symbol. Among them one could identify some who had been youth wingers in the earlier elections going as far back as elections for independence. They were mostly from Sakwa and not Asenbo as one would have expected and some of them had had a long association with Odinga.

The important inference is that just as in 1974 Ougo was using the political campaign network of Odinga which spread throughout Bondo. Oromo lacked such a network and this can be said to have been his major undoing. In the circumstances he, apart from sending his agents to dish out money to the electorate concentrated on the public rallies. In contrast it seemed that Ougo camp was deliberately not putting emphasis on these public rallies. Ougo and his supporters led by Odinga concentrated on a quiet village - to - village campaign. "Odinga did most of the ground-work campaign for Ougo touring the constituency from corner to corner and even made a symbolic swim in the lake. At various places he stopped he would draw sizeable crowds causing concern within the administration that resulted in widespread concern in Bondo that he was going to be arrested. But this could not be easy because at his various stops he would not formally address the gathering. He would only signify his support for Ougo mainly by flapping his arms like Olith (a bird) Ougo's campaign symbol. He also could figuratively tell the crowd "mosna uru Ougo Olith" (you all send my greetings to Ougo Olith) meaning they should vote for Ougo Olith.

The strategy of Ougo camp was therefore to conduct a quiet campaign reminiscent of the days of the KPU. Thus there was not as much concern about public rallies that they apparently left for Oromo to engage in his theatricals. This was rationalised in terms of a commonly held belief that Oromo on the one hand was the candidate of the establishment and was being favoured by the administration. This was also brought out by his own argument that

that he was working to bring Bondo closer to the government. Ougo and his supporters on the other hand were being molested and even victimised therefore they should be subtle and not open in their approach lest they are victimised more.

Omamo's closeness to the administration made him acquire the image of a cunning person having sinister motives and therefore an untrustworthy leader. This raised suspicion about his intentions and also wealth. Even more important is that it lent credence to the allegations that he was the one behind the troubles of Odinga with the establishment. While this worked to Omamo's disadvantage and made him lose votes in the case of Ougo it enabled him to acquire the image of an underdog which helped him gather sympathy votes. Likewise sympathy votes for Odinga went to him not Omamo. Furthermore because of Ougo's close link with Odinga he could be trusted and relied upon to facilitate, and not block, Odinga's rehabilitation to leadership in Bondo as an MP, even if it meant standing down for him. Thus the close link with Odinga was again the critical factor in Ougo's victory in the 1979 election. Odinga gave him full backing and put to use his political machine in Bondo headed by elders to ensure that he won and he did win.

1983 ELECTIONS: A Continuation of 1979 Trend.*

It can be said that in terms of analysis the 1983 Elections in both Gen and Bondo was a continuation of the trend observed in the 1979 Elections. There were major similarities. For example, the strong contenders remained the same in both constituencies. In Gen it was Otieno Ambala, Omolo Okero and Ongili Owiti while in Bondo it was again Odongo Onamo and Ougo Ochieng'. The social forces also remained basically the same. In Gen the rivalry between Kojudhi and Kwenda persisted as the deciding factor while in Bondo Odingaisu was the critical force still. Even the issues including leadership, development, personality etc. were essentially the same. And they were handled in a more or less similar fashion in both elections.

It is therefore useful, instead of reciting what has already been revealed by our discussion of the 1979 Elections, to only mention certain significant happenings in relation to the 1983 Elections which uphold and strengthen our arguments.

Gen

As the MP for Gen, Ambala continued with contributions to harambee in trying to fulfil his promises to the electorate although some people criticised him for favouring his own small locality. It also seemed that he was successfully working his way into the establishment as he was able to secure a belated appointment as an Assistant Minister. But at the same time there was also another trend not working in his favour. There was a growing resentment of Ambala for being arrogant and more so because he was characterised as a self-centred, aggressive and a violent person. He was consequently alienating his supporters especially influential Gen leaders who had supported him and enabled him to oust a true son of Gen and not a "Jadak" like himself. This state of affairs was aggravated by the fact that his marriage to the daughter of Odinga got sour and they broke

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off, resulting in increased resentment not only in Gem but also elsewhere in parts of Luoland. Furthermore he was linked through strong rumours to the traitor issue which precipitated the 1983 Election and therefore suspected of having been working together with outside forces which had all along undermined Luo leadership and unity.

The diminishing popularity of Ambala with the Gem electorate became evident during the campaign. The influential Gem leaders who had campaigned for him in 1979 abandoned him. Sijeyo in particular was in the race against him although Sijeyo was not a threat to Ambala, not even to Owiti and Okero. The significant point is that most of the chief campaigners of Ambala who left him excluding Sijeyo rallied behind Owiti where they joined forces with some of those who had supported Okeno Osare in 1979. Thus Ambala was left with a following, concentrated in South Gem, but without the leadership to provide an effective link as indeed happened in the 1979 Elections. The logical consequence was that this following could be swayed easily away from him through campaign. This actually happened especially in North Gem where Owiti gained increasing support at the expense of Ambala.

The campaign bid by Owiti in 1979 had definitely made him politically well known in Gem. But the increasing popularity was mainly due to his quiet campaign, even after losing in that election. This was by way of involvement in harabee projects in various corners of Gem particularly North Gem. If in fact he had not been carrying out such a campaign it would have been near impossible even to pose a threat to Ambala in view of the surprise premature announcement of the elections. He was consequently the only formidable candidate standing against three former MPs whom the tide in Gem had turned against.

Supporters of Owiti argued that all the other candidates including Sijeyo who had served for only a few months, had had their chances as MPs so this was Owiti's chance to become Gen MP. The idea of trying a new person was therefore working in Owiti's favour. And the idea was held strongly particularly among those who did not want Ambala to be returned and were at the same time not ready for Okero's come back. If these were Kajuodhi people they argued that even if the MP was not from their line at least he would be a true son of Gen. Among Kwenda people they also saw the new MP as being a true son of Gen but beyond that he would be a true son of Kwenda and still from South Gen not just Gen. "As a matter of fact those still supporting Ambala in South Gen argued that Ambala was the right person mainly because he had been instrumental in wrenching leadership from the North. He should therefore be given support still to avoid the North regaining the leadership as those in the North were in fact saying. These south people it is interesting to note were readily admitting that there was really nothing wrong with Owiti's candidacy except for the timing. In other words it would have been good if he contested at a later date to avoid dividing votes and making Okero win, which meant that leadership would go back to the North. Thus it is essentially out of the fear of this happening that they were banking on Ambala and did not want to take chances with Owiti's candidacy.

At any rate it was Owiti who won the election but with a small majority. Later when the election was nullified and a by-election held within months those who had doubts during the general election had gained faith in him and Owiti registered a landslide victory. " The major factors contributing to Owiti's success at the polls include capturing support of influential Gen leaders. A significant element in this group of leaders were Kajuodhi leaders who were no longer supporting Okero because of his leadership style and rivalry between Kajuodhi subclans. It

was also due to Owiti's involvement in harambee in both North and South Gea that made him boost his image of a development conscious leader and became therefore a good match for Ambala. Another additional important factor was that he is Jagen Asili coming from the South where his closest rival who is not a Jagen Asili comes from. He could thus share votes with him in the South and get overwhelming support in the North and therefore win. Lastly he gained constituency-wide popularity due to traits of a polite, humane leader and his personal charm.

Bondo

It seemed initially after the 1979 Elections that Bondo had suddenly entered a new era of accord. Odinga was appointed Chairman of the Cotton Lint and Seed Marketing (CLSMB) earning the nickname Minister for Pamba (Cotton). Omamo got Chairmanship of both the Agricultural Finance Corporation and the University of Nairobi Council and Ougo was of course the MP. There were pronouncements in the local press, especially by Omamo, and pledges that Bondo people and all their leaders would henceforth work in unity.

However, things started changing dramatically and before long, the moment Ougo resigned as Bondo MP in favour of Odinga Odinga in turn resigned from his CLSMB job to try and recapture Bondo seat. In an extremely fast chain of political events Odinga was expelled from KANU and could not therefore secure nomination to get elected. In a desperate last minute move, Jalang'o Anyango who was rumoured to be having the backing of Odinga tried to secure nomination to run against Omamo and even went to Court over the matter but failed to get nomination.

It was Omamo, who had also come out in support of Odinga's political comeback, who alone secured nomination and became MP

for Bondo without Bondo people going to the polls leading to reference to him as "High Court MP". It is also worth noting that on becoming MP he was in addition appointed a cabinet minister. He was thus exalted while Ougo and Odinga found themselves in the cold politically. For Odinga this was not the end of acute political problems. There was first the widespread talk that he was behind a move to form another political party which apparently instigated the move to make Kenya a de jure one-party state. The resulting effect of this was that he could not re-enter electoral politics as he belonged to no political party. Secondly, matters got worse when he was put under house arrest for alleged involvement in plotting the August 1982 Coup Attempt. It was while he was under house arrest that the traitor issue erupted. Thus the 1983 general election was held when he was in confinement.

The point to make all the same is that even when he was removed from public life Odinga remained the major force in the 1983 Bondo Election. The discussions during the campaign centred around alleged manoeuvres of Omano to capture leadership which were seen to be aimed at exclusion of Odinga from leadership. Ougo saw these moves to be aimed at not excluding Odinga only but other prominent Bondo leaders as well. He said that when he had a job, meaning when he was MP., Odinga had a job, Oneko also had a job, (Chairman Kenya Film Corporation) and even Omano himself had a job. But when Omano became MP., Omano was the only one with a job while Odinga, Oneko and Ougo himself were without jobs.

In his attempt to regain his job after what looked like political retirement Ougo was clearly regarded as the Odinga man.. The support he got was therefore basically support for Odinga and this was confirmed by the presence of close political supporters of Odinga in Ougo's campaign trail. It is worth pointing out

that Ougo had more people openly campaigning for him in this particular election than in any previous one. There were many more vehicles deployed for the purpose showing that more resources were put into this campaign. All in all there was more effort and a much greater determination exhibited even by Ougo himself in his speeches which were lively and showed that he was quite confident of winning the election. In brief, the indications from the network of support, which was essentially for Odinga, and the vigorous campaign, was that Ougo was going to win the election with a big majority. The failure of Ougo to win cannot therefore be explained in terms of the social forces in Bondo and the realities of Bondo politics. Odinga's conclusion put figuratively that Oromo went to parliament "through the window" echoes this stance.

Ethnic Factor in Participation in the Electoral Process and Leadership Choice

In trying to enhance our understanding of the extent to which ethnicity remains a dominant factor in the electoral process primary data was collected by way of interviews with the electorate in Gem and Bondo constituencies. The same structured interview schedule (questionnaire) was used in both constituencies to allow for comparison of the two areas with the help of the information collected. Interviews were conducted for two different elections: 1979 and 1983, thereby allowing for comparison between two elections while at the same time updating information collected in the initial 1979 study.

In 1979, 122 respondents were interviewed in Gem and 110 in Bondo giving a total of 232 respondents. In 1983, 86 and 92 respondents in Gem and Bondo respectively were interviewed. Quota sampling is the method of selection which was relied upon to yield all the respondents.

The respondents can be characterised generally as predominantly married males although the proportion of females was higher in the 1983 than the 1979 sample. The majority of the respondents were members of rural farm families and therefore belonged to the local indigenous population. Their ages ranged between 20 and 70 years with a concentration in the 30 - 60 age group and the females tending to be younger than the males. They had mostly received some primary education and could therefore read and write. In terms of religious preference most of them were christians belonging to different denominations.

The information collected of relevance to this analysis relates to two broad areas. First is the institutional scope for participation in the electoral process and the operations of these institutions. Secondly, the various factors and the values which influence the choice of leaders in such elections.

Institutional Scope

The observations on institutions which can facilitate participation in the electoral process revealed that there is a deadlock of participation through the political party which is the main modern electoral institution. The party only became of significance to the electorate at

the time of clearance of candidates wanting to contest the elections. The significance can in addition be said to be in a negative sense as it was essentially an expression of fear that a particular candidate would be barred from running for elections. Furthermore there was only concern if the candidate was popular. This was evident from the intense discussions of Odinga's clearance in Bondo as compared for example to virtual indifference to the fate of Sijeyo in Gem. When asked to state the main problem with selection of candidates in their constituency about 60 percent Bondo respondents said in 1983 that it is the barring of candidates or more bluntly that it had to do with the clearance of Odinga.

The discussions it is important to point out were informal and took place between friends and/or acquaintances in private not openly. The implication is that there is no forum for formal participation at the grassroots level in this important party matter. The data collected showed that more than 75 percent of respondents in Bondo and Gem are members of KANU. But only about 20 percent had attended any party meeting in the year 1983 when elections were being held. At any rate none of the respondents reported this matter having been discussed.

As a matter of fact the views expressed in Bondo clearly pointed to the fact that this matter and other important party issues are decided in Nairobi by KANU Headquarters. Furthermore that the decision on this matter could be manipulated by influential individuals to serve their interest by barring a particular candidate. The resulting effect is that there is a we - they posture in the relationship of the grassroots membership vis-a-vis the party headquarters which implies exclusion of the rank-and-file membership from the party decision process.

Once the party has taken the decision on election candidates the running of elections from the day of nomination to the declaration of winners after polling is the responsibility of the Provincial Administration. The District Commissioner (DC) who is usually appointed the Returning Officer is at the centre stage of electoral process activity. He scrutinises nomination papers of the candidates, licenses their meetings which are chaired by his aides usually the District Officer (DO), appoints polling clerks and organises as well as supervises the counting of votes. Thus the administration which belongs to the executive arm of government is the modern institution that plays a dominant role in the electoral process and not the party.

The arrangement is actually such that party members can only participate in the electoral process as individuals or grouped not on party but some other principle such as village, clan, location, church, self-help group etc. The election rallies assume the nature of meetings of the administration locally known as barazas and the party has no role, formal or informal, to play in them. This lack of involvement of the party in organising elections is mainly due to the fact that the local party leadership and even the party members themselves are divided in their support of the rival candidates who all belong to the same party. It is very much unlike in a multi-party situation where the local leadership and rank-and-file membership rally behind their party candidate.

The data collected clearly showed also that the party has virtually no role at all to play in the electoral process by way of creating awareness and mass mobilisation. The respondents when asked about the sources of information on election ranked KANU leaders and meetings as the least important after barazas. The most important source was the mass media, i.e. radio and newspapers, followed by friends and relatives which together constituted the most outstanding sources of election information.* The remaining sources of information in order of importance included market places, barazas, funeral gatherings, church groups, school teachers, KANU leaders and meetings, harambee meetings and lastly beer drinking parties.

The important sources of election information finding is consistent with findings on local institutional scope which showed prevalence of groups organised around traditional principles such as clan or lower level kinship ties. These were mostly self-help welfare groups and included women groups to a significant degree. The broad objective of these groups is to contribute funds for harambee self-help projects or improving the welfare of their individual members. This inevitably results in developing a network of friends and relatives between whom there is an exchange of political and other ideas freely.

There were in fact groups organised on modern principles but these were not broad based. There were for example a few church groups. Also there were cooperative societies but only about 25 percent of the respondents in 1983 belonged to the few societies in both areas. It needs to be pointed

* It was found in 1983 that 65% of the respondents own radios which implies access to radios by a larger proportion of the population.

out that these kinds of institutions unlike the party or welfare groups have somewhat specialised objectives and cannot be directly involved in electoral politics.

The findings on opinion makers and effective campaigners shows that traditional institutions play a dominant role in the electoral process as compared to the modern organisations. In response to a question to rank leading opinion makers in their constituency those interviewed in both Gem and Bondo taken together ranked Elders (Jodong Gweng) highest. Likewise when asked who are the most effective campaigners they again ranked the Elders highest.

It is interesting to note that while the Elders maintained a leading position in both instances the ranking position of the other groups did not remain the same. In the case of opinion makers the ranking of these other groups in order of importance was as follows: Educated Elite, Teachers, Church Teachers and Nairobi Residents. As regards effective campaigners the ranking was as follows: Youth, Educated Elite, Teachers, Church Teachers and Women Groups, and lastly Nairobi Residents.

It is also significant that in Bondo and Gem taken separately the Elders were ranked highest as effective campaigners. There was however an important difference in the second highest ranked group in which case Educated Elite in Gem and Youth in Bondo were ranked second. In regard to leading opinion makers Elders were ranked highest in Bondo followed by School Teachers while in Gem it was the Educated Elite and next came the Elders. Thus even in the two different constituencies the dominant position of the Elders is upheld. The position is given in summary form below:

	GEM + BOND	GEM	BOND
Opinion makers	1. Elders 2. Educated Elite	1. Educated Elite 2. Elders	1. Elders 2. School Teachers
Effective Campaigners	1. Elders 2. Youth	1. Elders 2. Educated Elite	1. Elders 2. Youth

The inference we need to draw is that the electoral process has not depended only on elements of modern institutions. There has instead been an ascendancy of traditional elements evidenced by the dominant position

of the Elders. All the same it is the combination of both traditional and modern elements that has ensured awareness and participation in elections. Together with the Elders, the Educated Elite including Teachers as well as Youth Wingers have shaped the participation in elections.

Thus the majority of those interviewed were registered voters and had participated in previous elections through voting. It is therefore not surprising that practically all of them knew who their MP was apart from being able to identify the stronghold of his support and to recall issues in previous elections. In addition they have actively participated in harambee development through their contributions and know who among the leaders has contributed most to development of their area and who has not. It can therefore be concluded that generally the voters have most if not all the information regarding election issues and that we are talking about an informed electorate.

Influences on Leadership Choice.

There is evidence from data collected from Bondo and Gem that despite their differences in social transformation traditional norms play a dominant and sometimes a determining role in their choice of leaders through the modern electoral process. The clearest indication comes from Gem where over 90 percent of those interviewed in 1983 felt that elections in their constituency is influenced by clanism/locationism and more so by clanism. They are also well aware of the particular clan from which most of their MPs have originated namely Kojudhi and some even mentioned the actual specific subclan, Kagola. Furthermore when asked to give their opinion on what they consider the main problem in the selection of candidates to stand for elections in Gem about 50 percent identified the problem as clanism. In the same vein, about 50 percent of those interviewed in Gem in 1979 agreed that general elections in their constituency are influenced by clanism/locationism. There were even some who felt that Gem MP should come from their particular location.

In Bondo, in contrast, there was in 1983 an awareness that most MPs have originated from Sakwa and a minimal feeling expressed by about 14% of the respondents, that locationism influences elections in Bondo. But no respondent mentioned clanism as a factor influencing Bondo elections. Likewise in 1979, 90% of those interviewed answered no when asked if they thought that general elections in their constituency had been influenced

by locationalism. It is therefore understandable that those interviewed in Bondo in 1983 did not at all consider clanism/locationism as the main problem in the selection of candidates to stand for elections in their constituency. Thus in Bondo apart from acting as the basis for organising election campaigns clanism/locationism does not seem to play a major role in the ^{electoral} process while in Gem it plays a determining role. This is mainly due to historical circumstances peculiar to Gem that have resulted in the choice of leaders being closely tied to clan origins of the aspirant.

It is however not in Gem alone that traditional norms influence elections and in Gem itself clanism is not the only factor. There are other such norms influencing elections even in Bondo, some to a greater degree than Gem depending on the particular stakes involved. And in both constituencies the pattern that has evolved is characterised by constant interplay between modern and traditional values. The findings on the leadership attributes a candidate should have to receive votes from the electorate points in that direction.

Leadership Qualities

Those interviewed in 1983 were asked to rank the factors they considered important in determining which candidate people vote for in parliamentary elections. It was found that in both constituencies taken together Progressive Ideas, High Formal Education and Traditional Leadership were ranked much higher than Religion and Wealth which followed in that order. In Gem High Formal Education was ranked much higher than Traditional Leadership while in Bondo the two were relatively much closer. Also in Bondo a lot more emphasis was put on Progressive Ideas than in Gem which points to the conclusion that progressive ideas are largely defined by one's perception of his or her own situation and can therefore be linked to either traditional or modern values or the two combined.

Thus it is education and traditional leadership that can be delineated as crucial for a candidate to be voted for in parliamentary elections. Religion or the idea of a God-fearing leader was considered important while wealth was considered the least important factor. In the same vein, in 1979, wealth was considered the least important factor in determining how people vote in an election while education and traditional leadership were viewed as crucial factors. It is interesting to note that compared to Bondo, in Gem religion and wealth were considered less important pointing to a much higher regard for education which is therefore a key factor in Gem.

The individual respondent was also asked to tell us which characteristics he or she considered important for a candidate to receive his or her own vote. Traditional Status combined with Age was ranked highest but closely followed by formal education. Other characteristics included Experience in governmental affairs especially parliamentary experience, Personality, Religion and again Wealth came last. In Bondo it should be noted there was specific mention of the characteristic of being development conscious by a number of respondents which most likely emanated from the views held by sympathisers of Omamo.

To shed some light on the actual operation of these factors in the choice of leaders the 1983 post mortem findings on the major factors which contributed to the victory of the MP who won the 1979 Election are instructive. In Gem, Ambala in particular won most importantly because of his performance and promise with regard to harambee development projects. This was the outstanding factor according to the majority of respondents. This however is closely linked to the other contributory factors. Also, it relates directly to factors that make people vote for a particular candidate and who are considered the leading opinion makers and effective campaigners. These contributing factors to Ambala's victory included traditional norms such as campaign by influential Gem leaders and support from S. Gem clans and small clans all over Gem. Another contributory factor was that Gem people were fed up with their former MP which had mainly to do with that MP's performance in regard to harambee development projects. It had also to do with that former MP's personality. He was considered arrogant more so by S. Gem people. Ambala was thought in 1979 to be accessible and social. In addition wealth of Ambala was mentioned but only in terms of his having dished money out to his supporters during the election.

In Bondo similarly the factors were closely linked. The respondents saw the most outstanding factor that led to victory by Ougo in particular to be Odingaism. They said he was backed by Odinga and that he promised to stand down for Odinga. A contributing factor was identified as his personality. He was seen as peaceful and cooperating with the people particularly the elders. One needs to bear in mind in this connection the strong bond between Odinga as well with the elders. Another contributing factor was Ougo's profession as a teacher which enjoined the teachers to him and brings to mind what was said earlier about the important role teachers play in the election process in Bondo.

In both Bondo and Gem the responses to the question how those interviewed thought Ougo and Ambala gained their support in 1979 upheld the factors contributing to their victory. What needs to be emphasised is that neither had a political base of his own. Thus once Ambala was deserted by influential Gem leaders he could not possibly win. Ougo for his part could continue winning so long as he had the support of Odinga.

The understanding of these factors and how they operate can evidentially help in the prediction of elections in these two constituencies. There is a clear indication of this from the 1983 findings on who was considered the likely winner in that year's election by the respondents and from where he derived his support. The evidence is furthermore confirmed by the responses to the question whether the respondent voted for the winner in the 1979 Election followed by if he would vote for the same person in the 1983 Election.

In Gem when asked to name the possible winner and the runner up the responses of those interviewed were as shown in Table 1.

Table 1: Gem Candidates Winning Score

CANDIDATE	WINNER	RUNNER-UP	SCORE*
HORACE OWITI	22	52	96
OTIENO AMBALA	39	13	91
OMOLO OKERO	22	19	63
WASONGA SIJEYO	2	3	7

* The score is arrived at by weighting giving a score of 2 if a candidate is mentioned as a possible winner and a score of 1 if mentioned as a possible runner-up.

It was indeed a close race between Owiti and Ambala as the actual outcome revealed even after the recount during the petition. But it is significant that over 60 percent thought Owiti would be the runner up indicating how much stronger than in 1979 his candidacy was considered. This was attributed to his quiet campaign, after losing in 1979, through harambee projects which made him a viable alternative to Ambala. In addition he had influential persons in his camp, was socially close to the people and had the right clan connections. This kind of support Okero could

not match although he had regained some popularity. Owiti had in fact gained support at his expense especially in N. Gem as indicated by a breakdown of the results of the 1984 by-elections available to us and given in Table 2.

Table 2: Gem - 1984 By-Elections

ELECTORAL AREA	NAME OF REG. UNIT	REG. UNIT NUMBER	VOTERS TOTAL REG.	NO. OF STREAMS	OWITI	AMBALA	OKERO	TOTAL
East Gem	Marenyo	29	2152	2	698	202	200	1,100
	Jina	30	1903	2	94	52	639	785
	Nyamninia	31	1790	2	318	115	206	639
	Anyiko	32	2850	3	416	123	483	1,022
	Kagjilo	33	1648	2	430	237	25	692
	Gongo	34	1051	1	358	89	NIL	447
	Nyandiwa	35	1129	1	345	80	14	439
	Nyawara	36	1047	1	439	61	22	522
	Uranga	37	1390	2	619	75	11	705
	Lihanda	38	1475	2	565	43	40	648
	Ramula	39	2069	2	1041	22	8	1,071
North Gem	Murumba	40	1445	2	370	70	59	499
	Malanga	41	2054	2	743	34	83	860
	Regea	42	1427	2	342	63	90	495
	Asayi	43	1200	1	395	95	29	519
	Sirembe	44	1383	2	401	135	65	601
	Malunga	45	1749	2	598	146	86	830
	Maliera	46	2062	2	735	90	48	873
	Siriwo	47	1246	1	312	166	8	486
	Lundha	48	1537	2	503	46	34	583
South Gem	Dienya	49	1774	2	273	507	10	790
	Ulamba	50	1250	1	186	425	5	616
	Wagai	51	1306	2	200	384	12	596
	Rera	52	1212	1	448	103	24	575
	Kambare	53	1554	2	622	85	50	757
	Gombe	54	1474	2	667	32	11	710
	Kaudha	55	1682	2	235	505	31	771
	Kanyadet	56	1532	2	358	344	22	724
	Ndori	57	1244	1	300	277	8	585
	Onyinyore	58	1260	1	417	112	7	536
	TOTAL		46,895	52	13,428	4,718	2,330	20,476

In the case of Ambala his popularity was on the wane by 1983. The respondents in Gem were asked if they had voted for the winner in 1979 and 50 percent agreed that they had. When asked if they would vote for the same person in 1983 only some 40 percent agreed. This was mainly the consequence of Owiti's rival candidacy.

In Bondo when asked to name the possible winner and the runner up the responses of those interviewed were as shown in Table 3.

Table 3: Bondo Candidates Winning Score*

CANDIDATE	WINNER	RUNNER-UP	SCORE ^{**}
OUGO OCHIENG'	59	20	138
ODONGO CMAMC	15	44	74
JALANG'O ANYANGO	5	7	17

* As in Table 1.

The indications conform to our analysis. The clear winning position of Ougo is linked directly to Odinga's influence. Ougo was regarded by the electorate as a peaceful, straightforward honest leader especially due to the fact that he stood down for Odinga to try and recapture Bondo seat.

Ougo had actually gained more popularity than in 1979 according to our findings. When asked if they had voted for the winner in 1979, 66 percent of the respondents agreed. And then to the question if they would vote for that same person in 1983 80 percent of the respondents agreed that they would.

* The remaining four candidates in Bondo have been deliberately omitted because their scores were of no consequence for this analysis.

CONCLUSION

In conclusion one needs to emphasise the combination of both modern and traditional institutions and values in the change process. Thus together but also either one of the two can play a determining role in the electoral process depending on the stakes involved and how these are manipulated by the influential leaders.

Ambala for instance could therefore win in Gem in 1979 despite the dominant factor of clanism/Locationalism mainly because he was regarded as development conscious. At the same time Omamo was losing twice in a row to Ougo in Bondo despite being widely regarded in Bondo as the only person other than Odinga who has contributed most to the development of the constituency. He was therefore in the same boat with Okero who was being accused of not being development conscious. This similar outcome can best be explained in terms of going against Luo ethnic norms.

To show further that being development conscious alone is not enough to get elected in Gem as well there is the case of Ambala in the 1983 and the subsequent 1984 Gem by-election. He was then regarded as the only one other than Argwings-Kodhek who had contributed most to the development of the constituency. But he had to give way to a budding development conscious Ja Gem.

In the circumstances of Gem electoral politics therefore, the biggest mistake that Ambala made was to go to court over Owiti's victory. He made Owiti a Gem hero by so doing because Owiti was seen as personifying Gem electorate in Court and earned a lot of sympathy votes in the subsequent by-election. This is what really gave him a landslide victory only a few months after a closely contested general election. It is also true that the revelations in Njonjo hearings by Lawrence Sifuna

en how Ambala became an Assistant Minister through the influence of Njonjo also ruined his chances. Thus Ambala blew up his chances of being re-elected MP for Gem and Owiti's victory could not come as a surprise to anyone familiar with Gem electoral politics. Even Okero's candidacy, although there were signs that he was gaining in popularity, could not alter the course of events as it was completely untimely for him to enter the race.

It is also true to say that the working of these social forces is such that just being wealthy and dishing out money to youth wingers to shout and/or make approaches to the electorate in the hope of buying their support cannot enable one to win an election in Bondo or Gem. The voters openly resent the suggestion that they can be bought while youth are not the leading opinion makers and some may not even be registered voters. Thus Omamo could not oust Ougo in 1974 and 1979 Election despite "Chuto Jo Bondo" and having a swarm of youthful campaigners some of whom it was alleged were in fact supporters of Ougo. And the fears in the 1984 Gem by-election that Ambala could outdo Owiti because he had a lot of money proved to be unfounded.

In short the fact is simply that there is an interplay of modern and traditional values and both influence electoral politics in Luoland as revealed in the case of Bondo and Gem. This is to different degrees depending on the political stakes and the intervention of influential leadership. Thus in an election there will be appeals to kinsmen in the clan, maternal kin and even marriage ties. However the candidate needs to be educated and progressive in terms being in line with the wishes of the community. It is in this sense that the role of Luo ethnic factor in modern politics can be more accurately understood.