

# Education as the Mirage of Politics: an Examination of Position of Education as the Genesis of Patronage in Gem Constituency, Siaya County. Kenya (1901-2017)

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DOI: <https://dx.doi.org/10.47772/IJRISS.2025.9010278>

Received: 14 January 2025; Accepted: 18 January 2025; Published: 19 February 2025

## ABSTRACT

Political leaders have at their own disposal great deal of patronage in the sense that they make decisions on the appointment of officials inside and outside government (for example on the UK). Patronage is therefore a recognized power of the executive branch. In most countries the executive has the right to make countries, some of which may be lucrative. In some democratic, high-level appointments are reviewed or approved by the legislature (as in the advice consent of the United State Senate); in other countries, such as when political leaders engage in nepotism (hiring family members and cronyism such as fraudulently awarding non-competitive government to friends or relatives or pressuring the public service to hire an unqualified family members or friend.

Power is often concentrated within a community, defined by religion or ethnicity. In turn, evidence reveals that those wielding power often provide patronage (usually in the form of perpetual preferential access to public resources) to particular members of their community based on their common religion or ethnicity. (Frank & Rainer 2012, Burgess et al. 2015). Some scholars have gone as far as to blame “Africa’s growth tragedy” and failed policies on the continental ethnic dissemination (Easterly & Levine 1997).

Patronage motives are based on loyalty and encourage consumers to purchase from a particular business or to a particular brand. Loyalty is influenced by positive previous experiences or a close identification with the product or business. Siaya as one of the counties in Kenya have suffered from intrusion of politics of patronage since the inception of the 2010 constitution. This political philosophy has emerged as the only determinant for development, appointment in to the office, employment and the only gear towards employment. The scourge has affected even the formation of the Luo Council of Elders, and ladder to climb the ladder towards appointment to leadership positions.

## INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this article is to highlight the major factors which contributed to the politics of patronage in Nyanza from the year when Kenya gained independents to date. It begins with the advent of independence and proceeds to current political situation. It analyzed the, nature of contacts, response of the of the population living in the region towards the prevailing political arena, when it happened to people who were in the frontline with the focus that their goal was achieved, and consequences of the outcome. The other factor which targeted here is to establish any causes of historical negative relationships between the natives of the region which extends to sharing local leadership position and distribution of power. The last area which was looked at was historical events which associated with political patronage in the region. It gave way forward for solving the identified problems and other issues which affected the people negatively.

According to Cokumu (2001), In about 1984 Colonel Henry Colville, the first Commissioner of the new government of the Uganda protectorate established an administrative sub-station at Mumias, and Sir Fredrick Spire was the first officer to be posted there (Dealing, 1974, 308). The Europeans believed then that Kenya was not as important to their interests as Uganda (Ogot, 1963, 249; Mungeam, 1966,7; Ochieng,1988).

Consequently, Mumias served merely as a calling station for the Europeans as they travelled between the coast and Uganda.

In 1883, Joseph Thomson made a momentous Journey across Maasai land reaching Mumias in December 1883 and stayed for only two days despite the heroic reception rendered to him, he was accorded by Mumias to win his support (Thomson, 1962, 160; Osogo, 1962,77). Two years later, in 1885, Bishop James Hannington passed by Mumias to take charge of Church Missionary Society station that had been established in Uganda eight years earlier (Osogo, 1975,11). He hurriedly left for Uganda despite entreaties from Mumias that he would be killed if he entered Buganda from the east. The bishop subsequently met his death for defying rule that governed entry into Buganda. The two journeys, nevertheless, encouraged more European ventures across Kenya into Uganda as they coincided with the period when European Scramble for Africa was in its most earnest and critical phase. In accordance with the “sphere of influence” doctrine of the Berlin agreement of 1884-1885, the British government was forced to increase and concretize its presence in the region before it was too late (Hobley, 1970, 68; Salim, 1973, 54; Van Zwanenberg, 1976,124).

### **Participation of Gem people Nationalist in Kenya Politics During and after the second World War (1945-1963)**

The concept of a Luo ruler Ker was coined by Jaramogi Oginga Odinga during the formation of Luo Union in 1947 that was aimed at uniting all people of Luo descent in East Africa. Jaramogi Oginga Odinga was the first Luo Ker. As part of distinguishing a tribal leader from a national politics and when Jaramogi Oginga Odinga went into national politics in 1957, he had to quit being a Ker.

The history of parliamentary representation during colonial period highlights the background of personalities who hailed from Gem and participated in parliamentary representation in Kenya. The first prominent person from Gem to serve in the colonial legislative colonial parliament was Apollo Ohanga in the year. In 1947 he was nominated to the Kenya Legislative Council. He became the first black Kenyan to serve as a Cabinet minister in the colonial period in the Ministry of Community Development and habilitation in 1954, a post he held until 1957. He was an immigrant from Ugenya whose parents were assimilated in Gem and grandparents' placenta buried at Gem Regea hills, Siaya District, Nyanza province, Kenya. He was the son of the late Ongewe Okelo and Alicia Obura. He was born in 1913 at Got Regea, Gem Sub-County in Siaya County. After passing his Common Entrance Examination in 1927 he Joined Maseno School in 1928. At Maseno, the late Carey Francis recognized his unique ability and within two years, Mr. Orange had taken his final exams for Secondary and teacher training education. He then proceeded to Alliance High school in 1931 for Senior Secondary education and qualified for entrance to university in 1933 Focus group discussion (FGD, 18th, January 2021).

In addition, Benaiah Apollo Ohanga joined Civil Service as an Education Officer in the Ministry of Education, and later moved to the Ministry of Home Affairs where he was in charge of approved schools. During his tenure in the Civil Service, he was Very active in the Trade Union Movements and Civil Servants Union and first President of Central Organization of Trade Unions (COTU). Through Apollo Ohanga Many youths from Gem and her periphery were inspired to join Maseno School to farther their education. At the same time, they used that opportunity to be closer to the British Colonialist than other Kenyans. He is the one who also inspired most Maseno old students to join independence politics. Through Apollo Ohanga, more elites like Argwings Kodhek, Omolo Okero, Okeno Osare and Bethuel Ogot emerged From Gem Focus group discussion (FGD 23/2/2020).

Between 1954 and 1957 he was holding the position of cabinet minister of Community Development and Rehabilitation-This led to his withdrawal action towards constituency politics when the British departed to give room for independence. Through the welfare associations, the members engaged the colonial government, for example, on 18thNovember 1947, the Kisumu branch of the Abaluya Welfare Association wrote a protest letter to the then DC of the central Nyanza complaining about representation and membership in the local Government. The Luo Union was founded in 1946 by the new crop of missionary educated elites who had nothing to do with politics of Young Kavirondo Association (YKA), the old Boys (alumni) of the Maseno

School. They included Jaramogi Oginga Odinga, Walter Odede and Achieng Oneko who began to call for a larger organization than before that would help unite the communities (Ochieng et al., 2012).

After the declaration of State of Emergency, Kenya remained in a political lull for two years. But it is important to note that Walter Odede from Central Nyanza became the Acting President of KAU after the detention of the Kapenguria Six (Jomo Kenyatta, Paul Ngei, Kungu Karumba, Fred Kubai, Achieng Oneko, and Bildad Kaggia). Other KAU officials from Nyanza included Argwings Kodhek. And Tom Mboya. In March 1953, Walter Odede was arrested and detained by June 1953, KAU was proscribed. During this period African political associations were not allowed to operate. It is interesting to note that the educated elite from Nyanza were already involved in national politics. And when African political parties could not operate under State of Emergency, the vacuum was filled by the African Labour Federation (AFL) Headed by Tom Mboya; the AFL assumed an increasing important national role in voicing African political aspirations albeit it's limited capacity.

In 1954 the Lyttelton Constitution allowed for the formation of a multi-racial Council of Ministers leading to the appointment of B.A. Ohanga, another educated elite from Nyanza, as Minister of Community Development. It was the appointment of Mr. Ohanga that sparked political rivalry amongst the elites in Nyanza. On one hand, there were those like Ohanga who embraced the concept of multi-racialism, and on the other hand, were those like Odinga who strongly opposed multi-racialism; Mr. Ohanga was partially censured by this group for accepting nomination to the Legislative Council in place of Odede. In the absence of any national political party, Mr. Ohanga, like other members of the legislative Council, soon felt the need for some kind of leading Luo from Central Nyanza District to consider the setting up of a Central Nyanza Political Association having as a political platform the support of a constitution for this Association. The Central Nyanza-ADA) was registered in 1956 but it did not grow into the authoritative political body the founders had expected. In fact, by the end of the year, it was practically defunct. There was a perception that the Luo Union was founded in 1946 by a new crop of mission educated elite who had nothing to do with politics of (YKA-Kavirondo). The Old Boys alumni of Maseno School included Jaramogi Oginga Odinga, Walter Odede and Aching Oneko who began to call for a larger organization, one that would help unite the greater Luo community (Ochieng' et al., 2012).

The first prominent person from Gem to serve in the colonial legislative colonial parliament was Apollo Ohanga in the year 1947. He was an immigrant from Ugenya whose parents were assimilated in Gem and grandparents' placenta buried at Gem Regea hills, Siaya District, Nyanza province, Kenya. He was the son of the late Ongewe Okelo and Alicia Obura. Since his ancestors did not have blood ties with the other Gem clans, people referred to them as salves when relating them to Ojuodhi clan who sheltered them. He was the first black Kenyan cabinet minister to serve in the colonial government. Apollo Ohanga was the first black Kenyan cabinet minister in the Colonial Period. He was born in 1913 at Got Regea in Siaya, Nyanza Province, the late Benaiah Apollo Ohanga was the son was the son of the late Ongwen Okelo and Alicia Obura (Ochieng' 2012).

After passing his common Entrance Examination in 1927 he joined Maseno School in 1928. At Maseno School the late carry Francis recognized his unique ability and within two years. Mr. Ohanga had taken his final exams for Secondary and teacher training education. He then proceeded to Alliance High School in 1931 for Senior Secondary education and qualified for entrance to university in 1933 (Ochieng' 2012). However, he was prevailed upon by Carrey Francis to join him in training teachers at Maseno Central School. He was a keen musician and an accomplished organist. In 1943, he was elevated to the same rank as graduate teacher in recognition of his outstanding ability.

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In the absence of any national political party, Mr. Ohanga, like other members of the Legislative Council, soon felt the need for some kind of local body to support him. Towards the end of 1955, he called a meeting of leading Luo from Central Nyanza District to consider the setting up of a central Nyanza Political Association having as a political platform the support of a multi-racial government. A committee was formed at this meeting to draft a constitution for the association. The Central Nyanza Political Association (later known as the African District Association Central Nyanza-ADA) was registered in 1956, but it did not grow into the authoritative political body the founders had expected. In fact, by the end of the year, it was practically defunct.

After the publication of the Legislative Council (African Representation) Ordinance 1956, and the consequent realization by the Africans that a General Election would take place early in 1957, ADA came back to life. Mr. Ohanga was to be opposed in the District by Mr. Oginga Odinga used his clout as outgoing Ker of the Luo Union to capture most of the conservative votes; and the successor of Mr. Odede, he captured ADA and used it effectively to win the support of the intelligentsia and the urban dwellers; he therefore beat Mr. Ohanga in these elections. Mwalimu Lawrence Oguda, on the other hand, got elected in South Nyanza District. Throughout 1957, ADA (Central Nyanza) was very active. Meetings were held throughout the District and Mr. Odinga effectively used this platform to put over his political views to the people. When Kenya African National Union (KANU) was formed in 1960. ADA transformed itself into a Central Nyanza Branch of the party. And like all the District political organizations that had sprung up between 1955 and 1960 in Kenya, ADA considered its chief function to be that of serving the members for the district. KANU, to a large extent was merely a conglomeration of these District associations that had emerged around certain personalities. The African political movements in Nyanza as in the rest of Kenya, performed one useful function; they forced the British Government to abandon the inter-war assumptions and to accept the goal of parliamentary democracy with all that it implies (Ogot, 2003).

From this brief survey of colonial administration among the Luos, it is obvious that the Luo, on all fronts (economic, political, social and even intellectual) were in a mood of change and revolution, accepting new challenges, showing ability at adaption and modification, fighting back against racist doctrines and above all, changing their economy and politics to suit the socio-economic realities of the day all (Ochieng' 2012). We have, for example, demonstrated that the Luo resisted the introduction of the colonial rule in their country in two ways: armed resistance and diplomacy. That is why we conclude that the entry of colonial rule in Nyanza and Kenya in general was achieved through military conquest; it was force in the main the persuaded the Luo to submit to colonial rule.

As colonialism proved inevitable, the Luos were flexible to learn the western ways of life for the sake of survival. At the very onset, missionary schools and churches provided the only opportunity for acquiring this knowledge. It was therefore from these churches and schools that emerged the first African intelligentsia with a broader world view than the hitherto traditional world view; they therefore played a leading role in propagating Western ideas and Western ways among the Africans. In the process, there was an inter-play of plethora of factors: the missionary, the settler, the migrant labourer, the businessman, the administrator, the traditionalist, the colonial office, and above all the 'westernized' Africans – who played a crucial role in transforming the traditional society, besides forming the early opposition to the colonizers. Later, through the Luo Union and its other agencies, like LUTATCO and Ramogi Press, the Luo succeeded in constructing a formidable Luo nation whose participation in the history of liberation in Kenya stands tall. The above complex interaction between the western and African ways of life in a colonial setting engendered three distinct elite groups amongst the Luo of western Kenya (Ajinja- Former Unionist of KFA, Kii, 20/2/2021).



The first group was the nationalists who pressed the Colonial Administration for reform and change: they included people like Walter Odede (aka Rachilo) who was the second nominated African to the Legislative council; Apollo Ohanga (aka Bawo) who became the first African minister in the Colonial Government; Achieng' Oneko (aka Nyakech) who was detained alongside Jomo Kenyatta (the Kapenguria Six); Jaramogi Oginga Odinga (aka Rapinda) who became the first vice-president of Independent Kenya; Okuto Bala; Laurence Oguda; Orinda Okun and J.J. Bonga among others. The second group of the elite was composed of professionals, mostly teachers who had been o Maseno, Yala, Alliance and Mang'u mission schools. Amongst them were Timothy Omondo (aka Abanja); Mariko Ombaka (aka Thee); Herbert Magowi (aka Nyidho); Hezekiah Ougo Ochieng'; Paul Mboya (aka Olwal Ja-Nyakongo); Isaac Okwiri (aka Jusa) and lecturers at university colleges: David Wasomo, Reuben Ogendo, Bethwel Allan Ogot, Simeon Ominde, T.R. Odhiambo, Francis Ojany and Nicholas Otieno (aka P.O. The World). The third of elite contained musicians: they included Antony Mito (aka Ja-Manywanda), Pius Olima (aka Anditi Ja-Karachuonyo), William Oswera (aka Auka Ja-Kadimo) and Ogola Opot (aka Ogunyo) and others. They made the Luo nation sing, dance and smile (Ochieng et al., 2012).

From 1946 to 1947, Apollo Ohanga was Secretary to the Language committee of all Nilotic languages. In 1947 he was nominated to the Kenya Legislative Council by the colonial government since they viewed him as an educated neutral loyalist. He became the first African in Kenya to hold a Cabinet seat when he rose to the position of Minister for Community Development and Rehabilitation in 1954, a post held until 1957. He then joined civil service as an Education Officer in the Ministry of Education. He then joined the Civil Service as an Education officer in the Ministry of Education, and later moved to the Ministry of Home Affairs where he was in charge of approved school. During his tenure in the in Civil Service, he was very active in the Trade Union Movement and served as President of Civil Servants Union and first President of Central Organization of Trade Union (COTU). Upon his retirement from the Civil Service in 1972, he became the Chief Executive of the Kenya Senior Civil Servant Association.

### **Political career of Benaiah Apolo Ohanga which transformed Gem politics**

Between 1954 and 1957 he was holding the position of cabinet minister of Community Development and Rehabilitation. This led to his withdrawal action towards constituency politics when the British departed to give room for independence. Through the welfare associations, the members engaged the colonial government, for example, on 18th November 1947, the Kisumu branch of the Abaluya Welfare Association wrote a protest letter to the then DC of the central Nyanza complaining about representation and membership in the local Government. The Luo Union was founded in 1946 by the new crop of missionary educated elites who had nothing to do with politics of Young Kavirondo Association (YKA), the old Boys (alumni) of the Maseno School. They included Jaramogi Oginga Odinga, Walter Odede and Achieng Oneko who began to call for a larger organization than before that would help unite the communities (Ochieng et al., 2012).

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Politically Argwings Kodhek was referred to by colonialists as the Mau Mau lawyer and defender of human rights. Argwings Kodhek was born in 1923 in Malang Village in North Gem. He attended St. Mary Yala where he passed Cambridge Certificate before proceeding to St. Mary Kisubi College and then Mary Kisubi College and then Makere. He returned to Kenya and became a teacher at Kapsabet School, where he taught until 1947. At Kapsabet School Argwings Kodhek met Daniel Moi and where they taught together. He was the first

Kenyan to open a private law firm in 1957 at the height of Mau Mau resistance. He married a white woman by the name Mavis Tate, despite the prohibition of mixed-race marriage by colonial legislation (Ogot, 2003).

### **Global Connections of Argwings Kodhek**

From 1937 to 1940, Kodhek studied for a diploma in education at Makerere College where other prominent East Africa leaders including Milton Obote, Mwalimu Julius Nyerere, Kabaka Mutesa II and Mwai Kibaki had also studied-This was his first exposure to the outside world where he interacted with other Africans in the region, exchanging views concerning the state of colonialism in the continent. He later earned a government scholarship to study social science at the University of Cardiff. However, his desire to study law led to termination of his scholarship after one year, and he proceeded to pursue a degree in law through financial support of his parents at the University of St. Andrews. He became a barrister and was admitted to the prestigious Lanoline Inn, an astonishing achievement for Africans at the time. Kodhek was the first East African to graduate with a degree in law shortly before declaration of State of Emergency in Kenya (Ogot, 2003).

His graduation in law coincided with the formation Jomo Kenyatta's Kenya African Union (KAU) in 1951, which demanded independence with three years. Code left a well-paying job in the UK to come and join the political struggle in Kenya in 1952-to the surprise of his friends. While studying in the UK, he was involved in debates about concepts such as democracy, human rights and equality, values that he endeavored to demand in his home country. For instance, campaigning for democracy, he gave a defiant speech in Bahati (Nairobi) for Kenyan independence this country has eight million African and if "this country has eight million Africans and if we want freedom we want it now. As a human right defender, he argued that human rights are indivisible and freedom cannot be appropriate in the West and inapplicable in Africa" He insisted on the principle of natural justice as applied in Western nations and European in Africa. Therefore, he embarked on defending Mau Mau fighters with great success. He took most of the cases under pro- bono -service in various areas in Central and Nairobi province Colonial Courts.

For instant he successfully helped forty-eight people accused in the Lari Massacre, which led killing of Chief Luka Kahangara. According to Ogot, (2003), he successfully defended Waruru Kanja, who later became an MP and minister, from being convicted of capital offense. During the struggle for independence. Infact Kodhek, Achieng Oneko and Ekana Ereko have been used to show ethnic diversity in Mau Mau Movement. This led to western press labelling him a "Mau Mau lawyer" and this was consequently debarred in 1957. In addition, he built important network with journalist and members of parliament in the UK and used these connections to bring the Hola Massacre to International stage when colonial government tried to cover it up. This was through House of Commons and press networks he had established while studying in the UK. He described colonial brutalities against African detainees committed on behalf of the British government, comparing the Massacre to Nazi concentration camps, leading to international uproar, (Onjak, O.I. 24/ 3/2021).

Furthermore, he joined the labour movement after the banning of political parties, just like Mboya and other nationalists with global connections. In the labour Union. He was able to advocate for better working conditions for Africans, which can be partially attributed to his training as a lawyer in fact after joining the state law office together with Charles Njonjo, who later became the first African attorney general, he left in protest of equal work for equal pay since he was paid three times less than his European counterpart. Later, during the 1957 election, he appointed Mboya as an American Stooge in response to his international connection, while casting himself as a nationalist. During the Cold War era, he tried to bridge the gap between Jaramogi Oginga Odinga and Tom Mboya who broadly speaking sympathized with USSR and USA political standpoints respectively Kodhek did not align himself as a diplomat and rising to become minister of foreign affairs (Agina, O.I, 20/ 3/2021).

### **Political Life of Argwings Kodhek**

Generally political activities of Argwings Kodhek spanned the colonial period to the early days of independent Kenya. He started his political career in Nairobi during the state of emergency, where he joined the trade unions after the barn of KAU. He formed the Nairobi African District Congress (NADC) which lost against

Tom Mboya's Nairobi Peoples Convection (NPC). The loss made him lose interest in Urban Politics and redirect his political activities to Luo Nyanza upon independence. He was also one of the legal minds of the Kenya African Union (KANU) during Lancaster House conference, where he helped to deal with legal implications. He was therefore accepted as a Luo leader among others like D.O. Makasembo, Tom Mboya and Jaramogi Oginga (Odhiambo, 2003). Through Argwings Kodhek Gem which at the colonial time was just a location emerged in global limelight live alone national politics. At the eve of departure of the British colonialist in Kenya Gem was the only location which had produced two veterans; Apollo Ohanga and Argwings Kodhek who shaped national politics (Alem, O.I, 3/3/2021).

KADU's team in London, led by Ngala, desperately resisted such changes, but it was clear once negotiations began that the British, led by Sandys, were inclined to compromise with KANU. During October 1963, Kenya came close to insurrection. After a near-walkout from the conference by KADU, Seroney sent a telegram to Rift Valley President Moi: 'Dishonorable betrayal of majimbo agreement by British. Alert Kalenjin and region and Kadu to expect and prepare for worst. Partition and operation Somalia only hope.'<sup>248</sup> The security forces went onto high alert, as KADU leaders announced plans to set up a Sovereign Federal Republic of Kenya with Ngala as president, Moi as vice president and Nakuru as their new capital. There were reports that the Kalenjin under Moi were arming for a war of secession, and there was talk of alliances with Kenya's Somali. However, the British were desperate to avoid civil war or a delay to independence and could see little alternative but to do a deal with KANU. They therefore provided BBC facilities for Kenyatta to broadcast on Kenyan radio a reassurance that the government was in control and a warning to troublemakers that aired throughout 10 October 1963. The colonial secretary also warned KADU that British troops would be used against them if they acted unconstitutionally. When neither the British nor Kenyatta blinked, KADU backed down. Ngala was concerned that Moi, by releasing a partition map and threatening a unilateral declaration of independence (UDI), was pushing events out of control, and dispatched Luhya MP Shikuku back from London (again with British assistance) to pacify Moi and the hotheads. On 14 October, Ngala 'postponed' KADU's partition plan. KANU now in turn threatened a walkout and a UDI if its demands were not met.

By 19th October, with chaos in the British government following the resignation of Macmillan, Sandys had given Kenyatta what he required. The police and civil service would remain centrally managed, and the special protection rules for the Constitution would remain only for the rights of individuals, citizenship, regional boundaries, the Senate and control of Trust Land. All other issues (including the powers of the regional assemblies) would be subject to a 75 per cent majority in both houses. On 19th October, the conference ended and Kenya's leaders returned to Nairobi to prepare for independence. Regionalism was crippled before it was born. KADU was furious, and Ngala accused Sandys of dishonesty by breaking pledges that he and Maudling had made. He suggested that since KANU and Britain had violated the Constitution, KADU would not be bound by it either. Returning to Kenya, Ngala announced, 'the time for action has arrived. Nonetheless, KADU's bluff was again called; it did not have the mass support or the secure territory that partition would require.

Three days later, Ngala announced that KADU had shelved its secession plan. Instead, he called for Kenyatta to show good faith and implement the remainder of the Constitution as he had promised the British, whereby most regional powers would be handed over on 1st December 1963, with the remainder coming into effect on 1st January 1964. It was a vain hope, but Kenyatta needed to console the losers. Trying to assuage the fears of the minority communities, on 20th October, he gave 'a categorical assurance that, under the Constitution, all tribal land is entrenched in the tribal authority, and no-one can take away land belonging to the native (Hornsby,2012).

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