

240002

**The History of Community Relations Across the Kenya-  
Uganda Border: The Case of the Babukusu and the Bagisu, C.  
1884 – 1997**

**By**

**PETER WAFULA WEKESA  
KENYATTA UNIVERSITY  
DEPARTMENT OF HISTORY, ARCHEOLOGY AND  
POLITICAL STUDIES  
P.O BOX 43844 00100  
NAIROBI KENYA.  
TEL: 254-2-811622 EXT 57320  
FAX: 254-2-811575  
E-MAIL: [pwwekesa@yahoo.com](mailto:pwwekesa@yahoo.com)**

**Thesis Submitted to the School of Humanities and Social  
Sciences in Partial Fulfilment of the Requirements for the  
Degree of Doctor of Philosophy of Kenyatta University.**

**September 2007**

Wekesa, Peter Wafula  
*The history of  
community relations*



2008/322685

**KENYATTA UNIVERSITY LIBRARY**

## DECLARATION

**This Thesis is my original work and has not been presented for a degree in any other University.**



\_\_\_\_\_  
**PETER WAFULA WEKESA**

Date 10/9/2007

**This Thesis has been submitted with our approval as the University Supervisors.**



\_\_\_\_\_  
**PROF. ERIC M. ASEKA**

Date 10/9/2007



\_\_\_\_\_  
**DR. ABDULLAHI JAMA**

Date 10/09/07

## DEDICATION

**This thesis is dedicated to all those that value the meaning of life and work towards enhancing a peaceful coexistence among communities across borders.**

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

The evolution of this work into a thesis has taken a period of five years within which I have accumulated numerous intellectual, material and moral debts. For practical reasons, I cannot adequately express my gratitude to all persons and institutions whose input ensured the fruitful completion of the research and thesis write up. I would like however to mention a few of them.

First, I would like to express my deep appreciation to Kenyatta University and specifically to the Department of History, Archaeology and Political studies for allowing me to register for my PhD studies. As my employer, Kenyatta University has been supportive to both my academic and material endeavours throughout the period of this research and thesis writing. The numerous human and material resources availed to me especially within the department of History, Archaeology and Political studies have nurtured my intellectual abilities and will forever be acknowledged.

Second, my special gratitude is due to my supervisors, Professor Eric Masinde Aseka, the late Professor Gabriel G. Jal and Dr. Abdullahi Jama. I benefited enormously from their criticism and advice throughout the entire period of the research and thesis write up. Their selfless sacrifice to read, edit and critically comment on my draft chapters made the fruitful completion of the work a reality. The three supervisors remained my dependable source of academic inspiration both in terms of their thought provoking criticisms and for constantly bringing to my attention new sets of literature relevant to my study. The late Professor Jal who was my second supervisor died after having read and made valuable comments on the draft thesis. His untimely death occasioned his replacement by Dr. Jama. I will always pray for his soul to rest in eternal peace.

Third, I would like to most sincerely thank my sponsors for the financial support that ensured that I was constantly focused on the research. The bulk of the sponsorship for the work came from SEPHIS through its South-South research network. I sincerely appreciate their promptness in releasing the research funds and for aptly keeping me on toes with their constant reminders on progress reports. I am also deeply indebted to the German Academic Exchange Service (DAAD) and the French Institute of Research and Development (IRD) for generously supporting my field and library research in Western Kenya and Eastern Uganda. The latter institutions further facilitated my short research stays in Germany and France respectively that accorded me some ample environment to reflect and complete the writing of the thesis chapters.

Fourth, I am extremely indebted to various individuals, researchers, colleagues and friends who have fed me with juicy titbits over the years of this research. The members of staff in the Department of History, Archaeology and Political studies at Kenyatta University have over the years remained a source of encouragement to me. They have accorded a conducive scholarly environment that has inspired me both materially and morally. Prof Winfried Speitkamp, Daniel Stange, Martin Huscher and Christiane Reichart-Burikakiye of the History institute at Justus Liebig University in Giessen provided me with various resources during my short stay in Germany. Dr Claire Medard,

Henri Medard and Valeri Golaz for their selfless support and hospitality during my stay in France.

Fifth, I feel deeply indebted to my respondents both in western Kenya and eastern Uganda for taking their time off their busy schedules to welcome and openly share with me their experiences during my fieldwork. In particular I would like to single out retired chief Kolia in Lwandanyi border area of Bungoma district and Mzee Canon Wakiro, Situma Munyanda and Wilson Wamimbi Weasa from Mbale for their invaluable support during my research in the respective areas. Their resourcefulness and interest in my work prompted me to revisit key areas and assumptions in terms of primary sources. In terms of secondary sources, I would like to express my thanks to the staff in the various libraries in Nairobi and Kampala for their support during the period of research.

Sixth, my sincere thanks and appreciation go to my family for their constant support and encouragement. My dear wife Hedwig O. Wafula, our two sons Ian Simiyu and Mark Wafula bore the brunt of my constant absence at home. I find joy in their strong sense of sacrifice for the numerous deprivations that this work may have caused them. My parents Silvester Wafula and Loice Nabukwangwa have constantly prayed and supported my academic pursuits. My brothers, sisters, cousins and friends have morally supported my work and I thank them all.

Lastly, I sincerely thank Caroline Runyenje and Mary Khaemba for neatly typing this work and bringing it in shape usually at very short notice. Naturally, none of them or my friends, professors and colleagues should be held in any way accountable for the deficiencies in the thesis, which are wholly my responsibility. Thank you all and thank you again.

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

	Page
Declaration	ii
Dedication	iii
Acknowledgement	iv
Table of Contents	vi
List of abbreviations	ix
List of Maps and Tables	xi
Definition of Terms	xii
Abstract	xiv

### CHAPTER ONE

#### INTRODUCTION

<b>1.1</b>	<b>THE HISTORIOGRAPHICAL BACKGROUND</b>	<b>1</b>
1.2	Literature Review	5
1.3	Statement of the Problem	10
1.4	Objectives of the Study	11
1.5	Research Premises	11
1.6	Theoretical Framework	12
1.7	Justification of the Study	16
1.8	Scope and Limitations of the Study	18
1.9	Research Methodology	20
	A. Data Collection	20
	B. Data Analysis	22

### CHAPTER TWO

#### THE GEOGRAPHICAL SETTING 24

2.0	Introduction	24
2.1	The People	25
2.2	Territorial and Administrative Terrain	30
2.3	Relief and Climate	36
2.4	Physical and Natural Resources	38
2.5	Summary	41

### CHAPTER THREE

#### PATTERNS OF THE BABUKUSU-BAGISU RELATIONS TO 1894 42

3.0	Introduction	42
3.1	Historicizing the Deep past of the Babukusu and the Bagisu	43
3.2	The Migration Problem Among the Western Kenyan and Eastern Ugandan Bantu communities	48
3.3	The Babukusu in the history of the Luyia of Western Kenya	52
3.4	The Bagisu in the History of Eastern Ugandan Communities	57
3.5	The Historical Basis of the Babukusu-Bagisu Relations to 1894	62
3.5	Summary	80

## CHAPTER FOUR

### COLONIALISM, THE BORDER AND THE BABUKUSU-BAGISU RELATIONS TO 1945 82

4.0	Introduction	82
4.1	From Pre-Colonial to Colonial: The Kenya-Uganda Border in Context	83
4.2	The Early European Power Politics and the Border to 1902	88
4.3	Early Colonial Administration, the Border and Bukusu-Bagisu Relations to 1920	96
4.4	Bukusu-Bugisu Border Land and the New Socio-Economic Relations to 1945	105
4.5	Summary	119

## CHAPTER FIVE

### THE BABUKUSU-BAGISU BORDERLAND RELATIONS AND THE DECOLONISATION PROCESS 1945-1963 121

5.0	Introduction	121
5.1	Decolonisation and Identity Boundaries: The Context	122
5.2	The Colonial State, Ethnicity and the Early Political Associations	127
5.3	Dini Ya Musambwa and Pan African Decolonisation 1945-1950	135
5.4	From DYM Pan Africanism to State Nationalism and Independence 1950-1963	144
5.5	Summary	159

## CHAPTER SIX

### INDEPENDENT KENYA AND UGANDA AND THE BORDER BABUKUSU-BAGISU RELATIONS TO 1980 160

6.0	Introduction	160
6.1	Independence and Border Dynamics: Theoretical Issues and Debates	161

6.2	The National Community, OAU and Border Relations 1962-1967	163
6.3	Inter-State Relations, the Border and Economic Regionalism 1967-1980	175
6.4	Border Bukusu-Bagisu Relations and the Failure of Economic Regionalism	180
6.5	The Informal Economy and the Border Bukusu-Bagisu Relations to 1980	187
6.6	Summary	193

## CHAPTER SEVEN

### RENEWED PAN EAST AFRICANISM AND THE BORDERLAND BABUKUSU-BAGISU INITIATIVES, 1980-1997 195

7.0	Introduction	195
7.1	The Dwindling State Economies and Renewed Regionalism	195
7.2	Regionalism and the Kenya-Uganda Borderland: The States Response, 1980-1997	200
7.3	Regionalism and the Kenya-Uganda Borderland: Babukusu-Bagisu Initiatives to 1997	211
7.4	Summary	221

## CHAPTER EIGHT

### CONCLUSION 223

### BIBLIOGRAPHY 236

Appendix 1 : Sample Question Guideline	253
Appendix 2 : Map Showing area of Study	255
Appendix 3: Maps Showing the Administrative divisions in Bungoma and Mbale districts	256
Appendix 4: Map Showing the Kenya-Uganda Boundary	257
Appendix 5: Map Showing Communities living along the Kenya-Uganda Border	258
Appendix 6: Partitioned African Culture Areas: A Check List	259
Appendix 7: Table Showing the Major Integration Arrangements in Africa	262
Appendix 8: Table Containing List of Informants	263

## LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

ADC	African District Council
AEC	African Economic Community
AU	African Union
BA	Bachelor of Arts
BCU	Bugisu Cooperative Union
BU	Bukusu Union
BWA	Bugisu Welfare Associationn
CMS	Church Missionary Society
COMESA	Common Market for Eastern and Southern Africa
DC	District Commissioner
DO	District Officer
DYM	Dini Ya Musambwa
EAA	East African Association
EAC	East African Community
EAEP	East African Educational Publishers
EALB	East African Literature Bureau
EAP	East African Protectorate
EAPH	East African Publishing House
EAS	East African Standard
ECOWAS	Economic Community of West African States
FAL	Final Act of Lagos
FAM	Friends African Mission
FERA	February Eighteen Resistance Army
HAK	Historical Association of Kenya
IBEAC	Imperial British East Africa Company
IGADD	Inter-Governmental Agency against Drought and for Development
KADU	Kenya African Democratic Union
KANU	Kenya African National Union
KAU	Kenya African Union
KES	Kitosh Educational Society
KLB	Kenya Literature Bureau
KNA	Kenya National Archives
KTWA	Kavirondo Taxpayers Welfare Society
KU	Kenyatta University
LEGCO	Legislative Council
LLA	Lumasaaba Language Academy
LNC	Local Native Council
LPA	Lagos Plan of Action

MCI Masaaba Cultural Institution  
MDA Mbale District Archives  
MHM Mill Hill Missionaries  
NKTWA North Kavirondo Taxpayers Welfare Association  
NKCA North Kavirondo Central Association  
NN North Nyanza  
NRA National Resistance Army  
NRM National Resistance Movement  
NZA Nyanza  
OAU Organisation of African Unity  
OI Oral Interview  
OUP Oxford University Press  
PTA Preferential Trade Agreement of Eastern and Southern Africa  
PC Provincial Commissioner  
SADC Southern African Development Community  
SAP Structural Adjustment Programmes  
UN United Nations  
UON University of Nairobi  
YKA Young Kikuyu Association

**LIST OF MAPS AND TABLES**

Appendix 2 : Map Showing area of Study	255
Appendix 3: Maps Showing the Administrative divisions in Bungoma and Mbale districts	256
Appendix 4: Map Showing the Kenya-Uganda Boundary	257
Appendix 5: Map Showing Communities living along the Kenya-Uganda Border	258
Appendix 6: Partitioned African Culture Areas: A Check List	259
Appendix 7: Table Showing the Major Integration Arrangements in Africa	262
Appendix 8: Table Containing List of Informants	263

## DEFINITION OF TERMS

**Community :** The term community is used in the study within its general context to denote a form of socio-cultural, economic and political unit whose members share certain values in common.

**Geography:** In the context of this study, the term geography is used in its wider context to connote two things. First is the territorial extent defined within the legal framework of law and emanating from the official nature of historically dominant practitioners for example colonial or contemporary administrators. Second is the spatial representations of collective identity (among different peoples) and their organic historiographies as they have come to acquire some relative autonomy in relation to their economic, political and social interactions.

**Globalization:** This is a term that is used to characterize a process that involves the increasing awareness and consciousness of the globe as a whole. This has to do with the increasing worldwide political, economic and social interconnections and interchanges between peoples that tend to challenge not only local economies but also traditional understandings of sovereignty, rights and citizenship.

**Government:** This refers to the organization within a state which makes and enforces the laws of the state, decides and carries out the state's policies, both domestic and international and conducts its official relations with other states operating in the international system.

**Nation:** This concept is used in the study within its broad context to refer to a considerable group of people united by common culture, values, standards and political aspirations and occupying a definite territory and having a sense of common identity. Such a group that shares the foregoing characteristic is said to have a common nationhood.

**Relations :** This refers to a co-existence between distinct identities within the borders in which the identities may or may not be in contact with each other.

**Sovereignty:** This term is used in the study to refer to the exclusive legal jurisdiction that a particular state possesses within its territory and its freedom to act in international affairs without being subjected to any legal control by another sovereign state.

**State:** This is defined as a body of people politically organized under one government with sovereign rights and it is recognized by other sovereign states as having legal status. The main elements defining the state in this study are therefore geography, people, government and sovereignty.

**Territory:** A dictionary definition of the term is a land or area under the control of a ruler, country, city etc. In the context of this study, territory is used in two broad ways.

On the one hand, it refers to the spatial expression of a collective consciousness. On the other hand, a territory is widely used as a surface limited by fixed boundaries to which corresponds one identity.

## ABSTRACT

This study examines the history of community relations across the Kenya-Uganda border using the case of the Babukusu of Western Kenya and the Bagisu of Eastern Uganda from 1884 to 1997. From this microcosmic level, the study explores forms of trans-border social, economic and political relations that have evolved between the two communities since the pre-colonial period. The study is justified on the reality that despite the increasing importance that borders continue to generate globally, the African and specifically East African context has not been given a systematic and sufficient analysis by historians. Border regions, or specifically borderlands, as sub-national areas whose social, economic and political life is directly and significantly affected by proximity to international boundaries, remain the centre at which questions of territoriality and citizenship are negotiated and settled the world over. More specifically, in regard to the community relations across borders, this study contends that these have historically functioned as catalysts and compelling influences on the quality of communication in the respective regions. As barometers for testing good neighbourliness, national peace and regional integration, Babukusu-Bagisu border relations are studied within the diverse historical context defining their evolution and transformation.

The study utilizes a variety of both primary and secondary sources to analyze the context within which border relations between the Babukusu and the Bagisu emerge and are transformed before and after the colonial configuration of the Kenya-Uganda border. It delves into the history of relations between the two peoples that had long developed in the region before the European political and economic activities that finally culminated in the evolution of the border. The latter activities, as the study observes, not only ignored African interests, but were also generally conceived within western notions of the border that contradicted African conceptions of space. These European activities were further augmented by colonial and independent government policies to freeze the historical solidarities between the two communities. As the study demonstrates however, both colonial and independent government policies generated contradictions over the Bukusu-Bugisu borderland area that made the control of interactions between the two communities with distinct geopolitical spaces problematic. Both formal and informal social, economic and political dynamics made the common Bukusu-Bugisu borderland a site of numerous state and community permutations.

In examining the diverse dynamics informing the Babukusu-Bagisu relations across the Kenya-Uganda border, the study traverses through two theoretical traditions generally categorised into statecentric and borderlands perspectives. This study reveals that the two theoretical perspectives offer connected but contradictory perspectives on borders and border community relations in general and on Babukusu-Bagisu relations specifically. While statecentric perspectives conceptualise borders as tools of separation and control, borderland perspectives see borders as instruments that impede the free movement of capital, people, goods and services. This study adopts an integrative approach to critique the overwhelming top-down emphasis on state power and also borrow some useful insights that complement the bottom-up processes that uncover complex mechanisms operating at the local, national and regional levels.

## CHAPTER ONE

### INTRODUCTION

" Just as none of us is outside or beyond geography, none of us is completely free from the struggle over geography. This struggle is complex and interesting because it is not only about soldiers and cannons but also about ideas, about forms, about images and imaginings"(Said, 1994:6)

#### 1.1. HISTORIOGRAPHICAL BACKGROUND

This chapter sets out to present a critical historiographical background to the study and to highlight some of the practical, theoretical and methodological approaches adopted in the actualization of the research. From the outset, the chapter aims at providing an entry point on which the later chapters are anchored and the historical directions informing the study of community relations among the Babukusu and Bagisu people<sup>1</sup> specifically. These relations, encompassing social, economic and political entities are analysed not only within the historical timelines in which they evolve but also within the border realities in which they are transformed.

Border zones, defined as regions at the frontier of national or international boundaries, have remained the centre at which questions of territoriality, citizenship and nationhood are contested, negotiated and settled world over. In Sub-Saharan Africa in particular, border zones form the razor's edge on which hang suspended contemporary issues of war or peace and of life and death of nations (Mc Ewen, 1971; Ben Arrous, 1996). The main issue has not so much been the physical location of the boundaries, but rather the meanings and values attached to them and which are related to the historical milieu defining their emergence, development and transformation (Glassner, 1996).

Prior to colonial intervention in Africa, for instance, the historical geography of the continent left much interstitial space open for the pulsation of a series of specialized areas, sometimes described as 'trade areas', 'government and military areas', 'linguistic areas' or 'religious and cultural areas' (Stone, 1995; Mbembe, 1999). Not only had these areas very mobile confines,

---

<sup>1</sup> The background information on both the Babukusu and the Bagisu people including the geographical and administrative locations in which they are found is provided in Chapter two.

depending on the ups and downs of inter-societal relations, but also overlapped without necessarily coinciding. With the onset of colonialism, however, with its concomitant social, economic and political restructuring of African lives, boundaries were, in most cases, drawn across well established lines of interaction, dividing various African culture areas<sup>2</sup>. In this sense, forms of inter-societal relations, including, in every case, a dominant or active sense of community based on traditions concerning common ancestry, usually very strong kinship ties, shared socio-political institutions and economic resources, common customs and practices, and sometimes acceptance of a common political control were disrupted (Asiwaju, 1992; Nugent and Asiwaju, 1996; Nugent, 2002). These changes have continued to have a profound impact on the historical trajectory of the continent both in the colonial and post-independent periods. There is little disagreement that the arbitrary nature of African boundaries due to their largely colonial origins and their transformation over time provide part of the explanation for the continent's contemporary problems (Davidson, 1992; Donnan and Wilson, 1998).

The African continent is presently confronted by many socio-economic and political maladies. After several years following the attainment of political independence, the performance of the countries in the region has not been impressive. Hunger, political strife, severe limitation to civil liberties have all grown in intensity, leading some observers to conclude sadly that African independence was an abysmal failure (Davidson, 1992). Many of these negative socio-economic and political conditions that have increasingly been characterised by conflicts, state failures and the criminalization of the structures of authority have heightened the urgency of addressing the situation with a view to offering suggestions and solutions.

It has been observed that the numerous problems that have beset many countries in the African region, and affected the daily lives and material conditions of millions of people are associated with particular countries' deficiency to manage the economy and environment, and their poor performance has often given rise to divisions and conflicts (Ogot, 1996; Nzongola-Ntalaja and Lee, 1997). Conflicts arising from ethnicity are perhaps one of the miseries that are central to Africa's current situation. Conflicts and divisions have constantly challenged the different

---

<sup>2</sup> See Appendix 5 and 6 for the map showing communities living along the Kenya-Uganda border and checklist on partitioned African culture areas respectively.

countries' abilities to forge national and regional harmony in order to effectively confront the numerous socio-economic and political needs of the people.

In terms of whether boundaries share responsibility for the continent's predicaments, scholars have noted that more often than not, many of the current African conflicts have arisen from border zones (Asiwaju, 1985; Martinez, 1986; Nugent, 2002). Some scholars argue that borders are primarily a source of political conflicts that not only undermine national peace but also slow down the pace of international cooperation and integration. At the centre of such conflicts has been a breakdown of relations between the relevant states and communities traversed by the common border. It is necessary therefore for the continent to respond more effectively to the challenges posed by its borders in order to directly confront the questions of conflicts, inter-community relations and cross-border cooperation. As Ben Arrous (2000:8) argues, the failure to acknowledge the vitality of African spaces and most importantly the cost of this failure in terms of human lives and human suffering, calls for deliberate renewal not only in conceptual tools, but also very practically, of political governance and policy options.

Specifically, the way scholars have addressed the challenges posed by African boundaries has revolved around diverse and sometimes contradictory perspectives. Some scholars have argued that borders everywhere are artificial and that the case of African exceptionalism is weak (Clapham, 1996). Others do agree that the borders are erratic in nature but suggest either that it has had few deleterious consequences (Touval, 1969), or that it is an asset for state consolidation (Herbst, 2000). Still others agree that Africa has suffered from its partitioned nature but see the costs of reshuffling states as greater than the hypothetical benefits and therefore suggest for efforts towards regional integration within the borderlanders<sup>3</sup> perspective (Nugent and Asiwaju, 1996).

Given the importance of boundaries, questions of nationhood and regional integration have become relevant analytical concerns. More important, however, is the analysis of the history of

---

<sup>3</sup> We use the term borderlands in this study to refer to regions lying along and across the boundary separating one country from another. Hansen (1981) regarded such regions as 'sub-national areas whose economic and social life are directly and significantly affected by proximity to an international boundary. The occupants of these regions are thus referred to as borderlanders.

border community relations. As Aseka (2005: 6) has observed, the bureaucratic and prefectural state apparatus set in place by the colonial administrators became the central focus of the contradictory social forces involved in the social transformation of African communities. These contradictions of social forces over which the absolutist state presided was reproduced within the prefectural form in terms of the ceaseless dialectic of centralization and fragmentation, which shaped and indeed continue to shape the axes of cleavage in the relations between border communities. Thus, whether as pretexts or real causes of boundary conflicts, border populations (individually or in groups) and the relations they generate across the boundaries have functioned as catalysts and compelling influences on the quality of communication between the respective political regimes and administrations existing on both sides of the common border. Yet, diverse and lively as the previous studies have been, they are either general, biased or based on case studies within different historical settings. This research explores, through the use of case studies, the extent to which border community relations can enhance or hinder national peace and regional integration in East Africa generally and Kenya and Uganda specifically.

The history of the Babukusu and the Bagisu communities that occupy Western Kenya and Eastern Uganda respectively provide an important starting point in the analysis of community relations across the Kenya-Uganda border. Prior to the establishment of colonial rule in the then British East Africa, together with its attendant restructuring of the social, economic and political lives, the two peoples had a shared corporate past for several centuries (La Fontaine, 1960; Were, 1967; Makila, 1978; Wafula, 2000). Besides similarities in language, semblances among these communities are found in cultural aspects such as codes of conduct, marriage customs, circumcision traditions and even folklore. As Aseka (2005: 15) has observed, culture as a social process and a historical condition is a source of immense influence in the sense that its preferred forms and norms as well as their sources of power and social influence determine or influence how and when they are used. In regard to the two communities specifically, the analysis of their cultural similarities need to raise fundamental social concerns about the politics of identity and the social construction of the ethnic.

The historical basis of the relations between the Babukusu and Bagisu have provided ground on which the two peoples related with other neighbouring communities in the region including the

Bantu, Nilotic and Cushitic groups. As Makila (1978: 46) has aptly argued, in relation to the Babukusu, 'if they are the Abaluyia by virtue of their geographical circumstance, they are first and foremost members of a duplex community incorporating the Bagisu by virtue of a historical circumstance'. The relations between the Babukusu and the Bagisu have undergone various transformations during the colonial and post-colonial epochs. This study examines the historical emergence, development and transformation of the Babukusu and Bagisu relations across the Kenya-Uganda border from 1884 to 1997.

## 1.2. LITERATURE REVIEW

The literature germane to this study is varied, vast and continues to grow. This literature generally discusses in a substantial measure themes related to the crisis of State legitimacy, the obligation of African States to the citizens, the constitutive elements of citizenship in Africa and specifically issues of border inter and intra-State relations in Africa. This review sets out to identify major gaps in the available literature in relation to issues of trans-border relations between groups of people that have similar historical and socio-cultural ties, yet live in different countries. There is a dearth of historical studies on this theme especially within the east African context. This is the case in spite of the fact that studies of trans-border interactions can help to foster, promote and maintain peace and human understanding among nations and bring about prosperity along national borders.

Works by Nyong'o (1989), Bayart (1991), Riley (1991), Ihonvbere (1995) and Olukoshi and Laaso (1996) premise the problem of the crisis of state legitimacy in Africa on the claim that the post-colonial state in Africa is a continuation of the colonial state with minimal changes. The authors seem agreed that the declining capacity of the African state to development arises from its failure to disengage fully from the colonial trap and legacy. Indeed they argue that independence failed to usher in the much needed new era of freedom and material prosperity. Instead, at independence, the nations inherited characteristics of the colonial state and were deficient in the management of the economy and the natural environment on the one hand, while their performance often gave rise to divisions and conflicts. These authors identify the colonially instituted borders as one legacy that impacts negatively on the post-colonial state in Africa. The

borders have been primary sources of political conflicts that continue to undermine national peace and slow down the pace of international cooperation and integration within the continent. These observations lie at the heart of the current study. However, although these authors offer an invaluable analysis into the crisis of the post-colonial state in Africa, their wholesome location of the source of the crisis to colonialism is limiting. It fails to put into consideration the historical and socio-cultural relations between African peoples that have continued to inform the post-colonial realities in Africa. Overly, some of these relations also constitute focal link points on which questions of political obligation between the state and citizens are negotiated. Particularly on the issue of community relations across African borders, it is limiting to locate this singularly on the colonial state since some dynamic developments relating to the evolution and transformation of African borders could be traced to the pre-colonial period as well.

The extent to which historical and socio-cultural factors exhibited certain features that are relevant to the study of present day politics in Africa is a question that has attracted a number of scholars (Ogot, 1996; Ibrahim, 1997; Simiyu, 1988). Such factors define the current multiplicity of fronts, poles and networks that correspond with changing social, economic and political configurations in various African states. The relevance of states as the only analytical framework is hence being challenged since its space is wearing thin as the geography from below expands (Ben-Arrous, 2000). Though the state forms the supreme political entity in all parts of the world, there exist other entities of a political nature that also play a significant role in human affairs. Despite the relevance of historical and socio-cultural factors, especially ethnicity to understanding the problem of the African state today, not much has been studied on its various dynamics. Ogot (1996) argues that scholars have not been able to integrate the cultural and ethnic differences and similarities meaningfully into their analytical frameworks because they do not consider the ethnic factor relevant to the questions they ask about reality. This study, while emphasising the dynamic interactions between different ethnic and cultural groups examines the interplay between ethnic identity and the socio-geographical space in which such realities manifest themselves. The attempt to link cultural, historical and ethnic manifestations to the study of border community relations becomes an important resource that should be tapped and harnessed for the promotion of inter-state relations, cooperation and cohesion.

The theme of boundaries has attracted a great deal of attention from various scholars. Indeed, as early as 1907, Lord Curzon, one of the earliest contributors to the history of boundaries had observed that “boundaries are the razors edge on which hang suspended the modern issues of war or peace, of life or death to nations, and that just as the protection of a home is the most vital care of the private citizen, so the integrity of her borders is the condition of existence of the state” (Curzon, 1907:7). On the other hand, Holdich (1916) and Fawcett (1918) also writing in the early twentieth century, had suggested that the boundary should be looked at in terms of a frontier zone, the width of which varies in accordance with geographical and sociological circumstances. Although these works have considerable appeal, given their pioneering status in the study of the history of boundaries in general, their general focus is on European borders. They do not analyze the intricate nature of boundaries and the human interactive patterns along such frontiers in other parts of the world and specifically in Africa.

Early works focusing on boundaries in Africa include Mc Ewen (1971), Touval (1972) and Asiwaju (1985). While Mc Ewen undertakes to show some legal and geographical aspects of boundaries, especially as they relate to East Africa, Touval analyses the historical background to boundary problems and politics in Africa. Asiwaju, on the other hand examines ethnic relations across Africa’s international boundaries. While Mc Ewen’s and Touval’s works could be criticized on the basis of lack of emphasis on Africa’s border populations, Asiwaju’s work, though general in orientation, makes a significant contribution to the study of border community relations that our study benefits from. Other interesting studies on African boundaries include Hargreaves (1963), Prescott (1987) and Kopytoff (1987). While the former two approach the issue of boundaries from the perspective of diplomatic history and political geography respectively, the latter makes a significant contribution on the existence of borders in pre-colonial Africa from a historical perspective. These works were invaluable to this study.

More recently, Davidson (1992), Amin (1995), Adepoju and Hammar (1996), Nugent and Asiwaju (1996), Ben-Arrous (2000), Wafula (2001) and Nugent (2002) have offered interesting insights on the issue of migration across boundaries, territoriality and sovereignty in Africa that are important to the analysis of the nature of borders in Africa. From an analytical point of view two theoretical perspectives emerge from the foregoing studies. These are; the ‘state-centric’ and

borderlanders' approaches. The former conceptualise borders as tools of separation and control and as markers limiting the end of authority of one state and the beginning of the other. The latter on the other hand focus on the borderlanders as important catalysts in the relations that evolve between two states traversed by a common border. These twin perspectives strengthen and enhance the current study.

Several other recent studies, developing their perspectives from the previous works make significant contributions to the current study on borders and community relations in Africa. Asiwaju (1992) and Mbembe (1999) generally lay credence to two approaches that are prevalent in the study of boundaries in Africa. These are; first, that the present boundaries in Africa were created by colonialism, they were arbitrarily drawn and separate peoples, linguistic entities, cultural and political communities that formed natural and homogeneous wholes before colonialism. The second thesis is that a kind of regional integration is already taking place from below (Baubock and Rundell, 1998; Mbembe, 1999:5; Kamazima, 2000). This integration, occurring on the margins of official institutions includes socio-cultural solidarities and inter-state commercial networks. These observations are important when viewed in the light of the interaction between the East African border communities especially in terms of informal relations, migrations, trade and many other social, economic and political relations between communities living across borders. In terms of border identity specifically, Donnan and Wilson (1999) and Nugent (2002) offer interesting findings based on case studies that are useful to this analysis. Also, the ways in which such border relations and identities influence efforts towards integration has attracted several studies. The latter include Okoth (1994), Levergne (1997) and Ochwada (2004). This study examines the extent to which border community relations between the Babukusu and Bagisu can contribute to the understanding of current trends in regional integration in East Africa. Because borders and border relations are good barometers of good neighbourliness, one way of promoting good neighbourliness is to understand the historical realities informing their evolution and transformation.

In Kenya and Uganda in particular, historical, anthropological, ethnographical and literary among other works have been written on the two communities in question and are pertinently invaluable to this study. These works on the whole tackle several aspects of the social, economic

and political life among the two communities within the respective geographical confines of Kenya and Uganda. Within this perspective, works have emphasized aspects of historical and socio-cultural dynamics of the two communities in regard to their origin, migration and settlement in the respective areas. The latter works, among others include, La Fontaine (1959, 1960 and 1969), Were (1967, 1978 and 1982), Twaddle (1969), Makila (1978), Aseka (1989), Kakai (2000) and Wafula (2000). Although some of these works are historical in nature and concentrate on the pre-colonial and colonial history, their overwhelming conceptualisation within the specific countries conceals broad based dynamic relations between the two communities that manifest themselves beyond the respective national borders. The works however offer the historical background on which current issues on border community relations should be based. Other works that are important to this analysis include Purvis (1909), Roscoe (1915), Walakira (1983), Wangusa (1989), Heald (1989,1999) and Khamalwa (2004). All the latter works concentrate on the various socio-cultural and historical aspects of the Bagisu within the eastern Ugandan context. While majority of the works are anthropological in nature, Wangusa's work is literary while Heald offers a sociological perspective. All of them contain invaluable data that is important to this study.

Generally, there is a dearth in the literature in regard to the history of trans-border community relations between the Babukusu and the Bagisu. As demonstrated within the review, this dearth seems to be accentuated by the lack of specific studies that seek to transcend the national border limitations. This study derives its justification in seeking to fill in the existing gap in knowledge by broadening the historical experience of the two communities beyond the national border entities that has defined previous studies. The study, while focussing on the case studies, further proffers policy options and issues that link the border communities to the national and regional dynamics within the East African context. It takes justification in the fact that border studies in Africa generally and East Africa more specifically are critical factors in fostering peace and sustainable development in the region. Such studies thus need to be case specific for any systematic contribution to the history of border community relations.

### 1.3. STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

As the literature review surveyed has shown, little attempt in the previous studies has been made to provide a sustained and systematic discussion on the history of border community relations in East Africa. Studies on the trans-border social, cultural, economic and political relations between communities in the region have been limited and are generally conflated within the specific nation-state dynamics in the respective countries. There are no specific historical studies on the subject although the issue of community relations across the border is basically a historical one in nature. This study examines the human factor on the Kenya-Uganda border by investigating the interactive patterns between the Babukusu people of Western Kenya and the Bagisu people of Eastern Uganda in the period between 1884 and 1997. By taking a microcosmic approach, the study evaluates forms of trans-border community relations during the pre-colonial, colonial and independent periods as are characterised in networks of informal relations, cultural diversities, cross-border migrations, trade and other social, economic and political dynamics. Of importance to the study is the centrality of informal historical and socio-cultural factors in understanding relations between the two border communities specifically and the relations between the respective countries of Kenya and Uganda generally. Within this perspective, the local, national and regional dynamics informing the evolution and transformation of trans-border relations including issues related to ethnic, linguistic, religious identities between the two communities are investigated. Finally, the study examines the relevance of the various interactive patterns to emerging trends in territorial, sub-regional and regional integration.

The study specifically addresses the following research questions:

1. What was the nature of pre-colonial historical and socio-cultural interactions between the Babukusu and Bagisu peoples?
2. To what extent did the colonial partition and the subsequent colonial policies on border management affect the pre-colonial and colonial interactions between the two communities?
3. How have the Kenyan and Ugandan governments enhanced or hindered trans-border relations between the two communities since independence?

4. In which ways can such relations be enhanced to harness harmonious community and state relations in the region?

#### **1.4. OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY**

The study endeavoured to achieve the following objectives:

1. To trace and analyze the historical and socio-cultural patterns of interactions between the Babukusu of Western Kenya and the Bagisu of Eastern Uganda within the pre-colonial setting.
2. To examine the colonial border institutions and policies and analyze the manner in which they were adapted to cope with the historical and cultural interactive patterns between the two communities.
3. Investigate the role played by the independent Kenyan and Ugandan governments in enhancing or hindering trans-border community relations between the two communities.
4. Evaluate the extent to which trans-border relations between the two communities provide amicable grounds for fostering harmonious relations and integration between Kenya and Uganda.

#### **1.5. RESEARCH PREMISES**

The study is premised on the assumptions that:

1. Various historical and socio-cultural factors and relations have existed and still exist between the Babukusu people of Western Kenya and the Bagisu people of Eastern Uganda.
2. The status and norms governing the creation of the Kenya-Uganda boundary and the subsequent colonial policies in regard to its management were patterned on European models with disregard to the existing historical and cultural relations between the two border communities.

3. The independent Kenyan and Ugandan states, favoring the policy of absolute boundary maintenance have been and remain essentially at variance with the realities of trans-border relations between the two communities.
4. A harmonious trans-border relations between the two communities and regional integration between Kenya and Uganda have long been in evidence at the level of Babukusu and Bagisu culture areas which in every case have retained their coherence and resilience despite their division by the inter-state boundaries and the resultant state political practises.

## 1.6. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

The central focus of this study is to examine the human factor in Africa's, and specifically East Africa's boundaries within a historical perspective. While a great deal of scholarly concerns have been focused on diplomacy, particularly the law and politics which govern state relations across boundaries, their theoretical considerations have been lacking, if not showing a marginal interest on border populations. In an attempt to come to terms with the theoretical issues informing this study, focus needs to capture the realities of border populations and the social, cultural and economic relations they generate across the frontiers. The latter dimension forms an important context in which the laws and politics operate.

The study of border community relations has revolved around well defined approaches. The first centred on the modernization theory that presented a general framework of progressive development toward "modern" statehood, conceived largely in a western mould. Borders are conceptualised as tools of separation and control, limiting peoples' movement within territories and marking points where the authority of one state ends and that of another begins. Applied to border issues in Africa, this theoretical terrain assumes that since borders in Africa are structurally and functionally as much extensions of Western European parallels as the modern African states themselves are historically territorial replicas of particular Western European states whose possessions they formerly were, the practical and theoretical problems can hardly be expected to be fundamentally different (Asiwaju, 2002). This theory and its assumptions, though offering a partial guide to understanding the political and economic conditions prevailing on the

continent has several shortfalls. Works adopting this approach focus more on international relations and state dynamics while border populations remain of marginal interest to the authors<sup>4</sup>. There is therefore a need for a theory that examines the nature of relations between states and communities and the numerous interactions, most of which have evolved within diverse historical, cultural and social backgrounds.

The second approach, which is conceptualised within the dependency and underdevelopment theory explicates the causes of Africa's underdevelopment and highlights the external constraints imposed on African societies as well as emergent class conflicts. The theory emphasized economic factors as being decisive in shaping the kind of relations an underdeveloped country had with powerful industrially developed states (Leys 1975; Ake 1978). The economic, cultural and ideological versions of dependency take the colonial era as their starting points for analysis. This offers valuable insights that are relevant to the study of African international relations. In terms of the study of borders specifically, authors adopting an economic perspective support regional integration and disavow the view that borders are entities of control since the creation of common markets would allow the free movement of people, capital, services and goods. By drawing on historical experiences, it becomes necessary to understand the nature and evolution of African boundaries and the various forms of community relations along them. Indeed as Mazrui (1977) argues, African international relations are a struggle against dependency, a situation imposed upon the continent by its historical experience. However, the grim and deterministic implications of dependency make explicit its theoretical limitations.

The third theory, the State-centric approach treats the state as the main actor in the international system. Grounded in the power perspective, the theory starts from the premise that universal conformity is not possible and therefore international conflicts must arise and persist since few nation states want to surrender their sovereignty to international institutions. Each state has the responsibility to promote its interests and those of its people against the opposition of other groups in the international system (Ojo *et al.* 1985). In terms of the relations between states in particular, the theory prioritizes the power factor as dominant and 'inescapable in the history of

---

<sup>4</sup> See for instance the works by Hargreaves (1963), Mc Ewen (1971), Touval (1972), Prescott (1987) and Kopytoff (1987).

international relations of states'. The struggle for power overrides all other factors (Morgenthau, 1973). Although this theory does, in a significant way, contribute to our understanding of the balance of power and the struggle of states to meet their power requirements, it has been faulted on various counts. First, it is one directional for presenting power solely as an end in itself, which states must pursue at all times. Secondly, the theory contains a near dogmatic belief in its presentation of power as the vital national interest that states pursue and defend above all else. Moreover, in terms of relations between states, political institutions at the level of the state or international realm are overly considered as forming the basic units of social, historical and political analysis as opposed to other human actors.

In this study, an integrative or eclectic approach, bringing together within a broader societal framework what has been proven to be useful in the various theoretical frameworks is adopted. This framework, which some analysts have called the political interaction approach (Lal 1995; Chazan *et al* 1999) utilizes appropriate ideas from a variety of contemporary theorists to forge an integrative method for understanding the relations between the historical, political, social and economic dimensions of the contemporary realities in Africa. The framework presumes that the state-society relations are central to understanding the intricacies of trans-border community relations in Africa. In this context, both the state-centric and borderlands perspectives<sup>5</sup> are harmonized. Individuals and governments are constrained by a variety of demographic, technological, ideological, global, historical and social factors. Changing conditions define available options at any given historical moment. It is within this range that decisions are made, not only by political leaders and state officials, but also by external actors, domestic social organizations and individuals. By looking at the interaction of historical factors, socio-cultural forces, economic activities, formal institutions and prevalent values, this study better grasps the meaning and direction of the diverse patterns of trans-border community relations that have evolved among the Babukusu of Western Kenya and the Bagisu of Eastern Uganda since about 1884.

---

<sup>5</sup> For debates and a clear distinction between the borderlanders and state-centric approaches, see Asiwaju and Nugent (1996) and Kamazima (2000).

This integrative approach, therefore, focuses on identifying key theoretical constructs which capture the multiple factors at work on the African continent and specifically the dynamics in pre-colonial, colonial and post-colonial times that explain border interactions among the two communities. Within this perspective, we commence our enquiry by examining the key components of African border politics over time, assuming that the sphere is by far broader than the formal state domain and the international state system. Official institutions, as in the power framework, are, indeed, significant actors, but so too are individuals, social groups, traditional authority structures, trading networks and multinational corporations. The study of the interests, organization and capacities of these entities affords a better view of the border processes by which they interrelate and act as key components in the history of community relations. By approaching this analysis from the many dimensions of political interaction and modes of interchange, it becomes possible to trace more accurately the shifting political patterns in Africa and East Africa in particular and their ramifications for socio-cultural and economic interactions between the two communities of the Babukusu and Bagisu.

In this political interaction framework, political factors account for many social and economic realities but are themselves informed by historical, demographic, cultural, ecological, ideological and international manifestation of the exercise of choice by multiple actors within existing parameters. This perspective unlike the 'managerial' view of the modernization school, the exploitative emphasis of dependency approaches, and the instrumental notions of the statist theorists, highlights the fluidity of politics and attempts to trace the vacillating political course and its relevance in border community relations. In this study, the analysis of the Babukusu and the Bagisu peoples takes into consideration the context, including, the particular historicity and specificity of the unique cultural characteristics of the two groups with a view to comprehend the larger milieu in which the groups are organized and in which interactions between them take place. This study explores and uses the two communities' lived experiences to demonstrate and enhance a case for a people oriented, bottom up border cooperation and regional integration.

## 1.7. JUSTIFICATION OF THE STUDY

The underlying objective of this research is to undertake at a micro level, an historical analysis of community relations across the Kenya and Uganda border. This study and analysis is justified in its endeavor to address two related considerations. The first is the need to fill in the gaps in relevant scholarly literature. The second is the hope that the new insights gained in the study leads to a reappraisal of the human benefit of harmonious community relations in Africa in general and East Africa in particular for more practical policy formulation in the two adjacent countries. The latter is significant given that whether emphasis is on the conflictual perspective or dominated by the state-centric or even that it stresses on the cooperative and integrative assumptions, there is a constantly expressed concern for policy relevance.

As regards the gaps in the existing literature, these are of two types - on the political boundaries in Africa in general and the resultant boundary problems in the region in particular. As observed in our review of the literature, works on African boundaries and the resultant boundary problems in Africa have been handled mainly from the international relations and comparative politics perspectives. Their units of analysis have been on previously established states. There is need to focus on culture areas or borderlands which were not necessarily organized into distinct sovereign states before European formal partition of Africa. Thus, while in the one situation it is the states that have been politically divided into two, the concern is with culturally coherent territories where peoples of definite cultural identities have had to be split into two units. Each part of these units being placed in the area of jurisdiction of a distinct state which functions to integrate such a part of a pre-existing culture area into a new socio-economic and political system removed from the original cultural whole. So whereas other studies have emphasized the politics of boundaries by focusing on the use of state power at both national and international levels to maintain, contain or reverse the division, this research stresses the human factor by examining the historical relevance of the ethnic groups in border areas.

The implications for policy raised in this research on the other hand arise from the location of the two selected ethnic groups close to and across boundaries separating Kenya and Uganda. There are both national and international levels to consider. Within each of the individual states in

which a given part of the partitioned group is located, there is need for an alternative developmental strategy to achieve a greater measure of integration of the border community than is in evidence. The assumption in this study is that border areas and populations are more neglected than those far removed from borders. Border areas are usually treated as fringe or marginal areas of the state's territory. However, as the research reveals, the observable geographic, demographic, cultural, economic and historical links and inter-penetrations that take place among the communities in question at the border demand that a borderland be viewed and treated differently. It needs to be seen as the most suitable testing ground for training and testing the sincerity of the two East African nation-states and their commitment to international cooperation, including efforts towards regional integration.

At the level of relations between states on either side of the boundary, the presence of proportions of either groups in the respective states and the fact of intra-group relations and the pre-existing network of informal relations across the particular boundaries are expected to exercise an important influence. It is interesting to see how border populations and the relations they generate across the boundaries function as catalysts and compelling influences on the quality of communication between the respective political regimes and administrations existing on both sides of the boundary. Borders and border populations need not be sources of political conflicts that undermine national peace and slow down the pace of international cooperation and integration.

There are therefore two broad policy questions deciphered in the study. The first is how best to resolve the conflict between the attitudes of partitioned groups which tend to ignore the boundaries of the states which are preoccupied with ensuring full effectiveness of the boundaries as lines of demarcation between separate areas of jurisdiction. Secondly, and related to the first is the question as to how the states' responsibilities regarding boundary maintenance can best be pursued with minimum strain on the communities located along the boundaries. Interactive patterns between the two historically related cultural groups continue to provide opportunities for their assertion of collective identities. The resulting pattern could be harnessed and allowed to act in dissolving the constant source of real or imagined hostility and anxiety among the relevant groups and the states in general, and hence enrich a harmonious co-existence. In this context of

the interplay between identity and integration, the basic challenge for the two East African countries is to reconcile the recognition of the multiplicity of ways of life, experiences and aspirations of the two ethnic groups and, indeed, others. The double challenge of this to the two states of East Africa and Sub-Saharan Africa in general, provide the unity of focus, intent and relevance of the present research.

### **1.8. SCOPE AND LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY**

The study begins its analysis in about 1884 and ends in 1997. The period of slightly over one hundred years of investigation is adequate for a historical investigation into the theme of border community relations among the Babukusu of Western Kenya and the Bagisu of Eastern Uganda. The years provide a significant point of departure, for they accord the research and analysis a wider cast on the pre-colonial, colonial and post-colonial shifts in the relations between the two East African communities. In this sense, the period of study provides an opportunity for a meaningful discussion of the issues related to pre-colonial cultural and historical components of the two communities' relations, a history of the partition, colonial boundary issues and their effects on the two communities as well as the trends in the post-colonial era. While this analysis is directly linked to the geopolitical spaces of Kenya and Uganda in which the two communities are found the focus hardly captures other border communities under similar circumstances including the Iteso, Pokot, Karamojong among others.

Specifically, the year 1884 is picked as the starting point for the analysis because it was during this year that the Berlin conference was signed between European powers to among other things sanction the subdivision of the African continent among themselves. Although essentially a European affair, the Berlin Conference is significant to African territorial history. Its centrality, and the subsequent division of the African continent was made manifest to the African peoples when the European powers began the process of conquest and subsequent pacification for the establishment of the colonial administration. In the context of East Africa, Kenya and Uganda in particular, this process of colonization began in the early 1890's when the territory, assigned to

the British begun to be brought concertedly under their rule. Against this background therefore, the year 1884 becomes meaningful, analytically in terms of the nation-state perspective.

On the other hand, the year 1997 is taken as a convenient date to end the study. Specifically, it was during this year and precisely on 29<sup>th</sup> of April at Arusha Tanzania that the heads of state of the three East African countries ratified the treaty of the East African Co-operation that sought to promote closer co-operation among the three countries in terms of the fiscal, monetary, immigration, infrastructure and service fields. The treaty marked a significant step towards the fostering of harmonious relations not only between the states but also among the various border communities. The years 1884 and 1997 are however not treated as rigid givens between which the study is confined. Where necessary, the research stretches beyond the period to bring out information to bolster the central argument of the study.

In terms of the territorial extent, the study is focused on the areas occupied by the two neighboring East African ethnic communities of the Babukusu of Western Kenya and the Bagisu of Eastern Uganda<sup>6</sup>. The Majority of the Babukusu are found in Bungoma district in Western Kenya, with pockets of others living in varying numbers in the neighbouring Kenyan districts of Trans-Nzoia, Busia, Teso and Mt. Elgon. A number of the Babukusu also inhabit, in varying numbers, areas in Eastern Ugandan districts. The Bagisu, on the other hand, occupy mainly the Mbale district of Eastern Uganda. Other Bagisu peoples occupy, in varying numbers, Eastern Ugandan neighboring districts of Tororo, Kumi, Karamoja, Kapchorwa and also Western Kenya. The now Western Kenya and Eastern Uganda regions occupied by the two ethnic communities, except for the mountain Elgon part, interlock and form a continuous territory. This analysis is mainly based on those populations occupying what is now Bungoma district in Western Kenya and Mbale district in Eastern Uganda.

Given the diverse and integrative nature of the research and theoretical methodology adopted, it is already possible to envisage some limitations in terms of the analytical trajectories. First, although the historical approach affords us the opportunity to balance the narrative and logical

---

<sup>6</sup> A more comprehensive geographical and administrative description of the regions of Bungoma and Mbale in which are found the Babukusu and the Bagisu people respectively is provided in chapter two.

analysis, the interdisciplinary demands of border studies constantly require one to bring on board other disciplinary analytical frameworks. Secondly, the geopolitical area of study is an arena involving intense community relations that obviously go beyond the two case communities. It may thus be profitable to consider a whole gamut of experiences and more so among border communities that share a historical past for comparative insights. Thirdly, is that the methodological issues in terms of sources that keep evolving over time poses new challenges and insights in terms of the finality in the research findings. It may be worth mentioning that the archival record especially in terms of the Ugandan context is limited to the period before 1960 while a good deal of material on the 1970s has been lost or destroyed. In Kenya, on the other hand, the government policy on access to archival material makes the public access to material after 1970 problematic. As more access to such sources in both Kenya and Uganda is enhanced, it may be important to re-examine some of the assumptions in the study. This may also apply to the limiting scope of our study to 1997, a point when intense efforts begin to be taken by the governments in the region to enhance border community relations through the East African Community.

## **1.9. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY**

### **A. Data Collection**

Data for this research was procured from both primary and secondary sources. These are broadly categorized into oral and written sources. In order to provide a useful background for field research, secondary evidence was consulted and analysed to provide the initial data and scrutinized to identify gaps for further research. These data also enabled us to situate the study theoretically and supply the conceptual framework with which to work on the primary data. Such secondary sources of data included mainly written sources such as published books, journals, unpublished theses, newspapers and periodicals among many others. These were derived from Libraries, including the University of Nairobi's Jomo Kenyatta Memorial Library, Kenyatta University's Moi Library, Institute of African Studies Library, the British Institute of Eastern Africa Library in Kenya and Makerere University Library and Center for Basic Research Library

in Kampala, Uganda. More secondary information was also sourced from other external Libraries within and outside the continent. Online journals accessible on the Internet also provided an important contribution to the secondary data for this research.

The main source of primary data was the archives. The archives included both the Kenya National Archives located in Nairobi, the Uganda National Archives located in Entebbe and other provincial archives in the two East African countries that contained important information for the study. From these archives, it was possible to examine political record books, Provincial and district annual reports, handing over reports, personal letters and diaries to name but a few. From these documents we gathered information related, but not limited, to miscellaneous petitions and complaints on border restrictions, legislative Council sessional issues, court matters, land tenure and land policy issues, labour issues, taxation, demography and the plight of farmers both among the Babukusu and the Bagisu among many other issues. These sources constituted important first hand records from participants and observers that have been passed down to posterity. Also, personal and group archives belonging to church organizations, cultural groups and non-governmental organizations were consulted. Through the use of the historical method, such information provided insights on the social life, economy and politics of Kenya and Uganda, and of the Babukusu and Bagisu people in particular. Although data from such sources were rich, they were not entirely reliable and regular. As such, critical analysis of the content was essential. It was necessary to complement and corroborate the data derived from such sources with the secondary sources and analyse them together with that from oral sources.

Oral sources constituted another important source of information for this research. This involved carrying out interviews in Western Kenya and Eastern Uganda in the districts where the two communities are mainly found. We employed a purposive sampling procedure to identify and select the informants that were interviewed. The identification and selection of prospective informants was based on information yielding from both primary and archival research. From these sources a temporary list of ten informants was drawn from each of the administrative divisions and counties in Bungoma and Mbale districts, respectively. This list was eventually altered by insertion of other informants mentioned by interviewees or withdrawal of the names of the deceased. Such people selected were well informed, concerned and were expected to have

participated in the various border interactive processes that we investigated or should have had access to the information by virtue of having learned from their elders. No rigid age-limit was observed in choosing such informants although knowledgeable elders were given priority. The languages used during the interview were Lubukusu, Lumasaba or Lugisu, Kiswahili and English. Information from such identified informants was derived by the use of diverse sources such as in-depth personal interviews and focused group discussions. The focused group discussions were in the form of open discussions with groups consisting of between five and ten people. In both methods we used a questionnaire with open-ended questions (see sample provided in Appendix 1). To ensure uniformity in the interviewing and discussion process, an in-depth interview guide was used. Where necessary and permissible, a tape recorder was also used to store the data that was transcribed soon after the interview session. In the event that this was not possible, it was necessary to write down the notes in the process of the interview session. Also, given the wide area of coverage, it became necessary to hire at least two research assistants who assisted in the process of research and data collection.

## **B. Data Analysis**

The data gathered from the diverse sources outlined above formed the basis of analyzing the theme of border community relations between the Babukusu and Bagisu people in the pre-colonial, colonial and independent periods. The actual data processing and analysis was done in accordance with the objectives of the study. This became essential for ensuring that we had all relevant data for specific themes to be discussed and for making contemplated comparisons and analysis.

The analysis and interpretation of data was done qualitatively based on the use of the logical historical method that entails the analysis and explanation of harnessed data both historically and logically. All data collected from the various sources were edited to detect errors and omissions and to correct these when possible. The data was then classified according to their content and the specific historical time frame within which events and developments took place. This was necessary because historical inquiry requires the establishment of the historical specificity of social phenomena in terms of its constituent elements and of the relations between these elements over time. Secondary data collected from written sources was carefully weighed against

2

evidence from the archives and the field interviews to ensure the validity of the sources in terms of their content. On the other hand, the analysis of qualitative data gathered from personal and focused group discussions was done by breaking down the information into various themes. While we went to the field with an open mind and prepared in case of quantitative data that we would have coded, entered into the computer and used the SPSS Programme to analyse, we realized that the nature of study would not allow for the adoption of quantitative data collection, analysis and presentation techniques. Only qualitative data was collected from the field. This data was carefully scrutinised to ensure that it was accurate and consistent with other facts gathered from secondary sources and the archives, then uniformly entered as completely as possible and arranged to facilitate the writing and presentation process. The importance of this research method was to provide a chance to counter-check, compare, contrast and ultimately be able to corroborate the various information collected. The final outcome of the study is both descriptive and analytical as is demonstrated in the following chapters. In chapter two of this study, we present a detailed analysis on both the Babukusu and Bagisu and the geographical confines in which they are located.

## CHAPTER TWO

### THE GEOGRAPHICAL SETTING

#### 2.0 Introduction

History as a broader field that encompasses all human experience has by its nature of study been inextricably linked with geography to the extent that it is hardly possible to grasp one without the other. This relationship is especially close since the two disciplines represent two fundamental dimensions of the same phenomenon. While history views human experiences from the perspective of time, geography sees them from the perspective of space. These dimensions of time and space are locked in a symbiotic linkage in which one dimension is constantly affecting the other.

In terms of the history of border community relations in particular, key concepts of geography such as location, place and region are tied inseparably to major ideas of history such as time, period and events. Geography within this context provides part of the crucible out of which communities mould their societies in time and space. As Mwanzi (1977) has argued, geography may not fully explain why a people choose a certain area for habitation but once settled in a given area, the geography of that region does affect a people's way of life.

This chapter examines the geographical setting of Western Kenya and Eastern Uganda generally and Bungoma and Mbale districts<sup>1</sup> specifically. It is in the latter districts that are found the majority of the Babukusu and Bagisu peoples. The aim of the chapter is to explore the geographical setting in which the two peoples are found and to delineate its significance in the history of community relations in the region. This geography includes not only the territorial extent defined within the legal framework of law but also the related spatial representations of collective identity. It also involves a

---

<sup>1</sup> See Appendix 2 and 3 for the maps on the area of study and the various administrative divisions.

discussion of the relief and climate, the physical and natural features that continue to influence the communities' relations over time. For a clearer conceptualisation of the relevance of geography however, a brief description of the two communities under study is given at the outset.

## 2.1 The People

This study basically undertakes an analysis into the history of the Babukusu and the Bagisu peoples of Western Kenya and Eastern Uganda, respectively. A convenient starting point into understanding these two peoples is to point out the weakness inherent in approaches that place a central focus on the nation-state, its reconstitution and recovery. Recent scholarship seems agreed that any study concentrating on the concept of nation and national consciousness is contradictory in two main ways. On the one hand, it is totalising hence obscuring the importance of local social and cultural processes which might point to differential responses to macro processes of political economy (Odhiambo and Lonsdale, 2003; Maddox and Giblin, 2005). On the other hand the approach tends to represent African communities as entities that have endured forever, which is not true.

The foregoing observations are relevant in our analysis of communities within and across the national borders. As Odhiambo and Lonsdale (2003: 1) have observed, it is historically defeating to analyse a nation-state as a holistic entity since all states that claim to be nations have skeletons in their cupboards stained with fratricidal blood. Nations are made by multiple, varied and even contradictory constituencies that have a multiplicity of dimensions created by the varied gender, generation, class and ethnic status of participants. More often than not, such nations are declared in the name of peoples who are not yet aware of their own collective existence (Ibid) and whose consciousness and constituency in several respects extend beyond the individual nation's borders.

It is important therefore to de-emphasise the amorphous historical analysis of the various African communities within the national perspective. As Ogot (2002: 27) has observed, any study that seeks to contribute to the understanding of African ethnic communities should allow for the conceptualisation of the relationship between the unit of observation and its context as a historical process. At the same time, the dynamism of the African communities has to be envisaged within a system of meaning for the particular people who experienced it. In this case, therefore, this study seeks to treat the Babukusu and the Bagisu within the historical milieu within which their interactions have evolved beyond the confines of the nation-states in which they are presently found. In this analysis, it would be evident that the nature of relations between the two peoples encompasses not only their separate political entities but quite the opposite, their ability to accommodate and assimilate diverse elements within their collective universe.

Barth (1969) has reflected on the issue of border ethnic groups that is important in the analysis of the Babukusu and the Bagisu. The author begins by differentiating between perspectives that emphasize the role of isolation in preserving ethnic borders from perspectives that point out the role of contact. The former considers that geographical and social isolation sustain borders, whereas the latter stresses that cross-border interactions maintain cultural categories through exclusionary and integrative practices. Barth definitely privileges the contact perspective as he argues that social interactions and acceptance do not weaken borders through change and acculturation (1969: 199). The major contribution of Barth is his observations on the various levels of interactions and differences between ethnic groups as they are defined by their social boundaries. In terms of the Babukusu and the Bagisu, these levels can be understood within the contradictory nature of the exclusive and inclusive dimensions of the cultural and political national borders, respectively.

The history of both the Babukusu and the Bagisu people clearly demonstrate that their social, cultural, economic and political interactions predate the present day locations as

they have come to be defined within national terms. An examination of the two peoples' institutions, family organization, the prevailing philosophic and moral precepts all point to many similarities and constants. That there was cultural diversity between the two peoples is true; that cultural specificity sometimes crystallized into a sense of distinct 'peoples' is also true. However this distinctiveness did not mean isolation, and did not extinguish strong historical interconnections, relatedness and mutual influence usually transacted beyond their respective borders. Following Ogot's (2002) scheme, the two people's past history could conveniently be analysed within three broad categories. The first category has to do with the historical period when the two peoples were considered to be one. This phase is variously captured within the oral traditions of the people including their legends about creation and prosperity (Were, 1978 and 1982; La Fontaine, 1969).

The second phase in the analysis of the history of the two communities relate to the interaction between them after the period of their differentiation. The differentiation into diverse environmental and social units according to Ogot (2002: 27) took place in the period between C. 500-1500AD. This process was perhaps more significant and resulted in the historical migration and settlement of these people into their present locations (Ehret, 1998). The twin processes of migration and settlement was not only complex but was also characterised by overlaps of contradictory dynamics composed of gaps, disjunctions and different rhythms. According to Aseka (2005: 29) these processes brought about the conjunction of ideological, political and scientific, philosophical and other contingent elements. It is significant to highlight the fact that migration and settlement processes among African communities enable us to have an understanding of the integrative and fractious dimension of pre-colonial political economies given that communities broke up and were integrated. It is evident that there are growing debates over these processes that one needs to be cognizant of. However, as will be demonstrated in the next section, research into this period has been aided mostly by historical linguistics and archaeology.

The third phase, and which specifically comes after the foregoing phase of migration and settlement is the period when these people were becoming familiarly known in the present regions as distinct ethnic groups with diverse clans. According to Simiyu (1982) and Were (1982) this process happened around the seventeenth century when the ancestors of both the Babukusu and the Bagisu were settling down in the present locations. It is within these locations that their institutions, economy and ethnic consolidation took place. It is also in these same locations that their societies' nationalistic spirit evolved as they came to acquire their distinct cultural identities. This triad historical continuum is important since as is emphasized by Shoenbrun (1998):

A history of how social systems emerged, of how people negotiated their continuity and influenced the course of their development offers valuable stores of cultural capital for contemporary struggles over moral order and the ways in which material circumstances should be made to reflect that order.

The continuity within which the people's lives were predicated involved various social, cultural and political transformations that had significant impacts on the later history of interaction between them and other communities. These transformations went hand in hand with the shifting nature of the people's identities that is reflected in the ethnic divide between the various groups. As Donnan and Wilson (1999) have emphasized, the existence of borders is the existence of an experience of difference, an experience that is manifested through accounts of self and other identities, in rules of interacting with different groups, and in ways of thinking about differences.

In the context of the Babukusu and the Bagisu specifically, the underlying understanding of their history and the evolution of their identities in space and time has been ordered within the continuous lines of national sovereignty defining present Kenya and Uganda. In this regard, the pattern of understanding space as organized by national borders has in many respects defined the manner in which analyses into their histories have proceeded. This as Cooper (2002: 13) observes has constricted the

cultural map that is clearly marked by gradations of differences and lines of connection and replaced by a series of bounded spaces, each with 'its' culture, 'its' language, 'its' sense of uniqueness. As a result, explanations on the peoples' interactive history have revolved around the characteristics of divided spaces, yet the structures of interaction are not only permeable but their socio-economic, political and cultural characteristics extend beyond the national spatial distinctiveness.

In the case of the Babukusu for instance, it is clearly important to note that although most studies including Were (1967) and Makila (1978) have examined them within the rubric of the Kenyan state, their history predates and extends beyond present Kenya as a political entity. However, one thing that we need to emphasize is that the Babukusu or Bukusu as will be used in some contexts are a Bantu cultural sub-entity who form the majority of the people living in Bungoma district and who have been categorized to belong to a larger cultural entity known as Abaluyia of Western Kenya. Their language is Lubukusu. Although the origin of the name Babukusu will be captured in the next chapter, it is important to note that at one point in the people's colonial history, the Babukusu were pejoratively referred to as 'Kitosh', a name which was disputed as a misnomer but which nonetheless is retained in some historical documents written during the colonial period. Like other people however, the Babukusu possess social, cultural and political peculiarities especially in terms of language and ethnic traditions that we highlight in the context of the work.

On the other hand, although the identity of the Bagisu as a people has come to be emphasized more within the Ugandan state, their history certainly goes beyond this period and space. Bagisu as a name was used to refer to the northern cluster of clans of Bamasaba. In the past and within the oral traditions of the people generally, the more inclusive name used to refer to them is Bamasaba, the people of Masaba, referring to both the eponymous ancestor from whom the Bagisu claim descent and to Mount Elgon (known locally as Masaba), which is considered Masaba's birth place. The latter

name Bamasaba seems to be most preferred when the people's cultural identity is being stressed.

The reference to the name Bagisu as an all encompassing identity owes its beginning to the British administration. It is argued that when the Ganda General, Semei Kakungulu, was directed by the British after the Buganda agreement of 1900 to subdue the people of what is now Eastern Uganda, he arrived and met a people who spoke a Bantu language resembling his own Luganda. When he asked them who they were, they told him that they were sons of Mugisu, their ancestor. He thus gave them the name Bagisu in order to differentiate them from their Nilotic neighbours (Khamalwa, 2004; Heald, 1989). Thus, although the name Bagisu initially primarily referred to the clans in the northern sections of the district, it was later used to refer to the whole district. The name was adopted by the British administration to refer to the people while their language and district became Lugisu and Bugisu respectively. The name Bagisu is used more often and more widely and, since it has become the name by which they tend to be known more within the outside region and in numerous sources, it is appropriately used in the study. Where necessary however, we also use the term Bamasaba to bolster specific arguments. It is also important to note that previous studies among the Bagisu describe the people variously as Bagishu (Purvis, 1909), Bagesu (Roscoe, 1915), Gisu (La Fontaine, 1959 and 1969; Turner 1969; Heald 1989 and 1999), Bagisu or Bakisu (Walakira, 1983; Wafula, 2000) and Bamasaba (Khamalwa, 2004).

## **2.2 Territorial and Administrative Terrain**

Having preliminarily tried to answer the question of who the Babukusu and Bagisu are, it behoves us now to mention something about the present territorial and administrative terrain occupied by the two peoples. In theoretical terms, territories have been defined and explained in broadly two ways. On the one hand, they are treated as the spatial expression of a collective consciousness (Ben Arrous, 2000; Mbembe, 1999). Here, territory in its relation to space is posed in comparison with the meaning of class or

ethnic consciousness. In this sense, therefore, it will seem realistic to confine the analysis of the territorial space of the Babukusu to Bungoma district in Western Kenya and that of the Bagisu to Mbale district in Eastern Uganda. However, there is an analytical limitation in this confinement given that this consciousness as we will argue extends beyond these territorial and administrative boundaries. Moreover, the theoretical position that we adopt in this analysis tends to extend beyond these areas. The latter position indicates that there is an overlapping sense of consciousness among these two communities that defy territorial and other administrative configurations.

The second way of looking at a territory is to broadly see it as a surface limited by fixed boundaries to which allegedly correspond one and only one all-encompassing identity (Davidson, 1992). This second approach also poses a number of problematic posturizations in relation to the central thesis of community relations between the Babukusu and the Bagisu. On the one hand, there seems to lack an all-encompassing identity in Bungoma in the case of Babukusu and in Mbale in the case of the Bagisu. Each of the communities has historically continued to belong simultaneously to many other spaces that act as important arenas for understanding the various forms of interactions between them. On the other hand, given that relations in the context of our theoretical positions connote a co-existence between distinct identities outside their 'fixed boundaries', the implied sense of rigidity between various identities, in this sense that of the Babukusu and Bagisu, runs counter to a spatial continuum that we seek to project.

These two approaches are however important in the analysis of the territorial and administrative locations in which the Babukusu and the Bagisu people are found. Moreover, rather than confine ourselves to the theoretical under-pinning informing the various debates on territoriality, we basically envisage surface and administrative boundaries in which the two communities are located presently. These territorial and administrative locations allow us to grasp the reality of the two communities' interactions over a long historical period. Bungoma and Mbale districts as are presently

constituted administratively are specific spatial markers which purely make sense on the political level as privileged spaces in the exercise of sovereignty in the imposition of authority in the two respective countries of Kenya and Uganda. The scope of our analysis however transcends these administrative countries. As we demonstrate in the next chapter, it is important for us to keep in mind that before colonization, the attachment to the administrative countries was entirely relative. In some cases, political entities were not delimited by the administrative units but rather by the lubrication of multiple spaces constantly joined, disjoined and re-controlled through peaceful co-existence, wars, conquests and the mobility of goods and persons (Kopytoff 1987; Mbembe, 1999). Thus, from the pre-colonial times to the early colonial period until the time when Bungoma and Mbale districts emerge as fully recognized administrative confines, the history of the Babukusu and the Bagisu relations underwent a series of transformations. It is important to project this history within the context of the evolution of the two administrative locations of Bungoma and Mbale.

Bungoma district in which are found majority of the Babukusu, one of the sub-groups of the Abaluyia, lies in Western Province of Kenya. The district borders Uganda and particularly Mbale district to the West. It lies between latitude 0°25'N and longitude 0°53'N on the Equator and longitude 34°21.4'E and 35°04'E of the Greenwich Meridian. The district covers an area of 2063 square kilometres that is equivalent to about 25 percent of the total area in the province (Development Plan, 1997).

Though the district forms the focus of our study, mention should also be made of some regions in which the Babukusu are found although on a varying minority scale. The latter regions include the neighbouring districts of Trans-Nzoia to the North, Kakamega to the East, Busia and Teso to the South West, Mount Elgon to the North West and Malava/Lugari to the East all in Kenya and Mbale and other bordering districts in Uganda to the West. The Babukusu who live outside the confines of Bungoma district are in no respects insignificant in fostering the various interactive relations we examine in the later chapters. Special reference is for instance made on the

Babukusu that occupy Mt Elgon district that was hived off from Bungoma and whose location, also bordering Uganda to the west is important. However, for practical research reasons our analysis is confined to Bungoma although with clear reference to those Babukusu living outside the district where the case demands.

In Bungoma district are also found other smaller ethnic communities with whom the Babukusu have interacted for a long time. They include the Batachoni, the Bakabras, the Kalenjin (mainly Sabaot), the Batura and the Iteso. Also found in the district presently are pockets of the Kikuyu, Asians and indeed other Kenyan ethnic collectivities mainly located in the various urban and local trading centers. The presence of numerous other diverse ethnic communities in the district portends on the one hand a long history of Babukusu interaction with their neighbours. On the other hand, it gives one an opportunity to examine the evolution, nature and implication of these diversities to the history of relations between the Babukusu and their neighbours, including the Bagisu. Overall, the total population of Bungoma district by 1989 was 571,445 and with an intercensal growth rate of 1.9 percent it was estimated that populations would rise to 720,650 and 763,689 in 1997 and 2001 respectively (Development Plan 1997:9).

The location of Bungoma in Western Province and its evolution to the present state has colonial antecedents. Before 1963, when Kenya attained her independence from Britain for instance, the present Western Province and Nyanza Province formed one province called North Kavirondo. For the greater part of the colonial period until 1956 most of what is now Western Province formed one district called North Nyanza with its headquarters in Kakamega. Between 1956 and 1963 Bungoma district and the northern locations of what is now Busia district were known as Elgon Nyanza district with its headquarters in Bungoma (De Wolf, 1971:10). Before 1959, there were only four locations in the district – Malakisi (North and South Malakisi), Kimilili (Kimilili, Bokoli and Ndivisi), Elgon and South Bukusu (East and West Bukusu). Before 1952,

South Bukusu was known as South Kitosh, and before 1927 Malakisi, Kimilili and Elgon were jointly referred to as North Kitosh and were under one chief (*ibid.*).

What is clear, then, from the foregoing description is that the name of the district has been changing over time. So has been the territorial extent of the district. All these changes have implications to our analysis of community relations between the Babukusu and the Bagisu over a given historical period. However, what is clear is that until 1997 the district, Bungoma, was divided into seven administrative divisions, namely Kanduyi, Webuye, Sirisia, Kimilili, Tongaren, Central and Bumula. The district was further divided into 39 locations with 93 sub-locations (Dev. Plan. 1997). It covered an area of 2063 square kilometres, which was about 25 percent of the total area of the province. The district bordered the Republic of Uganda and specifically Mbale district in the North West. In Kenya, it bordered Busia and Teso districts to the West and Butere/Mumias and Malava/Lugari in East and North West. It also bordered Mt. Elgon district and Trans-Nzoia district in the North and North West. It is important to note however that since early 2007, Bungoma district was further subdivided into four districts; Bungoma North, Bungoma South, Bungoma East and Bungoma West.

Mbale district, on the other hand, in which are found majority of the Bagisu is located in the Eastern part of present day Uganda. The district borders the Republic of Kenya, and Bungoma district in particular to the East, Kumi district to the West, Tororo to the South, Kapchorwa to the North and Karamoja to the North West. It lies between longitudes 34E, 35E and latitudes 00 45, 129N. The total land area of the district is 1,480 sq. km. (<http://www.mbale.go.ug>). The district covers most of the western spurs of Mount Elgon and has an area of about 254,580 hectares with 166,403 hectares, only (65%) being available for agriculture and the rest being under forfeit, mountain, open water and swamps (District Agricultural Office, Mbale, 1991). Within this territorial extent, the Bagisu have dispersed their homesteads over the general area. They stretch down from the line of the government forest reserve, running between 6,000 and 7,000 feet to the plains lying just below 3,000 feet (Heald, 1989).

Although the majority of the Bagisu are to be found in Mbale district, pockets of others are found outside this district and are in no way insignificant to the kinds of trends in community relations that we analyse in this work. Neighbouring districts such as Tororo, Kumi, Kapchorwa, Karamoja in Uganda and to a minor extent Bungoma and Mt. Elgon districts in Western Kenya have varying numbers of Bagisu inhabitants. But as with the case of the Babukusu, the focus of this research is on Mbale district although where necessary, we pay attention to other populations living outside the district to bolster our arguments.

The population of Mbale has been rapidly increasing over the years. A number of scholars have argued that the rapid increase in population within the district could be explained by the existence of the rich volcanic soils which support numerous and dense populations (Heald, 1989; Khamalwa, 2004). Indeed as Otim (1993) emphasizes, Mbale district is one of the districts with the highest population densities in Uganda. During the 1980 National Population Census, the population of the district numbered 556,900 the great majority of whom are the Bagisu (ibid.). According to the provisional results of the 1991 population and Housing Census, the population was over 700,000 with 282 per square kilometre (Ministry of Planning and Economic Development, 1991). Within the district itself, however, there are differential distributions of population with areas of the mountain spurs having denser populations than others. It is also estimated that about 92 percent of the population is rural and just eight percent urban (<http://www.mbale.go.ug>).

Apart from the Bagisu, people of other ethnic affiliations also inhabit Mbale district like the case was for Bungoma. These groups are significant in examining the history of community relations not only between the Babukusu and Bagisu, but also between them and other neighbouring ethnic and sub-ethnic communities. The Nilotic Teso who are found to the Southwest of Mbale district spread into some regions of the district. Two other small Bantu speaking groups, the Gwere and the Nyole also show a strong

presence in the district. So are the other small groups occupying Bukedi area but extending into Mbale. Perhaps, the most significant ethnic group that has shared a historical neighbourhood with the Bagisu, and whose presence is widely acknowledged in the district is that of the Nilotic speaking Sebei. The Sebei, who are known to the Bagisu and indeed also to their neighbours the Babukusu as 'Barwa' live to the North of Mbale district. There are also several populations of other Uganda peoples especially the Baganda and the Asians. Apart from these ethnic and sub-ethnic groups, the Babukusu of Western Kenya are also, in varying minority numbers represented in Mbale district and are mainly found in the border areas and especially the Southern sections of the district. The following chapters show how the interactions between the Babukusu and Bagisu have been fostered over the years.

In terms of the administrative divisions, Mbale district has three counties and one municipality. The counties are Bubulo, Manjiya and Bungokho while Mbale is the only municipality in the district. There are additionally 27 sub-counties or 'gombolola' and 148 parishes or wards in the district. Besides Mbale, there are emerging population centers in the district including Bududa, Sironko, Mayenze, Buweri, Butiru, Matende, Nakaloke, Nabumali and Magala. Six Members of Parliament represent the district in parliament. The represented constituencies are Bungokho North, Bungokho South, Bubulo East, Bubulo West, Manjiya County, Mbale Municipality and one seat for a Woman representative from Mbale. As the case was for Bungoma, it is important to emphasize that since 2006 plans were at advanced stage to subdivide the larger Mbale district into three districts of Bubulo, Manjiya and Bungokho.

### **2.3 Relief and Climate**

In examining the relief and climatic features of Bungoma and Mbale districts, it is important to note that the two districts adjoin each other and seem to have generally similar features. The two districts lie within an area whose relief and climate continue to be shaped by the presence of Mount Elgon and Lake Victoria. Sitting astride the

Kenya-Uganda border and rising to a height of about 4,420 metres high, Mount Elgon has been responsible in fostering the cool and moist climatic conditions experienced both in Bungoma and Mbale. On the other hand, the climatic features associated with the Lake Victoria basin, within which the two districts lie continue to be significant in shaping the rainfall and temperature patterns in the two districts. Arising from the foregoing two landmarks has been an agro-ecological zone whose potential has been significant in the economic mainstay of the two communities under study.

Mount Elgon and Lake Victoria have been important in influencing the rainfall patterns in the area. As a result, the two districts experience a bimodal type of rainfall with the heaviest coming in the first season of March to June and the second – which is normally light coming from September through December. A short dry spell is usually between June and August while December to March is longer. In general there are no extremes in temperature ranges. Although they vary, temperatures range from a minimum of 5°C to a maximum of 22°C throughout the two districts. The mean annual temperatures in regions away from the mountain are about 21 to 22 degrees centigrade while the mean annual temperatures in areas close to Mount Elgon are in the lower range of 5-10 degrees centigrade because of altitude. On the whole, there is sufficient sunshine in most parts of the two districts.

The average rainfall in the two districts is 1,500mm per year, but this average tends to rise to 2,000mm. On Mount Elgon where most of the rivers in the two districts originate, the high rainfall is supportive to the intensive agriculture, which forms the backbone of the two districts' economy. Generally, a sedentary type of agriculture is practised with Arabica Coffee and Cotton being the main cash crops among the Bagisu while Sugar cane, Tobacco and again Coffee are important cash crops among the Babukusu. Although a cash crop economy seems to owe its history to colonialism, a more subsistence economy based on local crops has been vibrant among the two communities from the pre-colonial period. The major subsistence crops grown in the area include beans, bananas, cassava, simsim, peas, groundnuts, onions, carrots, and

sweet potatoes. The two peoples also keep domestic animals such as cattle, goats, sheep and fowls among many others. Basically, it is mainly on this potential in the area and from the various agricultural products that both the Babukusu and the Bagisu have charted the relations between themselves, their neighbours and the outside world.

The agricultural potential in the two districts is also favoured by good soils. The geology, topography and climate have combined to give the two districts soils of considerable variations in fertility and drainage properties. Although the soils are generally well drained and deep in the two districts, they tend to be more fertile towards the highland areas. Where good soils are coupled with a gently sloping terrain, intensive agriculture is practiced. However, fairly poor farming methods have been applied on the slopes of Mount Elgon, on the inselbergs and hills causing soil erosion. The situation is made worse by hailstorms which are common in the two areas and which assist in carrying away the already exposed soils. However, it needs to be emphasized that although large parts of the districts are covered by fairly shallow soils, they are generally fertile and of various types. These good soils and climatic features have combined to give the Babukusu and the Bagisu considerable food security. The latter has created viable sedentary economies in which relations between the two peoples have been fostered over a long historical period.

#### **2.4 Physical and Natural Resources**

The foregoing relief and climatic conditions in Bungoma and Mbale districts have been significant in defining the varying natural resources in the two districts. As with the relief and climate, both Mount Elgon and Lake Victoria have created different agro-ecological zones responsible for the various vegetation zones in the region. From the Mountain Elgon forest to the modified tropical vegetation towards the lake areas, man-made forests encircle smaller patches of indigenous tropical vegetation. As one climbs up from the lower sections of the two districts there is a progressive change in both climate and vegetation zones. This leads to a situation where tropical savannah and

grassland savannah on the plain change through tropical forest to alpine vegetation towards the Mountain Summit. The different vegetation zones include grasses, forests and swamps. It is important to note that most of the natural vegetation has been cleared in most areas for cultivation. Before the latter process, which in several respects is a product of increased populations, the natural vegetation provided a favourable terrain in which various social, economic and political needs and activities of the two communities were met. There existed an ecological balance that ensured the meeting of people's human needs while preserving the sustainability of the climate and vegetation zones. The present indiscriminate clearance of the natural vegetation has resulted into soil erosion and is also threatening water catchment areas in the districts.

The numerous rivers in the area have been instrumental to the development of settlement patterns that have allowed large populations to be sustained in the two districts. Mount Elgon provides the single most important drainage system in the region. The drainage pattern arising from the Mountain is radial with several rivers and numerous streams and brooks descending the mountain in all directions through narrow valleys and a series of waterfalls. The mountain is the source of permanent rivers including Kibisi, Kuywa, Kimilili and Lwakhakha (Malaba) in Kenya and Manafwa and Mpologoma in Uganda. Other important rivers in Bungoma include Kamukuywa, Nzoia, Chwele, Sio and Malakisi while in Mbale are Sinoko, Namatala, Nambale, Nabunyonga and Namatsiyo. Generally, the adequate rainfall received in the two districts has sustained this drainage of rivers and streams. Coupled with the good soils and a gently sloping terrain the two districts have been ideal for both crop farming and animal husbandry for a long time. These conditions are significant in explaining not only the emergence of viable economic institutions among the two peoples but also more generally their linkage to other social, political and cultural spheres that mediate and influence the peoples' history. Apart from Mount Elgon, there are other more resistant inselbergs and ranges that stand above the general ground level forming Kabuchai, Luucho, Mwibale, Chetambe, Sang'alo hills and other several small ones in the region.

Transport and communication is also an important means by which people enhance contacts and relations with one another. Within the two districts, these are not well established and to some extent it is because of the nature of the terrain especially in areas close to Mt Elgon. In the latter areas, the long stretches and ridges present difficulties in the establishment of transport and communication facilities thus making such areas remote and inaccessible. Significant road networks are visible towards the urban centres, with major roads linking Mbale to Kampala and other towns. In Bungoma on the other hand, there is the Great North road passing through the district and other roads linking the town to other towns in the region. There is also a railway line from Mombasa to Uganda passing through the town centre. Generally, however, both districts are connected by a series of rough roads and tracts that have historically facilitated communication between various regions and peoples. In terms of connections between Bugisu and Bukusuland specifically, the Sirisia-Lwakhakha link has been historically important although other links through Cheptais and Malaba are also important.

In terms of mineral resources, both Bungoma and Mbale districts poses scattered varieties and potentials. Of historical significance in the two districts is iron that has been produced in small quantities for making farming equipments and weapons. The Mbale area extending into Tororo possesses lime and phosphate resources, which have been exploited in commercial quantities. In Bungoma, there are several natural and human resources which have given the district a viable basis for investment. The foregoing include the existence of quarries which have been exploited for ballast and chips. It is also important to mention the wildlife resources within the Mt. Elgon area that have historically supplied the two peoples with various items including meat, skins and other products for domestic and trade purposes. Presently, the respective governments in Kenya and Uganda have restricted the access to these wildlife products. The location of Mt Elgon Wildlife Reserve that covers the area astride the Kenya-Uganda border, including some sections of North Mbale, Manjiya County and

South Mbale has ensured the strict control over wildlife resources and their availability to both the Babukusu and the Bagisu.

On the whole however, it is worth emphasizing the centrality of the geographical conditions in the two districts to the history of relations between the Babukusu and the Bagisu. Especially for the suitable climatic conditions, agriculture has remained the most important economic activity among the two peoples. The viability of this economic realm, especially in ensuring food security for the two communities has historically enhanced other forms of social and political permutations between them and other peoples within their geographical universe.

## **2.5 Summary**

In this chapter, an attempt has been made to examine the geographical setting in which the Babukusu and the Bagisu people are found. It has been our contention that the human experiences that influence the two peoples' interactive history over time cannot be treated in isolation from geography, since geography, among other things, impacts on the course of history. The chapter has analysed geography in a broader sense to include not only the territorial extent but also the related aspects of relief, climate, and the physical and natural features that have continued to influence the two communities' relations over time. It has been observed that the geography of the area has been significant not only in fostering the border relations between the two peoples but indeed of other communities that they have historically been in contact with. Geography thus provided the permanent material foundation and space through which the various historical and cultural influences tended to shape the activities of the two communities. This in turn influenced the general terrain upon which other social, economic and political interactions evolved in the general area. In the following chapter, we examine how the foregoing geographical features influenced the historical evolution and relations between the Babukusu and Bagisu prior to 1894.

## CHAPTER THREE

### PATTERNS OF THE BABUKUSU-BAGISU RELATIONS TO 1894

#### 3.0 Introduction

In this chapter, we discuss the nature and pattern of the Babukusu-Bagisu relations prior to 1894. The latter period represents the year of the actual British declaration of a Protectorate over the region that is occupied by the two ethnic communities. This followed the processes of scramble and partition where the European powers drew boundaries to divide African territory among themselves. The latter process of partition had been sanctioned through the 1884-85 Berlin Conference. The year 1894 therefore represents the beginning of increased European activity in Africa and East Africa in particular, a process that culminated into the setting up of the British colonial administration. It marks an important watershed in the transformation of the pre-colonial relations and the onset of colonialism together with its attendant restructuring of the social, economic and political lives of the various African peoples.

Although the exact period of the annexation and political control of Western Kenya and Eastern Uganda was realized in the mid 1890's, precedent events following the 1894 treaties had set in place conditions that adequately explain the final control of the region in the later decade. The purpose of this chapter is to examine the historical developments in the region before 1894. It specifically examines the developments in the history of relations between the Babukusu and the Bagisu people in the wider context of the region they now occupy and in the light of the pre-European contact period. We discuss the relations between the two communities in this pre-European contact period to provide the historical setting necessary for understanding the developments in the colonial and post-colonial periods.

### 3.1 Historicising the Deep Past of the Babukusu and the Bagisu

The appropriate starting point in examining the relations between the Babukusu and the Bagisu communities is the analysis of their pre-colonial past history. This history precedes the European scramble and partition politics in the region especially the arbitrariness with which this politics informed the construction of the present common Kenya-Uganda border in particular. It is therefore true, as most scholars have argued that although the 1884-85 Berlin Conference marked an important watershed in the configuration of African borders, including the present Kenya-Uganda one, current debates on community relations need to go beyond this period. The partition of the continent need to be viewed in the light of other social, economic and political processes that restructured the peoples' history before the historical moment of the Berlin conference. As Barry (2001) emphasizes, the current borders of Africa are as a result of a lengthy history that must take into account periods beyond the accidents of colonial partition if the internal forces of fragmentation and unification of the continent has to be understood.

Barry's argument seems to complement the perspectives of other theorists who stress the importance of re-examining historical actors and peoples evolution through the various social, economic and political institutions before the actual colonial partition of the continent. Asiwaju (1992) and Kamazima (2000) for instance argue that the history of individuals or communities traversing common boundaries and its interrelatedness with other social structures including social stratification, social institutions and interpersonal relationships somewhat moulds and structures individual and collective experiences. These experiences, according to Odhiambo (2002) are significant for the past and present as they inform us on the linkages between climate and history, and put the natural world into full play alongside social and political institutions of the local people and regional social formations.

Viewed in the light of the Babukusu and the Bagisu specifically, the foregoing arguments coalesce into the need for a thorough interrogation of the different phases of their history from the earliest times to the present. This calls into question the issue of harmonizing the various available sources of information. A multi-source spectrum must be used before making a tentative conclusion on the evolutionary history of both the Babukusu and the Bagisu. Already, available data from disciplines such as oral traditions, archaeology, historical linguistics, cultural anthropology among many others have unearthed valuable data (Were, 1967; Ehret, 1971; Vansina, 1985; Kizerbo, 1981; Simiyu, 1991). Documentary and secondary sources have also formed an important basis for the analysis of the various African people's history. In this study we call into play some of these sources in order to try and reconstruct the history of the Babukusu and the Bagisu specifically. In this connection, the aim would be to show the evolutionary process that has facilitated the interactive process of the two peoples and indeed others that have inhabited the region.

According to Ogot (2002), the historical portrait of the present Western Kenya and Eastern Uganda from the earliest times to about 500 AD seems scanty. Although substantial data has been yielded from archaeological researches, a number of questions still remain unanswered especially in relation to the socio-cultural developments in the region. What we know, according to Ogot is that modern humans emerged 40,000 years ago, and that by about 20,000 years ago, the present Kenya and Uganda, including the specific areas under study had entered the late stone age, marked by the development of the microlithic technology.

In terms of the specific cultural and linguistic groups inhabiting these areas in this pristine period, evidence has also been scanty although linguists, historians and archaeologists have made significant contributions. What seems clear from a number of contributions on this theme is that these regions were not demographically empty, at least before the onset of the first phase of migrations, as we shall see later. They were inhabited by a number of hunter-gatherer populations who could be credited with the

earliest form of stone technology that has been found in these areas. Although generally described as being part of the Khoisan hunter-gatherers who traversed Eastern, Central and Southern Africa, these populations included the Okiek or Dorobo or Sirikwa as they have variously been referred (Ehret 1968; Were, 1972; Mwanzi, 1977; Ogot, 2002). In Western Kenya and Eastern Uganda in particular, evidence for the presence of these early populations has been noted at Mungoma hill in Maragoli, at Kakapeli on the slopes of Mount Elgon and are said to be synonymous with the Nguui or Nguye in Western Kenyan traditions (Gimode, 2003).

It can be argued from the foregoing therefore that given the overwhelming evidence on habitation, present day Western Kenya and the adjoining areas of present Eastern Uganda were centers of demographic contact from the earliest period. Indeed archaeological, linguistic and ethnographic data have provided clues on the economy of the inhabitants of this region within this period. Clark (1970) for instance, seem to suggest that their economy was simple and hunter-gatherer based. Their main technology was according to the same author based on stone and wood. The author further points out that although their populations were low, semblance of larger social units were beginning to emerge characterized by close affinities to particular social structures.

It is from these hunter-gatherer populations that the earliest immigrants into Eastern Africa in general came. Archaeological and linguistic evidence has suggested that the first cultivators and herders in East Africa were southern Cushitic in language and they settled in the area between 3000 BC and 300BC (Ehret, 1998). The early Cushitic speakers who are said to have preceded the Bantu and Nilotes in the present general Western Kenya and Eastern Uganda region had up to 1500 AD dominated the region (Ogot, 2002:23). Apart from transforming the region into a demographically vibrant entity, they, together with their great influence on the pristine hunter-gatherer communities were beginning to convert the area into a complex contact zone.

More evidence, especially from the period after C.500 has emerged to boost our knowledge base on the peopling of the present general Western Kenya and the Eastern Uganda areas. Of particular relevance has been the period between 500 AD-1000 AD, which witnessed a second wave of immigration into the region. This was, in a nutshell, a period of the pristine Bantu speakers. The Bantu developed two major axes of settlement within this period. One was the Southeast Elgon Bantu who occupied the area between Mount Elgon and the Uasin Gishu plateau (Ogot: 2002). The second group, which is believed to constitute the ancestors of the Luyia-Gishu peoples evolved into a separate people or group of closely associated peoples on the lands closer to the Winam Gulf. Archaeological evidence, especially from the dimple-based pottery that is associated with these pristine Bantu speakers has been resourceful (Ochieng, 1974). Also, evidence from iron working which is also associated with the Bantu has been found in various archaeological finds in the form of implements and tools. The latter evidence has been important in tracing the migration of the Bantu from their original areas in central and West Africa into the various places of eastern and southern Africa where they eventually settled.

The arrival of the pristine Bantu into the present Western Kenya and Eastern Uganda regions ushered in several social, economic and political transformations. Together with the autochthonous populations and the earlier Cushitic immigrants, this area began to evolve as an ethnically complex region where the various groups interacted with each other. And although several scholars including Huntingford (1944) attest to the fact that the Bantu were a dominant group both numerically and in language, diverse elements from the other groups continued to have an influence on the region's socio-cultural and economic set up. Evidence associated with this close contact also point to the cultural origins of the first agricultural revolutions and civilizations emerging pretty close to where the present Babukusu and Bagisu could be located. With the introduction of iron technology, especially between 500-1500 AD, people began settling into the fertile areas to practice food production. The Bantu for instance are noted to have brought with them subsistence practices centred around the

cultivation of grains and root crops, pulses and perhaps bananas (Ogot, 2002). They also kept livestock. The trend of economic interaction in this period therefore was towards a gradual synthesis of the two economies.

Perhaps, what is more significant with these transformations in the economy was the demographic configuration of the region as pressure on land became more visible. On the one hand, there was the easterly pressure from the Bantu-speaking immigrants from the West, especially from the present Ganda and Soga. On the other hand, there was consistent pressure on the pristine communities from the various Nilotic groups immigrating into this general area. Linguistic works especially by Ehret (1998) have significantly highlighted the cultural mix in this area from this early period by pointing out that Western Kenyan and the adjoining areas of Eastern Uganda were ethnically complex regions between c.500-1500AD. The autochthonous populations, the Cushites, the Bantu and the Nilotic-speaking groups interacted with each other fighting, trading and intermarrying and thereby influencing each others societies and economic practices. In his *Magnus Opus* of 1998, Ehret specifically elaborates on the common linguistic habitat in the region currently inhabited by the Babukusu and Bagisu. The author's thesis is that before 800 AD the people inhabiting the general area under study were linguistically one. Then from 800 AD to 1500 AD they became differentiated into environmental and social units before finally between 1500 AD to present they became familiarly known in the region as distinct ethnic groups and clans (Ehret, 1998).

Although few researches have challenged the findings by Ehret, it is instructive to note that the author's over-reliance on linguistic evidence need to be corroborated by other sources especially archaeology. So far, however, what seems clear is that, first, the evolutionary process in Western and Eastern Uganda pre-dates the histories of the present day inhabitants. Secondly, the ethnic composition of the region is as a result of a crystallization of many centuries of interaction between the various peoples. In this context there can be no definitive or pure community but a hybridization of sorts.

Thirdly, in terms of the available data, especially that from historical linguistics, it may validly be concluded that Cushitic speakers preceded Bantu and Nilotic speakers in the peopling of the region under study. The trends in the migration and settlement within the region could capture this configuration better.

### **3.2 The Migration Problem among the Western Kenyan and Eastern Ugandan Bantu Communities**

Community relations operate within a broader matrix of diverse and intricate levels of co-existence, interdependence as well as conflict. As the foregoing evidence has indicated, present Western Kenya and Eastern Uganda were already ethnically complex regions characterized by varied communal interactions by 1500 AD. These interactions were constantly altering the social, economic and political entities of the communities in the region. Through the historical process of encounter and interaction, there were evolving ethnic communities that were neither definitive nor pure but hybridized in nature (Ochieng', 1974:44). A crystallization of this process has been studied by a number of scholars using various sources as has been demonstrated in the preceding section.

The period from 1500 AD to the late 19<sup>th</sup> century on the other hand has continued to receive enormous historical attention. Scholars, including Ogot (1967), Were (1967), Kiwanuka (1972), Ochieng (1974), Mwanzi (1977), Aseka (1989) among many others have enriched our historical knowledge on individual communities that occupy most of the general present Western Kenya and Eastern Uganda regions. On the whole, the scholars have demonstrated that the region within this period was characterized by increasing population growth and the resulting opening up of new lands for agriculture either by clearing forests or by movement into already well-utilized lands.

Through mainly oral traditions, the scholars have strived to show the genesis, migration and settlement of most of the individual communities presently inhabiting

the region. But oral traditions, as scholars have rightly cautioned poses a number of chronological problems and hardly yields reliable information beyond five centuries (Simiyu, 1991). Indeed as the pioneer studies have shown, it is very difficult in the absence of other evidence to make conclusions based wholly on oral evidence. Thus, only through a multidisciplinary research involving scholars combining oral traditions, documentary evidence, linguistics, anthropology and archaeology among many others can a more rewarding study be conducted. As Spear (1982: 17) has emphasized:

By carefully analysing the sources of the traditions and comparing them with all the other data, documentary, linguistics, archaeology and anthropological, it is possible to discern a number of narrative and symbolic levels on which the traditions operate and which provide valuable evidence for social and cultural history in addition to narrative

Perhaps what Spear could have added is that the various sources of evidence and indeed the evidence itself evolve and more evidence get generated over time. Consequently, as more new evidence is gathered, more interpretations and conclusions are arrived at.

Clearly, the pioneer scholars derive their justification for conducting research on individual communities based mainly on oral sources from various promptings. First and foremost there appears to be the reality that within the period under study, intense processes of communal interaction in the region were ushering in the emergence of ethnicity and ethnic consciousness. Ethnic consciousness is construed to be the feeling of a people as a social community with definite identities. It became necessary therefore for research to trace this vital history from the focal point of individual communities. Secondly, and perhaps related to the first one was the new "independence" mood within the countries, which together with the opening up of new sources of historical inquiry necessitated an in-depth analysis into the history of

various peoples for national development. Especially with the acceptance of oral tradition as an important source of African history, each community's history had a part to contribute to the whole region's history.

Whereas the overwhelming contributions of the pioneer "individual community" based studies have been noted and appreciated, a number of issues have been raised. For example, because of the hybridized nature of the present Western Kenya and Eastern Uganda regions as has been demonstrated, there is an intrinsic difficulty in focusing studies on a single ethno-linguistic group as a unit of analysis. In view of the enormous intermixture alluded to before 1500 AD, it is evident that the continuity of any people as a social or political unit depended less on its purity or single origin. Rather in the opposite sense, it depended on its ability to accommodate and assimilate diverse elements (Ogot, 2002:26). For instance, the pristine communities including the Cushites, the Bantu and the Nilotes through the historical process of interaction evolved varied institutions that are equally hybridized and differentiated. As such, given that ethnic consciousness is a continuous process, we see evidence of numerous ethnicities and sub-ethnicities arising from the original "proto" groups. Analysing the latter groups distinctly within separate spaces and polities therefore raises several concerns. Through their long history, the groups have not only altered their spatial locations, but also their social, economic and political realities through the various permutations of social and cultural elements and social processes.

The purpose of this section is not to down play the significant contributions of pioneer studies, but to try and raise basic issues and offer more analytical interpretations to the problems raised by earlier works on the origin, migration and settlement of Western Kenya and Eastern Uganda communities generally and Babukusu and Bagisu specifically. Whereas earlier 'individual community' based studies have yielded substantial historical data on the latter peoples, our concern is to conceptualize their relations within the larger historical context and within a system of social meaning which has defined their experience. In so doing we hope to delve into their experiences

and into the social and cultural processes which have defined their existence within the various spatial locations.

Generally, the problem of migration and settlement within the Western Kenyan and Eastern Uganda Bantu communities has revolved around two schools in the pioneer historical studies. These schools or theories could be categorised as migration and evolution although at times there has been an attempt to combine the two. In these schools, the scholars have borrowed heavily from oral traditions, historical linguistics and partly archeology to arrive at their various conclusions. The migration theorists, relying heavily on linguistic researches by M. Guthrie, J. Greenberg and H. Johnston have argued and located the cradleland of the Bantu within the West African region.

Once the location thesis was accepted, historians began to postulate the possible routes and directions of the expanding Bantu settlements (Ogot, 2002; Mwanzi, 1986). Lack of written evidence coupled with unavailability of archeological material has made these historians to consider the geographical distribution of Bantu languages for possible inferences regarding the speakers of this language family. Bantu migration has been demonstrated as having been responsible for the spread of new ideas into those areas that they migrated and settled. The spread of iron technology as well as pottery types, including Urewe ware has been noted as Bantu accomplishments. From the West African cradle, the Bantu are argued to have gone across the forest into Central Africa where then they split into two, one group moving Eastwards and another group moving southwards.

The second group of theorists argue for the evolutionary process of development of populations in Africa and the emergence of culture in situ (Mwanzi, 1986). These scholars specifically argue that Bantu language and culture developed in situ and was not as a result of migration and expansion. For the latter scholars, the problem of language, pottery types and food production should be viewed in the light of the invention as a mechanism of culture change. Taking iron technology for instance, these

scholars have revealed that iron producers in East Africa and South Africa were in this place earlier or later than is often assumed (Zezeza, 1993). It is not therefore, as they argue, necessary to link the spread of iron technology or even pottery to the spread of the Bantu for it is probable that the Bantu were already settled in places where they are found today centuries before or after iron technology arrived as the case may be.

These two schools of thought constitute the major lines of research into the issue of Bantu migration and settlement in Western Kenya and Eastern Uganda. Although it is difficult to dismiss any of their findings, considerable research on individual Bantu communities in Western Kenya and Eastern Uganda need to pay attention to the basis of the two schools. Researches on the Babukusu and Bagisu have hitherto been conducted within the rubric of the geopolitical location in which the two communities are found.

### **3.3 The Babukusu in the History of the Luyia Community of Western Kenya**

The history of the Babukusu has continued to generate a lot of debate among both historians and non-historians. Especially in terms of the peoples' origin, migration and settlement into the present areas of Western Kenya, scholars have advanced various versions. It is important to observe that most of the earlier general studies on the Babukusu including Wagner (1949) treated the people's history from the rubric of the "Bantu of North Kavirondo". In justifying this general undertaking, Wagner argues that before one can meaningfully discuss a peoples history including their political organization, one must first determine whether their entire society can be looked at as constituting a single political unit or whether their society constitutes a multiplicity of political units. As far as the author is concerned, the Bantu of North Kavirondo to which the Babukusu belong "constitutes a group of people who submit persistently and in an organized manner to certain similar social, cultural and political institutions, for purposes of their continuity" (Wagner, 1949:200).

From Wagner's pioneering study, a number of other works have also analysed the history of the Babukusu from the general Buluyia perspective and specifically within the present Western Kenyan spatial location. The latter include Osogo (1966), Were (1967), Wagner (1970), Aseka (1989) among many others. The latter works have undertaken a reconstruction of the history of the Bantu groups and especially those that came to be described as the Abaluyia in the 1940's. These works portray the Abaluyia as owing their emergence as a group to interaction with several ethnic and language groups including the Cushitic and Nilotic stock. These interactions are said to have evolved over the long history that is characterised in processes of migration and settlement. More specifically, the inter-community interactions seem to have crystallised after the Abaluyia ethnic groups settled down in their respective locations in present Western Kenya.

What seems clear is that the history of the Abaluyia point to a remarkable heterogeneity in ethnic composition that go beyond the geographical confines of present Western Kenya. Due to the historical interaction between the Abaluyia and the neighbouring non-Abaluyia ethnic groups a hybridized ethnicity has emerged over the entire region bordering the present areas of the Abaluyia. There is need therefore to demonstrate the implications of this interaction with neighbouring non-Abaluyia groups beyond the Western Kenya geographical space. This will not only make the historical reconstruction rewarding, but more importantly treat historical developments in the region in their totality.

The most comprehensive account on the Abaluyia history must take cognisance of their heterogeneous nature (Were, 1967; Aseka, 1989). The fact that the Abaluyia are not a single unified population need not be over-emphasized. Although they constitute about 18 sub-ethnic groups, they have emerged as a cultural entity through several centuries of assimilation and consolidation of peoples of diverse backgrounds (Were, 1967:60). Apart from Babukusu, other Abaluyia sub-ethnic groups include Baragoli, Batiriki, Bawanga, Banyala (Navakholo), Babedakho, Batachoni, Bakabras, Babesukha,

Banyore, Bamarama, Bakisa, Batsotso, Banyala (Port Victoria), Bamaraki, Batura, Bakhayo and Basamia. The Buluyia cultural entity seems to trace its ancestry from the earlier Bantu groups who by the 13<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup> centuries were occupying parts of Eastern Uganda. Within this Eastern Uganda area these Bantu groups interacted intensely with Kalenjin and Luo inhabitants before the emergence of an overarching pattern of complex migrational movements and the amalgamation of all sorts of linguistic groups in the region (Aseka, 1989:77). It is this complex migrational movements that seem to have brought large numbers of Bantu Abaluyia speakers into the present areas that are found Babukusu and Bagisu peoples.

The emergence of Abaluyia as a cultural entity has remained a problematic issue. Although some scholars attest to the fact that the eighteen Luyia sub-ethnic groups have a common language and almost a common culture thus implying a homogenous origin (Mutoro, 1975), the heterogeneity of their evolution through interactions needs to be highlighted. What seems clear and uncontested is that the Bantu Abaluyia did not have a common name for themselves and each sub-ethnic group had its own institutions for settling the various social, economic and political problems. This seems to have been the state of affairs by the time the groups were settling down between the 12<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup> centuries and also before the coming of the outsiders including the Arab/Swahili traders and later the European colonialists in the 19<sup>th</sup> century.

With the onset of the Arab/Swahili traders and the Europeans, however, these groups of Bantu speakers came to be called Bantu of North Kavirondo. The origin of the term Kavirondo seems unclear. However some sources attest to the fact that it had an Arab/Swahili origin (Makila, 1978). It is argued that the term was pejoratively used by the Arab/Swahili slavers to refer to the manner in which “natives” were in the habit of sitting (Wakaa) on their heels (Virondo). Another version has it that the term “rondo” was indeed derived from a Luo word meaning confound or defeat. It is argued, from this latter version that it is the Luo who, after defeating the various peoples on their northern side referred to them as those who they vanquished (Wakavirondo) (ibid.).

Whichever version that is correct is besides the point, what seems clear is that from the mid 1890's the term Kavirondo was commonly used to refer to the Bantu and other peoples living in the general Western Kenyan area. It may however be easy to contest the second version given that Kavirondo came to be applied to the whole western Kenyan area encompassing other communities including the Luo, the Abasuba, Abagusii and Abakuria hence South Kavirondo (later South Nyanza), Central Kavirondo (later central Nyanza) and North Kavirondo (later North Nyanza). By September 1920 when North Kavirondo district was designated a Bantu reserve, the term had begun to receive acceptance from various colonial quarters.

Bantu of North Kavirondo, therefore, as a category served as a colonial administrative convenience to distinguish these ethnic groups from others within the same British colonial territory. North Kavirondo became an administrative district that is equivalent to the present jurisdiction of Western Province. The colonial administration was therefore in part responsible for not only grouping together hitherto independent ethnic groups but also defining clear geographical limits for its administrative convenience. In the words of Bayart (1989:146) "the chains of inter-societal relations which had no linear borders but were based on rights over people were replaced by the enlarged dimensions of the colonial state, which founded rights over the land".

In the context of the Bantu of North Kavirondo from which Abaluyia as a term later emerged, this categorization was convenient in two respects. First, it was not the region in square kilometres that mattered, but rather that their nature, compounded with possible similarities in language and culture would pose little problems to the colonial administrative objectives. Secondly, and perhaps related to the first one is that their territorial confines of North Kavirondo overlapped without necessarily coinciding. This is however not to imply that these peoples' inter-societal interactions never transcended the colonial spatial particularity in which they had been confined nor did they concede to the colonial geographical categorization. It is clear for instance that the local people continued to resent the continued use of the term Kavirondo not only because of its

pejorative nature but also because it categorically lumped them together with people whose culture, especially in relation to language and traditions were incompatible with their own.

Over the years, Abaluyia as a term begun to emerge as an alternative name to the pejorative name Bantu of North Kavirondo. According to Wagner (1949), Abaluyia as a concept begun gaining ground towards the late 1920's and early 1930's. The term emerged as a reaction against the term Kavirondo which had been superimposed upon the people by the Swahili traders and later by the Europeans. Abaluyia as a term also seems to have emerged as a concept meant to express unity and solidarity of the various groups as members of an emerging ethno-nation. The term however does not seem to have a unified meaning among the various Abaluyia dialects. In Lubukusu, for instance, Baluyia means children of a common father in a polygamous family or of the same homestead (Makila, 1987:Wangwe, O.I.). In other Luyia dialects it means "people of the same fire" (Aseka, 1989) or simply fellow clansmen. The commonality in the linguistic description of the term Baluyia is its emphasis on "sameness" or "commonness" among the various groups. However its varied meaning unmarks the heterogeneity that is embedded in each ethnic group's cultural diversity.

Osogo (1966) has pointed out that the term Baluyia had both cultural and political implications. Culturally, it was meant to coalesce the various sub-ethnic groups into a cultural entity, given the unifying possibilities inherent in their language. Politically, however, Abaluyia as a term was meant to bring together a grouping of related communities. This unity was necessary for political reasons during the colonial period and especially after the Second World War. Indeed, it was in 1940 that the word Baluyia received substantial recognition, when Abaluyia Welfare Association was founded (Osogo, 1969:139). To crown it all, all the numerous groups in the North Kavirondo district adopted the name Abaluyia in 1943.

Although the battle for identity seem to have been played from both cultural and political planes, it is not useful to disregard the Abaluyia as having a heterogeneous origin since they have through the long processes of migration, adaptation, assimilation and unification become highly syncretic. As the case of individual sub-ethnic groups demonstrates, the political considerations for the Abaluyia identity sometimes contradicts the historical and cultural realities that tend to go beyond this collectivity. Taking the case of the Babukusu for instance, scholars have observed that their history relates more to that of the Bagisu of Uganda than to that of the other Abaluyia sub-ethnic groups (Were, 1977, Makila, 1978; Simiyu, 1991). Indeed as Makila (1978: 46) argues more specifically, if the Babukusu are part of the Abaluyia collectivity in Kenya by virtue of their geographical circumstance, they are first and foremost members of a duplex community incorporating the Bagisu by virtue of historical circumstance. Although the scholar should have added that it is not only by geographical but also political circumstances, it is important to back these arguments with concrete historical evidence.

Other useful works specifically on the Babukusu include Wesonga (1970), Wolf (1971), Wandibba (1972), Nasimiyu (1980; 1984), Makila (1982), Kakai (2000) and Wafula (2000). These works among others discuss various aspects of the social, economic and political history of the Babukusu from diverse perspectives. Of interest to this study is the way in which such works examine the history of relations between the Babukusu and the Bagisu people.

### **3.4 The Bagisu in the History of Eastern Ugandan Communities**

The history of the Bagisu, like that of the Babukusu has been reconstructed within the geopolitical location of Eastern Uganda. In this analysis, the Bagisu have been grouped together with the various Bantu groups that not only occupy the greater Ugandan state but more precisely the Eastern parts of the country. By the turn of the 19<sup>th</sup> century or more precisely before the territory now known as Uganda came to acquire definite

geographical boundaries, the region now occupied by the Bagisu had long been inhabited by various ethnic groups as the previous sections have demonstrated. The latter ethnic communities who perhaps included the Bagisu, or more precisely their ancestors, were therefore in place before the legal and other colonial formulations that gave definite limits to the country we now know as Uganda.

Uganda generally and Eastern Uganda specifically has been a center of extensive research owing to its centrality in the migratory, settlement and indeed crystallization of the ethnic composition of most of the East African communities. As previously pointed out, the general area especially after 1500 AD historically influenced the evolution and the ethnic admixture of the various communities including the autochthonous populations, the Cushites, the Bantu and the Nilotic speakers. This process no doubt owed a lot to the environmental conditions and a multiplicity of other factors which dictated the terms upon which these ethnic groups, with different historical experiences came together to order their lives towards common goals.

Considerable literature is available on Uganda generally and especially on the formerly centralised kingdoms of Buganda, Bunyoro, Ankole, Busoga, Butoro (Kiwanka, 1972; Karugire, 1980). For a long time these have largely remained the only areas where extensive historical, political, sociological and anthropological studies have been focussed. In the context of Eastern Uganda generally and among the Bagisu people specifically, historical literature has been scant and scattered. A number of works including those of missionaries (Purvis, 1909; Turner, 1969 and Walakira, 1983), anthropologists (Roscoe, 1915; 1924; La Fontaine, 1959; 1960; Twaddle, 1969; Khamalwa, 2004), Sociologists (Heald, 1989; 1999), Linguists (Brown, 1972), literary (Wangusa, 1989) among others have illuminated on the various aspects of the people in the region. Although the latter works focus on the Bagisu people specifically, they hardly demonstrate their historical evolution over time and their interaction with neighbouring communities in the region.

Perhaps what seems to provide much attention to the history of the Bagisu among the foregoing scholars is the apparent antiquity of the Bagisu settlements, their perceived archaic language and cultural traditions as they have come to evolve in the Mount Elgon area. The missionaries who are the earliest writers on the Bagisu were fascinated by the traditions of the people and collected materials for propaganda and evangelisation. On the other hand the anthropologists studied the Bagisu country, their native customs and beliefs, their government and other traditional aspects for colonial administrative purposes. Although other scholars have departed from the missionary and anthropological objectives, their concerns with the Bagisu cultural traditions and especially the elaborate ritual of 'Imbalu' in which the young males are circumcised among the Bagisu is overwhelming. However, the works hardly demonstrate Bagisu history beyond the local mythical narratives and their interaction with other communities through migration and eventual settlement in the present areas. On their migratory history, Roscoe (1924) and La Fontaine (1959) argue that the Bagisu ancestors moved into their present homes after migrating from their previous ones in the North Nyanza District or more precisely the present Bungoma district of Kenya (Were, 1967:42). The authors further argue that the Bagisu and the Babukusu are related and therefore are one people. Since no comprehensive comparative history of the Bagisu and Babukusu exists, more research especially from historical sources should prove rewarding.

From a historical point of view, Ogot (1967), Kiwanuka (1972) and Were (1967) have thrown some light on the population admixture in the Eastern Ugandan region before the onset of colonialism. The works by these authors need to be briefly analysed independently to show their contribution to the history of Eastern Uganda and of the Bagisu in particular. Ogot (1967) does not deal with the Bagisu specifically but demonstrates the intricate relations that developed in the area especially between the early Bantu populations and the Nilotic Luo. An interesting aspect of these relations developed from 1500 AD at which period there was intense activity of cultural

transformation and social construction (Ogot, 1967). This is the period that witnessed the South-Eastern Luo immigration into parts of eastern Uganda.

On the other hand, as the same author demonstrates, there was another movement of people – the Ataker people, of whom the Iteso of Uganda and Kenya are a very important branch who also interacted intensely with both the Luo and Bantu groups in the region. An important point of contact between these communities was the Bukedi area, from which the immigration of the Luo extended into present Western Kenya. Ogot (1967) further observes that the “colonisation” of the Budama area to the further West by the Luo was aided by the fact that the area was virtually empty (Ogot, 1967:85). This “colonisation” according to the author seems to have pushed other earlier Bantu immigrants in the region further eastwards especially after the Luo fusion with the Iteso.

What seems clear from Ogot's account is that Eastern Uganda and especially around the Bukedi area was a major corridor of migration that perhaps received a heterogeneous collection of ethnic groupings. Although there is no mention of Bagisu at this early period they can be supposed to have been among the Bantu groups, which Ogot argues, were being pushed eastwards. Perhaps, what can be augmented with certainty is that, the general eastern Uganda area due to its attraction was environmentally far more suitable for habitation by the early populations. The latter included the Nilotic Luo, the Iteso and the Bantu groups who not only presently inhabit the area but have also had intense interactions over many years.

Another important source on the peopling of Eastern Uganda is Kiwanuka (1972). Although the author concentrates on the history of Buganda, there are valuable insights on the region in the section on migration of the Baganda. Like Ogot, Kiwanuka advances the view that the first clans of the Baganda constituting what has been known as the 'Kintu' had their first sojourn in the present Eastern Uganda. These immigrants claim to have come from beyond the Eastern bank of river Nile down to a region

around Mt. Masaaba (Elgon). While around Mt. Masaaba the 'Kintu' seem to have interacted immensely with the Luo, the Iteso and the Karamoja before they spread out to the various other regions in present Uganda. From this observation, there is little doubt that the movement of 'Kintu', like that of the Luo represented the arrival, settlement and further dispersal of the groups from the area around Mt. Elgon. The unanimity about the location and the mention of the conspicuous land feature of Mt. Elgon is proof that the present Eastern Uganda region was an area of intense cultural contact.

It is worth pointing out that beyond the habitation of the general area of Eastern Uganda by the ancestors of what has been categorized as the 'Kintu' within the history of the Baganda peoples, several sources also link the Bagisu to the 'Kintu' phenomenon. Indeed as Were (1982:193) has observed, the history of the Bagisu is related to that of the Basoga, Baganda and Banyoro of Uganda. To this scholar, the centrality of 'Kintu' in the legends of the Bagisu only reinforces the fact of the long shared history of this community and that of the Baganda. This history seems to have crystallised around the Mt Elgon area before the eventual westward migration of the Baganda peoples to the present regions.

A more elaborate history concerning pre-colonial community relations in Eastern Uganda and the adjacent Western Kenya regions is done by Were (1967; 1977; 1982). This scholar has not only examined the place of the Bagisu in the history of the Baganda, but has also specifically linked their history to that of the Babukusu. Based mainly on oral traditions, Were (1967) particularly argues that the Bagisu and the Babukusu not only share a common ancestry but also a common dialect. Although this common ancestry is hardly demonstrated through their shared migration history, Were (1982) has emphasized the cultural interaction phenomenon and the clan histories of the two communities. However, through an analysis of language comparisons, the author erroneously notes that the Babukusu and the Bagisu are of Kalenjin origin.

These issues can only be elaborated on within the context of the two peoples shared history, an aspect that we now turn.

### **3.5 The Historical Basis of the Babukusu-Bagisu Relations to 1894**

The histories of the Babukusu and the Bagisu as the preceding sections have sought to demonstrate have been studied within the geopolitical space of the respective nation-states in which they are currently located. In this context, each of the peoples have been grouped together and analysed with other related Bantu groups in whose close proximity they are found. More specifically, the more integrative needs of each state coupled with the perceived urge to create political unity in the respective states has justified the need for such 'nation-state' approaches. In so doing, these approaches have tended to negate or downplay the historical dynamics of the two communities that not only go beyond each state's borders but also lie at the heart of the nation-building efforts of the two neighbouring states. This section is not meant to deny the crucial importance of the previous state-centered analysis but rather to draw attention to the practical limitations of such approaches. The emphasis here is placed on the possibilities deriving directly from the historical relations between the two communities and which seem to go beyond the geographical and state confines in which the respective peoples are presently located.

As a point of departure, it is necessary to note that the historical dynamics informing the Babukusu and Bagisu relations have not only evolved over a long period of time but are also often embedded in the peoples cultural values, political and economic institutions that have continually shaped their aspirations, needs and worldviews. No doubt, then, that the nature of these relations have continually been defined, redefined and indeed transformed in response to changing times. In the broadest sense, historical relations in this context refer to the totality of connections and linkages that have involved the social, economic, political and cultural realms of the two communities. This section specifically demonstrates that in the long history of origin, migration and

eventual settlement of the two communities in their present areas there is impeccable evidence of close relations that were deeply rooted before the onset of colonial rule in the mid 1890's. These historical relations as are demonstrated in the rhythms of encounter and social interaction acted as membranes for the exchange of goods, information and cultural ideas that are significant in the understanding of the later emergence of the colonial border and its transformation over time.

Efforts to write the history of the Babukusu and the Bagisu have not only emphasized the two communities' heterogeneous nature arising from many centuries of contact with diverse ethnic communities but also stressed their commonalities (Were, 1982; Simiyu, 1991). According to Simiyu (1991:136), it was only until the end of the 18<sup>th</sup> century that both the Babukusu and the Bagisu coalesced into a sub-nation, by which he means the possession of a homogenous culture capable of absorbing foreign individuals, occupation of a territory and having a specific economy. If we go by the latter interpretation, the period before the 18<sup>th</sup> century seem to have been characterized by individual clanal history of the various peoples whose contacts were reinforced by a shared common ancestry. Several sources seem to suggest and concur that most of the communities now residing in the present Western Kenya and Eastern Uganda are products of many centuries of intermingling, acculturation and adaptation that ultimately led to their emergence around the 18<sup>th</sup> century (Aseka, 1989; Ogot, 2002). Strictly then, it follows that reference to the collective terms of Babukusu and Bagisu before this period appears rather misleading unless contextualized within the general history of the people's origin, migration and settlement.

Controversy abounds regarding the history of the origin, migration and eventual settlement of the Babukusu and the Bagisu. Part of this controversy has emerged due to the general treatment of the communities within the diverse interpretations of the Bantu history as we pointed out earlier. The other problem relates to the inadequacy of sources of data on both communities. So far, oral traditions and partly historical linguistics have formed the core sources although significant contributions are

emerging from other disciplines such as anthropology and archaeology. The complexity of the evidence gathered through these sources and the various interpretations given have generated much debate. The problem has been how to sift the relevant material from the enormous mass of information and subject it to the critical eye of the method of historical criticism.

Be it as it may, evidence so far from oral traditions (Were, 1967; Makila, 1978; Wafula, 2000) point to the fact that the Babukusu and the Bagisu draw their origin from a single ancestor and place and followed similar migratory routes until their settlement in the present locations. According to Were (1967; 1982) the cradleland of the Babukusu and the Bagisu is in a place called 'Misri' which in the oral traditions of the people is often associated with Egypt. Critics of the 'Misri' legends especially as they refer to Egypt have argued that they are a mere distortion of African history by biblically influenced informants. Kipkorir (1970/71) has however argued that the 'Misri' legends cannot merely be dismissed as modern day inventions given the strong historical link between ancient Egypt and several other regions of Africa. There is a general agreement among the various scholars however that the 'Misri' referred to in the Bukusu and Bagisu legends could be in a place lying in the direction of the North and perhaps in the present Ethiopian and Sudan areas (Wangwe, O.T; Makila, 1978). It is in the latter general area that Mundu, and his wife Seela (or Seera), the ancestral parents of the Babukusu and Bagisu lived for several generations. The probable origins of Mundu and Seela are unclear and are often conjured within the diverse mythical narratives among the Babukusu and the Bagisu. Some sources point out that they either came from the great crater on top of Mt Elgon or they came from the Ethiopian direction in the North (Makila, 1978; La Fontaine, 1960, Namulala, O.T). According to Were's (1967:43) dating sequence, Mundu should have lived in the 'Misri' cradle between 1517 to 1544. This is a fairly more recent period and perhaps points to the chronological limitations of oral sources. More evidence seem to suggest that Mundu could have lived between 200 and 100 B.C (Makila, 1982: 5)

According to the same oral sources, Mundu and his wife Seela had two sons, Kundu and Masaaba, the former was a herdsman while the latter was a hunter. Kundu is said to have migrated further south and eventually became the eponymous founder of the Basoga and the Baganda. It is this Kundu that is referred to as Kintu in both the Basoga and Baganda oral legends and to whom the latter two peoples claim their ancestry (Kiwānuka, 1972; Were, 1982). It is however the Masaaba ancestry that is of our immediate concern here. From the same oral sources, Masaaba begot two sons; Mubukusu (the eponymous founder of the Babukusu) and Mugisu (the eponymous founder of the Bagisu). The two are thus brothers and sons of Masaaba or Bamasaaba as is fondly expressed among the two peoples. Given the diverse mythical narratives surrounding the Misri location however, it is unlikely that the identities of the two peoples and the names Babukusu and Bagisu had emerged at this early stage as we demonstrate below. In terms of Babukusu for instance an alternative name of Banabayi is given by some sources (Simiyu, 1991). On the other hand, some Bagisu oral sources seem to suggest that Masaaba may have had more than two sons and that Mugisu was merely a nickname that Masaaba gave to Mwambu, his first son. In the latter sources, the other sons of Masaaba apart from Mwambu are Mubuuya and Wanale and their sister Nakuti (Walumoli, O.I, Khamalwa, 2000: 13).

The oral sources that yield information on the origin of the Babukusu and the Bagisu, like that of other Bantu communities in East Africa sometimes also transcend normal human experience and extent into the legendary world. However as several scholars have observed, this does not mean that they are to be dismissed off hand but rather that their evidence should be corroborated with that from other sources (Were, 1982, 192; Simiyu, 1991). In the context of the history of the Babukusu and the Bagisu, what the sources on the origin of the two peoples emphasize is that from the beginning the two had blood relations in the country identified as 'Misri'. Their kin relations were emphasized within the context of 'brotherhood' that was fondly expressed through 'Babana Bamasaaba' or sons of Masaaba. Bamasaaba then literally came to mean children of Masaba who was their great ancestor after whom the imposing mountain

was named. Beyond this, the accounts are also clear on the geographical conditions of the Misri locations. They are said to be arid and semi-arid, a factor that made the Babukusu and Bagisu to migrate after their populations grew.

It seems clear from the foregoing accounts therefore that the primary indicator of the common history of the Babukusu and the Bagisu is seen in the pointer by their oral traditions to an original 'Misri' homeland. It is perhaps only with the original ancestors, Mubukusu and Mugisu that one can therefore talk about homogeneity. Though not mentioned in the available oral sources, it can be assumed that within the 'Misri' location, some language of communication had emerged although the exact nature and type of this language is hard to tell without substantial evidence. Again, given that the sources don't mention any external contacts beyond the immediate 'Mundu' family at 'Misri', it is impossible to speculate anything on the development of divisions or cultural frontiers at this stage. From the 'Misri' cradle however the two Masaaba sons and their growing families, due to ecological factors embarked on the various migrations. They moved southwards through Sirikwa, Mbayi, Sengeli, Solokho and finally Namarare, Bugisu and Tororo. The latter three regions fall within Eastern Uganda and are in close proximity with present Mbale (Simiyu, 1991:130). The migration movements were complex, took a long time and usually involved various demographic influxes. Various sources however agree that between the 10<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup> century the ancestors of the present Babukusu and the Bagisu had settled in Eastern Uganda (Makila, 1982, Aseka, 1989: 77)

There is overwhelming evidence attesting the occupation of the ancestors of the Babukusu and the Bagisu in Eastern Uganda (Aseka, 1989; Were, 1982; Simiyu, 1982). All these scholars agree that both the Babukusu and Bagisu had interacted with a number of other Bantu and non-Bantu communities before they finally settled in Eastern Uganda. The latter communities include the Kalenjins, the Maasai, the Luo, the Baganda and Basoga among other groups. From these sources therefore, it can be *argued that apart from the common ancestry, evidence point to a common history of*

migration of the ancestors of the Babukusu and the Bagisu at least from their 'Misri' cradle land to regions of Eastern Uganda. Moreover, it is also possible to argue that given the long periods involved their numbers had not only drastically grown but also become more diversified. The latter had important implications on the social, economic and political institutions of the people. Again, given their interactions with other communities, it is impossible to talk about a homogenous group at this time. More precisely and within the context of this study one can begin to see the emergence of cultural frontiers, although at a very rudimentary stage. These cultural frontiers are reflected in the heterogeneous nature of the Babukusu and the Bagisu arising from centuries of mixing, intermarriage and cultural interaction.

The Babukusu and Bagisu occupation of Eastern Uganda seem to have reinforced their relations in a significant way. These were not only strengthened due to the two peoples response to the environment but more specifically because of their interaction with other alien groups. According to Simiyu (1991) it was especially around Butiru, Bukobelo and Bubulo hills that the two communities acquired their identities. It was also in these regions and especially around Mt Elgon that several waves of migration by the Babukusu and the Bagisu brought them into their present locations. This area is therefore central in the crystallization of the relations between the two peoples and others, and in the transformation of their respective communities. Perhaps what could be of immediate concern here is to identify the key factors responsible for these transformations.

Beginning with the issue of Bukusu and Bagisu identity, it would be important to note the points of separation between these hitherto 'kin' related groups. Available sources (Makila, 1978; Were, 1982; Simiyu, 1991, Wangwe, O.I) agree that family or clan differences and pressure on land due to population increase are the main reasons for their separation. Makila (1978: 124) particularly identifies the feasts of 'Lulwasako' (feast of splitting), in which the families related to Mugisu and Mubukusu slaughtered cattle as sign of showing off their advantageous position, as being responsible for the

separation of the two peoples. Whatever the reasons, it is clear that the two peoples due to the long periods involved had diversified and come into contact not only with other communities but indeed the environment that continued to influence their relations. More important however is that even after the apparent separation the two peoples and their different clans not only continued to express close relations in political, economic and social affairs but also lived within generally similar geographical conditions.

The role of geography in influencing the two communities' relations and specifically their economic base cannot be over-emphasized. Throughout their history of migration and eventual settlement both the Babukusu and the Bagisu lived in close proximity and within territorial bounds that allowed for the crystallization of their social, political and economic institutions. The search for the environmental conditions suitable for their mixed economy that included crop and animal husbandry were partly at the center of their migratory history. Their long sojourn in Eastern Uganda and especially at Mbayi, Namarare, Mwiala, Bukusu and Bukobelo is also associated with the conducive ecological factors prevailing in the region. The climate was cool since the area is on the slopes of Mt. Elgon. On the other hand, adequate rainfall, black volcanic soils made the area ideal for agriculture and for the provision of pasture for cattle and other domestic animals. In addition, Simiyu (1986: 9) has argued that the physical features of the mountain also protected the two peoples from enemy attacks because further up the mountain one enters a bamboo forest, while to the East and West there are steep foothills of Mt. Elgon. The region also had numerous iron ores from which the people smelted and forged tools, implements and weapons for use and exchange.

One can therefore argue that because of the good geographical location, the demand for consumption goods outside each of the two communities was limited largely because they were almost self-sufficient. However beyond these structures, there were, owing to the natural and ecological locations of each clan, food items that could not be found in particular regions. Oral sources attest to the fact that whereas most Bagisu clans produced plenty of groundnuts, peas and bananas, the Babukusu clans had plenty

eleusine, millet and animal products which they exchanged regularly (Wangwe, O.I). On the other hand, there emerged certain specialised clans in both communities dealing in metallurgy, pottery, woodwork and many other crafts whose products were exchanged regularly within and outside the two communities. In a way therefore, there emerged an economic system of complementarity that enhanced relations between the various peoples.

The good geographical conditions allowed the Babukusu and Bagisu to interact intensely since there existed no clear territorial distinctions comparable to a no man's land that was to later characterize their relations during the colonial period. The physically bounded unit allowed the various peoples, families and clans to participate in common institutions that symbolised their brotherhood. The fluid territory allowed for common and institutionalised forms of co-operation and interdependence based on their social, economic and political history. Indeed, throughout their history of migration, the fluid nature of their territorial relations was reinforced by the two communities' relative attachment to land as a major source of livelihood. Among the Babukusu and the Bagisu the rights of access and control over land were communal and flexibly invested within the clan. It is the various clans that allocated the land to members if necessary and there was no individual ownership of the physical parcel. Moreover, sections of individual allocations were left open for collective use among these related peoples. The latter include grazing fields, salt licks, forests, public watering points and streams. Scholars have observed that among both the Babukusu (Nasimiyu, 1984; Kakai, 2000) and the Bagisu (Gayer, 1957, Otim, 1993) land as a focus of social relations did not include fixtures and hence individual autonomy in land matters as happened in the colonial period was alien to pre-colonial land tenure system. Oral sources have attested to the fact that various neighbouring and usually related clans of the Babukusu and the Bagisu were free to settle anywhere within the general areas occupied by the clans from the two peoples (Wangwe, O.I).

The patterns of settlement within the general geographical locations of the two peoples were thus significant in reducing tension and conflict. It is only after population increases and incessant raids especially from the Teso that the Babukusu clans moved and settled in the present locations. Were (1972) and Simiyu (1986) note that the Babukusu and the Bagisu evolved as distinct communities during their stay in Eastern Uganda between the 16<sup>th</sup> and 17<sup>th</sup> centuries. This makes the latter region important in the historical evolution of the relations of the two peoples before their subsequent separation and settlement in the present regions of Bungoma and Mbale districts.

It is specifically argued that the two peoples began to evolve their separate identities during their stay in Eastern Uganda. Simiyu (1991) has argued that the Babukusu changed their name from Banabayi (people of Mbayi) to the present one in Eastern Uganda. That the name 'Bukusi' meaning 'price' in Lubukusu, which was originally a nickname given to Banabayi entrepreneurs, over time was accepted first among the traders and later to the entire Banabayi. Several oral sources do not agree with this interpretation and argue that the name Babukusu preceded the people's occupation in Eastern Uganda (Wangwe, O.I). Moreover, Simiyu (1991:12) does not indicate the people who gave the nickname to the Banabayi and in any case if the origin of the name is from the non-Banabayi as the scholar argues, chances are that it couldn't be 'bukusi' which in Lubukusu means 'price'. Be it as it may, it is the Babukusu that distinctly emerged as a name referring to a group of clans that claim to have descended from the original Mubukusu and which later spread to occupy several parts of Bungoma district and beyond.

In terms of the Bagisu on the other hand, the name Bagisu came to refer to a group of clans that claim to have descended from Mugisu. Oral sources among the Bagisu attest to the fact that the name Mugisu is of Maasai origin and was originally a nickname given to Masaaba's son Mwambu for his bravery (Walumoli, O.I). It is said that following his bravery in single-handedly pursuing the Maasai raiders and rescuing the community flock, the Maasai gave him a bull, known in Maasai language as Ingisu as a

token for their respect for his bravery. It was his father who gave him the nickname Mugisu in reference to Maasai Ingisu, the name by which he became known. According to the latter source North Bugisu is occupied by descendants of Mwambu or Mugisu, Central Bugisu by descendants of Wanale and southern Bugisu by descendants of Mubuuya all being sons of Masaaba (Walumoli, O.I, Were, 1977: 135; Khamalwa, 2000: 14). In this context therefore, the collective name for the people is Bamasaaba and not Bagisu although as we pointed out, it is the latter that gained prominence over the former with the onset of colonialism. Bagisu came to collectively refer to all the Bamasaaba clans while their entire territory became Bugisu.

What perhaps can be said from the contestations over the origin of the names Babukusu and Bagisu, and indeed from the differing interpretations is that given the long periods involved, forms of interactions cutting across various ethnicities shaped the manner in which their identities were formed and transformed. Also, owing to the limitations in oral sources, a clear line of descent cannot be deciphered without other sources. By the 18<sup>th</sup> century, most of the clans of the Babukusu had moved, individually to various parts of their present homeland in Bungoma (Simiyu, 1991: 135). The Bagisu on the other hand remained in their present Eastern parts of Uganda.

What perhaps needs to be pointed out is that the crystallization of the Bukusu and Bagisu identities in the now Eastern Uganda regions indicated an important phase in the evolution of a cultural frontier between the two peoples themselves and between them and the other Bantu and non Bantu communities. Although not relevant to the concerns of this study, the two peoples relations with other Bantu and non-Bantu communities has been reflected in the similarities and differences in language, cultures and other social, political and economic institutions. Both the history of the Babukusu and the Bagisu reveal a degree of contact with these communities. There is overwhelming evidence for instance to show that the communities have a lot in common with the Abaluyia (Were, 1967; Aseka, 1989), the Baganda and Basoga (Kiwauka, 1972, Were, 1977), the Kalenjin (Simiyu, 1991; Kakai, 2000; Ehret, 1998)

and indeed other communities. There is no doubt that owing to the long history of interaction, the borrowing has been multidirectional. It is however between the two communities themselves that the borrowing and influences have been strongest.

Historical evidence reveals that the frontier between them was neither fixed nor static and always contracted and expanded in response to the communities' political, economic and social needs. These needs have continued to be replenished by reference to their common history and sustained within the interlocking geographical proximity in which they are located. There emerged a bound system of common knowledge, beliefs and values that have been a foundation of the two communities' social, economic and religious institutions. As Geertz (1973: 89) puts it, historically transmitted patterns of meaning embodied in symbols, a system of inherited conceptions expressed in a peoples' knowledge about attitudes towards life are central in emphasizing a peoples shared identity. In the context of the Babukusu and the Bagisu these historical patterns are perhaps more expressed within the various clan relations and histories. The clan was a central social arena where individual roles, groups, status acquisition, corporate action, religious and political authority were carried out (Sakwa-M'sake, 1971:8). There are several clans with similar names between the Babukusu and the Bagisu demonstrating not only a process of intense interaction but also more importantly, perhaps, emphasizing the fact that the ethno-cultural line between them is very thin. This is more so if one considers the history of clan formation among the two peoples. According to Makila (1978: 68) clans and sub-clans are founded through two major ways. These are, internal disintegration of the parent clan or sub clan and through the assimilation of aliens. In a way, therefore, the members of the clans and sub-clans are related to one another directly or indirectly by way of patrilineal or matrilineal descent if not by association. The clans with similar names between the two communities include, among many others Babulo, Balako, Batiru, Bakhone (called Bakhonde in Bugisu), Bakhayaki, Bawambwa, Bamwalie, and Basiru (Simiyu, 1991, Makila, 1982; Wangwe, O.I). By cutting through the two ethnic communities these clans not only emphasize singular individual origins or common

founders, but more importantly close trans-ethnic relationships. Moreover, the similarity in clan names could also reflect the fact that the two ethnic groups were one before their separation.

The relations between the members of these clans and sub-clans cannot be defined in neat territorial terms since they operate in fluid frontier zones marked with dense networks that reinforce other social, economic and political permutations. Oral sources (Walumoli, O.I) for instance confirm that such networks between the various clans and sub-clans of the Babukusu and the Bagisu were particularly important during their long stay in Eastern Uganda and especially during times of calamity, war and peace. Few examples to support this are necessary. During the wars between the Babukusu, the Barwa (Kalenjins) and the Teso over land, pasture rights and other factors, the Bagisu clans always came in to aid the Babukusu. Two such battles at Namanjalala and Namalo ensured that the Babukusu managed to defeat the Kalenjins (Makila, 1978; Simiyu, 1991). It is also noted that because of the military aid that the Babukusu got from the Bagisu through the emissary, Mukisu Lufwalula, they were able to defeat the Teso and Kalenjin who had encroached on their territory. They particularly learnt the art of using poisoned arrows and manufacturing bows and arrows from the Batikane clan of the Bagisu (Makila, 1978: 192). Similarly, during the defeat of several Babukusu clans by the Teso in the battles at Mwiala and Ebwayi, the Babukusu took refuge in Ebusomba in Bugisu territory where Mwalie, the elder among the Bamasike clan, warmly welcomed them. All these examples only reinforce the fact that the clan and sub-clan history of the two peoples transcended narrow territorial limits and were often translated into matters of common concern to the two peoples.

Beyond the matters of military concern, dense networks cutting across various clans and sub-clans within the two communities were significant. Simiyu (1991) has noted that by about the 16-17<sup>th</sup> century the clans that had settled around Namarare had achieved full expansion both demographically and economically. One can assume that some ethnic formation within the groups was taking shape accompanied with a form of

political organisation that ensured unity within the various clans and sub-clans. Political organisation between both the Babukusu and the Bagisu was based on exogamous clans or clan groupings, which often constituted a large clan or sub-clan or families who occupied a distinct territory. There was no overriding authority that could express or implement common policy. A high degree of social and political cohesion was ensured through individual clans under distinguished elders (Bakasa). Their source of power was not usually derived from the prerogatives of office, but rather from the degree to which they were recognised by the people or represented groups. Age and experience constituted the main requisite qualifications. Various rituals and religious observances ensured the unity of the entire two peoples.

Perhaps the most important institution within the political structure was the local Council of Elders that constituted the visible apparatus of government. The role of these councils was however not really to rule but to mediate disputes and identify common concerns among various groups or individuals, different lineages or villages, competing leaders, age groups and particular economic interests. As Were (1972: 192) has argued, they were merely loosely organised states as they had territorially defined areas, had recognized leaders and established means of dealing with everyday challenges within their demographic collectivities. Two issues however need to be stressed concerning the political structure of the Babukusu and the Bagisu. The first relates to the fact that there usually emerged respected clan elders and leaders of charisma whose influence and heroic deeds cut across the two communities. The latter among other numerous leaders included Maina wa Nalukale among the Babukusu and Mwalie Omumasike among the Bagisu. The importance and influence of these leaders beyond their clans and territories has been noted by the various oral sources (Walumoli, O.I; Makila, 1978: 147). On the other hand, various clan elders could be invited in either of the communities to settle disputes and in doing this a common ground could be struck. This ensured the manner in which patterns of relations reinforced unity among the two peoples.

The economic and political realms could perhaps not be meaningful without a common cultural base between the two communities. As La Fontaine (1969: 189) has argued, the degrees of cultural and linguistic closeness as well as geographical proximity between the two peoples were symbolised by the closeness of putative genealogical links as far as the founding ancestors of the groups were concerned. The two peoples speak a similar and mutually intelligible language. Ehret (1978) who has done historical linguistic studies in the area observes that the two languages, Lubukusu and Lugisu emerged in the Mt Elgon area around the 16<sup>th</sup> century. The scholar states that these two languages though having strong Kalenjin influences seem to have emerged in the area after the disappearance of the ancient Kitoki tongue that was initially spoken in the area. This evidence is corroborated by Were (1971:103) and La Fontaine (1969:179) who point out that there is a close relationship between Lubukusu and Lugisu. Although a comparative historical study of the two languages focussing on vocabulary comparisons, grammar, phonetics among other linguistic characteristics has not been done, works done so far point to a similarity in these features. Brown (1972) in the study of the phonology of the languages in the region grouped Lubukusu and Lugisu together under Zone E group 30 because of the closeness of phonological characteristics among the languages. What perhaps needs to be emphasized is that the fact that two peoples share a similar language is historically important in showing the closeness in their relations. Language is an important vehicle of culture. It is according to Westin (1998:55) the principle provider of concepts and conceptualisations by means of which the world is experienced and understood. Language is the powerful means of interpersonal communication and serves as a forging social cement within a community of speakers.

Cultural linkages have perhaps been one of the greatest unifying features between the Babukusu and the Bagisu peoples. According to Geertz (1973:89) culture connotes an historically transmitted pattern of meaning embodied in symbols, a system of inherited conceptions expressed in symbolic forms by means of which men (and women) communicate, perpetuate and develop their knowledge about and attitudes towards life.

These are according to the author reflected in the pool of common beliefs, customs, values, meanings, constructions and ways of being. Although the whole range of cultural beliefs and activities between the two peoples cannot be attempted here, two examples from the circumcision rituals and traditional religion will suffice. Again it ought to be emphasized that these cultural activities cannot be treated in isolation but in relation to the whole gamut of social, economic and political developments in the two communities in question.

The institution of male circumcision is by far the most important cultural link between the two peoples. All available oral evidence is unanimous on the fact that circumcision is obligatory to all the males among the two peoples. Before a man is circumcised he is regarded as a child and is ridiculed and treated with contempt. It is only after one is circumcised that he becomes an adult and is exposed to the secrets of adulthood. As Were (1977:139) puts it circumcision bestows upon the individual the power, privilege and rights of belonging to the society. The history of the origin of circumcision is beyond the scope of this study. It is however worthwhile mentioning that this history is an ancient one among the two communities. According to Khamalwa (2004: 14) the origin of circumcision among the Bagisu is associated with the 'Barwa', specifically the Sebei. It is from the latter people that the Bagisu are said to have borrowed the practise. In the case of the Babukusu, evidence show that although the practice could have began during the period of migrations, it was specifically after their settlement in Eastern Uganda that it was transformed (Makila, 1978: 172; Kakai, 2000: 51). In the latter area and at Mwiala wa Mango specifically, Mango the Omukhurarwa by clan was publicly initiated after demonstrating his bravery by killing a dangerous snake which had terrorised the whole neighbourhood and even killed two of his sons. In either of the cases, the practice of circumcision grew and became not only mandatory but also a recognised and respected cultural institution.

Whatever the origins of circumcision, the centrality of the institution and the rituals surrounding it in enhancing the relations between the Babukusu and the Bagisu need to

be noted. The initiation symbolised a passage from a junior to a senior status, from one of weakness and cowardice to a higher plane of manliness, maturity and courage among the two peoples. The biannual timings of the initiation ceremonies and a sequence of activities leading to and after the initiation involved several members of both communities. Oral sources confirm that the activities surrounding initiation rituals cut across the cultural divide and people crossed freely to invite (Khulanga) related members of the family from either of the communities to participate (Walumoli, O.I). The rituals thus not only brought together members of the neighbourhood but usually included far-flung related peoples. The circumcisers from either of the groups were usually invited to conduct operations on the initiates in the various regions and a strong degree of inter-dependence existed. More important however is that the two peoples shared an age-set nomenclature that reinforces each of the members' interactions. The nomenclature, in the order of seniority includes Kolongolo, Kikwameti, Kananachi, Kinyikeu, Nyange, Maina, Chuma, Sawa (Simiyu, 1991: 135). Members of each age-set (bakoki) generally enjoyed comradeship relations which were accompanied with behavioural rules, rights and reciprocal privileges that went beyond individual clans and groups. Persons who belonged to one age-set enjoyed a greater degree of intimacy between them and they favoured each other in the customary distribution of the 'Lubaka' meat (Makila, 1982: 123).

Associated with the various rituals surrounding circumcision are the two communities' belief and worship practices. A constant feature of these common religious beliefs is the attribution for a single ancestor to both the Babukusu and Bagisu clans. The cultural link between the two peoples is manifested in reference to Masaba, the local name for Mt Elgon and the most revered place not only as a dwelling place for God but also in whose direction people faced while praying. Apart from Mt Elgon, common historic shrines existed where the peoples from the two communities visited for prayer purposes. The later sites included Mwiala wa Mango, Mwibale lia Namasanda, River Malaba, Sikulu sya Buyemba and Bubuya (Makila, 1978:152). Except for Mwibale lia Namasanda that is located in the interior of Bukusuland, the other sites are relatively at

the border of the two peoples perhaps suggesting the importance of accessibility and inter-dependence. A major element in this belief system is a strictly observed body of taboos. The Babukusu and the Bagisu oral, political, legal and social values were principally guarded by taboos, a violation of which was generally believed to cause harm to the offender. Added to this, there was a tendency of ancestor veneration since ancestor power was perceived to keep evil forces away and whose anger was accountable for misfortunes (Wafula, 1997: 30). The taboos apart from maintaining societal standards fostered the unity among the various peoples by maintaining cohesion and viability in the society.

In a nutshell, the various social, economic and political structures and practices were central in fostering the pre-colonial relations between the Babukusu and the Bagisu peoples. Such relations not only ensured the cohesiveness and viability of the two communities but also sustained a high level of inter-dependence. What needs to be emphasized however is that these relations can, in many respects, be locally defined, meaning that they did not always involve entire groups. Though the two peoples were brought together by some cultural foci, such as the bi-annual circumcision ceremonies or mount an offensive against a common enemy, there are other significant permutations that hardly involved or affected all the members. Various clans, families or individuals between the two communities continued to manage their daily concerns inter-dependently. In this case, each clan through its political institutions could chart a common course for its members. It is the different clans that determined how the different members co-operated, intermingled and sometimes clashed.

This foregoing state of affairs characterised the history of the two communities not only during their stay in Eastern Uganda but even after their final separation. From the 17<sup>th</sup> to 18<sup>th</sup> centuries, the separation process between the Babukusu and the Bagisu was almost complete with the former peoples crossing river Lwakhakha into their present locations of Bungoma district. While several Bukusu clans took the southerly direction others simply came directly into Bungoma district after crossing river Lwakhakha

(Simiyu, 1986: 11). There seem to be an agreement among scholars that the final movement of the Babukusu to Bungoma, Mt. Elgon and parts of Trans Nzoia was precipitated by their encounter with non Bantu neighbours and mainly the Teso (Were, 1967; Nasimiyu, 1979/80; Wesonga, 1985). The hostility between the Babukusu and the Teso resulted mainly from quarrels over land and cattle raids. Between 1840 and 1850 the Teso are said to have attacked and dislodged Babukusu from areas around Tororo, Malaba, Amukura, Mwalie and Malakisi (Wesonga, 1985:11). Consequently the majority of the Babukusu moved eastwards into present Bungoma district. It is this eastward movement that brought them into contact with the Kalenjin and the Tachoni (Kakai, 2000) and indeed other ethnic communities.

The Teso wars other than facilitating the separation of the Babukusu and the Bagisu are also significant in several respects. First they contributed to the consolidation of the Bukusu society, especially in the emergence of their ethnic identity. Secondly, they brought the Babukusu into contact with other communities. This contact would later influence the evolution of their community. This can be elaborated on briefly. It is because of these wars that the Babukusu were to re-organize themselves militarily under Mukite wa Nameme and eventually defeat the Teso (Nasimiyu, 1979/80: 10; Makila, 1978: 184). This re-organisation went beyond the military to involve other social, economic and political realms. On the other hand their contact with other communities was varied. Their encounter with the Tachoni was mutual following Kitimule Wetoyi adventure mission at Mwalie that revealed the closeness of their identities (Kakai, 2000, 53). On the other hand, while several Babukusu clans interacted peacefully with the Sabaot (a section of the Kalenjin), it is noted that sections of the Sabaot harassed and killed some Babukusu who crossed through Cheptais area into Bugisu and back (KNA/DC/EN/3/2/4). The latter conflict is particularly noted to have degenerated into the 'War of Chonge' that resulted in numerous deaths (Kakai, 2000).

Be it as it may, by the 18<sup>th</sup> century the ancestors of the Babukusu were already settled in their present homeland of Bungoma district. It is here that their relations with the Bagisu have continued to be enhanced through the processes of interaction, intermarriage and assimilation (Were, 1982: 193). It is in Bungoma and Mbale that their institutions, their economies and ethnic identities have continued to be consolidated. Their history of interaction has continued to be shaped not only by their geographical locations but more importantly by their contact with their neighbours, the Arab–Swahili traders and eventually the British colonialists.

### **3.6 Summary**

The purpose of this chapter was to raise a number of issues related to the integration process among the Babukusu and the Bagisu peoples before the onset of colonialism. This process as we pointed out was characterised by the complexity within which the various Bantu and non-Bantu communities were evolving in the general Western Kenya and Eastern Ugandan region. An examination of the available literature, however reveals a lacuna in the perception of historical dynamics that are trans-boundary in nature. These dynamics, in the case of the Babukusu and the Bagisu are projected in their common history of origin, migration and settlement. When the British colonial administrators arrived in the general area occupied by the two peoples, in the 19<sup>th</sup> century, an elaborate system of relations between the two peoples was fully evolved. Although it is difficult to predict how these pre-colonial relations and contacts would have been had they not been interrupted and then halted by the colonialists, there were possibilities for the emergence of an even larger system of cultural interdependence. Colonialism came to the Babukusu and the Bagisu at a time when each of the communities were consolidating their identities and when the relations between the peoples and others were assuming significant proportions. The pre-colonial contacts and linkages that were permitted by geography and encouraged by strong historical bonds between the two peoples influenced the nature and evolution of their respective societies. They also charted the direction within which the two communities related with others within their universe. There was always what has been categorised as the

common fund of experiences (Kizerbo, 1981) that usually expressed formal interdependence and complementarity within the various social, economic and political institutions between the two peoples. With the coming of colonial rule however, a boundary was drawn between these hitherto historically related peoples. With this also came the reorganisation of their societies to meet colonial demands. An administrative structure that was alien was implanted on the people whose key function was to regulate and transform the pre-colonial activities in line with the requirements of the British colonial administration. The next chapter specifically examines these colonial transformations in the light of the border institutions and policies.

## CHAPTER FOUR

### COLONIALISM, THE BORDER AND THE BABUKUSU-BAGISU RELATIONS TO 1945

#### 4.0 Introduction

By 1894 when the British declared a protectorate over Uganda, which at the time included parts of present Eastern Uganda and Western Kenya, a systematic process of colonial rule was put in place. A gradual but consistent transformation of the pre-colonial social, economic and political structures of the various African peoples was instituted. This chapter examines colonialism and its impact on the trans-border interactions between the Babukusu and the Bagisu people to 1945. Contextualizing the evolution of the border within the pre-1894 African and European political and economic activities, the chapter highlights the colonial social, economic and political dynamics that shaped the interaction between the two border communities. It argues that the major preoccupation of the colonial state was to initiate structures and institutions that would guarantee its hegemony, security, autonomy, legitimation of power and the exaction of revenue from the colony. All these processes not only interfered with, but also, generally, transformed the dynamic historical process of community interactions that had hitherto existed in the region.

Specifically, the chapter argues that the arbitrary character of the international border continued to be fostered through the colonial administrative divide and rule policy that was reinforced through African alien agents. Its management hardly paid attention to the borderland realities and community interactions than to the process of colonial consolidation. The chapter, also, pays specific attention to the transformation of relations over land and the socio-cultural sphere and highlights the new ways in which the peoples from the two communities exploited the contradictions within the colonial system to convert the border into a porous entity by cultivating broad based cultural loyalties to 1945.

#### 4.1 From Pre-colonial to Colonial: The Kenya-Uganda Border in Context

The Kenya-Uganda border<sup>1</sup>, like that of most other African countries is a product of several activities whose history extent beyond the actual British declaration of 'protectorate' status over those territories. These activities include those of the specific African communities living within those territories and later those of the European powers whose political and economic rivalry culminated into the 1884-1885 Berlin conference. Yet, in the conceptualisation of borders in Africa specifically, little attention is paid to the dynamics involving African communities within the pre-colonial setting. The latter is often justified on the premise that Africans in the pre-colonial period did not have their own traditions of mapping (Nugent, 1996: 36). On the other hand, a distinction is usually made between frontiers and boundaries and argued that in the pre-colonial period there were no boundaries but frontiers. Be it as it may, these two positions do not imply that Africans lacked a conception of territoriality, but rather that political space was mapped mentally rather than cartographically. As already indicated in the previous chapter, both the Babukusu and the Bagisu had a variety of political forms that were underpinned by different systems of production and expropriation of surplus. Since boundaries are always about the regulation of people and goods, one would obviously expect a corresponding variation in the way in which boundaries were constructed and maintained (Kopytoff, 1987).

It is useful to take cognisance of pre-colonial African conceptions of boundaries in order to appreciate the nature of their evolution during the colonial period. The debate on the existence and nature of boundaries in pre-colonial Africa before the Berlin conference has attracted diverse perspectives from several authors (Kopytoff, 1987; Mbembe, 1999). The most compelling argument from previous studies is that before colonialism the attachment to territory and to land in Africa was entirely relative. In several cases, the political entities were not delimited by boundaries in the classical sense of the term, but rather by frontiers that had an imbrication of multiple spaces constantly joined, disjoined and recombined through wars, conquests and mobility of goods and persons (Mbembe, 1999:5). As demonstrated in the previous chapter, the

---

<sup>1</sup> See Appendix 4 for the Map showing the Kenya-Uganda border

history of the relations between the Babukusu and the Bagisu in the pre-colonial period reveals that there was a fluid boundary zone through which various social, economic and political interactions were transacted between the two groups.

The manner in which relations between the two peoples and others were conducted underscored the evolution of the boundary between them. Adejuyigbe (1988) has outlined the manner in which pre-colonial African frontiers evolved and transformed into boundaries. According to this author, there were seven stages involved:

The expansion stage when communities step out of their homesteads; the contact stage when expansion confronts natural or human hindrances; stabilization stage when communities begin to consolidate territories that have been effectively occupied; allocation stage when communities begin to concede boundary or territorial limitations; delimitation stage which is the consultation period between communities about boundary lines; demarcation stage when the boundary line is finally and formally accepted and; patrol stage when vigilance is mounted in boundary zones to ensure respect and compliance with boundary demarcation (Adejuyigbe, 1988: 27-36).

Although it is difficult to envisage a scenario where all African pre-colonial frontiers could systematically go through all the stages outlined, the point being emphasized is that Africans before the colonial partition had their own conceptions of boundaries that were very much different from those introduced by the Europeans following the conquest and partition of the continent. These boundaries, depending on the varied inter-community relations were at different stages of evolution and transformation when the Europeans arrived in the respective regions. The point that needs to be emphasized, however, is that as bonds and separators, these boundaries shared the characteristic of being artificial in nature (Asiwaju, 1985). This artificial nature was dependent on the fact that man within the geographical and historical milieu defined their existence and maintenance.

It is clear that pre-colonial African representations of space were not limited to political and economic issues. Landscape references were utilized to express ideas about identity, migration histories, mythology, and relationships with spiritual forces.

Boundaries were definitely created for internal use rather than communication with outsiders. As far as the transformation of the pre-colonial conceptions of the boundary is concerned, this process began long before the Berlin conference. By the time the Berlin conference was held and formal colonialism established, the early Europeans in the region had begun introducing their own conceptions of space that in various significant ways contradicted that of the Africans. These European conceptions of the boundary derived from Europe's own peculiar history that revolved around the development of capitalism, the growth of national identity and its realization in the nation-state (Nugent, 1996: 38).

Perhaps, the major turning point in European history in regard to boundaries, their conceptualisation and how this was bequeathed to other parts of the world relates to the 1648 Westphalia treaty that was concluded after the so-called thirty years of war. In this peace agreement, the major Western European powers of the time decided to actualize the relatively new idea of sovereign states whose boundaries were clearly marked in relation to geographical domains of existing nationalities in Europe. The great significance of the Peace of Westphalia is that it ushered in a relatively more stable sovereign state framework where each nation state was recognized as having equal legal standing. Thus, by the time the Berlin conference was called, the nation state framework was an accepted entity in Europe and the centrality of boundaries within this framework formed an important component in the transformation and activities of the various European nationalities operating in various parts of the world, including east Africa.

In Kenya and Uganda specifically, this transformation mainly started with the activities of the early Europeans who came to the region. Chief among these activities revolve around the economic and political rivalry that involved the major European colonial powers and whose resolution was sought through the 1884-1885 Berlin Conference. By the time the Conference was convened, the major European powers including Britain, France, Germany, Italy and Portugal were on the verge of conflict over access and trading rights in several African territories. The most immediate concern was with the Congo and Niger rivers which most of the European powers wanted to be neutral and open for trade. The activities of Belgium's King Leopold II had made the neutrality objective impossible since he had turned part of the Congo

basin into a personal kingdom (Muller and de Blij, 1997). This, therefore, required the intervention of all the colonial powers through the Berlin conference.

European activities were responsible for the actual demarcation of African boundaries prior to the Berlin Conference. At the time of the conference, eighty percent of Africa remained under traditional and local control. What ultimately resulted from this conference was a hodgepodge of geometric boundaries that divided Africa into about fifty irregular countries. According to Katzenellenbogen (1996: 21), before the Berlin Conference, European powers had been grabbing pieces of Africa for many years and many boundaries had already been set. To this author therefore, the most that one can legitimately say about the Berlin Conference and colonial boundaries is that it marked a significant stage in a process which had begun earlier and continued long after, using its provisions when convenient. Yet, as apt as this argument may be, it ignores the centrality of the Berlin Conference in initiating the process of placing African boundaries within internationally recognisable mechanisms of control. Secondly, this argument, by singularly emphasizing on pre-Berlin European activities in Africa ignores African pre-colonial initiatives that also informed the creation and transformation of African boundaries.

In the context of African colonial border history, the Berlin conference occupies a central place in as much as it represents the European superimposition of their domains on the African continent. By distributing sovereignty to the several powers that had been engaged in the division of the continent, the conference succeeded in demarcating the territorial limits for the operation of each colonial power. It is these same territorial limits that later acquired international recognition and became spatial markers between African states. It is true therefore that the concept of territorially defined statehood is a European import that contrasted with the relative survival of local traditions of political authority and social interaction. During the three months period that the Berlin conference was on, the colonial powers haggled over geometric boundaries in the interior of the continent, disregarding the cultural and linguistic boundaries already established by the indigenous African populations (Muller and de Blij, 1997: 340).

Important as the Berlin conference was to the partition of Africa, however, it was not made manifest to the African peoples until the European powers began the process of conquest. In the context of the Kenyan and Ugandan interior communities of the Babukusu and the Bagisu, this came after the declaration of a protectorate over Uganda in 1894. Thus, although 1884 is meaningful in terms of the analytical nation-state structural perspective, 1894 is much more meaningful in terms of community relations within the East African context. By the time the Berlin conference was being convened, the now Western Kenyan and Eastern Ugandan areas were ethnically complex regions characterised by intense inter-community relations (Ogot, 2002). People of different ethnic groups interacted through trade, intermarriages and other cultural activities. However, these realities of inter-communal relations never mattered at all during the Berlin conference. What is clear is that, despite its significance for the subsequent history of Africa, the Berlin conference was essentially a European affair. There was no African representation though the African continent and the administration of its people was the main agenda of discussion. Again, African concerns were, if they mattered at all, completely marginal to the basic economic, strategic and political interests of the negotiating European powers (Asiwaju, 1985).

The fact that Africans themselves did not define the colonial boundaries is important in examining their evolution and characteristics. The foreignness of the boundaries emanated from the fact that they not only contradicted pre-colonial forms of contact and interpenetrations but also because the borders were externally defined and engineered. In the context of the evolution of the border between the Babukusu and the Bagisu people, it is necessary to examine the external dynamics, reflected in the politics surrounding the Berlin conference, as well as pay attention to the transformations that were taking place within the region generally. This is in recognition of the fact that territory as broadly defined includes not only the spatial expression of collective consciousness but also a surface limited by fixed boundaries (Ben Arrous, 2000; Mbembe, 1999). Apart from the events of the Berlin conference that led to the configuration of the Kenya-Uganda border and also to the intensification of European activities in the region, developments in the general area are significant in explaining the evolution of border community relations. The latter include the processes of social, economic and political restructuring of the peoples'

history through the activities of the early Europeans, Arab-Swahili traders and indeed other African communities including the Baganda and the Wanga. The dynamics arising from the latter activities had long developed in the region before the historical moment of the Berlin conference<sup>2</sup>. Our main concern in this section is to analyse how the initial European presence and policy on partition impacted on the history of community relations in the region.

#### 4.2 The Early European Power Politics and the Border to 1902

Before the early 1880s, Uganda and generally most of the areas in the interior of East Africa had remained unknown territory in so far as the outside world was concerned. The people who seem to have opened up contacts in the interior before this time were the Arab and Swahili slave and ivory traders. However, as Ingham (1962: 115) argues, the latter traders had no desire to attract commercial rivalry or the attention of anti-slavery humanitarians by communicating their knowledge to others. Apart from the Arab and Swahili traders, the activities of Khedive Ismail of Egypt who in response to anti-slavery opinion in Europe undertook to occupy and administer the southern Sudan and the adjoining areas of Uganda were important. However, as scholars have noted the Egyptian administration, which in several places attracted a number of Europeans, never in fact became a reality outside a relatively small area in northwest Uganda (Oliver, 1952; Twaddle, 1993). Only socio-culturally is the Egyptian influence credited for contributing to the development of a substantial Islamic community in areas of present Eastern Uganda, especially Busoga and to a lesser extent Bugisu.

The foregoing scenario, however, drastically changed as European geographers, missionaries and explorers gathered more knowledge from Buganda and the adjoining regions, including the specific areas occupied by the Babukusu and the Bagisu. The latter Europeans included the arrival in Buganda of John Speke in 1862, William Grant and Henry Morton Stanley in 1863 and again in 1865. Especially with Speke's discovery of the source of river Nile, there was concerted European interest to establish contact with the Buganda Kingdom. The Buganda state, then under Kabaka

---

<sup>2</sup> For an elaborate history of these activities see Ogot (1967), Were (1967) and Aseka (1989)

Mutesa, was fast becoming an important political centre of gravity for the whole region around lake Victoria by the 1880s. Mutesa who had felt threatened by the spread of Egyptian Imperialism and the old rivalry from the Kingdom of Bunyoro warmly invited the Europeans hoping to secure their help to defend his Kingdom (Ingham, 1962; Twaddle, 1993). Numerous European reports at this time pointed out that Mutesa and his people, the Baganda had not only shown friendship towards Europeans but had also demonstrated an apparent enthusiasm for the explorers' proposals that missionaries be invited to Buganda (Hansen, 1984:12). It is therefore mainly upon Buganda and partly other centralised Kingdoms like Bunyoro and Wanga that European missionary, commercial and imperial interests were centred in the initial period. The Babukusu and the Bagisu seem to have maintained their autonomous social, economic and political structures and relations at this early period (Were, 1967; Makila, 1982; Khamalwa 2004).

The central position of Buganda was particularly demonstrated during the period of the scramble and partition of the continent. Precisely, the main European economic politics in the region at the time and which now encompass the three East African territories of Kenya, Uganda and Tanzania revolved around Zanzibar at the coast and Uganda. The latter is particularly important because it was to later emerge as the hub from where European rivalry revolved. As a source of the river Nile and given its strategic centrality within the European scramble for Africa, it was believed that whoever controlled Uganda would also gain supremacy over the Nile valley and the lands bordering it (Hobley, 1970: 69). The Nile politics generated bitter political and economic rivalry between the major super powers in the region including the British, the French, the Belgians and the Germans. Apart from the latter powers, the activities of the Arab and Swahili caravans that penetrated into the interior from the coast proved to be a veritable economic force in the region. All these groups, apart from the Nile issue were primarily interested in the trade prospects and especially in the export of ivory, the extension of their markets as well as their range of allies (Dealing, 1974; Aseka, 1989).

The early Europeans to arrive in present Western Kenya and Eastern Uganda were mainly traders, travellers and missionaries. Their contacts date back to 1883 when the Scottish explorer and adventurer Joseph Thomson and his companion, J. Martin came

to Mumias (Were, 1967:156). Mumias, the epicentre of the Wanga Kingdom acted as a calling station for the Europeans and Arab-Swahili traders as they travelled between the East African coast to Uganda in the interior on their different ventures. From Mumias, Thomson and Martin passed through Bukusuland and the adjacent Bugisuland in the company of Arab-Swahili caravan traders already known in the area on their way to Uganda (Mungeam, 1966:2). In 1885, Bishop Huntington following the same route passed through Bukusuland and Bugisuland on his way to Buganda. However, Huntington did not make it to his destination as he was killed in Busoga at the command of Kabaka Mwanga (Were, 1967:157; Aseka, 1989: 181). Unlike his predecessors, Thomson and Martin, Bishop Huntington was accompanied by Mumia's spearmen who had volunteered to escort him (Murunga, 1998:181). Other Europeans who passed through the land of the Babukusu and the Bagisu after stopping over in Mumias included Teleki and Hohnel in 1887. By this time, a regular route to Uganda had gradually been established (Mungeam, 1966:2).

Strictly, it was mainly because of the foregoing activities and specifically the caravan route to Buganda that both the Babukusu and the Bagisu came into constant contact with the early Europeans. This contact was to necessitate, in the mid 1890s the establishment of a firm political structure in the region and later the demarcation of their respective areas for easy administration as will be demonstrated below. Apart from the caravan route, the religious dimension of the scramble also played a significant role in influencing political developments not only among the Babukusu and the Bagisu but generally in the entire East African interior. Particularly for the missionaries, the persecutions by Kabaka Mwanga and the bitter religious rivalry between Protestants, Catholics and Muslims elicited numerous appeals to the British government to make strong representations in Uganda but this was not initially forthcoming (Hansen, 1984). The process of establishing an administration however came towards the end of 1889. During this period, there was the arrival in the region of two representatives of the Imperial British East Africa Company (IBEAC), Fredrick Jackson and Ernest Gedge (Dealing, 1974). IBEAC, a private company had been given a royal charter on September 3, 1888 and empowered to administer those parts of the British empire where it could acquire treaties of protection, approved by the Secretary of State (Ingham, 1962:141; Aseka, 1989). In the context of present Western Kenya and Eastern Uganda in particular, the company was interested in

developing trade, mapping out a serviceable route to Uganda and obtain as much ivory as possible in order to defray expenses (Dealing, 1974:301).

In order to accomplish its task therefore, the IBEAC through its representatives had to conclude treaties with local leaders to make the entire region not only safe for European interests, but more precisely for it to become part of the 'British Sphere of Influence'. But the latter task was not to be an easy one as earlier anticipated given the German presence and interest in the same area. Indeed in January 1890, Carl Peters, the founder of the German East Africa Company also arrived in Mumias and later Buganda and concluded treaties with the local leaders. In practical terms therefore, the battle for the control of the region begun in earnest pitting the British against the Germans. In the context of the scramble for territory, the region temporarily came under a 'dual sphere of influence' pitting the latter two Great powers. This put the powers under direct confrontation for the control of the region. It was, however, not until July 1, 1890, with the signing of the Heligoland treaty that the British influence and self assurance was enhanced in the area. Under the terms of this treaty that was signed in Europe, the territory known as Uganda and which today includes the area occupied by the Babukusu and the Bagisu became part of the British sphere of influence and in return the island of Heligoland in the North sea was ceded to Germany by Britain. Also important within the East African region was the fact that the British had to recognize and respect the German sphere of influence in Tanganyika while the Sultan of Zanzibar's sphere was to be confined to a coastal strip, ten miles in width.

It was within the framework of these treaty agreements, therefore, that the British and Germany areas of jurisdiction in East Africa became basically demarcated. It is however important to point out that these were merely spheres of influence with little colonial penetration. What is clear is that spheres of influence within the context of East Africa were a kind of transitional phase; a kind of amorphous prelude to colonial crystallization. As Mc Ewen (1971) has argued, the treaty creating the sphere of influence contained provisions for the establishment of definite boundaries. Thus, the Anglo-German agreement of 1890 above all specifically indicated the initial phases in the colonial establishment of boundaries within East Africa generally and between the present region of Kenya and Uganda specifically.

It is important, however, to emphasize the relevance of the Anglo-German treaty within the Berlin Act in order to appreciate its centrality in the evolution of the Kenya-Uganda boundary. Among other things, the treaty achieved the main objective of the Berlin Act of establishing the British sphere of influence in the region hence making a clear criterion for international recognition of her territorial claims. Once this was settled, the principle of effective occupation had to follow since 'Great Britain considered that it now had been admitted in principle by all parties to the Act of Berlin that a claim of sovereignty in Africa can only be maintained by real occupation of the territorial claim' (Katzenellenbogen, 1996: 23). It is no wonder therefore that the foregoing agreements had to be significantly followed by not only a firm British colonial authority and presence but also by clear efforts towards demarcation in the region.

Between 1894 and 1902, the process of demarcating boundaries for political action in present western Kenya and eastern Uganda and between the Babukusu and the Bagisu peoples specifically was clearly underway. It was within this framework that the economic dynamics informing the emergence of the Kenya-Uganda border were consummated. From the initial colonial demands of securing the caravan passage to Buganda, the economic demands evolved to include labour and taxation demands from the local populations. While labour was initially required for the construction of the railway, taxation was generally meant to meet administrative costs. The railway from the coast to Lake Victoria was particularly emerging as a vital link and alternative to the caravan route. Indeed as some scholars have pointed out, the politics around the management of the railway were central to the demarcation of the region. According to Ingham (1962: 43) and Maxon (2002: 100), although the actual demarcations of the Kenya-Uganda border including the colonial decision to join Uganda's eastern province to East African protectorate was based on numerous considerations, the main reason was the advantage of having the railway from the coast to Lake Victoria Nyanza under a single administration.

Although the foregoing railway thesis seem true to particular areas, especially those that were close to the Coast-Uganda railway, it does not adequately account for the general demarcations of the border in other areas including some that are occupied by

the Babukusu and the Bagisu. Western Kenya and Eastern Uganda just like the entire present Kenya and Uganda were in any case already under one colonial administration. Moreover, as we shall see below some efforts to demarcate the Kenya-Uganda border preceded and even went on long before and after the completion of the railway in certain points. It is therefore more accurate to argue that the demarcation of the Kenya-Uganda border just like the treaty arrangements before was part of the major colonial political and economic transformation of the African lives in which the railway was but an important component.

Looked at from a purely economic angle, the railway argument and the British decision to demarcate the Kenya-Uganda border contradicted the interdependence between the two regions. From the outset, the British colonial government through the IBEAC supported the move for an East African federation for economic advantages (Ingham, 1962: 207; Okoth, 2000). According to the economic argument, the Uganda protectorate appeared to have by far the greater economic potential while Kenya and particularly Mombasa would inevitably continue to be an outlet for Uganda's produce. In effect therefore, the two territories would form an economic unit that could most suitably be administered and serviced jointly by the Mombasa-Uganda railway. Within this context therefore, the demarcation of the border would appear meaningless not only because of the existence of a single colonial power but more importantly because of the integrative role facilitated by the railway link

Although the foregoing economic imperatives appeared realistic, it is clear that the actual demarcation and the joining of Uganda's Eastern province to EAP mainly relied on the colonial governance needs. The British political needs for initiating a divide and rule policy worked counter to the initial economic federation concerns. From the political point of view, the demarcation and the border specifically was meant to mark the spatial and administrative limit that separated the British colonial possessions in both Uganda and the East African Protectorate. It is no wonder therefore that the early administrators who fronted for the purely economic arguments for the integration of the two territories were easily overruled. The unsuccessful proposal by Harry Johnston and other early administrators for an East African federation resulted in the transfer on April 1 1902 of the Eastern province of Uganda to the EAP. The latter was to become the colony and protectorate of Kenya in 1920. This transfer did not define the precise

boundary and line between the two regions, a task that was mandated to a two-man commission that reported in July 1902 (Mc Ewen, 1971:249).

What perhaps seems clear is that although 1902 represents a major milestone in the evolution of the Kenya-Uganda border, there is much that is accurate on the fact that the border was primarily an outcome of the pre-1902 European power politics in which Britain emerged as the main player. This observation is important in examining whether the border demarcation paid attention to the pre-existing community relations among the relevant African peoples. As Herbst (2000) has argued, the extent of border arbitrariness depended on whether both sides of the border were under one colonial power or not. Britain was in the context of the post-scramble politics the only colonial power in charge of the affairs of the entire region that is now Kenya and Uganda. Unlike other international borders in the East African region therefore, the Kenya-Uganda one was perhaps the only one demarcated without the involvement of any other European power.

Yet within the respective areas occupied by the Babukusu and the Bagisu, there emerged a process where the two border peoples' concerns were marginal to the basic political and economic concerns of the British administration. As far as more structured polities in the European sense of the Westphalia agreement-defined nation-states were concerned, the Babukusu and Bagisu were meaningless compared to the Baganda and the Wanga. The border within their context mattered in respect to their subject status under the latter communities. Moreover, since the new border was to be followed by actual occupation over land and control, the colonial ignorance continued to be exhibited in the delineation of the boundary. This ignorance by the colonial administrators of the actual areas concerned, as several scholars have observed, was a characteristic feature defining the artificiality of most African boundaries. Louis Roger (1963: XV cited in Okoth 2000: 282) has specifically observed that

In ignorance of the geography of the region, the diplomats took their boundaries geometrically from heavens. The result was 'astronomical' boundaries, a convenient means of postponing decisions of how a region should be 'correctly' partitioned.

In the context of the Kenya-Uganda border, this ignorance among the colonial administrators in part explains the continued alteration of the border and the uncertainty that surrounded its precise limits. As far back as 1890, a commission was set up to fix pillars and some initial demarcations were made. However, as Kabwegyere (1974) has argued, these pillars were often changed as new knowledge was gained. According to this scholar, the decisions on the border were made without taking consideration of the geographical terrain or caring about the people affected. The only concession given to the local people in the area affected by the boundary was that they were permitted 'to remove their residential and all their property' to the territory of their choice 'within one year from the day on which this agreement is signed' (Kabwegyere, 1974:66). In this context, the boundary could not be adjusted to fit the pattern of settlement, rather it was the people that were to adapt to the dictates of the border policy.

From the initial demarcations of 1890 and the further ones by a two-man commission of 1901, the Kenya-Uganda border was altered again in 1910 and in 1926 (Bernet, 1959:71; Ogot 2000:19). As Mc Ewen (1971: 280) has pointed out, the demarcation proceeded on a three-schedule plan that spans varying periods. The first involved the boundary from 1° south latitude, through Lake Victoria to the mouth of Sio river. Secondly, was the boundary from the mouth of Sio River to the summit of Mt Elgon. Thirdly and finally was the boundary from the summit of Mt Elgon to Mt Zulia on the boundary of Sudan<sup>3</sup>. According to this scholar although, the demarcation for the first and second schedules seem to have been completed by the order of the council in 1926, the third schedule was problematic since further demarcations were made in 1932 and 1961 (Mc Ewen, 1971:255).

It is significant to note that no mention of communities is made during the three-schedule demarcation of the Kenya-Uganda border. Although this goes a long way in demonstrating the fact that the border was created without the knowledge of, or in the interest of the local populations, it also highlights its contradiction with the African conception of the boundary (Davidson, 1992; Asiwaju, 1995). Whereas pre-colonial polities may have used mountains or rivers to demarcate their respective sovereignties,

---

<sup>3</sup> See these specific details on the map in Appendix 4.

the blunt instrument of arcs and meridians had no indigenous application. Yet, even by adopting these western instruments, there were still glaring imprecisions. The case of the exact location of the border that straddles between the Babukusu and the Bagisu perhaps emphasizes better the imprecise nature of colonial policy. Although Lwakhakha river (sometimes referred to as Malaba) and Mount Elgon acted as ideal landmarks, there was admission by the colonial administrators themselves including Sir Charles Elliot and Fredrick J. Jackson about their not knowing exactly where Mt. Elgon should lie. According to Okoth (2000:283), the latter colonial administrators mistakenly considered all border nationalities as 'akin to the Baganda' except the Kavirondo (Luhyia) and this was used to justify why the border placed most of them (Kavirondo) on the Kenya side. The border beyond Mt Elgon (North Eastern Uganda) on the other hand was taken to be just a matter of purely 'academic interest' (Bernet, 1959:71).

For the greater part of the British colonial administration among the Babukusu and the Bagisu, the border played a significant role in the evolution of the policy of effective control. Guided by indirect rule, the colonial administrative policy ensured that the two communities became subject to a number of forces working towards change within the different territorial locations they had been consigned. The indirect rule policy, which was based on the assumption that locally developed African institutions were best suited for government under British control, upheld the centrality of fragmentation in African social formations. The demarcation of the border therefore was in line with the British politics of division. The policy ensured that the former fluid zone of interaction between the two peoples become subject to the compelling strictures that became the embodiment of the international border. Seen as an area of national and cultural interfaces however, the political, social and economic interpenetrations continued to influence the nature of colonial policy on each side of the boundary.

#### **4.3 Early Colonial Administration, the Border and Bukusu-Bagisu Relations to 1920**

By 1902 when the geopolitical space of present Kenya and Uganda received a major change through the demarcation of the border, the process of transforming the Babukusu and the Bagisu social, economic and political lives was already underway. The latter process, which initially had been a function of British economic interests in

Buganda, had evolved to necessitate the direct colonial administration over the regions occupied by the two peoples. The administration was necessary as Aseka (1989) argues in order to restructure local production to meet metropolitan demands as well as act as a local factor of cohesion over heterogeneous, fragmented and contradictory forces jostling within it. Through the collaboration of African allies and the use of the instruments of violence at their disposal, the colonial state functioned as a conquest state and successfully invested in force in its dealings with the local communities (Lonsdale in Ochieng, 1989)

In terms of the specific areas occupied by the Babukusu and the Bagisu, the colonial economic and political dynamics informing the establishment of colonial rule followed the formal declaration of a protectorate over Buganda in 1894. Following this formal declaration were a series of punitive expeditions mounted against the two communities by the colonial government supported by African collaborators. The 1895 Lumboka-Chetambe war among the Babukusu and the 1898 and 1900 expeditions against the Bagisu represented a major phase in the colonial transformation of the peoples' pre-colonial structures and relations.<sup>4</sup> These punitive expeditions, together with transforming African lives were according to Karugire (1980: 104) meant to 'bring the unruly tribes under some kind of settled government and also dissuade them to be well disposed towards European presence'. Thus, the 'pacification' period marked the first step in the British appropriation of political authority over the Babukusu and the Bagisu peoples.

But if the pacifications marked the beginning of the colonial transformation of the Bukusu and Bagisu lives, their aftermath, characterised by a series of peace treaties, became central in the appropriation of British colonial authority over the two peoples through the Baganda and Wanga agents. In terms of the Babukusu, the 1895 treaty arrangements in Mumias between Hobley, Nabongo Mumia and Babukusu elders exemplified both their new status under the British and their subservient position under the Wanga (Makila, 1982). In terms of the Bagisu on the other hand, the Buganda agreement of 1900 was particularly important in emphasising their new

---

<sup>4</sup> For a clear history of the Lumboka-chetambe war and other punitive expeditions among the Babukusu and the Bagisu, including their impact on the peoples' social, economic lives see Makila (1982), Wafula (2000) and Twaddle (1993).

position under the Baganda. It was specifically through the efforts of the Wanga and the Baganda that a divisive boundary line was reinforced between the hitherto closely related peoples. The Buganda agreement deserves special attention not because it was initiated from the centre where British power revolved but because its clauses affected the entire protectorate and affected the border dynamics between Kenya and Uganda generally and the Babukusu and the Bagisu specifically throughout the colonial period.

The 1900 Buganda agreement was signed between Sir Harry Johnston and the Buganda regents representing the infant son of Kabaka Mwanga. The senior Mwanga, together with his Bunyoro counterpart, Omukama Kabarega, had been deposed in 1899. The clauses of the agreement mainly touched on the administrative structure, Buganda's position in the region, matters of finance, land and others that were more general (Karugire, 1980; Hansen, 1984). The most important in our context is that through this agreement, the Baganda were accorded a privileged position in the Uganda protectorate and their Kingdom allowed to maintain a semi-autonomous status. Conditional upon their loyalty to the governor, the Baganda administrative structure was to be applied to other regions of the protectorate (Karugire, 1980). In this context, though the Baganda lost power after becoming subject to British rule, the territory under their administration was extended to include other areas in the protectorate including Bugisu. In the years following the 1900 agreement therefore, the Buganda political structure and personnel were widely utilised in the administration of Bugisu.

Thus by 1902, the British indirect rule system with its highly centralised character was applied among the Babukusu and the Bagisu through the Wanga and Baganda agents respectively. Faced with administering a large territory with limited European officers and finances, the centralised political system was deemed ideal to neighbouring territories, including those occupied by the Babukusu and Bugisu. As Maxon (2002) has argued, the most important criteria for the creation of the colonial administration was geography and ethnicity. Within the context of the Babukusu and the Bagisu, once the geographical delimitation was emphasized by the international boundary other social, economic and political transformations followed. The international boundary, like other internal divisions ensured that the colonial administrative objective that was

geared towards the creation of the devices of discipline and command in the region was easily achieved.

Of particular relevance to our context are the colonial instruments of state for the management of community relations across the border. These instruments were ultimately significant in defining the nature and functionality of the border and played a central role in the transformation of the social, economic and political relations between the Babukusu and the Bagisu. To the latter peoples, the boundary was not just a line but also indeed a concrete buffer that specifically initiated the process of transferring their physical location between two political entities. In the words of Merx (2000: 3), they were assigned to specific territory, assumed to static and attached to concrete places. The new boundary and the subsequent colonial policies systematically began the process of freezing the historical process within which the dynamic interactions between the two communities were hitherto coalescing.

With the new border in place, the geopolitics of the area occupied by the Babukusu and the Bagisu changed. The European concept of territorially defined statehood came into play and contrasted the relative survival of local traditions of political authority and social interaction (Nugent, 1996). The boundary was to be a permanent line of human divide, with utter disregard for the historical destinies of hitherto contiguous and related communities. Eastern Uganda in which the Bagisu were consigned became defined as the original Busoga, Mbale and Teso districts, whose politics revolved around the Baganda agents. The Bagisu were administratively lumped together with the Iteso, Basoga, Bagwere, Sebei among other Eastern Ugandan communities. On the other hand Western Kenya became the area that comprised the present Western and Nyanza provinces, and whose politics revolved around the Wanga. This area brought the Babukusu together with other Luyia groups of Western Kenya, the Luo, the Sabaot among many other nationalities in the region.

In essence, within the context of the Babukusu and the Bagisu, the international boundary succeeded in creating an environment in which, on the one hand, the Wanga and Baganda extended their political domains over territories in which they had no control within the pre-colonial context. On the other hand, the boundary meant a considerable loss to the rulers and the decentralised systems of leadership of the pre-

colonial Babukusu and the Bagisu since they were rendered worthless within the policy of indirect rule. By being drawn into a single political structure, the question of power was easily resolved by ranking them below their Baganda and Wanga counterparts. Henceforth, a political structure had to be instituted to emphasize the differences between the two peoples rather than the commonalities that had historically existed among them. Specifically, the two communities had to come to terms with the new realities and ethos that had been established by the new political structure and the boundary.

Perhaps one of the greatest challenges to the colonial administration in the new dispensation was how to convert the border into a device that would ensure the realization of its objectives. As Nugent (2002: 23) has observed, the fixing of the boundary on paper was merely the first step in the process of practical boundary making. An altogether greater challenge was to turn the cartographic detail into an effective line of demarcation on the ground. The latter was to be achieved through the setting up of restrictive and regulatory mechanisms at the border to control the flow of goods and persons on the one hand, and to apply the instruments of the colonial state on the other. Taking account of the legacy of fragmentation, the initial colonial goal was meant to encourage the emergence of new representations of identity and territory that transcended historical identities that had existed between the two communities. In Eastern Uganda like in Western Kenya, the colonial government embarked on the creation of new ethnic identities based on what came to be characterised as 'tribes', 'sub-tribes' and 'clans'. Needless to mention, the latter had to be placed under the newly formulated and coinciding provinces, districts, divisions and locations under the various colonial agents.

For the Bagisu specifically, the area which they occupy was categorized as 'Bukedi' and included Bukedi itself, Bugisu, Teso and Lango with administrative headquarters at Nabumali (Mpumudde). From 1900, all the Bagisu had to be defined distinctly into Bugisu, which was split into various counties of North, Central, and South Bugisu for British administrative purposes. Bugisu was thus expected to be the home for the Bagisu 'tribe'. On the other hand, Bukusuland was split into North and South Bukusu. Both counties and locations of the Bagisu and the Babukusu, respectively, were expected to be linguistically and culturally 'pure'. Ethnic considerations thus came to

exercise a substantial influence on the administration and politics in both regions throughout the colonial period.

The most immediate impact of these 'ethnic based' colonial demarcations to the Babukusu and the Bagisu is that their former relations were gradually severed. Rather than the fluidity that marked their shared pre-colonial experiences through individuals, families, sub-clans and clans, the divisions shifted their identity and allegiance in substantial ways. In the words of Lonsdale, they bound themselves together in clans out of previously scattered allegiances, the better to claim or repudiate the rights of chiefship. At a wider level, district boundaries, lines drawn on the map rather than shifting margins of subsistence and trade, began in the same way to mark out tribes which claimed the ethnographic purity that the British expected of them, quite unlike the hospitable eclecticism that had existed before. (Lonsdale, 1989:28)

Whereas the quotation refers mainly to internal ethnic boundaries within respective colonial entities, there was an added compelling influence of the International boundary. Although their pre-colonial relations had been conducted within no clear-cut borders but rather frontiers, the new boundary became fixed and static in nature (Nugent, 2002). Cultural and ethnic affinities that had previously gone on between the two communities across a fluid area had to be controlled or done away with altogether if they were seen to conflict with the interests of the British colonialists. In this role, the internal ethnic boundaries were complemented by the international border institutions, which included the border custom posts, to ensure the realization of colonial objectives.

Key points where custom posts would be located on the Bukusu-Bugisu borderland included, Lwakhakha, Suam and Chepkube. The latter points had in the pre-colonial settings formed important contact zones between the two peoples and acted as important convergence zones through which people in the two communities criss-crossed during their various interactive activities. Thus, by strategically placing the custom controls within these locations the colonial government hoped to put the two people and indeed other Africans' cross-border activities under check. Roads and main footpaths from key areas such as Bubulo and Butiru in South Bugisu and Chwele and Sirisia in Bukusuland among others were further linked up to these locations in order to

channel and refocus the formerly multi-faceted trading networks to colonially designed border points. These border points, needless to mention, were politically and economically linked to the centres of power in the respective countries through the coordinating mechanisms facilitated by the local colonial agents.

From 1909, the process of placing the Babukusu and the Bagisu into various districts, counties or locations for colonial control was underway. It was within these territorial locations that their ethnic identities or what has come to be known as 'tribalism' was forged for colonial administrative purposes. But colonial rule did not only give significance to ethnic identity, it also led to the creation of a new political system or what Lonsdale calls 'the vulgarisation of power' (Lonsdale, 1989:26). The political system had as its source 'patronage backed by the terrifying sanctions of British force'. Within this context 'tribes' required rulers while clans needed chiefs. The process of using foreign traditional African centralised structures of leadership in the colonial governance of the Babukusu and the Bagisu had to be further strengthened and expanded.

For Eastern Uganda generally and Bugisu specifically, it was simply a case of Baganda sub-imperialism. The Buganda hierarchical administrative structure was upheld and applied to the Bagisu and other ethnic communities in the region. The general regions including Bukedi, Bugisu and Busoga were controlled by Chiefs and agents organised under the Ganda general, Semei Kakungulu (Roberts, 1962; Musoke, n.d). In terms of political organisation, the hierarchical Buganda structure with the Kabaka at the helm, through the Katikiro down to the county chiefs and agents was applied in Bugisuland. The area was further subdivided into counties, directly ruled by appointed chiefs and legislated by a common 'Lukiiko' (Parliament) (Twaddle, 1967; Roberts 1962). Among the various chiefs appointed by Semei Kakungulu in Bugisu included, Kezekiya Kizza in 1900, Eriya Kakedo in 1900, Yosia Mayanja in 1904, Merekizadeki Muwanga in 1905, Jafari Mayanja in 1906. All of these chiefs were from Buganda and were mainly supported by a band of Baganda warriors, administrators, teachers, traders and others who had come with Kakungulu (Musoke, n.d, 24). No Bagisu were appointed to the position of county chiefs until the 1930s and it was only until 1913 that the first Mugisu was appointed to a subordinate Gombolola chiefship position (Wamimbi, O.I, 2005 ).

In terms of the administration of Bukusuland on the other hand, the same alien model was applied except that here it was under the Wanga sub-imperialism. Indeed the system adopted was a replica of the Ugandan case. According to Were (1967), in the eyes of the administration, the Wanga was to Buluyia what Buganda was to the rest of Uganda during the initial stages of colonisation. In a sense, an attempt was made to apply the 'Buganda system', subject to several important modifications using the Wanga in place of the Baganda. Through Nabongo Mumia, the King of Wanga, the administration of most parts of Western Kenya including Bukusuland was initiated. The early administrators including G. F Archer, the DC of Mumias (1907 to 1908) and his successor, K. R. Dundas argued that Mumia's position resembled that of the Kings of Buganda since his influence extended across the Uganda border to the peoples on the slopes of Elgon (Osogo 1976; Sakwa-M-Sake 1971). From the early colonial period through the 1908 demarcation of Western Kenyan administrative units by the efforts of Archer, Bukusuland was administered by close Mumia allies. In South Bukusu was Namachanja Khisa, then followed by his son Sudi Namachanja while North Bukusu was, from 1908 placed under Murunga wa Shiundu, Mumia's half brother. For the period upto 1927, Mumia was virtually in control of the district, first by virtue of the fact that leading government agents were either his relatives or ordinary friends and from his own country Wanga and, secondly, because these agents owed their appointment to him (Were, 1967:176; Aseka, 1989:188).

Basically, it is within the foregoing 'alien' political structure that British colonial administration was initiated among the Bagisu and the Babukusu. The boundary between the two regions did not simply represent divided sovereignties but indeed ensured the effective change in the spatial patterns of political power in a fundamental way. While it erased the fluidity characteristic of the pre-colonial patterns of rule, the boundary clearly defined the jurisdiction of each of the colonial agents and their geographical scope of instituting power on behalf of the British colonial government. It was within this administrative structure and geographical scope that the incorporation of the two communities into a new and different political entity was achieved. The international border and other internal divisions were conjured within the new policy frameworks in the respective regions to ensure that the pre-colonial inter-ethnic solidarities and ties between the two communities were diffused and

integrated within the general framework of the colonial state. This was necessary not only for the survival of colonialism itself but also for the institution of power that was required to exact revenue, autonomy, security and legitimisation of hegemony, all of which were necessary for the functioning of the colonial system (Aseka, 1989:18).

To the most ordinary Babukusu and the Bagisu, the alien political institution represented by new officials was the clearest indicator that their circumstances were changed. The officials acted as the very embodiment of the colonial state since their presence and deportment made it clear to anyone that they belonged to respective political and geographical spaces. But their presence alone was not enough to emphasize the centrality of the changed status. It is in the performance of their duties that their actual impact on the local communities came to bear. As colonial officials, they were responsible for the co-ordination of the various administrative activities in their respective areas. Whereas the revenue and labour aspects required them to know the specific number of people residing in their respective areas, effective administrative measures ensured that movement from one region to another was restricted. Preventive measures within and along the borders were to ensure that the officials apprehend and punish defaulters who tended to violate the policy strictures.

By 1914 when a major crisis for the new administrative system occurred with the start of the First world war, the situation in Bukusuland and the Bugisu revolved around the Wanga and Baganda appointed officials' ability as effective labour recruiters and tax collectors. For the next four years, the two regions, like elsewhere in Kenya and Uganda were subjected to huge demands for increased taxation, livestock and manpower in aid of the war effort. Since the chiefs enjoyed greater power in the administration and control over the activities of the two peoples, their methods of procuring labour and tax for the colonial purposes became a major point of conflict between them and the ordinary Babukusu and the Bagisu. At first, the use of semi-voluntary recruitment had to be replaced by arbitrary physical coercion because no mechanism existed to get the cooperation of the people on a regular basis.

Perhaps, there was no time during the early colonial period that the border raised much anxiety among the local administration than during the 1914-1918 First World War. Although the Kenya-Uganda border was not directly affected by the war, the German

presence in Tanganyika made the reality of the British-Germany rivalry to be played within the East African context. Like elsewhere in Kenya and Uganda, able-bodied men were recruited by the colonial officials from among the Babukusu and the Bagisu to serve in the war effort against the Germans. While some served actively in the military, others served as porters supplying the British forces in the unfriendly terrain and climate of the German East Africa. Among the Bagisu, Daudi Musoke, the county chief in South Bugisu was appointed twice to escort soldiers to Majanji port on their way to Kisumu (Musoke, n.d, 26). In Bukusuland on the other hand, both chief Sudi Namachanja and Murunga wa Shiundu coordinated the recruitment for the war effort.

The war effort led to adoption of policies by the colonial government that required stricter demands to be initiated on the local populations to ensure the realization of colonial goals. In the context of the local administration, therefore, when the German forces overrun and captured Kisii in Kenya in 1917, the reality of the German threat within the British territory was exacerbated. The economic and political demands for the war required the passing of several ordinances to give more powers to the headmen and chiefs to recruit labour not only for settler demands in the case of Kenya but also to raise the necessary capital to run the war effort. The Native Authority ordinances of 1912 and 1920 should be conceived in this light. On top of this was, in the case of Kenya, <sup>the</sup> the Native Registration Ordinances of 1915 and 1920. These ordinances required that any males of over 16 years be subjected to a pass system that required them to carry an identity document, which doubled as a work record (Maxon, 1989: 72). The purpose of this was to apprehend deserters who ran away from the employers and to keep a check on the movement of Africans across regions. By 1920, these administrative changes, combined with other socio-economic transformations were converting the Bukusu-Bugisu borderland into an active point of inter-communal intercourse.

#### **4.4 Bukusu-Bugisu Border land and the New Socio-Economic Relations to 1945**

By 1920 when the former EAP was renamed Kenya and declared a crown colony, the colonial administrative framework provided the mechanism through which the transformation of pre-colonial social, economic and political relations were taking place in the Bukusu-Bugisu borderland. Ranger (1983) has drawn attention to the

changes that accompanied colonial rule in Africa by arguing that colonial rule in Africa witnessed the proliferation of a variety of invented traditions that bore little resemblance to previous cultural and political practices. According to the author, colonial rule not only resulted in the inclusion of Africans in imported European inventions of identity, but also inspired the invention of African traditions such as ethnicity, customary law and traditional religion. Unable to draw any connections between British and African political, social and legal systems, the British officials set about inventing African tradition for Africans and in the process transformed flexible custom into hard tradition. While in pre-colonial Africa identities were multiple and fluid, African identities in the colonial period became rigid and were confined by the traditions of invented tradition.

Ranger's work is significant in examining the nature and transformation of African relations within the colonial period especially in the light of the invented character of ethnicity, language, law and religion. However, Ranger's analysis overemphasizes the colonial state's ability to dictate the direction of these transformations by ignoring the continuities from the pre-colonial period. As a number of scholars have observed, African pre-colonial forms were not merely invented but indeed represented cultural continuities from the pre-colonial to the colonial.<sup>5</sup> In the context of the relations between the Babukusu and the Bagisu we examine the centrality of the colonial transformation of the border land and the emerging socio-economic dynamics.

Throughout the decades following the establishment of the colonial administration, there were marked changes in the land tenure arrangements that not only belied the colonial image of exploitation but also had a resultant impact on the economics that defined the relations of the two peoples across the border. Since it is specifically on land that borders are created and livelihoods derived, it is important that we briefly examine the issue of land and the new economic activities across the borderland. As Asiwaju (1985) has argued, the purpose and ultimate function of boundaries is to divide and separate lands and people within definable eco-systemic entities. Land is a central factor in border studies because it provides the setting within which other forms of social, economic and political permutations are transacted. Between the

---

<sup>5</sup> See Vansina (1990) and Feierman (1990).

Babukusu and the Bagisu specifically, once the colonial administration was put in place, the main economics and politics within their regions revolved around land, its control and productivity.

The pattern of land tenure that evolved between the Babukusu and the Bagisu during the colonial period contradicted pre-colonial forms in significant ways and thus not only contrasted their previous sources of economic livelihoods but indeed greatly altered forms of inter-community interaction over land. Within the pre-colonial setting, as observed, the clan system between the two communities formed the basis for social, economic and political activity. Land and all its rights were clearly spelt out within the customary laws that bound the various clans. Earlier studies on land between the two communities emphasize the central role played by the clan as an arbitrator and controller of land (Nasimiyu, 1984; Gayer 1957; Otim, 1993). Much as the individual held individual use rights over land, the clan had definite checks over it.

The clan determined its boundary and, therefore, the limit of expansion as more land was brought under arable use. With the relatively low populations, the abundance of land in several respects allowed the various clans the freedom to expand and occupy vast territories without clear delineations. In the words of Kopytoff (1987), the people's attachment to territory and land was entirely relative. The various social, economic and political entities between the Babukusu and the Bagisu clans were thus not delimited by boundaries nor were they strictly attached to land in terms of its ownership in the classical sense of the term. Within their continuous territory there emerged multiple spaces that were joined, disjoined and recombined through reference to common history and which therefore allowed for the fluid zone for the mobility of goods and persons.

With the onset of colonialism however, the foregoing reality had to be transformed both for colonial political and economic reasons. The political transformations as we have demonstrated revolved around the suppression of opposition and the establishment of a firm control over the two peoples' territories. Based on an alien system and guided by the divisive ethnic politics, the colonial administration was to ensure that the regions occupied by the two peoples became economically viable in meeting both local and metropolitan needs. As Maxon (2002) has argued, the local

needs revolved around offsetting the high costs incurred during the punitive expeditions in the region and the running of the new administration. On the other hand, there was an increasing need to produce the various raw materials required by metropolitan industries. Although these double demands were in the initial phases of colonialism responsible for the building of the Uganda railway, there were to follow other economic policies aimed at orienting the economies of the region towards serving colonial needs.

Strictly, there are important variations in terms of the British policy as was applied among the Babukusu and the Bagisu but hardly is there a variation in terms of its overall objectives. By 1900, the British government through Sir Harry Johnston as a commissioner in the East Africa Protectorate had already outlined the immediate steps to transform the economic base of both present Kenya and Uganda by introducing a new system of land tenure and monetary system. By right of conquest, all 'vacant and ownerless' land belonged to the colonial state (Kaniki, 1985). In this regard therefore, all unoccupied land belonged to the state since as Sir Charles Elliot clarified 'we have in East Africa the rare experience of dealing with a *tabula rasa*, an almost untouched and sparsely uninhabited country, where we can do as we wish, to regulate immigration and open or close the door as seems best' (Eliot 1905 Cited by Mwanzi, 1985: 163). Among other colonial land arrangements, the Crown Land Ordinances which were passed gave the colonial authorities the power to alienate land in freehold in contravention to the social homogeneity and cultural consensus that the pre-colonial customary land tenure had offered to both the Babukusu and Bagisu.

Probably, the most far-reaching economic reorganisation took place in Uganda. Following the 1900 Buganda agreement, land was divided into two, whereby one half was made Crown land and the other half allocated to the royal family and about one thousand Chiefs as freehold tenure. The latter was called *Mailo* land because it was parcelled out to the individuals concerned in square miles. This colonial land distribution led to the development of different class and property relations in Uganda since landlords and tenants came into existence. Whereas previously the land was collectively owned in Buganda so that the people derived the right to use it from the *Bataka* (clan heads), now they could take individual possession to it. The *Bataka* lost their authority to allocate land while some of them were transformed into tenants. In

addition, it was understood that Uganda was to be a country where African agricultural production predominated. This as Mwanzi (1985) has argued was one of the factors that acted as a barrier to large-scale white settlement such as the case was in Kenya.

The alienation of land and the new land tenure system in Kenya and Uganda came to be manifested on the local communities in the new economic land uses and their restrictions on pre-colonial accepted land uses. In both Kenya and Uganda generally, the 'cash crop revolution' meant that land acquired value. In Kenya the policy that was pursued was to encourage the European settlers to grab as much land in the fertile highlands of modern Kenya as possible. The colonial authorities' propaganda to popularise settler agriculture and the settlers' demands for more land and privileges defined the relations of the colonial government and the local communities. Specifically, the dramatic increase in settler numbers and their acquisition of land in the highlands among other fertile areas in the country was central to the creation of the squatter phenomenon (Kanogo, 1987). While their demands on the one hand created a class of rich land owners, they on the other hand dispossessed majority of African peasants that hitherto lived on those lands. The latter were to be consigned in African reserves where they relied entirely on their labour for survival.

What perhaps needs to be emphasized is that the process of land alienation, which was backed by several land ordinances, witnessed a major transformation in the colonial policy over land in both Kenya and Uganda. The policies other than making clear distinctions between the various categories of land also included provisions for a different land tenure system based on individual ownership that contradicted African traditional forms. The severity and impact of these policies varied from one region of the country to another. In the context of the Babukusu and the Bagisu, although their lands were not directly affected by the settler demands, the colonial land restructuring policies directly affected their livelihoods. The individual ownership of land coupled with the colonial demand for land to set up administrative offices, missionary and educational centres among others not only shifted the peoples' traditional land tenure systems but directly increased competition and attachment to land. When coffee and cotton cash crops were introduced in both Bukusuland and Bugisu, land became a central focus as the members of these two communities struggled to define the

borders between themselves (Wakiro, Kolia, O.I, 2005). In this context therefore, where land abundance had encouraged a fluid intercourse between the two neighbours, competition set in as each began to view the other as belonging to a separate entity defined by the international boundary. Crossing the territorial barrier thus became an infringement on ethnic land rights and was competitively discouraged by both the new local realities and the colonial structures in place.

The new relations over land by dis-empowering the clan heads' control over land also impacted on the traditional socio-economic relations over land. The process of land registration and individual tenure meant that each adult man migrates and lays a claim to a given parcel of land (Otim, 1993). This land would then be registered under the particular individuals and form the basis from which livelihoods and other colonial monetary demands would be derived. Such claims to land were to be restricted within the given ethnic and political entities that were defined in strict static terms. The border was thus to mark the extent to which such claims could not stretch beyond. Any territory beyond the colonially defined ethnic border was thus strictly defined as 'foreign' land. To some extent however, members of the respective communities found themselves on the opposite sides of the border. Following the history of prior settlement patterns and interaction, the latter trend contradicted the strict border policy of restricting the two peoples within distinct territorial spaces. What needs to be emphasized is that whether one's land fell within or outside the new community jurisdictions, its definition had to follow the colonial categorization. It is this that formed the basis within which the officials in both communities consolidated power and elaborated the legal and administrative apparatuses defining their rule and the conditions of land tenure.

By transforming land and the rights to its use, the colonial government initiated a direct process along the border in which the production and general livelihood of the two communities would be seriously affected. Specifically in terms of the traditional land tenure system, its transformation meant that land rights be clearly demarcated and the fluid land frontier hitherto in existence among the two peoples be erased. Thus, pre-colonial contacts, which had ensured that members of related clans could access land, wherever such rights were granted and permissible, could no longer do so as a consequence of colonial restrictions and generally due to the diminished role of

clan heads over land. As a source reveals, traditional contexts where the two communities had shared common lands for grazing, cattle licks, religious activities among others were erased and practically confined within the administrative borders of each respective community (Wakiro, O.I, 2005).

As Herbst (2000) argues, the new colonial spatial patterns erased the ambiguity so characteristic in the pre-colonial period by defining the jurisdiction of each individual within the power framework, as much as in terms of geographical scope. While this process was taking place in each of the regions occupied by the two peoples, it was perhaps at the common border areas that its significance was more pronounced. The discourse of colonial population control as expressed by their new attachment to land within each community's new jurisdiction ensured that no claims could be extended beyond the international border. The border, therefore, in several respects became part and parcel of the British indirect form of state power. By additionally transferring the power over land from the clan to the state, it became possible to control the African labour into definite territories that came to be called African reserves.

With the introduction of cash crop farming in Bukusu and Bagisu, the competition over land was further heightened by the fact that land now acquired a commercial value. Most of the previously free Mount Elgon forest land which had provided the basic requirements for the peoples of the two communities had to be parcelled out, individualised and converted into commercial coffee farms. Although the problems of land demarcations bore ingredients to major disputes, as we shall demonstrate, its immediate impact on traditional forms of economic livelihoods that had sustained the Babukusu-Bagisu relations in the pre-colonial period need to be highlighted. The traditional economic production in terms of food items was to be greatly transformed as land, which was originally used for the production of such items, was converted into cash crops. A heightened interest in coffee and partly cotton farming in the area meant that land within these areas be turned over to cash cropping, given or sold out to strangers who converted them to this purpose.

The linkage between the new land tenure system and the economic forms production among the Babukusu and the Bagisu was particularly complicated by the fact that the colonial chiefs in both regions owned vast lands in their respective areas of control.

On these lands, the chiefs stayed with their families, police and other agents of colonial administration. Specifically among the Bagisu, the land question was a matter of great controversy between the colonial administration and the local rulers. What emerged in Bugisu, however, is that Semei Kakungulu initially demanded land for camping sites, chiefs houses, staff quarters, *Lukiko* meetings among other administrative requirements. With such valid sounding reasons, the Bagisu elders readily lent land for these 'temporary' purposes secure in their minds that the land would revert back to them (Otim, 1993:6) at a later period. To crown it all, Kakungulu had in 1904 been granted 20 square miles of land by the colonial government as a reward for his efforts in assisting expand British rule (La Fontaine, 1969; Gayer opcit; Otim 1993). On this land Kakungulu settled with his agents and the army. The Bagisu who were living in this area were turned into squatters and, therefore, landless. Those who stayed in Kakungulu's estate had to pay him '*busulu*' (ground rent) a system that existed in Buganda under the *Mailo* land system of tenure where vast lands were allocated to chiefs and the tenants on this land had to pay rent to the allottees. Although the case in Bukusuland in regard to land ownership by chiefs was different, both Sudi Namachanja and Murunga also owned vast lands in their respective areas of control. On top of this, land had to be set aside for the construction of administrative offices, schools and mission centres among others.

The general implications of the transformation of land rights came to be reflected in the new colonial demands on the peoples in the two communities. In order to profit economically from their engagement from the Babukusu and the Bagisu, it became necessary that the colonial administration maintained the people's relations to land not only through physical displacement but also confinement within strict immovable territories and define rules governing land access, transfer and use. These processes shifted from time to time depending on the colonial needs. Exclusive control over land was not enough; they also needed to mobilise African labour to work on it. Once the Babukusu and the Bagisu land rights were transformed, they became confined into neat territorial entities where labour was to be exacted for various colonial tasks. Apart from being engaged in their own areas as tax collectors, road constructors, among other tasks, majority of the people especially in Bukusuland worked on settler farms especially in the Trans-Nzoia areas. For the Bagisu, the colonial labour requirement necessitated that some move out of the district to work for the colonial

government. Indeed as a source confirms, some Bagisu crossed the border to join the Babukusu in offering labour services on the various settler owned farms in Kenya (Munyanda, O.I, 2005). The process of labour movement outside specific geographical confines thus raised a clear contradiction between the colonial administration's efforts to keep the two peoples apart and within confined territories on the one hand and the need to bring them together as labourers on the other.

Yet, cross-border labour movement is not the only way in which the Babukusu and the Bagisu enhanced inter-territorial links especially in the 1920s. Like other colonial economic and political agents of change, both Christianity and western education continued to provide an impetus through which the border relations between the peoples of the two communities were shaped and defined during the inter-war period. Among the Babukusu and the Bagisu, the missionaries who were the purveyors of these new forms of 'westernisation' relied on the already established colonial administrative channels and personnel for support. As La Fontaine (1969: 182) has argued, the colonial administrative organization provided the overall structure which eventually came to serve as a skeleton for a unit which became much more loosely knit than the loose association of autonomous units of tradition. From the early colonial period, the presence of a single colonial power coupled with similarities in the cultural traditions of the two people provided a mechanism through which the common faith and the ethos of westernisation straddled the common border. Especially for the CMS missionaries based in Nabumali in Bugisu, Twaddle (1993, 202) has observed that their cross-border evangelism spread into Bukusuland. This cross-border evangelism profited from the efforts by Bishop Willis, who through a series of conferences and personal contacts in East Africa sought to establish closer cooperation among the faithful and possibly set up a broad based ecclesiastical province (Hansen, 1984: 213).

The centrality of cross-border evangelism though congealed within the strong interdenominational divides, especially between Catholics and Protestants needs to be understood against the backdrop of the emerging body of the western educated men and women. These converts enjoyed a brotherhood of being members of the same faith and belonging to a new class. This class, as Comaroff and Comaroff (1997: 163) argue, was associated with a package called 'civilization', which insinuated new

forms of individualism, new regimes of value, new kinds of wealth, new means and relations of production and new religious practise. By 1921 the western province of the EAP, in which the Babukusu are found, ecclesiastically belonged to the Diocese of Uganda, although, geographically the area had been transferred in 1902 (Hansen, 1984: 213). This therefore meant that the church of Uganda remained directly in charge of missionary activities among the Babukusu and the Bagisu. As a way of enhancing relations with one another, the converts increasingly organised themselves into monthly meetings which appointed executive committees to represent the interests of Christians externally. That such meetings cut across the narrow political boundaries and divisions created by the colonial administration was significant in transforming the nature of community relations across the border.

One of the consequences of increased access to missionary education among the Babukusu and the Bagisu was the realization of their common experiences under colonialism generally, and its policies of racial humiliation, economic exploitation, political oppression and cultural oppression, specifically. By providing an avenue for interaction beyond the colonial border and ethnic divisions, missionary work and education provided a common organizational basis on which the two peoples reflected upon the impact of colonialism to their common history. The emerging educated Babukusu and the Bagisu mooted new means through which their communities could be united with other Africans in protesting against colonial injustices. From the 1920s a number of political and welfare organisations came up within their regions that aimed at redressing the people's grievances. Most of these organisations were led by the missionary educated class and their main successes lay in the manner in which they mobilised members across their respective communities towards common goals.

Perhaps the earliest common expression of the two people's distaste for the colonial system was demonstrated through the massive campaigns to rid their regions of alien agents of colonialism represented by the Baganda and the Wanga among the Bagisu and the Babukusu, respectively. As colonial functionaries, these agents represented not only the negative images of colonial rule but indeed the very denial for the emergence of a constituency for unity. Among the Bagisu, the movement to get rid of the Baganda rule gathered momentum in 1925 with the founding of the Bagisu Welfare Association (BWA) under the chairmanship of Erisa Masaba, an Anglican

bishop of Mbale. Its main objectives were to protect Bagisu traditions and drew its membership from teachers, chiefs, clerks and peasants of different faiths (Twaddle, 1969: 198). By 1934, the association had succeeded in forcing the retirement of all Baganda serving in the administration in Bugisu. Among the Babukusu, on the other hand, the movement to get rid of alien chiefs was mainly focused on North Bukusu and Malakisi locations where through Murunga wa Shiundu and Waluchio, the Wanga exercised dominance. Like in Bugisu, the Bukusu movement was organised by the Quaker and Catholic teachers under the Kitosh Education Society (KES) that was to later evolve into Bukusu Union (BU) in 1935. Its chairman was Pascal Nabwana, the head Christian of the Catholic mission in North Bukusu. Other key members included Eusebio Wafula. By 1930 the Bukusu had succeeded in demanding the retirement of Wanga chiefs in Kimilili and Malakisi locations and their replacement by local ones, Namutala and Stephano Wekunda, respectively (KNA, DC/NN1/11; NK, AR, 1930). By 1934, their efforts had further successfully led to the transfer of Murunga from Bukusuland to Southern Wanga.

The triumph of the Babukusu and the Bagisu objective of getting rid of alien colonial agents signalled an important phase in the potential organizational role of the emerging mission educated class. Their influence was not only felt within the respective communities but it also went beyond thereby representing a veritable revolution that posed an entirely new challenge to the politics of collaboration in the two areas. This challenge was complicated by the evolving trans-ethnic nature of the organisations and their linkage with other regional anti-colonial movements. In Western Kenya generally, the BU and BWA had established links with Kavirondo Taxpayers Welfare Association (KTWA) among other emerging organisations. Indeed as Twaddle (1969: 198) argues Erisa Masaba the founder of BWA modelled the association on KTWA principles after reading about its principles and personally meeting Archbishop Owen, the founder of KTWA in Butere. That the demands for the removal of alien chiefs were finally granted around the same time perhaps points to the colonial awareness of the intertwined nature of influences in the two regions. Both BWA and BU embodied this emerging spirit through the possibilities of missionary education. The objectives of the two unions were hardly different and the members usually met to chart out common grievances for the entire region.

By 1939 when the Second World War broke out, the main politics revolving around the welfare unionism in Bukusu and Bugisu was on the sanctity of traditional cultures. Although this was masked within the general politics that surrounded the campaigns against alien chiefs, their relationship with the issue of land and the campaigns for an administrative unity between the two communities need to be highlighted. From the early colonial period the use of the alien Wanga and Baganda together with their languages in the administration of Bukusu and Bugisu represented a major threat to local cultures. Together with the chiefs, the colonial administration used alien teachers and missionaries to spread the word to the heathen wastelands of Bugisu and Bukusu, respectively.

As in other parts of colonial Africa, the missionaries in Bukusuland and Bugisuland took a hostile attitude towards several African traditional practices related to religion many of which were abolished. Their main focus was not just to convert Africans to Christianity but also to western culture, which was infused with, and profoundly informed by Christianity. In several ways, the missionary teachings attacked the cement that had held the two communities together. Like the colonial administrators, the missionaries preached against the belief in spirits, supernatural forces and gods, witchcraft, sorcery, sacrifices and rituals, taboos and veneration of ancestors, and thus weakened the influence of African traditional and ritual leaders such as priests, priestess, magicians, rainmakers and divine monarchs. The old order was thus progressively and severely altered.

Although the full impact of the missionary work and colonialism to Bukusu and Bugisu culture cannot be attempted here, it is worthwhile emphasizing the contradictory nature this clash of civilization reawakened a strong sense in the preservation of African cultures. In Bugisu the need for the colonial government to recognise traditional land law, which the BWA felt had been misunderstood formed the core of the association's campaign objectives since 1925. Masked within these campaigns were the Bagisu fears against the continued alienation of their land and thus the need to defend their local territory against alien intruders. In the 1920s the fears for intruders had been complicated by the formation of the Baganda Association of Mbale whose main objective was to agitate for estates of freehold land as a compensation for what they considered unduly early retirement from protectorate

service as colonial administrators in order to make way for local men (Twaddle, 1969: 197). On the other hand, there were real fears that the colonial government could alienate Bagisu land and give it to the settlers in Kenya (Munyanda, O.I, 2005). The agitation by BWA resulted in the appointment of a Commission to investigate traditional Gisu land tenure headed by Mr C. Gayer and some leaders from the BWA. Although its findings were delayed because of the outbreak of the war, it satisfied Bagisu public opinion and embodied the main Bagisu claims to a system of limited individual tenure in its findings (La Fontaine, 1969: 184).

By 1939, the main objectives of the welfare organisation in the two regions were to get rid of alien languages as mediums of administration, education and religion. Both BWA and BU union set out interdenominational language committees to review Lubukusu and Lumasaba as alternative mediums not only for communication but also for the writing of newspapers, Bibles and prayer books. As La Fontaine (1969: 184) observes in the case of Bugisu, the Lumasaba Language Committee regretted the impoverishment of the Gisu language by the neglect of Gisu words, which were being replaced, in educated speech, by Ganda terms. In a way, therefore, the language 'revolution' of the 1930s cannot be divorced from the general distaste that the communities had for the presence of alien institutions specifically but also more generally, for colonialism. On top of the language issue, there were also major concerns against the introduction of circumcision in hospitals instead of the traditional ceremonies, the quest for secular education and in the case of Bugisu the need for the installation of the permanent head of the community equivalent to that of the Kabaka (Munyanda, O.I, 2005)

The campaigns for the preservation of African cultures had important regional implications on district boundaries and on the broader Babukusu-Bagisu identity. Especially in Bugisu, the border between Bugisu and the territory to the west was a subject of considerable feelings in the 1930s and 1940s. The division of the eastern region of Uganda which was undertaken in 1923 under the DC Mr. Perryman led to the demarcation of three areas namely Bugisu, Bugwere and Bukedi. This division opened a major row between the Bagisu and Sebei who were placed under the same Bugisu district. The bone of contention was, according to oral sources, the feeling among the Bagisu that they could not be placed in the same district with people whom

they did not have cultural and linguistic similarity (Wakiro, O.I, 2005). Although this argument was justified within the colonial government's attempt to match cultural, linguistic, territorial and political boundaries, it concealed inherent traditional rivalries between the two communities. As La Fontaine (1969: 187) has argued, the conflict over the inclusion of the Sebei and Bagisu revolved around the latter's concern over their threatened identity and the need for them to be accorded rights granted to other 'tribes'.

While the issue of common identity revolved around the incorporation of Bagisu and the Babukusu into a wider territorial space, the debate on them being accorded rights was conflated within the internal colonial dynamics in the region. The latter included the economic use of district finance to improve roads outside Bugisu territory and the need to control Mbale Township in order to promote Gisu interests there. By 1937 the 'Mbale controversy', which mainly pitted the Bagisu against the Bagwere was complicated by the fact that the town though a common administrative centre for the two communities stood in the traditional jurisdiction of Bugisu territory. The demands of each faction that Mbale be amalgamated with its district became the focus for intense emotions exacerbated by the fact that the two district administrations were housed in different wings of the same building. In the context of the Bagisu, its recognition as a Gisu town would have given the Bagisu a status symbol indicating equality with Buganda and other people considered by the Bagisu as powerful within the state of Uganda (La Fontaine, 1969: 185; Kasfir, 1976: 140). The Bagisu wished to make Mbale their town much as independent African states wish to establish their own university, as a symbol, as much as for its own sake (La Fontaine, 1969). It was only after independence that the Mbale controversy was successfully resolved with the transfer of the Bukedi district administration to Tororo.

In terms of the need to enhance a supra-national identity, the Bagisu advocated for inclusion, together with the Babukusu into the same district boundaries owing to their common history of origin and shared cultural backgrounds. Through this, it was hoped that joint action could be secured that could lead to a wider control of the two communities in the affairs of the two countries. These common affairs would not only involve local cultural issues but indeed national economic and political issues. This common identity indicated an acceptance of common values and a common code of

ethical norms. In the context of the prevailing colonial reality, this was viewed as a way of harnessing a broad based ethnic loyalty that could be mobilised in particular situations in order to exact sanctions or legitimise a claim for support. By 1945, the need for collective action against the colonial state remained a key objective of not only the welfare organizations within the two communities but indeed also the informal cultural movements and activities. These came to represent an increased awareness by the masses of Africans of the importance of organised resistance to stem out the pressures being exerted by colonialism. By extending their loyalties beyond a specific region, the Babukusu and the Bagisu increasingly came to see themselves as belonging to a wider group under the same colonial situation. In the period after 1945, these broad based loyalties were at the centre of the decolonisation process in the two countries of Kenya and Uganda.

#### **4.5 Summary**

This chapter has endeavoured to examine the issue of colonialism, the border and the community relations between the Babukusu and the Bagisu to 1945. In terms of its evolution, it has been argued that the Kenya-Uganda border was a product of several activities whose history extended beyond 1894 when the present East African countries were formally declared British protectorates. These activities included those related to the pre-colonial African community relations and those of the early Europeans in the region. While noting that most analyses on border dynamics in Africa have ignored the contribution of pre-colonial developments in Africa, there has thus been a missing link between such pre-colonial developments and the activities of the early Europeans in the region. More specifically, the European economic and political rivalries that culminated into the 1884-1885 Berlin conferences are highlighted as major factors in the transformation and evolution of the border. The European activities and the Berlin conference other than leading to the actual demarcation of the border were responsible for the transformation of the African conception of the border into a western conception as an international mechanism of control. This transformation, as we observed, proceeded on the European ignorance and utter disregard of African realities, especially the existence of pre-colonial historical relations. With the setting up of colonial rule, the trans-border relations between the Babukusu and the Bagisu became conflated within the European divide

and rule policy that was enforced through the alien Wanga and Baganda colonial functionaries, respectively. Within this divide and rule policy, the sanctity of the border as a dividing mechanism fitted neatly within the colonial policy and institutional framework. The border and the various colonial policies sought to guarantee hegemony, security, autonomy and legitimation as hallmarks of the colonial system. From 1920, when the EAP was renamed Kenya and declared a colony, the reality of the colonial transformation of the border social, economic and political relations between the Babukusu and the Bagisu was clearly underway. As the chapter has demonstrated, the historical links between the two communities continued to exploit the various contradictions in the colonial system to convert the border into a porous entity. The chapter has highlighted the contradictions in the land policy and pointed to the emergence of western educated class as major mobilising agents for cultural loyalties between the two peoples beyond the border. These broad based cultural loyalties were significant within the context of the decolonisation process from 1945 as we demonstrate in the next chapter.

## CHAPTER FIVE

### THE BABUKUSU-BAGISU BORDERLAND RELATIONS AND THE DECOLONISATION PROCESS 1945-1963

#### 5.0 Introduction

This chapter sets out to examine the border relations between the Babukusu and the Bagisu peoples within the context of the decolonisation process in Kenya and Uganda. By 1945, the decolonisation process in the two East African countries begun to gather greater momentum as numerous movements grew up rapidly. Though the seeds of such movements and their grievances against the colonial government had their roots in the pre-1945 period, both local and international developments conspired to open up the way for independence in 1962 in the case of Uganda and 1963 in the case of Kenya.

The purpose of this chapter is to highlight the contribution of trans-border cultural movements to the decolonisation process in the two countries using the case of the Babukusu and the Bagisu. As already observed, the period before 1945 had witnessed the rise of broad-based regional movements that exploited the contradictions within the colonial system that sought to restrict and control the movement of people within borders. Especially in terms of socio-cultural permutations, these movements provided the setting for the crystallization of various identities into what have been analysed as national movements in the respective countries. Usually taking place beneath the overt political and economic networks, socio-cultural networks not only expanded the horizons of the two peoples but also refined their comprehension of the colonial condition and the relations between themselves and other Africans under similar circumstances. While we argue that such movements were a product of strong historical relations between the two border communities, the chapter points out that their contributions have been undermined because of the overemphasis on national movements. The chapter specifically examines the local, regional and continental trans-border initiatives that tended to work towards independence in the two countries.

## 5.1 Decolonisation and Identity Boundaries: The Context

Decolonisation as a process through which formerly colonised territories seek to gain independence from a colonial power has been at the centre of academic discourses worldwide. In Africa specifically, the discourses informing the decolonisation process have often been couched within the state-centred approaches whose main project has been with nation building. Within this, nationalism as an ideology that holds that nations are the fundamental units for human social life has been portrayed as the main force behind the decolonisation process. The claim that the nation is the only legitimate basis for the state and that each nation is entitled to each state has invoked many studies on nationalism with a sole purpose of contributing to the national grid. In both Kenya and Uganda, studies on the decolonisation process have encapsulated various regional and ethnic anti-colonial initiatives and movements and their relationship to the national.

Theoretically, the foregoing studies have de-emphasized the positive aspects of the cross-cultural evolution of ethnic consciousness that had clear links to the identity forming processes whose history goes beyond the colonial period. Such cultural forces are usually conflated within the divisive forces of ethnicity and often projected as undermining the process of nation-state formation (Mustapha, 1992). The dominant intellectual paradigms have not helped much and indeed boost the nationalist agenda. The modernization theorists saw cross-cultural linkages as an anachronistic form of ethnicity that was bound to disappear in the face of the modernity of the new nation states; dependency theories tended to concentrate on external constraints on the new nation states; and neo-Marxist theories concentrated on the class structure, and often consigned ethnicity to the realm of 'false consciousness'. Even in contexts where ethnic nationalism is studied systematically, the point of departure is on the integrative needs of the nation-state, rather than the regional integrative possibilities and constraints offered by the actual historical dynamics of ethnic groups and especially those that traverse national borders.

Doornbos (1991: 64) has drawn our attention to the practical limitations of the state-centred approaches to the study of ethnic consciousness and ethnicity in Africa. The

author observes that in the urge to political unity the tendency of many states has been to negate ethnic, regional and cultural diversities rather than recognize them as building blocks in the construction of a civil society. The result has been often a facade of seeming unity at the cost of many unsettled wounds and denied identities. Fatally in the long run, the state project had no meaningful or alternative sources of cultural inspiration to draw on, leaving it in the end without a vision and empty-handed in the face of impending crisis and disintegration. The study of nationalism from a narrow nation-building project therefore negates cross-cultural identities that go beyond the state and which could meaningfully be harmonised within broader regional integration initiatives. The purpose here is to lay more emphasis on the possibilities and constraints deriving directly from the history of trans-border community relations and integration.

African borders like others elsewhere in the world have been central to the creation of national identity, or nationhood. The borders divide territories, distinguish social groups from each other, and help to separate distinct categories of the mind (Barth, 2000: 17). Borderlanders are, on the one hand, marginal people who are often ridiculed. They occupy, on the other hand, a particularly sensitive location entailing specific economic and political opportunities. From the perspective of nation-states and the international system, clear demarcation and stability of borders are enormously important. In this regard when borders are not consolidated, when effective political institutions have not been created, and when nationalist projects remain incomplete, the result is instability and a tendency towards either civil conflict or warfare. As Anderson (1983: 15) has emphasized, nations are merely imagined communities since members of even the smallest nation will never know most of their fellow members, meet them, or even hear of them, yet in the minds of each lives the image of their communion.

Anderson's argument is important in tracing the historical trajectory of nationalism in Africa and the state-centric nation building objectives that have informed its study. Though the colonial borders in Africa were drawn in the later part of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, it was only after independence that the respective countries emerged as nation-states. Through nation building, a new identity had to emerge, one of belonging to a country or political nationhood. This national identity was defined on the basis of certain criteria that

distinguished one nation from the other and also determined the members of each nation. These criteria included a shared language, a shared culture and values and most probably belonging to the same ethnic group. What people share within a particular boundary varied along three dimensions; these include interests, institutions and culture (Connor, 1994).

Nationalism when conceived within this narrow nation building processes thus sees all human activity as national in character including values and identity. Viewed within this light, the decolonisation process is projected as having had a national character that brought together all nationalities and nationalists for the common goal of independence. According to Odhiambo (1996: 75), this view is triumphalist, modernistic, nationalistic and ignores the positive aspects of ethnicity that formed the building bricks of nationalism. The quintessence of African nationalism as Shivji (2003) has argued was anti-imperialism. It was basically the historical experience under colonialism coupled with its policies of racial humiliation, economic exploitation, political oppression and cultural domination that was borne African nationalism. The goal of African nationalism was, according to Mafeje (1992) to struggle against denial of humanity, denial of respect and dignity, denial of the Africanness of the African.

That the decolonisation process in Africa derives its authenticity from the ethnic based politics and initiatives in the pre-independence period has been widely acknowledged.<sup>1</sup> As products of the colonial divisive policies, these initiatives from inception were characterised by the badge of ethnicity for they, by and large, attended to interests that were perceived to be of immediate concern to their ethnic constituencies. In cases where such associations tended to widen their geographical scope and demands by threatening to constitute rallying bases of challenge to authority, the colonial authorities moved swiftly to domesticate those demands and to institutionalise forums for articulating their grievances within specific localities. This served the purpose of division and discord among the various communities that was in resonance with the colonial state's agenda of

---

<sup>1</sup> See for instance Atieno Odhiambo's (1996) analysis on the discourses on nationalism, democracy and ethnicity.

denying the local population any constituency of unity that would have constituted a formidable challenge to its dominance over society. Like all authoritarian institutions, the colonial state thrived on division, hate and oppression.

Ethnic identities in the colonial period were strengthened by both internal and international boundaries of the state. In interpreting the decolonisation process, one, therefore, needs to pay attention to both internal and external organizational bases of ethnicity that provided a basis for the organization of resistance against colonial domination, especially at a cultural level. As Barth (1969) has observed, the continuity of an ethnic unit or national group depends on the maintenance of a social boundary, which may at times have a territorial counterpart. In this case, as the author maintains, the cultural features that signal such a boundary may change, and the cultural characteristics of the members as well as the group's organizational form but the fact of continuing dichotomization between members and outsiders remains a permanent feature. It is this dichotomization that allows each group's nature of continuity, and investigates its changing cultural form and characteristics (Nasong'o, 2005: 94). Ethnic groups are not merely or necessarily based on the occupation of exclusive territories; and the different ways in which they are maintained, not only by a once-and-for-all recruitment, but also by continual expression and validation. A boundary canalises social life as it entails complex organization of behaviour and social relations (Ibid, 9-38).

The centrality of Barth's analysis does not just lie in the fact that ethnic identities were shifting categories but also on the assumption that ethnic groups cannot be conceived of only, or even primarily, as culture bearing units, but rather as 'organizational types'. For him, ethnicity is a form of social organization in which the participants themselves play a primary role in determining and maintaining their identity. It is, in the words of Ogot (1996: 20), an interactive process, reflecting social cleavages and material competition. Arguing for the primacy of organizational over cultural phenomena, Barth asserts that the primary focus should be on the delineation of ethnic boundaries, how they are maintained or fluctuate, rather than on 'the cultural stuff that it encloses'. In a nutshell, the point being stressed is not merely the broad organizational possibilities offered within and

outside ethnic boundaries but indeed also the mechanism through which ethnic identities are differentiated.

From a state-centric point of view, territorial distinctiveness and national consciousness have been among the key defining features in the formulation of ideas on ethnicity and nationalism as the main components informing the decolonisation process. Informed by the reality of the increasing expressions of ethnicity in many post-colonial African societies and the need to offer a critique of ethnicity, this line of thinking yielded many historical studies. Ranger (1983), Anderson (1983), Smith (1986), Hobsbawm and Ranger (1990), Feierman (1990), Vansina (1990) and Ogot (1995) showed clearly that ethnic consciousness was a product of historical experience, and hence its creation and elaboration was a proper subject of inquiry for historians. The link between ethnicity, nationalism and national identity and its manifestations within the decolonisation analysis has been methodologically revisited. The central theme emphasized is the idea that nationalism is a relatively recent creation, specifically in response to the upheavals of the industrial revolution and the evolution of modern bureaucratic states (Hobsbawm and Ranger, 1983). In demystifying nationalism it has been demonstrated that nationalist mythologies are historically contingent creations that ignored diversities within ethnic identities. Smith (1986) in trying to trace the link between ethnicity and nationalism specifically identifies two positions. On the one hand, are what he calls 'primordialists' or 'perennialists' who conceive of ethnic identity in static, primordial or essentialist terms. On the other hand, are the 'modernists' or 'instrumentalists' who conceive ethnicity in a situational, contextual and subjective sense. In his view, ethnicity is something more than situational, and that it is not merely a fleeting or illusory matter of time and context.

The central treatment of ethnicity and identity within the decolonisation process among the Babukusu and the Bagisu while de-emphasising nationalism locates their anti-colonial struggles within the dynamic process within which they articulated their social, economic and political grievances against colonialism. While the state-centred approaches had their merits, especially in de-emphasising the negative aspects of ethnicity for national unity,

they conceal patterns and cultural strengths inherent in broader identities for national and regional integration. In this chapter therefore our challenge is to place greater emphasis on trans-border historical processes of identity formation and ethnicity that together with the national initiatives facilitated the decolonisation process in Kenya and Uganda.

## 5.2 The Colonial State, Ethnicity and the Early Political Associations

That the decolonisation process in Kenya and Uganda draws from the cultural traditions of the various ethnic groups cannot be denied. Strictly speaking there were no nationalistic anti-colonial activities in Kenya and Uganda at least before 1945. Since the imposition of colonial rule, the movements that articulated African grievances were organised on ethnic lines rather than on a national basis, largely because there was no such a thing like a nation. As already demonstrated, African grievances were in response to the colonial policies which were faithfully implemented through a fragmented and segmented space. Within this, the centrality of boundaries, both internal and international were emphasized as key instruments in facilitating the divide and rule policy. Colonialism did not just lead to the fragmentation of African spaces, it also re-defined the notions of political and physical space and altered the socio-economic and political structures of the African peoples.

The colonial response to open associational space to a large extent determined the nature of the anti-colonial movements and also the modes they used in their struggle against its exploitative social, economic and political policies. Essentially, by 1945, the grievances on which Africans based their anti-colonial movements were well evolved in various regions of the two East African countries. These grievances included a distaste towards colonial policies such as land alienation, taxation, forced labour, neglect of their areas in terms of development, the Kipande system and generally lack of representation. These grievances were complemented by the divisive ethnically defined frameworks that were sustained by the colonial agents whose role became the deployment of violence in facilitating the realization of the colonial state's objectives. The emergence of the early anti-colonial movements in the region was thus a consequence of the colonial social,

economic and political exclusion. Underlying their emergence was the attempt to pressure the colonial regime for inclusion by mobilizing outside the existing colonial social political institutions or the deconstruction and reconstruction of alternative institutions. Their main objectives were to ameliorate the negative impacts of colonialism that also included the preservation of African cultures.

The colonial response to the emergence of early political associations was to padlock them within the various ethnic enclaves so as to prevent them from evolving a broad based anti-colonial feeling. Without freedom of movement and association across ethnic boundaries political organisation would not only be curtailed but also limited in scope. Their grievances though forming a base of articulating African demands were to be confined to specific African areas or simply be converted by the colonial government into ineffective instruments for effecting change. In every sense therefore the colonial state was always keen on stifling the emergence and development of movements that would constitute a base for the development of competitive politics. The colonial state jealously safeguarded its monopolistic politics in which dissent was considered anathema. As Bogonko (1980) has argued, the colonial government feared that if it encouraged African political activities, it could work itself out of business.

Like any other business, the colonial government had as its primary role to balance between the loss and gains in order to remain profitably relevant. Within the inter-war period when the contradictions within the colonial system threatened to yield trans-ethnic organizations, the colonial government moved with speed to curtail or restrict them. These contradictions related not only to the increasing awareness by Africans of the exploitative colonial system but also their realization that only broad based organizations would facilitate the change of the status quo. According to Rosberg and Nottingham (1966: 54), a definite policy was initiated to encourage strong and isolated tribal nationalism as one of the most effectual barriers against pan-African upheaval. This policy was supplemented by the colonial government's repressive measures with a sole purpose of redirecting the trajectory of the growth of African consciousness. This

approach obtained for both Kenya and Uganda generally and Western Kenya and Eastern Uganda specifically.

In the case of Western Kenya for instance, the first political association, the Young Kavirondo Association (YKA) which was formed in 1921 represented the interests of the Luo and Luyia populations and sought to present the hardships and grievances of these two groups to the colonial administration (KNA, DC/NN. 1/5/12). Among its objectives included the call for the establishment of a separate legislature for Nyanza with an elected African president, abolition of Kipande, reduction of taxation and excluding women from hut and poll taxes, abolition of forced labour and the dissolution of specific labour camps in Nyanza province, the return of Kenya from colony to protectorate status, granting of individual title deeds for land, the construction of a government school in Nyanza and a general improvement of educational facilities, an increase in the wages of the employed, including chiefs and the creation of paramount chiefs in Central and South Nyanza (North Nyanza already had Nabongo Mumia as paramount chief) (Aseka, 1989: 309).

Although led mainly by the products of the mission schools, YKA's ability in redressing African grievances lay in its focus on local rather than national needs affecting the Luo and the Luyia. In cases where such issues, including land, taxation and labour tended to transcend ethnic and regional boundaries, the colonial government's approach, mainly informed by developments within the colony became divisive and discriminatory at the ethnic level. YKA had for instance emerged within the time frame when many Africans especially in Central Kenya were increasingly becoming critical of settler dominance in their areas. The Young Kikuyu Association that transformed into the East African Association (EAA) had been the greatest embodiment of this anti-colonial spirit in central Kenya. The latter association was however banned and its leader Harry Thuku arrested and detained after bloody confrontation with the protesters (Odhiambo, 1985). The real threat posed by African associations and the constant challenge to domesticate their levels of activity thus informed the colonial policy on emerging African groups.

YKA's ability to widen its geographical scope and constitute a rallying base to challenge the colonial authority was swiftly domesticated by refocusing its grievances to specific localities. Through the efforts of Archdeacon W. Owen, YKA was effectively transformed from a militant political association into a welfarist-oriented association now re-named Kavirondo Taxpayers Welfare Association (KTWA). Once it was put under Owen's presidency, KTWA successfully abandoned its former radical views and confrontational politics and devoted much of its energies to social and welfare demands. In line with the colonial policy of fragmentation therefore, the KTWA was effectively diverted from the national to an ethnic based organisation that was to turn Africans into law abiding citizens who were expected to be cooperative with the colonial government in their respective ethnic areas. Indeed when KTWA was further split in 1924 with the emergence of separate Luyia North Kavirondo Taxpayers Welfare Association (NKTWA) branch, the ethnic divide between the Luyia and the Luo was greatly enhanced. Henceforth, the two organisations developed separately amid constant inter-ethnic Luo and Luyia antagonisms over land and schools especially in the border areas.

The colonial efforts to break trans-ethnic political activities in Western Kenya did not stop at the political level with the split of the Luyia and Luo associations. It also became clearly necessary to confront the organisational bases of the emerging mission educated 'boys' by strategically curtailing their threats to the colonial government. The answer to this lay in the creation of some body through which the young educated natives could feel that their views would adequately be considered (Lonsdale, 1970: 605). The inauguration of the Local Native Councils (LNCs) in 1925 created fora within which the mission boy element was co-opted within local politics and diverted from any trans-ethnic inclinations. Among the local issues of concern undertaken by the North Kavirondo LNCs included raising revenue through rates and utilising it in the construction of roads, bridges, dispensaries, agricultural extension work and education (KNA, PC/NZA 3/10/1/1, 1924). Through these efforts the mission boys were quickly incorporated into the LNCs, which were primarily meant to contain and control the development of African politics at the district and ethnic constituencies since colonial officials, the District commissioners were mainly their presiding chairmen. More significant is the fact that the

councils were only mandated to deal with local issues within their geographical jurisdiction (Ogot, 1996).

Among the Babukusu specifically, the activities of the LNC's revolved around the local leadership in the two locations of North and South Bukusu. Apart from the chiefs, the mission educated Babukusu including Pascal Nabwana and Anjelimo Wepukhulu became active members within the institutional frameworks of the LNC. The latter that were also founder members of KES used the local LNC to front for more secular education and for the abolition of spheres of influence between the various denominations in Bukusuland (De Wolf, 1977: 148). By the time KES was proscribed towards the end of the 1930s, the colonial effort in restricting the activities of the politically conscious Babukusu within their specific locations had succeeded. With its revival as Bukusu Union, the objectives of the association continued to be social in nature with links beyond the districts being restricted. By 1945, BU had began to sponsor its own schools in Bukusuland and were ready to start a junior secondary extension at one of them.

The case of Eastern Uganda on the other hand, in terms of early organisations is hardly different. Like in Kenya, the colonial government strived to stifle any associations with broad based inclinations by channelling their focus to ethnic issues. The politics of such associations were formally decentralized and largely operated within the contours and context of ethnic zones that coincided with district boundaries. The first political movements in Eastern Uganda emerged in mid 1920s among the Bagisu, Basoga, Bagwere among other ethnic communities as a response to Baganda sub-imperialism. Each of these groups formed independent welfare association to address local issues related the people's experiences under the Baganda. Unlike Western Kenya therefore, the divisive colonial policy in Eastern Uganda was animated through the social, economic and political inequalities between the local ethnic groups in the region against the privileged status of the Baganda.

The Bagisu Welfare Association (BWA) which was formed in 1925 in particular focused on the protection of local traditions, especially, in regard to traditional land law, which

the founders felt had been misunderstood by the administration. This misapprehension had resulted in land alienation, with the greatest beneficiary being the Baganda local administrators. The BWA was motivated by the locals' need to defend their territory from further encroachment by non-Bagisu intruders. The fears for further encroachment were fuelled in the 1920s, with the formation, by the Baganda notables in Mbale of the Baganda Association of Mbale. The latter association agitated for estates of freehold land to be granted to them alongside that already given to Kakungulu their former leader. This was largely to compensate them for what they considered unduly retirement from protectorate service as colonial administrators in order to make way for local men (Twaddle, 1969: 197).

Like in Western Kenya, the colonial government worked steadfastly to deflect the BWA and other associations from forming broad based organizations. Though founded by Erisa Masaba and constituting of mainly Bagisu mission 'boys', chiefs, teachers and clerks, BWA was under the patronage of Archdeacon Mathers of the CMS Nabumali mission. Like Owen in western Kenya, the towering image and role of archdeacon Mathers in diverting the BWA's militancy into addressing socio-cultural issues became an important development in the 1930s. As stated within its early constitution, BWA's objectives included working for 'uplift of the Bagisu', attempting to 'develop the land handed down to us by our forefathers', agreeing to 'assist financially any member needing help', and trying to be 'faithful to our denominational faiths' (MDA, 1938). Thus away from being a political party that would initiate broad based social, economic and political changes within Bugisu and Uganda, the association's focus on social welfare issues meant that its scope of operation be limited to Bugisuland.

Besides the limited focus, the denominational divide within the Eastern Uganda region generally inhibited any trans-ethnic associations in the region despite them sharing similar objectives in regard to land and distaste of Buganda sub-imperialism. BWA, for instance was primarily Anglican and its quest for change in Bugisu was consummated partly within the context of this denominational inspiration. Its closest counterpart in eastern Uganda, the Young Bagwere Association (YBA), on the other hand, drew its

motivations from the *Abamalaki* separatist church movement. What seems clear is that the politics leading to the formation of the BWA and YBA in Eastern Uganda in the 1930s had close affinity with those leading to the formation of the Young Kikuyu Association, the Young Kavirondo Association and the Young Nyika Association in Kenya. This shows that the formation of these proto-nationalist organizations was an inter-territorial phenomenon and that the communities involved were readily learning from each other.

Nevertheless, the importance of denominational divides in initiating divisions within the various ethnic communities was prevalent in regard to their policies especially on language. Consequently, the encouragement and transformation of the various local languages into literary vernaculars through the efforts of the associations and the respective missionaries, while at the same time encouraging Luganda to be a common language in the area encouraged the emergence of a new and wider ethnic identification in the region. The prominent position of Lugisu or lumasaba language in Bugisu did not only mean that their identity competed rather than collaborated with that of other ethnicities, but also that BWA emerged as a distinct association in regard to local politics.

Perhaps more important in transforming the associations in Eastern Uganda was the formation of District Councils. First established in Teso by F. R Kennedy in the 1930s, District Councils, like the LNCs in Western Kenya were formulated within the colonial divide and rule policy to counteract the strong emerging African anti-colonial associations. The Bugisu district council was introduced in the 1940s for a variety of other reasons, prominent among them being the desire to silence the agitation of tribal associations, which had disturbed protectorate administrators working in Eastern Uganda before the Second World War (Burke, 1964, quoted in Twaddle, 1969: 201). Within these legally instituted frameworks, the educated Bagisu, chiefs and local administrators could sit together and deliberate on local issues of concern. This way, the overt political agitation by BWA had to be watered down as some of their concerns became institutionalised and their purposes became served by the district councils. They did not

only form the basis from where local issues were fomented but also engineered a fractured terrain in which competitive politics could only be initiated at the local level

The initiation of District Councils in Eastern Uganda generally also coincided with the colonial demarcation of new administrative boundaries in line with ethnic groups. In the early 1920s the original Bukedi district was divided into three, forming separate districts for Bugwere, Budama and Bugisu, with Mbale Township acting as the administrative headquarters of Bugwere district. But in 1937 Bugwere and Bugisu were amalgamated to form a single district with Mbale as the common capital; and then in 1954 this amalgam was dissolved to form the new districts of Bugisu and Bukedi, whilst Mbale Township became separate territory (O'Connor, 1962). The implication of these district changes to the ethnic rivalry between the Bagisu and Bagwere and specifically in regard to the 'ownership' of Mbale Township was central to the local politics among the Bagisu as was encapsulated through BWA. On top of diverting BWA's focus from national issues the Mbale crisis created a strong sense of Bagisu identity as more focus was channelled to cultural issues and on the place of Bugisu in Uganda. The creation of new boundaries thus meant that ethnicity became more entrenched, as each region's political activities were confined to local issues that affected each respective community. Moreover, by pitting the Bagisu against the Bagwere, the colonial policy of divide and rule attained its ultimate fulfilment.

Thus, in both Western Kenya and Eastern Uganda, the colonial administration strived to consign emerging political associations within the ethnic enclaves by trying to effectively stifle any possibilities for broad based networks. Yet, it is clear that the contradictions within the colonial system itself made the broad based agitation by the local communities a reality. Apart from the realm of local political associations, the Babukusu and Bagisu involvement in the struggles for the market for their agricultural need to be emphasized. These struggles among the Babukusu were consummated through the Native Chamber of commerce in which concerted pressure was placed on the colonial government for reform in African areas. In Bugisu on the other hand, Bunker (1987) has observed that the local people were able, through the Bugisu Cooperative Union, to exert considerable pressure

on the rural development and crop marketing programmes of the central state from as early as 1912. The Bagisu, as the author further argues exploited the colonial state's economic dependence on the valuable coffee they produced by threatening to withdraw into subsistence when the state attempted to centralize the administration of rural development programmes. By 1945, the success of the Babukusu and Bagisu in mobilizing government attention towards local issues and their organisational bases beyond the local level created something of a paradox in terms of the colonial objective of shrinking the associational space in the two regions. While on the one hand the ethnic factor was emphasized within the divide and rule policy, the social, economic and political developments in the region facilitated the emergence of strong cross-cultural linkages between the two communities on the other hand. The emergence of *Dini Ya Musambwa* across the Bukusu-Bugisu borderland area reflected a major dynamic in the unique evolution of the wider associational space within the decolonisation context of the two peoples history.

### **5.3 Dini Ya Musambwa and Pan African Decolonisation 1945-1950**

The rise of *Dini ya Musambwa* (DYM) as a socio-cultural and political mobilizing movement across the Kenya-Uganda border partly represented a mass response to the shrinkage of associational space at the broader regional level. Though colonialism worked to curtail political, cultural and economic unity or co-operation among the border communities of the Babukusu and the Bagisu, historical networks fostered through DYM worked towards trans-border integration and Pan-Africanism. The anti-colonial struggle engendered through DYM was popular in content since it was mass based as well as pan-African in orientation. The struggle through DYM went beyond ethnicity and sought to confront the challenges of colonialism beyond the narrow confines of colonial borders. Pan-Africanism within this context is understood in organizational terms as the ability by DYM to transcend the colonial border and to develop a sense of unity among the various peoples beyond the narrowness of the pathways created by colonialism.

Pan-Africanism was perhaps the most visible component of the continental based African initiatives within the colonial period. The history of pan-Africanism, which has been defined as a political and cultural phenomenon which regards Africa, Africans and African descendants abroad as a unit, and aims at the regeneration and unification of Africa and the promotion of a feeling of solidarity among the people of the African world has been examined far more extensively to warrant any repetitions<sup>2</sup>. Our purpose here is to demonstrate that DYM as a socio-cultural and political movement that aimed at the liberation of Africans opened a much wider dialogue about the meaning of race and oppression that became major integrative forces that regionally cut across the various communities. The movement drew its popular mobilizing base not just from the colonial arbitrary imposition of power on the one hand and its entrenching of cultural difference on the other but was indeed also inspired by broader trans-border sentiments that were shared by many Africans living under the prevailing colonial situation.

Neocosmos (1998) has made a clear distinction between Pan-Africanism and state nationalism that deserves attention while examining the history of DYM within the East African context. According to the author, the Pan-Africanism of the early colonial period was based on African traditions as opposed to the state nationalism of the mid 1950s that was engineered by the need to control state power. Within the former in which DYM falls, the centrality of African traditions was emphasized as a response to colonial state coercion on the large sectors of the population. Ethnic identities had in fact been kindled and rekindled precisely by the oppressive colonial state practices and despotic systems of rule that largely gave rise to ethnic grievances and responses that the imperialist interests sought to manipulate. In so far as this Pan Africanism was concerned, the stress was on discovering an authentic African personality, an essence of Africanness where African customs, culture and achievements were counter posed to essentialised western colonial notions of backwardness, atavism and absence of culture (Neocosmos, 1998: 3).

The history of DYM as a religious sect that emerged among the Babukusu and spread to Bugisu and to other parts of Western Kenya and Eastern Uganda has been studied far

---

<sup>2</sup> See for instance Esedebe (1980), Asante (1999), Kodjo and Chanaiwa (1999)

more extensively<sup>3</sup>. As a religious and political nationalist movement DYM has been noted as a major force in Kenya's decolonisation process. Yet, as a movement that was actuated by religious, political, economic and social grievances, DYM's centrality lay in its potency to wield a trans-ethnic Pan African following based on African cultural traditions. Though the movement came to public notice in the 1940s, its origin and anti-colonial sentiments through its founder, Elijah Masinde 'Okhwa Nameme' goes back to the 1930s. By the 1940s DYM had spread not only between the Babukusu and the Bagisu but also among other Kenyan and Ugandan peoples including the Abatachoni, Abakabras, Abanyala (Navakholo), the Iteso, the Pokot, the Nandi, the Marakwet, the Elgon Maasai, the Gusii, the Turkana, the Karamojong, the Sebei and the Abasoga.

There is no doubt that the emergence and spread of DYM within the colonial setting was engineered by the activities of the colonial government, Christian missionaries and white settlers and that it combined traditional religious aspirations with political aspirations as a fundamental vehicle for protest (Wipper, 1971; Were, 1977). The movement's Pan African inclinations therefore thrived on its ability to seize the opportunities within African traditions and to channel them into popular protest. These traditions were, within the context experienced by many African peoples, facing new colonial realities and challenges. It was partly because of colonial oppression and rapid social change that African traditions increasingly served to create and reinforce DYM as a new religious and political movement. As Fanon has argued:

The desire to attach oneself to tradition or to bring abandoned traditions to life again does not only mean going against the current of history but also opposing one's own people. When a people undertake...a political struggle against...colonialism, the significance of tradition changes (Fanon, 1990: 180)

If we do not view tradition in an essentialist manner but rather as a creation of society and a synthesis of the checks and balances that a society devises in response to conflicts,

---

<sup>3</sup> See the works of Wipper 1971 and 1972, Were 1972, Kipkorir 1972 and 1973, Shimanyula 1978, Shilaro 1991, Simiyu 1997, Wafula 2000.

it is easy to understand the Pan-African appeal that underlay DYM. As a movement that sought to emphasize the unity and solidarity of Africans, DYM's appeal fell on the genuine feeling that the people needed a religion that was rooted in their traditions and way of life—a religion, which would be comprehensible and meaningful as well as sympathetic to the people's code (Were, 1972: 88). Christianity as taught by the missionaries was foreign, distant, incomprehensible and even harsh. It was also intolerant and unsympathetic to the African way of life. DYM was thus activated largely by the desire to break away from many of the Christian mission teachings and prohibitions (KNA, DC/NN.10/1/5, 1946-1949). Owing to the changed circumstances DYM emerged as a blend of African traditions and those aspects of Christianity that were acceptable to the people.

The reliance on African traditions by DYM adherents perhaps signified one of the movement's greatest challenges to colonialism. As Mamdani (1996) has argued, tradition as a political identity was formed mainly by the colonial state's indirect rule conception of individuals as subjects rather than citizens. As colonial subjects, DYM adherents always pointed to the inherent contradictions between Christian teachings and colonialism and to the fact that Christianity as the arm of British imperialism justified and sustained the colonial order. By reading the Bible and especially the Old Testament, it was easy to discover the contradictions in the religious teachings given by the mission churches and the colonial policies in practice. While the Old Testament teachings were in many ways similar to the African traditions including those related to polygamy, divination, use of stones in worship, respect of important mountains, reverence of ancestors among many others, DYM adherents could not understand why these were discouraged and banned.

The existence of common traditional symbols and cultural practices in regard to religion between the Babukusu and the Bagisu facilitated the manner in which DYM easily traversed the territorial and cultural terrain occupied by the two peoples. As one source revealed, though originating in Bukusuland, DYM became domesticated in Bugisu because of its direct appeal to the traditional ways of worship (Munyanda, O.I, 2005).

Among the Bagisu, DYM spread to places such as Bumbo, Buputu, Bulucheke, Muyembe and Sebei (Nasimiyu, 1980: 17). The presence of common historical links, symbols and belief systems made the two peoples identify DYM as 'our own religion' as opposed to the established churches that had no connections with the local cultures. Mount Masaba (Elgon) was revered as a holy place of worship while in both Bukusuland and Bugisu there existed other Holy hills, including Namasanda and Bukusu that brought the adherents together for worship and connection with the supernatural world.

The similarity of the traditional religious beliefs between the Babukusu and the Bagisu also explains the manner in which Elijah Masinde and other emissaries of DYM were readily accepted in the two regions. Seen as the direct agents of the influential and authoritative supernatural world, it was only through observing their word that the living could establish closer relations with the Creator. As 'Omung'oosi' (Seer or diviner) Masinde was to interpret the demands the ancestors put to the people through dreams. This was to enable the people to carry out those wishes in order to avoid misfortunes. Any violations could not only harm the offender but also lead to dire consequences on the whole community of believers. Elijah Masinde and his lieutenants exploited this traditional medium to cultivate a cohesive community of believers whose sense of commitment to the DYM cause was intricately intertwined with their social, economic and political experiences under colonialism.

Throughout Bukusuland and Bugisu, DYM allowed its adherents to organize outside mainstream institutions and to reconstruct their traditional values that the colonial regime had perverted. Salient within DYM was its model of organization in which an ideology was evolved that sought to counter colonial hegemony while de-legitimising the Christian religion as articulated by the missionaries. By successfully recreating the Old Testament theology and infusing it with the African creation myths and religious beliefs, DYM adherents were able to envisage missionaries as skilful robbers who preached 'water and drank wine'. While they propagated the gospel of love and equality on the one hand, they were projected as fleecing the poor and living expensively unlike their African clergy. Indeed Masinde himself criticised and condemned the alliance between missionaries and

colonial administrators that had not only conspired to loot African resources such as land but also for introducing foreign ideologies to blind Africans (Simiyu, 1997).

In both Bukusuland and Bugisu, DYM allowed for the evolution of a community of adherents whose convictions were guided not only by the focus on the traditional religion but whose activities reflected a response to the prevailing colonial situation. There evolved what Mamdani (2002) has called an 'ethnic citizenship' that not only went beyond the confines of state borders but one that brought together groups sharing a cultural and colonial experience. Yet, if DYM led to the formation of a Pan African 'ethnic citizenship', its strength also lay in its ability to acquire a political identity in challenging the status quo. In doing this, DYM exploited the social, economic and political grievances of the people against colonialism and used millenarian promises to win their support. By relying on the contradictions created by colonialism within the rural context it was able to advance its goals to wider audience. These colonial contradictions emanated from the activities of the missionaries and the colonial administrators of not only excluding the rural populations but also of concentrating power in authorities that exacted social, economic and political might. It is this exclusion in the rural setting therefore that DYM tapped in creating an alternative pan African citizenship.

The manner in which the DYM members organized themselves and challenged the colonial order resonated well with the movement's Pan African appeal. By pointing out to the contradictions and robbery within the colonial system, DYM constructed a broad based inclusive system that sought to legitimise any form of struggle that would reverse the trend of things. While the adherents violently attacked the colonialists and their agents as the sources of problems, they found a rallying cry in the fact that things would only be better once the Europeans went back to their country (Wipper, 1971: 159). Only through this would deliverance, which was frequently foretold in DYM hymns, be assured. It is therefore the mode of legitimisation built around a sense of injustice that found resonance in many of their followers that cut across the ethnic divisions created by colonialism. Its mode of expression, through traditional vectors such as songs and traditional practices, most of which were in harmony with the specific Bukusu-Bagisu

cultural context, ensured that they organized successfully outside the colonial state and its structures.

That DYM's wide appeal was augmented within the colonial edifice of denial and subjugation to Africans in the colonial system cannot be denied. This denial was not just viewed as constructed on narrow ethnic lines but also as geared toward serving the colonialists in entrenching their exploitation of Africans. While religion was meant to enhance a wider spirit of brotherhood that could certainly go beyond the confines of borders, the DYM adherents saw Christianity as enhancing a contradictory point of view. Christianity in both Bukusuland and Bugisu had created a sharp interdenominational divide between Catholics and Protestants that not only pitted members against each other but whose activities shrunk any associational space between the community of believers. By exposing the 'wickedness' of established churches therefore, DYM exploited traditional modes of worship that attracted both a wider appeal and those that the local populations could easily identify with. These modes of worship had provided a traditional forum of interaction between the various communities before the arrival of Christianity. This is why colonial affront on these modes both among the Babukusu and the Bagisu elicited a contradiction by the DYM adherents who enthusiastically embraced its aims.

It was perhaps colonialism's role in transforming the social, economic and political realities between the Babukusu and the Bagisu that DYM's scope and pan African appeal took shape. The ethnicization of relations through the divide and rule policy and the enactment of strictures of interactions exhibited contradictory tendencies towards colonial exclusion, competition and authoritarianism. Unlike the pre-colonial dynamic in the area that had aimed at production and commerce, the new colonial ethnic tendencies were more interested in the control and monopolization of power and resources. Colonialism relied heavily on the suppression of the two communities within their 'own' boundaries, a process that was not only contradictory but also counter productive. DYM deplored the imposition of hut and poll taxes and argued that these were measures to force the hitherto self-sufficient peasants to leave their land and work for the Europeans for petty wages (Wipper, 1971: 164). It was also critical of compulsory work (forced

labour) and the Kipande system as additional hindrances to the freedom of movement among the local people.

The most fundamental aspect of DYM's political consciousness among the Babukusu and Bagisu perhaps related to their common grievances over land. While land alienation negatively affected the people's economic livelihoods, the manner in which this contradicted with the traditional forms of production was tapped within the DYM emancipatory discourse. The presence of foreigners, the white settlers in the context of the Trans-Nzoia areas of Bukusuland and the Baganda in the context of the Bagisu, formed a rallying point for protest by DYM adherents. These foreigners had not only alienated vast lands in the two areas, they also had converted numerous people into squatters where eking out a living depended on their dependence on the colonial system as labourers. The similar experiences on the land question between the Bukusuland and Bugisu thus provided the people with an avenue of accepting DYM as a genuine forum for articulating the cause and welfare of the people. As a socio-political organ DYM promised its adherents God's help in their struggle to rid their country of foreigners (Were, 1972: 94).

In confronting the issue of land the majority of DYM members saw redemption in violently attacking the colonialists. In a meeting held in Kimilili in 1944 for instance, Masinde, the leader of DYM emphasized the fact that time for the white people to leave their lands had come since God had told him that their stay was over (Wipper, 1977). The leader did not just stop at whites but indeed also sent a warning to the 'Asians who are listening to me now to know that one day I'll tell them to go and they will have to pack up and go' (Ibid.). It is no doubt that these sentiments reflected the real experiences in both Bukusuland and Bugisu and in other areas in which DYM had strong roots. The need to expunge foreigners from their lands immediately and by force resonated well with the members' conditions of dispossession and hope that the prevailing status quo could only be reversed through a determined struggle.

While the alienation of land by the white settlers in parts of Bukusuland and the Baganda in Bugisu occasioned serious conflicts with the local populations, it was perhaps the new manifestations of colonialism that attracted direct attack from DYM members. Schools, mission centres, police stations and administrative centres among other local representations of colonial 'modernity' were targeted in the attacks. As Wipper (1971: 157) has noted, there was a strong wave of arson that burned down mission churches, schools, administrative buildings and caused a variety of harassments. Like these structures, the local agents of change were equally on the receiving end of DYM violence. The latter included Europeans, chiefs, police and local administrative agents. Between 1943 and 1945 for instance, cases of harassment of settler farmers in Trans-Nzoia and Uasin Gishu as well as numerous strikes attributed to DYM activities were prevalent. On February 14<sup>th</sup> 1945 Masinde himself was convicted of assault and sentenced for 12 months in prison. Moreover as Aseka (1989: 371) observes DYM undertook the writing of threatening letters to settlers on the farms in the two regions.

The climax of the violent confrontations between the DYM and the colonial authorities came in the second half of 1947 and 1948. Within this period a crowd of DYM supporters clashed with policemen at Malakisi. During the incident the police opened fire on the crowd killing eleven people and wounding six others. After the incident 34 people were sentenced for nine months each for taking part in an unlawful assembly (KNA/DC/NN.10/1/5 1946-1949). Between mid 1947 and 30<sup>th</sup> June 1948, a total of 55 people were tried for being members of an unlawful society (Were, 1972:93). These detentions, however, did little in deterring the determination of the DYM members from confronting the colonial order. Around 1949 DYM adherents directed their anger at demolishing the concrete beacons marking boundaries between Bukusuland and the Trans-Nzoia and Uasin Gishu settled areas (KNA, DC/NN.10/1/5 1946-49). Although these demolitions were happening in Bukusuland, the manner in which the land question resonated in other areas especially Bugisu was central to DYM's wider appeal.

The issue of land in the two areas as we previously noted had been a point of political agitation for the emerging political associations of BWA and BU. It was not surprising

therefore that BWA, BU and DYM found a common front against the prevailing status quo. This common front, which was sustained through regular meetings, marked a turning point in the evolution of DYM. By 1950, prominent BU members including Pascal Nabwana, Jonathan Barasa and Peter Wafula actively participated in DYM activities and were also responsible for the fast spread of DYM in Bugisu through their regular visits (Wamimbi, O.I, 2005, KNA, DC/NN.10/5-1946). Through such links DYM succeeded not only in tapping into the brains of the mission educated but also in combining the new petty bourgeoisie revolutionary ideas with millenarian promises and tactics (Aseka, 1989: 369). The emerging leadership in these associations had in the 1950s developed trans-ethnic networks with other parties in the respective countries that in turn became central to the final phase of the decolonisation process.

Yet by 1950, the greatest challenge fostered by DYM to the colonial administration remained its pan-African appeal that was conjured through its anti-colonial stance on land, labour and taxation policies. Its massive appeal to people living and experiencing similar colonial injustices saw it emerge as a liberating forum to communities outside Bukusu and Bugisu. On April 4<sup>th</sup> 1950 when a major climactic confrontation between the Pokot DYM followers and the colonial administrators occurred in what is referred to as the Kolloa affray<sup>4</sup>, DYM's pan African role in forging solidarity especially among the border communities was paramount.

#### **5.4 From DYM Pan Africanism to State Nationalism and Independence 1950-1963**

The crack down on DYM and its followers, just like other popular social movements in the 1950s marked an important phase in the transformation of the decolonisation process in Kenya and Uganda. This transformation did not just see the decline of the broad based Pan African ideal espoused through DYM among the Babukusu and the Bagisu but also signified the ascendance of state nationalism within the two countries. According to Neocosmos (1998) the key characteristic of state nationalism was its ability to distinguish nation and tradition. To the author, state nationalism had a particular conception of

---

<sup>4</sup> For a full discussion on the Kolloa affray see Kipkorir 1972 and 1973.

politics and the state that excluded popular manifestations of tradition and emphasized the understanding of the state as the sole domain of politics. This liberal conception of politics meant fundamentally the centrality of the state in balancing particular interests and in monopolising politics in order to manage social change and plural cultures. It presupposes that the state combines territory and culture and formalises their conflation in the management of their orderly progress in the interests of all (Ibid. Pg. 6).

The centrality of the state meant that any broad-based pan African initiatives be transformed in line with the emerging aspirations for the evolution of separate national entities toward independence. According to Cooper (2002: 59) this transformation proceeded with lack of a clear vision of what sort of institutions were to be created in order to supplant the colonial states in spite of the fact that the pan African ideal had provided one of the ways in which African organizations looked beyond individual territories. Continentally, the post war Pan African ideal that had advocated for the political unification of the African continent into one 'nation' as a strategic variable in the struggle for the cultural and social development of the African peoples became variegated as the various emerging nationalist leaders focused more on national state dynamics. It was necessary, as Nkrumah argued, for African entities to unite as separate colonies and become national, absolutely free from the encumbrances of foreign rule before they could assume the aspect of international cooperation on a grand scale (Nkrumah cited in Asante, 1999). The aim during this period was not to achieve broad based political, cultural and economic integration but to do so within a nationalistic statist perspective. To win an election to a territorial or imperial legislative body was to obtain a platform from which to speak and possibly patronage, hence the opportunity of enlisting supporters (Cooper, 2002: 59).

In both Kenya and Uganda generally, the 1950s witnessed the resurgence of officially encouraged associations that were accompanied by a repudiation of broad based ethnic consciousness that had been a hallmark of informal integration networks in the region. The emerging political party leadership was to evolve outside the framework of ethnic consciousness that dictated movements such as DYM since the latter were seen as

representing 'tribalism' that was universally negative and an obstacle to national emancipation. Yet the manner in which the emerging leadership was co-opted within the wider decolonisation process reflected the regional ethnic dynamics that informed a variety of mobilizations in the rural areas. Nationalism was in essence still an elusive agenda since the frontiers of the imperially created states of Kenya and Uganda and the rising African nationalism rarely coincided.

The basis of the regional based politics that were to dictate the decolonisation politics in the 1950s did not just arise from the strong tide of popular mass movements that the colonial government wanted to tame but were also influenced by the international post World War Two developments. The end of the war led to the convergence of international forces and nationalist politics in the colonies that prepared the way for independence (Maloba, 1989: 176). With this, the stage had been set for the disintegration of the European empires especially following the successful transitions in India and Pakistan and the rising global anti-colonial tide. While the inevitability of independence was not in question in the 1950s, the process through which this could be attained to safeguard or reject colonial interests was primary. As Cooper (2002: 62) has argued, since the multiple forms of post-war political and social mobilizations were not confronting a static colonialism, the colonial powers had to take the initiative to increase African political participation in a controlled way and to give them a stake in expanding production within the imperial economy.

The strategy of encouraging regional based political organizations was therefore seen as the best approach not only to evolve a 'responsible' leadership but also to check the strong tide of inter-territorial movements that threatened the entire colonial fabric. This was the leadership that would learn the European craft and eventually lead the colonies to self-government. As Iliffe (2005: 168) has noted, the general colonial 'regional based' policy within East African was guided by the fact that unlike West Africa the colonies here were less developed educationally, economically and politically and were also inhabited by a large European settler community that tended to dictate a multi-racial rather than a purely nationalistic future. On top of this, the rising tide of broader rural

anti-colonial mobilization meant that the regional strategy ultimately balanced between myriad dynamics informing the decolonisation process.

In Uganda, the 1949 anti-Kabaka riots in Buganda in which houses of pro-government chiefs were burned and the general state of protest against Buganda dominance in most regions of Uganda lit the anti-colonial torch that formed the basis for the rise of broad based political organisations (Mutibwa, 1992: 11). The rioters had three demands: the right to bypass government price controls on the export sales of cotton, the removal of the Asian monopoly over cotton ginning and the right to have their own representatives in local government to replace chiefs appointed by the British. In Kenya on the other hand, the frustrations of many Africans arising from the deteriorating economic conditions in the reserves, the broad mobilising threat of the only existing African party Kenya African Union (KAU) and the underground activities of territorial movements including DYM and MAU MAU dictated the pace at which political change evolved in the country.

The process of relying on regional forums in the different districts of the two countries to evolve a political leadership in the 1950s thus arose within the context of the foregoing volatile political situation. The colonial policy of thinking in terms of 'tribes' had led the governors, Andrew Cohen in Uganda and Everlyn Baring in Kenya, to adopt a strategy where African members of the Legislative Council (Legco) could only be elected from the district councils. The argument for this was that 'since it is the district that was the natural life everywhere in the colony and it is here that tribal loyalty and cohesion is strong, abler representatives would likely be chosen' (Cited in Kasfir, 1976: 114). While the first African nomination to the Legco in Kenya was done in 1944 through Eliud Mathu, in Uganda this happened only after the 1949 promulgation of Local Government Ordinance. However it was only after the 1953 Wallis inquiry recommendations and the introduction of District Administrations (District Councils) Ordinance in 1955 that majority members were elected directly in Uganda (Mamdani, 1976:194). With this development, power began to shift slowly from the chiefs to the elected representatives. But while this has been hailed as a positive move towards giving Africans a voice in the Legco, it is important to underscore the fact that beneath the official pronouncements lay

strands of ethnic manipulation and political patrimony that became important in controlling African politics.

As Ogot (2003: 10) has argued, it is useful to examine the emerging regional politics in the comparative context of the process of constructing ethnicity and tradition. In this way, we can be able to perceive the political complexity that informed inter-ethnic alliances and their linkage with regional and district issues among the various African groups. In any case, the new political geography would have been transient had it not coincided with similar trends among Africans. As has been noted:

They (Africans) too had to live amidst bewildering social complexity, which they ordered in kinship terms and buttressed with invented history. Moreover, Africans wanted effective units of action just as officials wanted effective units of government...Europeans believed Africans belonged to tribes; Africans built tribes to belong to (Iliffe Cited in Ogot, 2003: 10).

The process of incorporating the regional representatives within the Legco just like the formation of the early inter-ethnic political parties in the 1950s was dictated by rural ethnic dynamics as much as the colonial schemes of managing change. Africans everywhere in the colonies imagined larger communities, which they regarded as more effective of action than the original 'tribes' to which the colonial government assumed they belonged. The invention of greater ethnic communities that grew in self-awareness throughout the period had major implications for not only the evolution of the national project but equally for the drive from 'trans-national' linkages.

Among the Bagisu specifically, the drive for a greater Bugisu in the 1950s continued to be conflated within the anti-Buganda sentiments. These sentiments, which as we noted were complicated by the issue of land became more solidified as the Baganda who had formed the first party, Uganda National Congress (UNC) in 1952 continued to agitate for a special position and dominance within Uganda. UNC as Karugire (1980) points out, was in addition to being formed in Buganda, dominated by minority Protestants and a preponderance of the Baganda at the upper echelons of the party. The spark to UNC's

new quest for the recognition arose out of the fears of Buganda's diminished role in the political destiny of the future Uganda. The latter fear emanated from two related realities. On the one hand was the political direction of Uganda that was being espoused by Governor Cohen who emphasized the fact that Buganda was and was to remain a province of a united Uganda (Mutibwa, 1992: 11). On the other hand was the 1953 announcement in London in which the Secretary of State for Colonies referred to a possibility of a federation of the three East African territories. The fear that the latter federation would lead to the domination of Uganda by the racist settlers in Kenya was at the centre of UNC agitation.

The actions by the Baganda who refused to cooperate with Cohen's plans for an integrated Uganda and instead demanded that Buganda be separated from the rest of the protectorate and be transferred to foreign office jurisdiction generated intense political activity that led to the deportation of Kabaka to London in 1953. The impact of the Baganda agitation for special recognition heightened the fears among the Bagisu and other non-Baganda groups for the possible continuation of Baganda hegemony over their areas. As Low (1962: 29) has observed, key hostilities were directed towards statements in the Buganda Lukiiko that Kabaka should be made King of a self-governing Uganda and also that there should be no strong unitary central government. Although the anti-Buganda sentiments did not crystallize into a political organization until 1958 with the formation of Uganda People's Union (UPU), they led to a strong drive towards the construction of ethnicity and tradition in Bugisu. This as some oral sources revealed was necessary for a unified Bugisu not only to chart out a common front in the future political arrangement but also for the protection of its territory from further outside interference (Munyanda, O.I, 2005). The most immediate concern in the 1950s was the boundary between the Bagwere and the Bagisu, which as we noted had been a point of ethnic tension between the two groups. The urgent fear about the boundary as Twaddle (1969: 201) has observed concerned the need of getting it adjusted before any possible subjection to majority rule by other Uganda 'tribes'. Although some Legco members argued that the boundary issue could wait till self-government was achieved, the *Lukhobo* committee members in Mbale argued that there was no guarantee that once the queen

would have divested herself from the control of land after independence, they would have a better hearing than in the prevailing circumstances (Lukhobo, 1957).

The Mbale dispute had an added dimension in the construction of Bagisu ethnicity and traditions in the 1950s and their subsequent incorporation into the wider Ugandan decolonisation process. The manner in which this led to collective mobilization and affinity, not just nationalism, became significant in the political dynamics that revolved around the anti-Buganda sentiments in Bugisu. During the 1950s, a number of young and educated Bagisu with wider experience outside the district came together to form the Masaba Research Society in order to collect and collate local traditions of origin relating to Mbale and its ethnic environs. Politically, the society sought to genuinely devote its energy to presenting the boundary claims from an informed point of view (Wamimbi, O.I, 2005). Together with these research efforts was the publication at Makerere University of *Mulembe* magazine by Bagisu students. The latter urged for the social improvement of Bugisu as well as propagated the Bagisu view on the Mbale dispute (Twaddle, 1969: 202).

By 1954 when the second party, Democratic Party (DP) was formed in Uganda, the anti-Buganda feelings in Bugisu had coalesced into sharp political activism. Like UNC however, DP was also basically a Buganda based party with all the executive members being Baganda. Unlike UNC's Protestantism, however, DP was Catholic in orientation and following. Led by Benedicto Kiwanuka, DP's main concern was the feeling of exclusion by the Protestant-dominated establishment. Organised under the catholic elites, DP's concern merely infuriated the already volatile anti-Buganda feelings outside Buganda. Yet, this did not stop the rise of Buganda based parties. A year after DP was formed, the Progressive Party (PP) was founded, and this too was not only Buganda-based but also predominantly protestant. As Low (1962) has observed, PP represented in the main a largely protestant group of schoolteachers, prosperous farmers and African entrepreneurs who had not found a niche for themselves within the Buganda government hierarchy.

PP like the UNC and DP pursued the main idea of Buganda supremacy within Uganda and thus did little to attract wider membership outside Buganda. Especially following the 1955 agreement that paved the way for the return of Kabaka from exile after Cohen's deportation scheme backfired, most of the party activities were confined to Buganda. In the 1955 treaty, Buganda gained the right to select its chiefs and other officers through its own appointments board. It was also permitted to introduce government by ministers on the pattern of English national government rather than English local authority (Kasfir, 1976). It is no wonder, therefore, that the emerging parties became couched within the internal Buganda politics of exclusion in the pursuit for power and local service appointments. Commenting on PP for instance, Mutibwa (1992: 16) has observed that it was too conservative, too tribal and too parochial to survive the turbulence of the years that followed, and it soon fell into oblivion.

It is clear from the foregoing that the early political parties in Uganda did not have a broader anti-colonial agenda but basically focussed on Bugandan issues and its continued privileged status in Uganda. In terms of the Bagisu and indeed other non-Baganda communities, these parties merely heightened ethnic tensions and a strong anti-Baganda feeling. It was only after the 1958 first direct elections to the Legco that were boycotted by Buganda that the anti-Buganda sentiments crystallized into the formation of the United Peoples Union (UPU). UPU was formed by established leaders in the districts outside Buganda who were members of the Legco. Summarising the party's objectives, Mutibwa (1992: 16) notes thus:

Concerning the UPU, we should note first that it was formed to oppose the concessions, which Buganda was demanding from the British government. Secondly, it was the first party to be formed and led by non-Baganda. Thirdly, its formation led to an inevitable confrontation between the Baganda leadership at Mengo and the non-Baganda politicians in the Legco and later in central government. And lastly, it forced the Baganda to make a decision about their future which in turn led to the Kingdom's decision to declare itself independent in December 1960 and, when this

failed, to work out a compromise formula with one of the political parties so as to ensure its survival after independence.

From these concerns, it is clear to understand why most of the Bagisu members identified themselves with the UPU. While it espoused the strong anti-Buganda sentiment, its broad based focus offered possibilities for the inclusion of the small ethnic groups in the future political arrangements in a unitary Uganda. Yet like the Buganda based parties, UPU could not claim a countrywide representation given its exclusion of Buganda. Its success as a mobilizing forum depended on the ethnic bases in the various districts and its anti-Buganda platform. Indeed it was the latter platform that led to its merger with the anti-Buganda wing of UNC, led by Apollo Milton Obote, to form the Uganda Peoples Congress (UPC) in March 1960. From this, the political direction of Bagisu and other non-Buganda groups, though riddled with divisions and rivalries, shared one common concern in the determination not to be dominated by Buganda.

The organization of UPC like UPU was oriented more towards district politics. As Kasfir observes, UPC controlled neither nomination of candidates for the national assembly nor policy statements of district branches (Kasfir, 1976: 113). It is no wonder therefore that most issues of concern in the districts carried the day in its programmes. Among the Bagisu for instance the vexing question of land and boundaries remained at the centre of the political activities that were channelled through UPC. On top of the Mbale controversy, the Sebei-Bugisu border and the demands for separatism among the Sebei confronted the local political dynamics. The latter controversy was at the centre of a bitter political rivalry between UPC and DP as each manipulated the ethnic feelings in Bugisu and Sebei, respectively. At a broader level however, it was perhaps the anti-Buganda feelings heightened by their demands for autonomy that marshalled greater unity among the UPC supporters.

By 1960 when the London conference was called to plan for the constitutional future for Uganda, UPC and the other Ugandan based parties were polarised within the various ethnic diversities over the centrality of Buganda autonomy. At the conference, it was

obvious that Buganda autonomy and a strong unitary government were incompatible, but no compromise emerged and the decision on the form of government was postponed. It was only after the March 1961 elections that were boycotted by Buganda and the formation of the Kabaka Yekka (KY) party that a temporary compromise for independence was struck. Within this compromise, Buganda was to enjoy a measure of internal autonomy if it participated fully in the national government. The alliance between Obote's UPC and KY, which aimed at unseating DP, upheld this compromise and further allowed a provision by which the Kabaka could appoint representatives to the national assembly. This political marriage of convenience between the UPC and the KY did not only lead to the inevitable defeat of DP but also led Uganda into independence in October 1962, with Obote as prime minister and the Kabaka becoming president a year later.

Among the Babukusu, the drive for greater regional identity in the 1950s was found within institutions that fostered a common front against colonialism. Although the colonial onslaught on DYM led to the decline and to a more secretive way in which its activities were conducted among the Babukusu, its spirit lived on in the 1950s. Its main agitation over land continued to inform the emergence of political forums that agitated for political change on a broader scale. The land problem was particularly acute in the Trans-Nzoia areas where more restrictions continued to be placed upon squatters, many of them the Babukusu, as a result of the arrival of new white settlers. The plight of these squatters, their myths and metaphors, the way they perceived themselves, their sense of community and the very sense of identity as a deprived group resembled those of the Kikuyu squatters in the Rift valley which have been vividly portrayed by Kanogo(1987).

The violent confrontation between DYM members among the Babukusu and the Pokot towards the end of the 1940s was happening a few months away from the outbreak of Mau Mau. When the Mau Mau war broke out in 1952 and a state of emergency declared, it became clear that the issue of land within the Kenyan colony was bound to form a common front against colonialism. The fire that had been ignited by DYM in Bukusuland over land was spreading to other regions of the country and beyond. It is no wonder

therefore that DYM and Mau Mau maintained steady links that were a source of concern to the colonial administration. As Frost (1978: 150) has observed, the two associations were fundamentally very anti-European and found in land a fundamental cause of grievance. These broad based anti-colonial feelings are partly what the institutionalised Legco and early parties sought to control. As has been observed, the decision to nominate Africans to the Legco had been reached in an effort to channel the emergent voice of African nationalism towards the support of the administration (Ogot, 2003: 17).

By 1952, KAU remained the only officially recognised party that brought together several political activists from various ethnic backgrounds. Formed in 1944, KAU had the immediate aim of giving African support to Eliud Mathu, the first unofficial member of the Legco. Yet as a mass party, KAU could not claim to be of a national disposition beyond the narrow and elitist membership of Jomo Kenyatta, Eliud Mathu, Achieng Oneko, Ambrose Ofafa and Oginga Odinga (Odhiambo, 1996: 96). While it was still viewed as an extension of the Kikuyu Central Association, its representation by the emerging African elite made it less appealing in the local areas including Bukusuland. As Maloba (1989: 186) has noted KAU failed to thrive in areas outside central Kenya because:

It was competing not only against ethnic nationalism but also functioning against the background of inter-tribal suspicion and even apathy. It is therefore true that up to 1947 when Kenyatta assumed its leadership, KAU had scored very few if any political victories.

KAU had a sub-branch among the Babukusu that operated under the North Nyanza branch that was under the chairmanship of John Adala. Its representation comprised of former Bukusu Union members with Pascal Nabwana being the chairman of the North Nzoia branch (De Wolf, 1977: 187). Yet like elsewhere in the colony, the local KAU leadership did not achieve much district-wide enthusiasm and appeal. By 1953, when KAU was banned following the outbreak of Mau Mau, its main successes among the Babukusu had been its opposition against the repatriation of the Babukusu from the Pokot and Sebei areas. They recommended within the overall KAU broader objective on land

that should such people be repatriated, they were to be allocated farms in the areas alienated by the Europeans in the white highlands. On a broader scale, KAU under Kenyatta neither succeeded in mobilizing support nor implementing the objectives of the party (Ogot, 2003: 18). As unrest among Africans became more marked, Kenyatta and other KAU leaders appeared helpless in their appeals for a non-violence transition to independence. It is because of this helplessness on the part of KAU that Ogot (Ibid.) notes that it was not a surprise that some communities such as the Babukusu, Pokot and Kikuyu became impatient, abandoned the national project and sought their own solutions to the overwhelming social, economic and political problems that threatened to drown them.

With the declaration of the state of emergency, various rules to govern African political activity were put in place, reorienting African politics towards the various regions in Kenya. Within this was the colonial policy of divide and rule in which Africans were to go back to their districts and ethnic domains. This decision broadly led to the emergence of such associations as the Nairobi District African Congress, the Mombasa African Democratic Union, the Kisii Highlands Abagusii Association, the Taita African Democratic Union and the Nakuru African Progressive Party. In Bukusuland specifically, the ethnic consolidation was congealed within the local African District Council (ADC), which now began to grant some economic power to individuals by allowing them to participate in some of its activities. This was followed by the decision in 1956 by the local government to split North Nyanza into two districts, namely Elgon Nyanza and North Nyanza. The new Elgon Nyanza district and ADC had its headquarters in Bungoma. Politically then, this split did not only localise Bukusu political activities but indeed led to a strong ethnic identity among the people that favourably limited any chances for broader political associations.

The creation of the new Elgon Nyanza district and ADC successfully ensured that the politically active Babukusu were effectively engaged in local politics while at the same time the colonial government maintained a close check at the subversive activities of DYM and Mau Mau in the district. Former KAU and Bukusu Union leaders became

active participants in the district ADC and were thus diverted from any broad based activities. Pascal Nabwana was elected as the Vice-chairman of the council and in 1959 he became the first African in Kenya to be installed as the unofficial chairman of an ADC while Jonathan Barasa became the vice-chairman. The two as we pointed out had not only been active members of the BU but had equally fostered links with Bugisu and other emerging political parties including KAU. The other active member of the Elgon Nyanza ADC was its secretary, Nathan Munoko whom the DC described as 'one who undertook his heavy responsibilities in a thoroughly competent manner' (KNA, DC/EN 1/3, 1961).

With the consignment of African politics to the district levels, the development of broad based links between the Babukusu and the Bagisu were limited as each people reoriented its district priorities in line with the colonial needs in the separate colonies. Moreover, among the Babukusu specifically, the proscription of KAU and the banning of political activities at the broader level meant that no forum beyond the district could be used to channel the people's political sentiments. The only exceptions to this were the activities of trade unions, including Tom Mboya's Federation of Registered Trade Unions, which formed focal points for mass mobilization beyond the ethnic level. Yet trade unions too operated within the orbit of the colonial state and thus could not be allowed to thrive untamed. While militancy was abhorred, trade unionists including Mboya clearly knew and understood the fact that trade unions were only platforms for stepping into the arena of party politics. They were neither alternatives nor substitutes (Odhiambo, 1996: 70).

By March 1957 when Africans were for the first time elected to the Legco, the ADCs further emerged as powerful organs for determining who should be elected to the Legco. This additional role meant that more local political competition was focused on individual districts since one had to cultivate a local constituency in order to be able to ascend the political ladder. More often than not such a constituency coincided with the ethnic and district boundaries in place. Any broad based linkages that went beyond the districts or ethnic group boundaries were disregarded as unimportant for purposes of Legco elections. Except for Mboya who won a seat within the metropolitan Nairobi, most of the other politicians relied on their ethnic backyards. In the North Nyanza constituency

which was made up of two districts, North Nyanza and Elgon Nyanza, Masinde Muliro, emerged a winner defeating other five contestants including W.W. Awori, Joseph O. Otiende, Christopher Siganga, Webungo Akatsa and Joseph Wamukoya. Other Africans who won seats during the first African elections to the Legco were Tom Mboya (Nairobi), Ronald Ngala (Coast), Oginga Odinga (Central Nyanza), Lawrence G. Oguda (Nyanza South), Daniel arap Moi (Rift Valley), J. N Muimi (Machakos) and Bernard Mate (Meru) (Mazrui and Tidy, 1984: 106).

With these elections, the road to state nationalism and the eventual attainment of independence became centred within the politics of the Legco. Through the formation of African Elected Members Organisation (AEMO), the African members of the Legco though representing various regions of the country focused their attention on the central institutions of power under the tutelage of the colonial administration. Their main attention was drawn to the colonial multi-racial constitutional arrangements, which were seen as ideal for Kenya. Multi-racialism or partnership that would allow Europeans, Asians and Africans to have a voice in the political affairs of the country had been the basis of the Lyttleton, the Lennox Boyd and the Macleod constitutions of 1954, 1957 and 1960 respectively. Yet, while these constitutional arrangements granted African representatives a voice at a broader level, they neither conceded to the principle of majority rule nor allowed majority of Africans to participate in broader political activities beyond individual districts. Moreover the elected members became embroiled in bitter rivalry over the nature of societal arrangement for the future Kenya that pitted the Kenya National Party (KNP) under Masinde Muliro and Kenya Independence Movement (KIM) under Oginga Odinga.

It was not until 1960 after the First Lancaster House Conference that majority of seats in the Legco went to the Africans. This was followed by the lifting of the seven-year State of Emergency and the allowing of Africans to form nationwide political parties. Like other political processes before this period, the latter developments took place against the background of a still very authoritarian colonial state, undemocratic political culture and a fragile mass nationalism (Odhiambo, 1996: 70). It was within these realities that the

Kenya African National Union (KANU) and the Kenya African Democratic Union (KADU) emerged. Although the two parties had a similar agenda in regard to independence, the issue of safeguarding ethnic as well as regional interests within the umbrella of the future Kenyan state raised a major point of conflict. The contentious issue between the parties pertaining to the applicability of either a unitary or federal constitution for independent Kenya reached its high point at the Second Lancaster Conference held in February 1962 (Maloba, 1989: 52).

Most of the Babukusu, through their representative, Masinde Muliro identified themselves with KADU, whose main concern was for the interests of the so-called 'small tribes'. KADU, led by Ronald Ngala, Masinde Muliro and Daniel Arap Moi called for the establishment of regional governments (Majimbo) as opposed to the unitary state based on the Westminster model which KANU favoured arguing that the latter would place many powers in the hands of the majority party. In terms of the evolution of state nationalism however, it is easy to understand the ethnic dimensions within the KANU-KADU controversy. The controversy was premised on the sociology of colonial politics that defined various communities in terms of ethnic origins and locations. By ably succeeding in creating an ethnic based nationalism that hindered any possibilities of trans-regional mass mobilization a precedent had been set for division, discord, mistrust and hate not only among Kenyan communities but between them and those in the neighbouring colonies. Within this context, both ethnic and international borders were important tools in the colonial scheme of creating a divisive state nationalism. Through a compromise hammered at the Second Lancaster House conference KANU and KADU agreed to form a coalition that worked towards a general election in May 1963 in which the former party won. Due to this victory, KANU qualified to form a representative government with Kenyatta as its leader. He was sworn in as the prime minister on 1<sup>st</sup> June 1963 and on 12 December 1963 Kenya became independent.

## 5.5 Summary

In this chapter, we have attempted to discuss the trans-border relations between the Babukusu and the Bagisu within the decolonisation process in Kenya and Uganda. We have demonstrated how the decolonisation process in the two East African countries begun to gather greater momentum through the nationalist movements that emerged in the two regions. We have accounted for these movements illustrating how the seeds of their formation and their grievances against the colonial government are traceable to the pre-1945 period in which both local and international developments seemed to have conspired in opening up the way for independence in the two colonies. We have, as such, highlighted the contribution of trans-border cultural movements to the decolonisation process in the two countries using the case of the Babukusu and the Bagisu. Accordingly, we have demonstrated how the period before 1945 had witnessed the rise of broad-based regional movements that exploited the contradictions within the colonial system. We have proceeded to argue that such movements were a product of strong historical relations between the two border communities even though, as evidence adduced in the chapter shows, their contributions were undermined because of the overemphasis on national movements. In the following chapter we examine the post-independence developments in the border relations between the Babukusu and the Bagisu peoples.

## CHAPTER SIX

### INDEPENDENT KENYA AND UGANDA AND THE BORDER BABUKUSU-BAGISU RELATIONS TO 1980

#### 6.0 Introduction

The attainment of independence in Kenya and Uganda in the early 1960s marked an important watershed in the evolution of the history of border community relations between the Babukusu and the Bagisu peoples. Unlike the colonial period, the leaders of the new East African states, like those in other parts of Africa, readily acknowledged the disastrous effects of the colonial partition of the continent and their countries specifically. However, they were reluctant, if not totally unwilling to support policies that were likely to restrain state sovereignty and consequently undermine their own power. The problems and constraints encountered in officially encouraging harmonious border community relations during the independent period seemed many and intractable. Specifically in terms of the border dynamics and the problems raised by the partition of similar cultural groups by a common boundary, the impact of national consciousness as well as the social, economic and political events taking place at the local, national and regional levels were important concerns. Conflated within the contradictions of the continental politics of the Organisation of African Unity (OAU) and the local national identity dynamics, the new leaders were reluctant to take bold decisions towards common border issues.

As far as border community relations were concerned, the theoretical and practical underpinnings informing the pursued policy favoured the persistence of the colonial territorial political status quo. Within these broad concerns, this chapter specifically sets out to examine the reactions of the independent states of Kenya and Uganda to the border relations between the Babukusu and Bagisu peoples. Contextualizing the border issues within the emerging theoretical debates, the chapter specifically assesses the inter-state economic and political dynamics informing border policy and community relations in the light of a strong cultural movement towards informal trans-border economic regionalism.

It further highlights the central role played by the emerging informal economy at the Kenya-Uganda border within the evolving borderland relations between the Babukusu and the Bagisu and also within the conflicting developments of inter-state tensions and militarism for the period up to 1980.

### **6.1 Independence and Border dynamics: Theoretical Issues and debates**

The partitioning of cultural areas and groups confronted the newly independent African states with two major problems. The first related to whether, looked at in terms of the nature of their evolution, such partitions should be accepted and boundaries that were inherited from the colonial period be respected or revised. The second issue related to the nature of policies that needed to be adopted in regard to trans-border transactions between partitioned cultural groups and whose impact transcended individual nation-state entities. Though related, the two problems have generated diverse theoretical debates among researchers.

On the nature and evolution of boundaries of independent African states, there seems to be little disagreement among scholars that such boundaries are arbitrary as a result of their largely colonial origins (Touval, 1969; Davidson, 1992; Nugent and Asiwaju, 1996). A few scholars, however, insist that the history of boundaries need to be located in pre-colonial Africa since boundaries also existed then (Mbembe, 1999). The latter scholars insist that since boundaries generally depend on convention, the fact that African boundaries are inherited from colonialism does not necessarily always make them arbitrary. There is also no consensus as to whether the creation of African borders was a liability for African states. Some argue that borders everywhere are artificial and that the case for African exceptionalism is weak (Clapman, 1996). Others do not dismiss the relatively erratic nature of African boundaries, but suggest either that they have had few deleterious consequences (Touval, 1969), that they actually represent opportunities for Africans (Nugent, 1996), or that they are an asset for state consolidation (Herbst, 2000). Still others agree that Africa has suffered from its partitioned nature, but see the costs of reshuffling states as greater than the hypothetical benefits (Bayart, 1996). Finally, a few

authors believe that at least some African states would gain from territorial reconfiguration or through efforts towards regional integration (Herbst, 2000).

Diverse and lively as these perspectives are, they suffer from several shortcomings in relation to the issue of borders and territoriality in Africa. First, most of the works have received little systematic treatment, with much of the literature proving anecdotal, opinion based, or dependent on few and possibly biased cases. Secondly, the studies have tended to subsume African states into a single category without distinctions in the degrees of arbitrariness. In reality, however, the particular conditions of each state vary widely. Without accounting for these variations, inferences about the consequences of arbitrariness have been vague and difficult to estimate. Finally, the debates and theories have also been limited by their emphasis on international conflicts. Given the apparent lack of inter-state conflicts in Africa until the 1990s, the argument that artificial borders 'do not matter' has gained prevalence (Bayart, 1996). Whatever its validity, this claim misses a crucial dimension of the nature and consequences of boundaries. For, if borders determine who the other is, they also define the self and confer membership to the polity.

Given the foregoing discussion on the subject, it is important in our context to examine the issue of community relations across the Kenya-Uganda border, not only within their specificity but also emphasising their international and domestic dimensions. Our approach, in respect to the Babukusu and the Bagisu is not necessarily restricted to conflicts. In any case, as we pointed out in the previous chapter, a fluid cultural zone informed by strong historical ties has consistently shaped the nature of long term intense interactions between these two border communities and thereby minimised any possibilities of major conflicts. As an international line delineating and separating the two communities, the Kenya-Uganda border also stimulated the development of other cross-frontier transactions. We, therefore, take cognisance of the fact that the border between these two peoples may also affect the likelihood of other non-violent patterns of inter-state relations often described variously as informal, unrecorded, underground and also as smuggling. The Kenya-Uganda border, since its evolution and throughout the independent period continued to define patterns territory that facilitated control from the

centres of the two countries. Thus, as smugglers, for example, and as people who possibly have double loyalties, they can benefit from undermining state regulations and can even threaten states in their centres (Barth, 2000: 28).

Domestically, the border may challenge the stability of the administration or its quest for hegemony, control and nation-building, dictate policy choices, and influence the quality of institutions and the degrees of allegiance of citizens, resulting in different levels of political participation and disengagement, varying propensities for repression and diverse development fortunes. On the other hand, and as has been observed by Donnan and Wilson (1998), attention needs to be paid to the identity of the persons experiencing the restrictions created by the international boundary and their various responses towards the border and the regimes that limit their movement and fruitful cross border transactions and communication. In the context the Babukusu and the Bagisu border peoples, our point of departure is to examine the role of the new independent nation states of Kenya and Uganda and their quests for national sovereignty within the continental institutions of the Organisation of African Unity (OAU) in influencing border issues and policies.

## **6.2 The National Community, OAU and Border Relations 1962-1967.**

The legitimacy of the colonial partition lines has remained one of the most enduring colonial legacies in independent Africa. Colonialism not only left behind a patchwork of many sovereign states in Africa, but the states spawned by this process were themselves artificial entities. As we have sought to demonstrate in the previous chapters, the case of the border communities of the Babukusu and the Bagisu amplify not only the artificiality inherent in the colonial partition but also the constant challenge posed by trans-border cultural relations on the state-model institution introduced by the colonial rulers. By the time Uganda and Kenya attained their political independence in 1962 and 1963 respectively, they were by no means nations but rather they represented the shells of territorial independence in which different ethnic communities co-existed with each other. The major task of the new two east African governments was to provide the soil in which the seeds of their national sovereignty could grow. Moreover, the process of

political consolidation required territorial stability as the most viable means of maintaining national integrity and engendering nation and state building.

From the international relations theoretical point of view, the nation states of Kenya and Uganda following the attainment of independence and incorporation into the international system became sole agents of change within their separate juridical and territorial bounds. As Ojo (1985) argues, since a nation is merely an ethnic group that has a common heritage, language, culture and a sense of common identity, its distinction from the other nations depends on its occupation of a definite territory and enjoyment of legal sovereignty. The state, as he further observes is a body of people politically organized under one government with sovereign rights and recognised by other sovereign states as having a legal status. The main elements of the state are geography, people, government and sovereignty (Ojo, 1985; Ajomo, 1996: 38).

At independence, therefore, both Kenya and Uganda acquired exclusive sovereign rights in the international system to act within their territories without being subjected to any legal control by another sovereign state. Possession of sovereignty conferred upon each of these states the total jurisdiction on the utilization of the strength of its people and resources in whatever manner they wished, without regard to any political authority inside or outside the national territory (Ojo, 1985; Okoth, 2000). Each of their governments were to make and enforce laws of the state, decide and carry out the state's policies, both domestic and international, and conduct official relations with other states operating in the international system. What is perhaps more relevant to our context is the relevance of this transformation to the nature of relations between the Babukusu and the Bagisu peoples in the post independent period. As ethnic entities within different geopolitical states, the two peoples became subject to the social, economic and political transformations in the respective countries. The nature of their relations across the border reflected each state's primary active role in the diplomatic, political and military affairs of its people (Okoth, 2000: 281). Thus, in as much as such relations constituted inter-community relations, they were inter-state relations characterised by both conflict and cooperation.

Central to the process of creating a national sovereignty and state was the issue of boundaries and how they would differentiate national groups from others. As Benedict Anderson (1983) has argued, ethnic groups, or nations as he calls them, are 'imagined political communities', imagined as both inherently limited and sovereign. To Anderson, a nation is imagined because the members of even the smallest nation will never know most of their fellow members, meet them, or even hear of them, yet in the mind of each lives the image of their communion. The nation is imagined as limited because even the largest of them has finite albeit elastic boundaries beyond which lie other nations. No nation, Anderson asserts, imagines itself to be coterminous with mankind. A nation is imagined as sovereign in the sense that each one of them imagines itself to be free from all the others. Finally, a nation is imagined as a community because, regardless of the actual inequality and exploitation that may prevail in each, the nation or ethnic group for that matter, is always conceived as a deep, horizontal comradeship.

The relevance of Anderson's observations to the context of the two new independent East African states lies in the challenge posed to the new leaders in their effort to weave together a national as opposed to a regional consciousness. As Connor (1994) and Nasongo (2005) have argued, a nation is simply a psychological bond that joins a national group and differentiates it, in the subconscious conviction of its members, from all other groups in a most vital way. Factors that may account for the collective national psychology can be related but not limited to the subconscious belief in a group's separate origin and evolution. On the other hand, the boundary becomes an important component in instituting patterns of territorial control and differentiating one nationality from another. According to Barth (1969) when defined as an ascriptive and exclusive group, the nature of continuity of an ethnic or national group is clear. It depends on the maintenance of a social boundary, which may at times have a territorial counterpart. The cultural features that signal such a boundary may change, and the cultural characteristics of the members as well as the group's organizational form may likewise be transformed, but the fact of the dichotomization between members and outsiders remains a permanent feature. As Nasongo (2005: 94) has observed, it is the fact of perpetuity of

dichotomization, in Barth's view, that allows us to specify a national group's nature of continuity, and to investigate its changing cultural form and content. It is the context of the dichotomization of national groups into strict sovereign borders that fitted well into the political programs of the new independent African states generally and those of Kenya and Uganda specifically.

Anxious at encouraging a national sovereignty, or dichotomy to use Barth's words, the new leaders were compelled to look inward and to rank as their first priority the political, economic and social developments of their own polities. The immediate concern, then, was to build viable national groups based on their traditions and customs. The extent to which national consolidation received high priority, the less the attention was paid to relations between communities that had strong inter-state cultural bonds. As Nugent and Asiwaju (1996) have pointed out, this reality arose out of the fact that:

At the time of independence, African governments inherited citizens where there had once been colonial subjects. Formally at least, the new rulers imagined that the ensembles of citizens added up to nations- or at the very least nations in the making. But there was an inherent tension between the new ideology of 'nationalism', which assumed that people belonged to one nation or another, and the reality of borderlands where communities merged into each other in spite of official lines of demarcation (Nugent and Asiwaju, 1996: 9).

From the outset, therefore, and in spite of the tension the new political leaders of Kenya and Uganda like their counterparts elsewhere in Africa did not display much willingness to sacrifice perceived national interests on the regional altar. Committed and deliberate efforts to address the problems posed by the borders and especially those that required a regional input beyond the nation states were generally minimal. As Asante (1999, 732) has argued, whether regional or continental, such efforts only succeeded in contexts where they were not in conflict with considerations of national security, prestige or economic advantage.

Part of the explanation for the failure by the new independent states to embrace a regional platform could be located in the nature of the decolonisation process. By the time both Kenya and Uganda attained their political independence, there was generally a strong territorial independence in which the kernel of national identity had been planted by the independence movements. Though attempts at a cultural nationalism were alive at the borders as we observed, the decolonisation process generally lacked a trans-national orientation. The decolonisation process therefore had planted the seeds of national consciousness that only required the soil of the independent leaders to grow. The latter was to be found in the ideological and national interests of the new leaders that were consummated within internal priorities, conflicts and tensions. Lacking in these national priorities was a supra national scheme which obviously required a long-term commitment on the leaders and a restraint on national sovereignty.

In both Kenya and Uganda, the idea of a supra-national unification that would eventually lead to a federation was conflated within the divergent views fronted by the various parties. In Uganda, there emerged two centrifugal views, namely the official Uganda government position which supported the federation and the position of the Kingdom of Buganda, which opposed the idea. These divergent views were accentuated not only by the rivalry between the main political parties of Democratic Party (DP), Uganda Peoples Congress (UPC) and the Kabaka Yekka Party (KY), but also by the consequences of the fragile political marriage of convenience between UPC and the KY that had brought Obote to be Prime Minister in 1962<sup>1</sup>. The 1962 constitution, based on the UPC-KY coalition had granted Buganda through Mutesa and the Lukiiko the right to hold indirect elections for its representatives in parliament as well as its leader retaining the ceremonial position of Head of State. In a nutshell, Buganda, in terms of these constitutional arrangements enjoyed an autonomous status that it was not willing to sacrifice at the federal altar. As Ochwada (2004: 64) argues, the constitutional arrangement placed the Uganda government in an awkward position and made Obote non-committal to the East African federation

---

<sup>1</sup> For more on the internal politics in Uganda at independence see Karugire, (1980).

The Kenyan political scene on the other hand was equally not less eventful. Both the ruling party Kenya African National Union (KANU) and the opposition Kenya African Democratic Union (KADU) were engrossed in animated debates on the federalism. The opposition KADU pursued the philosophy of federalism (*Majimbo*) that would allow semi-autonomous ethnically based regions to have substantial decision-making power while KANU advocated for the centralization of power<sup>2</sup>. As Adar and Ngunyi (1994) observe, whereas the two parties accepted the idea of federalism in principle, KADU inscribed in its policy the idea that ‘the regions (*majimbo*) must maintain their power’. KADU carried this policy position into the federation debates and in so doing came much closer to Buganda’s position on the matter. KADU’s ethnic oriented policy position was based on the belief that a federal constitution is the best available means of entrenching personal liberty where traditions will be maintained. KANU campaigned on the pledge of East African federation, which emphasized the need for a unified Kenya. These opposing views affected the way Kenya participated in the East African federation.

Thus, although there appeared strong internal sentiments among the early leaders of the two countries for the construction of a federal entity that could cater for the needs of individual communities including those inhabiting border regions, this was conflated within the general debates for national consolidation that generally lacked consensus on how to proceed. Yet, the premise on which national consolidation was undertaken masked serious ethnic tensions whose history was inherited by the independent governments from colonialism. In Uganda, the granting of a semi-autonomous position to Buganda meant that certain concessions also be extended to other ethnic groups in the new political dynamics of the independent period. In Kenya on the other hand, the incorporation of the ‘federalists’ also meant that national political consolidation could not proceed smoothly without giving some recognition to ethnic bases of power. In both Bugisu and Bukusu, these dynamics, coinciding with the new leaders’ emerging divide and rule policies, meant that the new administrative structure upholds the legacy of ethnic identity. Thus, where ‘tribes’ were ‘created’ during the colonial period, the new overall

---

<sup>2</sup> The debates on the constitutional directions of both KANU and KADU are well captured by Gertzel, (1972), Oyugi (1992) and Nasongo, (2005).

ethnic chiefs, *Umuinga* and senior chief and later Paramount in Bugisu and Bukusu respectively, were appointed after independence. Partly as a challenge to the regional elected politicians and partly as complementary, these developments were clearly political responses to national consolidation, at the ethnic level, that undermined federalism.

As the two states approached the mid-1960s, the warmth with which they had received the federation diminished as both internal and external acrimony crept in. Internally, both Kenyan and Ugandan political leadership were besieged by the constant political challenges to consolidate the ruling parties and power over the masses and against opposition leaders. In Uganda specifically, Obote's regime had through the infamous 'Pigeon Hole' constitution of April 1966 embarked on a series of unpopular political moves that used both force and intimidation against its critics. In Kenya on the other hand, the ideological divide that polarised the country into two political camps, pro-West ruling KANU party and the communist leaning Kenya Peoples Union (KPU) provided major political rifts in the country in the mid 1960s. The latter rifts, as Nyong'o (1989) argues, had led to the disintegration of a nationalist coalition and led to the emergence of a strong authoritarian president in Kenya.

In as much as the foregoing internal political developments undermined efforts towards regionalism, they also had important implications for the Kenya-Uganda inter-state relations. Obote's political problems in Uganda, for instance, did not only lead to a constitutional crisis and the collapse of relations between his regime and the Buganda kingdom, but had other inter-territorial repercussions. Besieged by persistent opposition at home, however, Obote through his UPC adopted a policy of repression in order to legitimise his position. As a source (Munyanda, O.I, 2005) revealed, one of the main fears to Obote's regime was that the opposition was colluding with external agents outside the borders to destabilize his government. Such fears had been made apparent by the famous gold scandal motion in parliament in February 1966 in which its mover, Daudi Ochieng' alleged that that some members in government were planning to overthrow the constitution. One of the main responses to this crisis was the famous

changes in 1967 in which parliament converted itself into a constituency assembly which, among other things, abolished all the local ethnic kingdoms. In terms of inter-state relations and border community relations specifically, the decision by Milton Obote to expel thousands of Kenyan migrant workers in 1966 and 1970 opened a major diplomatic row that had significant consequences on the two countries relations (Okoth, 2000). Though rationalised within Uganda's nationalisation program, there is no doubt that the expulsion targeted mainly Kenyan border populations for political reasons. As Berg-Schlosser and Siegler (1990: 127) argue, there were fears that the Kenyan border communities were colluding with their kinsmen in Uganda to destabilize Obote's regime.

In Kenya on the other hand, the political conflicts between KANU and KPU and the subsequent banning of the latter saw a decrease in the active participation of people in politics and the steady emergence of institutional authoritarianism (Chepkwony, cited in Nasong'o, 2005:20). In terms of the wider impact, the ideological rifts merely represented a tip of the iceberg within the regional inter-state dynamics. By 1964 and 1965 when the East African leaders called for meetings in Kampala and Mbale respectively, the ideological differences between them over the economic disparities in the region had become apparent. Although they resolved to correct trade imbalances between the three states, it was clear that the ideological acrimony signalled major inter-territorial differences. Apart from the view that Kenya, because of her strong economy enjoyed most the economic advantages, the leaders were not ready to forfeit their political and economic sovereignty for broad based regional integration. As Ochwada (2004: 66) observes, this acrimony indeed led to the collapse of the East African common Market.

Yet as the strident economic competition and the strong feelings of nationalism spread within Kenya and Uganda, the commitment of the leaders to the Pan-African ideals only mattered in contexts where they didn't conflict with the various national interests. One such area concerned the issue of the maintenance of the their borders through the institutional framework of OAU. The OAU, as a Pan African organisation, had important binding resolutions in regard to African boundaries that affected all member states,

including Kenya and Uganda. Established on May 25, 1963, the OAU's intended purpose was to promote the unity and solidarity of the African states and act as a collective voice for the continent. It was also dedicated to the eradication of colonialism and establishment of a liberation committee to aid independence movements within the continent. As an organisation that sought to unite African states and which had a strong bearing on issues of border community relations, the OAU's mandate cannot be understood in isolation from the provisions of the United Nations (UN), its forerunner. The UN, which had been established as an international organization committed to peaceful relations between states, emphasized within its charter the respect of territorial integrity and political independence of each state. The UN thus introduced major changes in the international law of territorial acquisition in consonance with fundamental changes in international society (Ajomo, 1996: 40).

From its foundation in 1963, the OAU as an offshoot of the UN appreciated the problems of African international boundaries and sanctioned their continuity and thus the new leader's quests for the national integrity of each independent state. The organisation pre-empted claims to territorial regimes by accepting in principle that boundaries inherited from the colonial period be retained *faute demieux*. Like the UN, its mother organization, the OAU stressed in Article III (3) and (4) of its Charter the respect for the sovereignty and integrity of each state and the peaceful settlement of disputes through negotiation, mediation, conciliation and arbitration.<sup>3</sup> Indeed, to emphasize the fact that the rejection of colonial boundaries would lead to chaos and strife, the Ethiopian Prime Minister in one of the plenary sessions of the OAU meeting held in Addis Ababa had the following to say:

If we are to redraw the map of Africa on the basis of religion, race or language, I fear that many states will cease to exist. It is in the interest of all Africans today to respect the frontiers drawn on maps, even though they were drawn by the former colonialists (quoted in Ajomo, 1996: 40)

---

<sup>3</sup> For an incisive discussion on the OAU, its origins and Charter see C. Zdenek (1969) and T.O Ellias (1965).

The above sentiments generally reflected the mood of most of the African new leaders and were in turn at the centre of the OAU's resolutions. In the Summit held in Cairo in 1964 a resolution of heads of state and government formally accepted in principle to respect the borders existing on their achievement of national independence. Although this resolution had been critiqued as unrealistic by four African states, including Somalia, Togo, Ghana and Morocco, the unanimity of support exhibited by the other African leaders made their case irrelevant. The latter states had justified their objections on the grounds that the boundaries of their respective countries cut across ethnic groups that had a right to be united and incorporated within one state (Touval, 1985: 223).

The relevance of the OAU resolution to border community relations and inter-state relations between Kenya and Uganda specifically need to be emphasized. As signatories to the OAU resolutions, the new presidents of Kenya and Uganda, Jomo Kenyatta and Milton Obote, respectively, were in support of the continuity of the status quo as far as their common boundary was concerned. In terms of the Babukusu and the Bagisu peoples, this status quo meant that the two peoples remain in the respective new national entities of Kenya and Uganda. Like the case was during the colonial period, therefore, the two peoples continued to be defined within the former geopolitical entities. In essence nothing changed in as far as the common border was concerned since the colonial partition line had simply been transformed into an administrative, boundary separating the two independent states. Given the multi-ethnic nature of their respective political entities, the two peoples came at the centre of the new political leadership's efforts to construct the different national sovereignties of their respective countries.

By sanctioning the continuity of the colonial boundaries, the OAU became an important institution in the new states' quests for internal ethnic consolidation. Yet this did not signify an end to the cross-border relations between culturally related African communities. It is instructive to note, for instance, that the continuity of the spatial locations in which the Babukusu and the Bagisu peoples were consigned at independence did not lead to the end of a cultural consciousness across the common border. Though residing in different countries, their common identities, characterised by similarities in

language, customs, values and symbols, among others, persisted because of the existence of reciprocal ties and relations carried out across the border. These processes of trans-state or cross-border interactions between the two peoples though countering the institutional claims of OAU and the national state in regard to the sanctity of the border translated into other numerous social, economic and political permutations.

Trans-state interactions as Bach (1999:8) argues cannot be associated with an institutionalised process, although they are totally dependent on state policies. In regard to the Babukusu and the Bagisu, although the OAU and the national governments' institutionalised policy frameworks favoured the strict adherence to the sanctity of the nation-state borders, internal ethnic dynamics within each country made the practical workability of this policy less realistic. This was also compounded by the multi-ethnic nature of the new state entities within which the two peoples were incorporated. The heterogeneous nature of both Kenya and Uganda made accommodation and perpetuation of their community's diverse interests meaningful within each state's policy frameworks. As some scholars have pointed out, the realities of heterogeneity always precludes attempts by any state to impose the language or culture of any single ethnic group upon the rest of the population (Touval, 1984:224). Thus both the Babukusu and the Bagisu though exhibiting an identity that was trans-national in nature, were incorporated within the multi-ethnic entities of their respective states and formed part of the emerging national states.

The pluralistic nature of Kenya and Uganda seem to have encouraged the smooth incorporation of the peoples from the two groups within the new political entities. Like in the colonial period, the tendency by the two peoples to feel alien within the state's pluralistic structure were minimal given that they continued to develop norms and procedures that enabled the maintenance of an ethnic balance within the new political and administrative institutions. Furthermore, given their former subjection to the divergent economic, social, cultural and political developments during colonial rule, it was easier for them to be integrated within their respective territorial confines. Throughout the colonial period and during the nationalistic struggle specifically, many of the Babukusu

and the Bagisu had participated in the political struggles in their respective territories along with other ethnic groups in those areas. Though there existed a strong trans-border cultural nationalism as we pointed out, many of the people from the respective groups and especially the elite had gradually become integrated in the economic, cultural and political-administrative life of their territories and contact across the international boundaries was limited. As one source pointed out, political unification with kinsmen across the international boundary could have meant risking loss of status or some other disadvantage (Wamimbi, O.I 2005).

The question of the heterogeneous nature of post independent Kenya and Uganda was equally important for the political considerations of the new ruling elite since it had important influences in shaping governmental attitudes and policies on boundaries. The Kenya-Uganda border came to represent a significant political balancing line separating entities that were internally ethnically less cohesive. As such, the maintenance of their status quo came to be associated with the self-preservation of the state. As Touval (1984:225) has argued, it was feared that to grant any group or region the right to secede would stimulate secessionist demands from others, and thus be conducive for the disintegration of the state. Within the Kenyan context, such fears during the early years of independence were compounded by the strong sentiment at the coast that favoured separation and union with Zanzibar as well as the strong secessionist movement that existed among the Somali in northern Kenya. In the case of Uganda, its unity was threatened by the separatist sentiment among the Baganda people who, until 1966, possessed a measure of autonomy in their Baganda Kingdom.

From the point of view of the various oral sources, the idea of the unification of the Babukusu and Bagisu after independence, though overwhelmingly supported, had practical shortcomings. Added to the persistence of the colonial divisive policies that we have pointed out were the observations that indeed the border, except on paper, had done little to alter much of the two people's practical interactions. Quoting the bi-annual cultural activity of male circumcision as an example, one source (Wakiro, O.I, 2005), insisted that its conduct across the border went on as if the common border never existed.

The permeability of the border in such circumstances therefore allowed the interests of the border populations to prevail. Some of their everyday economic, cultural and political activities were transacted across the border especially where such activities were not seen to be in conflict with colonial interests.

The argument for the permeability of the border though inherited from the colonial times also had deliberate policy implications. According to Asiwaju (1985) and Touval (1985), boundaries in the colonial periods were left un-enforced because governments accorded higher priority to other issues. The border populations were in their context not relevant to the policy decisions that were taken at the national levels. As a policy choice therefore, the independent regimes allowed the status quo to continue by refraining from any policy choices that could impact on the border populations but at the same time retained their validity as territorial markers. Yet, the importance of these policy choices in regard to the relations between border communities cannot be understood without paying attention to the political leadership and the international relations exhibited between the two countries especially through efforts towards regionalism.

### **6.3 Inter-State Relations, the Border and Economic Regionalism 1967-1980**

As could be gleaned from the foregoing, the different developmental strategies adopted by Kenya and Uganda during the early years of independence made the relations between the two countries, generally, and those of the border communities problematic. Having defined their national priorities and emphasized the sanctity of national boundaries, it became difficult for the two countries to adopt any supra-national unification policies. However, by June 6, 1967 when the treaty establishing the East African Co-operation (EAC) was signed in Kampala, it was clear that the countries of the entire region could not socially, economically and politically meet their national objectives without actively incorporating inter-state integration arrangements within their development agendas. The latter was not only prompted by the nature of the colonially adopted federal institutions but more so by the interlocking cultural nature of their geopolitical entities.

At independence, both Kenya and Uganda inherited British colonial integration arrangements that dealt with economic aspects of production of goods and exchange of services. As Ochwada (2004: 63) argues, the different countries had during the colonial period specialised in the production and exportation of particular products, the purpose that had served the British well. They had also developed specialised forms of transport and communication as well as services such as reinsurance and tourism. Kenya increasingly specialised in food manufacturing, while Uganda produced electricity and processed raw minerals (Ibid, 64). All these colonial integration arrangements were, together with the associated institutional arrangements, inherited by the independent states. Though replete with various deficiencies, the new leaders were keen to further their integration efforts through the colonial based structures of the East African Common Services Organization (EACSO).

Colonial and early independent formal regional integration initiatives shared a common feature of being mainly economic in objectives<sup>4</sup>. The economic justification for regionalism was overwhelmingly emphasized almost at the exclusion of other possible intervening variables. The economic arguments insisted that by joining together, states are in a position to exploit large scale economies and at the same time restructure the regional economy in a way that benefits the production base of a given region (Clapham, 2001). Imbued with the western developmental arguments and conjured within modernization theoretical assumptions, regional integration was conceptualised as a mechanism of ensuring economic development. At independence, it was obvious that the new leaders would continue to pursue integration through a federation. As Rothchild (1968:1) observes:

...Because federation is a response to genuine needs, it seems certain that the desire to found trans-national unions will persist in the years to come. Economic inducements such as regional economic advantage and economies of scale as well as expanded opportunities for inter-territorial projects (electric power and irrigation systems), a wider financial base,

---

<sup>4</sup> See Appendix 7 for the table showing the major integration arrangements in Africa.

and a more rational allocation of skilled technicians and managerial personnel are constants.

Both Jomo Kenyatta and Milton Obote embraced the ideals of federalism as envisaged through EACSO and viewed regional integration as a way of liberating their respective states from the throes of economic malaise. By encouraging regional integration, the two leaders together with their Tanzanian counterpart, Julius Nyerere, hoped to create common markets that would allow the free movement of people, capital, services and goods within and between their respective countries to avoid their chronic dependency to the North. As Mazrui (1977) has argued, regional integration efforts were seen as a struggle against the dependency situation imposed upon the continent by its colonial historical experience. Thus, East African regionalism was acknowledged as a viable strategy through which the different countries in the region would adopt to combat foreign dependency and underdevelopment.

Used rather loosely, regional integration came to characterize various broad social, economic and political initiatives that were hoped to increase the bargaining power of the respective countries within the international political economy. As Clapham (2001: 59) has argued, the uniting strand within such initiatives was the sense that as individual states, they could not readily achieve their goals in isolation from their neighbours. This, as the author further argues, explains why integration schemes were particularly characteristic of groups of states that were aware of both their common identities and of their least relatively small size and individual weaknesses. Since the East African countries, like those elsewhere in Africa were seen as being exceptionally small and weak, at least in reference to those in the North, regional integration was seen as the panacea to their numerous problems. Again, the realities in the region characterised by shared histories among its people and a strong sense of continental solidarity expressed through pan-Africanism made the need for East African integration initiatives sacrosanct.

By 1967 when the leaders of the three East African states signed the treaty formalizing the operation of the East African Community, both local and continental initiatives

towards regionalism were fully on course. Locally, as we have already observed, the federation structures inherited from colonialism were active in the countries of the region. Continentally, the activities of the Economic Commission for Africa (ECA) gave overwhelming impetus to the economic aspects of integration. As the earliest formal apostle of regional cooperation in the entire post-independent Africa, ECA perceived the internal markets of Africa as generally too small and therefore a constraint on industrialization and development (Adetula, 2004: 11). Consequently, ECA strongly advocated for the creation of effective regional markets through economic cooperation between states. In this regard, various groups of countries were expected to establish or strengthen their multinational institutional machinery to facilitate the crystallization of common economic policies and projects. ECA's programme, through the political support of OAU, formed the basis for the emergence of numerous regional and sub-regional integration organisations.

Within the East African Community, the stipulations of the 1967 treaty laid down new strategies of integration although the leaders did not abandon the structures inherited from colonialism (Gimode, 1996; Ochwada, 2004, 67). As Ochwada (2004:7) has observed:

The new elements added aimed at correcting the economic disequilibria in trade between the countries. They also hoped to promote a more viable development strategy through the harmonisation of fiscal incentives offered by each country. These included the transfer tax system and the establishment of the East African Development Bank. At the time, they argued that a more equitable distribution system of industrial benefits would diversify wealth and bring about economic equilibrium.

The signing of the EAC treaty signalled a major development in the inter-state relations in the region. From a state-centric point of view, the member states committed themselves to an economic course that was destined to benefit the peoples of the region and more so the border populations. Though mired with economic as well as political problems, the period between 1967 and 1977 saw major economic cooperation facilitated through the EAC between the states of the region generally, and Kenya-Uganda

specifically. This was a period characterised by broad national experiences in Kenya and Uganda fostered through the political leadership of three presidencies, Jomo Kenyatta in Kenya and Milton Obote and Idi Amin in Uganda. While Kenya witnessed a relatively consistent political and economic development by the standards of most African states, Uganda was greatly undermined by the political collapse in the 1970s that came to be manifested in military dictatorship and authoritarian regime (Berg-Schlosser and Siegler, 1990: 126).

Uganda's political problems among other factors explain Kenya's dominance in the economic fortunes of the region generally and those of the EAC specifically. As already observed, Uganda's political problems had begun with Milton Obote who by 1967 had suppressed those opposed to his abuse of power. By 1969, Obote had banned political parties and in 1970 made the so-called 'Nakivubo Pronouncements' on May Day 1970, nationalizing private business holdings. Within this political atmosphere that was also associated with economic problems and the eroded investor confidence, Idi Amin, his army commander used a disgruntled section of the army to overthrow Obote's government on January 25 1971. This coup effectively brought Uganda under Amin's military dictatorship that was to last till April 1979. During this reign Uganda experienced the worst economic and political turmoil characterised by tyranny that caused serious disruptions and led to the eventual breakdown of the economy.

The collapse of the Ugandan economy in the 1970s, among other things, intensified the reliance of the Ugandan people on Kenya especially through the provisions of the EAC and other informal economic networks. Following the expulsion of the Indian community that controlled a major proportion of the country's economy in the early 1970s for example, the sharp decline in Uganda's manufacturing sector was mainly cushioned by Kenyan business people. Consumer goods and other imports from Kenya increased in markets in Uganda. Mamdani (1983:97) has observed that in 1971 imports of animal oil and fats, cotton fabric and sugar valued at Uganda Shs. 24 million, Shs 12.3 million and Shs 11 million respectively streamed into Uganda from Kenya. Ochwada (2004: 68) has further observed that by 1976, Uganda imported from Kenya products valued at Uganda

Shs 94.99 million, Shs. 41.68 million and Shs. 76 million. Concomitantly, multinational corporations (MNCs) operating in Kenya extended their commercial undertakings into Uganda. The latter included Cooper Motors, Leyland Motors, East African Industries, Robbialac Paints and Shell Chemical Company.

The foregoing economic links between Kenya and Uganda, though not wholly credited to the EAC, succeeded within the greater spirit of Pan-East Africanism that was championed by the political elites in the two countries. Yet this spirit, and generally the EAC treaty, merely mirrored the inherent contradictions that dictated the nature of the commitment of the leaders to the EAC as a supranational body. Essentially, the unwillingness of the leaders to forfeit their political and economic sovereignty posed a major threat to the survival of the EAC. In terms of its broad impact on the lives of most ordinary Kenyans and Ugandans, especially those inhabiting border areas, the deep involvement of the states and the over-emphasis on economic arguments for regional integration provided a series of contradictions for its dismal performance and collapse in 1977.

#### **6.4 Border Bukusu-Bagisu Relations and the Failure of Economic Regionalism**

That the reduction of EAC integration goals to strictly economic matters militated against its relevance to border communities cannot be gainsaid. The state centred economic arguments hardly paid attention to the particular social and political histories that informed the two countries whose peoples were meant to benefit from the EAC integration initiatives. Integration as Adetula (2004: 21) argues, represents much broader and detailed arrangements which require states to make certain social, political and economic sacrifices and commitments as well as concessions, as well as demonstrate their will towards a redefinition of their individual and collective participation in the international economy. Thus, by conceiving the EAC in purely economic terms its operations ignored the wider realities at play. EAC merely became an avenue through which infrastructures were created for the exchange of commodities. The human agency lacked in these initiatives since exchange and markets that facilitate the movement of

goods were the only ones that are over-emphasized. As Adebayo Adedeji argues rather generally:

It is now clear that the economism of regional cooperation is principally responsible for the slow progress made during the last forty years. By focussing virtually exclusively on economic cooperation and integration while making the heroic *ceteris paribus* assumption as far as political and social factors are concerned, has contributed significantly to the lack of progress in the actualisation of the vision (Adedeji, 2002: 1)

In terms of the human agency and specifically the activities of the border communities of the Babukusu and the Bagisu, the EAC meant nothing much without transforming their social, economic and political border interactions in real terms. While the official rhetoric emphasized the economic gains of EAC, other social, cultural and political dimensions of this process were conflated within the individual political and ideological rivalries of the power elites in Kenya and Uganda. To the ordinary peoples within the different national sovereignties, the boundary between them continued to define their insertion into the power interests at play. The Kenya-Uganda border basically remained a line of contact between two sovereign states each jealous of its territorial integrity and national autonomy. In a sense, contacts at borderlands remained more often than not contacts of conflict rather than harmony (Asiwaju, 1985).

Precisely, the relations between the Babukusu and the Bagisu peoples were, within the state centred economic imperatives, mitigated within the inhibitive and restrictive tendencies of the two states. The crossing of the border by the nationalities of either state was a challenge that needed to be monitored within the context of each state's policies and interests. This was especially important for the cross-border movements of persons who had and continued to have close historical and socio-cultural ties and who continued to view the border as a great impediment to their daily transactions. As Baubock and Rundell (1998: 8) observe, the crossing of the boundary by these people blurred three kinds of boundaries; the territorial borders of the states, the political boundaries of citizenship and the cultural boundaries of national communities. When such people move from one international location to another, as individuals or as groups, their activities

affect the immediate and future development prospects both at the source of their movement, the place of their origin and also the place of destination (Gould, 1995: 23). The cross border movement of the two peoples and their activities were thus conceived within the diverse inter-state relations that were characterised by conflict and cooperation.

As already observed, before 1967, there was some relative calm and political stability in both Kenya and Uganda as the leaders in the two states struggled to align their national priorities and consolidate their power. The trends of cross-border relations between the Babukusu and Bagisu were equally calm. As one source (Wamimbi, O.I, 2005) indicated, border crossing did not raise much heat since the nationalist consciousness was the main political agenda. Due to this relative calm, most people within these communities freely moved to the different urban centres and towns in the two countries in search for better opportunities for self-advancement. Border towns such as Bungoma, Mbale, Malaba and Tororo became major conglomerates attracting large populations of the Babukusu and Bagisu peoples. Moreover, there was a high rate of rural-urban migration to other major urban centres like Nairobi and Kampala (Obudho, 1984).

Within the various urban centres, the two peoples were engaged in several formal and informal activities and trade. As Kolia (O.I, 2001) observes, it was in the urban centres characterised by diverse cultural dynamics that the Bukusu-Bagisu cultural comradeship was highly demonstrated in the people's social, economic and political transactions. The main regulating mechanism in the participation of the two communities in the political economy of each respective country remained the Identity Card or *Kipande* that defined their distinct nationalities. However as several oral sources (Munyanda, Wakiro, O.I, 2005) corroborate, the use of the Identity Card did not translate into much success as far as the controlling of cross-border movements and relations between the two communities were concerned. This was because of the presence of people from either community on each side of the border and their ability to speak not only Lubukusu and Lumasaaba but also Kiswahili, the regional language. Moreover, the Identity card could only be issued to those who had attained the age of eighteen years. With the increasing participation of the

young populations in the various cross-border transactions, the ineffective system of police and the lack of enough data to determine those who had attained the identity card age, its use as a means of controlling interactions between the peoples became an abysmal failure. Moreover, the extensive nature of the border and the limited human and financial resources also made close surveillance problematic.

But if the period before 1967 was characterised by intense cross-border relations between the Babukusu and the Bagisu that were relatively calm, the political dynamics in Kenya and Uganda between 1967 to 1980 made such relations increasingly problematic. Although the political developments in Kenya were no less insignificant, Uganda's political instability under Obote in the late 1960s and Amin in the 1970s especially had the greatest impact on the two border communities' relations. As already pointed out in the previous section, Obote's repressive regime from 1966 to 1971 had not only led to a crack down on his opponents but also to the expulsion of thousands of Kenyan migrant workers. Though this had an overall impact on the Kenya- Uganda inter-state relations, its greatest impact as we noted was on the border communities whose people were seen to be collaborating on kinship lines to destabilize Obote's regime. As Okoth (1992: 76) has observed, it was not surprising that because of the antagonism that Obote had created, Idi Amin's coup of January 1971 was well received in Kenya as a whole and western Kenya in particular.

The years between 1971 and 1980 were critical ones in the border relations between the two countries and that of the Babukusu and Bagisu people specifically. On top of the economic collapse that we observed, Idi Amin's military dictatorship worsened the security situation in Uganda and this continued to impact on the border dynamics and relations. Indeed as it is noted, the warm mood that had received Amin's takeover in Kenya lasted for only two years (*ibid.*). From 1973, the worsening security situation in Uganda had led to the disappearance of several Kenyan employees of the East African Community. Although there emerged a strong diplomatic concern in Kenya, Amin's response was to accuse Kenya's Luos in Uganda of colluding with exiled Obote in Tanzania to destabilize Uganda (Avirgan and Honey cited in Okoth 1992). Thus, like

Obote after 1967, Amin also viewed the Kenya-Uganda border and the relations generated across it as politically destabilizing and, therefore, requiring close monitoring and control.

Amin's need to control the border though not restricted to the Luo impacted greatly on the specific relations between other border communities including the Babukusu and the Bagisu. By 1975, thousands of Ugandans including the Bagisu fled into exile using western Kenya generally as their escape route. For most of the Bagisu, the proximity of the border and the presence of their kith and kin in Kenya made their incorporation in Kenya easier. As one source reveals (Kolia, O.I, 2005) the Bagisu in fear of repression crossed the border and were warmly received in most of the Bukusu homes. While some sought refuge among their Kenyan extended relatives, others ended up in major rural and urban centres in various parts of Bungoma. It was in these areas that the Bagisu sought various opportunities for advancement. As we shall demonstrate below, most of the activities they engaged in were informal in nature.

Yet, neither the nature of cross border movements nor the political problems could be viewed in a unidirectional way. The political problems and their resultant impact on both the Babukusu and the Bagisu relations across the border were not uniquely a feature of the Ugandan state in the 1970s. In Kenya, although the scale was relatively low in comparative terms, there were all forms of state orchestrated repression. As Munene (1995) and Wanyama (2000: 32) have observed, the compromised elite that constructed the independent state in Kenya inherited an authoritarian state structure that they continued to use for their self-aggrandizement. They manipulated the political system in a bid to consolidate their hold on power and this culminated in a patrimonial pattern of personal rule, which worked under the guise of a one-party-system (Munene, 1995). Within this political framework, that was characteristic of the Kenyatta regime of the mid 1960s to late 1970s, Kenyans with dissenting voices were clamped down, including artists, lawyers, academics, politicians and the clergy. The brutal manner in which the Kenyatta regime sought to silence its critics during this period partly explains why many Kenyans including some Babukusu found their way into Uganda. Like the experience

with the Bagisu, the movements by the Babukusu across the border found refuge among their kinsmen in Bugisu and within the many emerging urban centres in Uganda including Mbale and Kampala. What perhaps needs to be emphasized at this point is not the comparative strengths of political repression in the two countries but rather the impact of the inter-state relations on the peoples' cross-border activities and relations. The Ugandan scenario perhaps captures this reality better.

The crossing of many Ugandan nationalities into Kenya continued to cause an alarm to the Amin administration in the mid 1970's. As Okoth (1992: 77) observes, Amin was clearly in difficulties and to get out of them he decided on a confrontation course with Kenya. In February 1976, Amin through a radio broadcast announced that large tracts of land in Kenya (mainly western Kenya) were originally Ugandan territory and wondered whether the people in those areas still wanted to remain part of Kenya. Amin indeed went ahead to announce that he would fight any neighbouring country that interfered with its import-export routes (Okoth, 1992). This provocation and territorial claims no doubt generated a lot of diplomatic tension and affected the relationship between Kenya and Uganda so severely that armed conflict seemed imminent. The Kenyan response to these provocations was to close the border, stop the handling of Ugandan goods on 23 February 1976 and give Amin 48 hours to apologise (Okoth, 1992: 77). Although Amin relented almost immediately, Berg-Schlosser and Sigler (1990: 126) argue that Kenya's subsequent trade embargo, including blocking the entire oil supply to Uganda for a short time in 1976 almost broke the Amin regime before Uganda finally agreed to withdraw its claims.

The provocation generated by Amin's territorial claims over Kenya was just among the many ways in which the Kenya-Uganda inter-state tensions were consummated in the mid 1970s. From 1976 to April 1979 when Amin was ousted from power, the intense suspicions between Jomo Kenyatta and Idi Amin occasionally threatened to bring the two countries to war with resultant implications to the ordinary people in the two countries and especially those occupying border areas. It is, for instance, noted that following the humiliation that Amin faced in his failed territorial claims over Kenya, deliberate

harassment of Kenyans started in Uganda (Okoth, 2000: 288). These harassments culminated in the death of a Kenyan female student in Makerere University and the 'disappearance' of another in March 1976 (Ibid). This was followed in the subsequent month with the raid and killing of five Kenyans by Ugandan troops in the Kapenguria border area inside Kenya. After this, a series of accusations and counter accusations led to steadily rising tempers between the two leaders. It is no wonder that when the Israeli government raided on Entebbe in July 1976, Uganda quickly suspected Kenya of complicity. Indeed this accusation of conspiracy did not only get forwarded to the UN and OAU but also led to the mobilization of troops at the common border by the two countries.

That the inter-state relations between Kenya and Uganda in the face of mounting tensions were significant in shaping the community relations across the common border cannot be gainsaid. More often than not, it was mainly during such strained relations between the national leaders that the border and indeed the border communities became relevant in the ensuing power play. It was during such times that stringent economic and political measures, including border closures and enhanced border policing became important policy options for the national leaders. In such contexts, the cross-border relations between the Babukusu and the Bagisu were greatly strained by the deliberate national decisions to control or completely curtail the people's movements across the border. Such national decisions, though obviously aimed at meeting the political leaders' aspirations, contradicted the historical realities of interaction between the two communities across the common border.

The fact that national policies paid little attention to border people's trans-border interactions can however not be restricted to periods of volatile inter-state relations. It is for instance argued that whether it was during periods of peace or tension the local border populations were not incorporated in the various national economic activities (Munyanda, O.I, 2005). On top of the numerous Multi-national Corporations (MNCs), government ministries, commercial firms and financial institutions, government parastatals and cooperatives only prominent business people were allowed to cross the national borders

to trade (Ackello-Ogutu, 1997; Ochwada, 2004: 69). The economic justifications for keeping the common border open were thus persistently determined by the overwhelming influence these mega interest groups wielded on the national leaders as opposed to the realities of the cross border community activities. As Okoth (1992: 77) has observed, despite the inter-state tensions of the mid 1970s, it was because of the economic picture between both countries at this time that made them recoil from the implications of a lengthy state of belligerence than anything else. The collapse of the Ugandan economy, its dependence on Kenya and the profit Kenya obtained in the process made any other considerations at the border irrelevant. In fact, Kenya was making such a profit out of Uganda that closing the border was tantamount to killing the proverbial goose that was laying the golden egg (Ibid. Pg.77). In this context therefore, it was the economic motive at the state level than the dynamics at the border community level that determined both border policy and inter-state relations generally.

### **6.5 The Informal Economy and the Border Babukusu-Bagisu Relations to 1980**

The manner in which the national Kenyan and Ugandan interests ignored the trans-border community relations and the activities they generated was responsible for the emergence of various diverse informal responses to the border restrictions. These responses, which took place beyond the formally recognised institutions under which the border and its management was conceived by the states, continued to define the nature of its evolution and transformation over time. As Nugent (2002) argues, borders are shaped as much by the everyday activities of ordinary people, in ways that sometimes undergird but at other times may bypass the formal structures of politics. The nature of response generated by both the Babukusu and the Bagisu through their regular interaction across the border on the one hand worked against the logic of national integration and tended to reinforce a sense of commonality between them that was supranational in nature. On the other hand, the two peoples, in collaboration with others in similar situations sought to take advantage of their unique location as border peoples to participate in the daily cross-border activities that challenged the national restrictions espoused by the leadership in place. The emergence of the informal economy along the border and the increasing

participation of the two peoples in it during the period 1967 to 1980 need to be conceptualised within these broad dynamics.

The proliferation of the informal economy, which some scholars have called variously as 'unrecorded trade', 'underground', 'smuggling' or within the context of East Africa 'Magendo' is due to cross-border interactions which have their own distinctive features but which, as Bach (1999: 8) observes, combine elements of inter-state and trans-national regionalism. Although the informal economy generally, and informal trade specifically comes in different forms or known by different names, it is characterised by not being entered in national accounts. Since it operates outside the official national networks, it challenges the restrictions and tax policy frameworks put in place as its participants are viewed in opposition to established norms. Even if the activities within the cross-border informal economy may not be interpreted as acts of overt opposition, they may still be seen as acts of what James Scott called 'everyday forms of peasant resistance', comprising part of the hidden transcript of power relations (Scott, 1985). According to Scott:

The official transcript of power relations seldom elicits explicit challenges from subordinated groups, except during moments of systemic crisis when the mask will finally be permitted to drop. At other times, when the structures of power are secure, the response of the subordinate is to circulate their own knowing and hidden transcript among themselves, traces of which may seep into the public arena and thus destabilize the official transcript (Scott, 1990: 200).

If the above observation by Scott is correct, it is not enough to look at just open acts of resistance but also keep an eye on the alternative constructions of reality embedded in the words and the deeds of the ordinary people. The informal cross-border activities between the two peoples can be seen as constituting their subversion of the official constraints that the border laid on their daily interactions and which continued to hamper their age-old dealings that obviously go beyond the colonial institution of the border.

The existence of the informal economy at the border and its various categorizations unmasks the constant reality of the ordinary peoples' struggle to make a living outside the formal state defined economic networks. The context of whether these activities are legal or illegal is arguably dependent on what Nugent (2002: 259) has distinctly categorized as the divide between the national and local discourses of morality. Within the national, most of the activities may be noted as being illegal since the states have historically arrogated to themselves the right to distinguish legal from illegal activities. From the local point of view on the other hand, cross-border informal activities or what is often described as smuggling is basically an exchange of goods and services over the boundary. In essence, therefore, the definition of smuggling and indeed other informal cross border economic activities boils down to whose point of view, between the national and local, arrogates the morality issues.

Scholars have generally observed that the restrictive policies followed by many countries create incentives for the rise of the illegal cross-border informal economy (Ackello-Ogutu, 1997: 2). Restrictions such as import tariffs, quotas, exchange controls, state trading monopolies and export restrictions create incentives to beat the system. Together with the restrictive national policies, past historical linkages and the semi-convertibility of currencies in border areas facilitate 'illegal' cross-border informal activities. Import licensing, often a response to an overvalued currency, restricts the supply of imports and raises their domestic price which in turn provides incentives for a parallel market in smuggled goods (Ibid, 3). Relative price differentials between countries and shortages in a particular country also encourage border informal trade. Scarcity and shortages in some of the neighbouring countries create effective demand and high profits thus making it extremely difficult to control smuggling. All these conditions obtained for both Kenya and Uganda and were particularly exacerbated in the 1970s by the civil strife and political instability in the region as we have observed above.

The restrictive nature of the state at the borders coupled with the uncertain political climate that disrupted the traditional forms of interaction between the Babukusu and the Bagisu was mainly responsible for the rise of illegal trade within the common borderland

area. By 1980, most of the economic gains that had developed across the border during the first decade of independence and earlier had come to a standstill. These gains had been a product of not only a cultural interaction but also a flourishing cross-border trade that saw the emergence of major border trading centres and market places like Chepkube, Suam, Lwakhakha and Malaba. The Amin dictatorial regime in Uganda, the constant border restrictions and the ever-mounting border insecurity due to the inter-state tensions especially in the 1970s accounted for the transformation of this trade into more discrete and contraband nature. The range of commodities that passed through the Kenya-Uganda border includes agricultural commodities (coffee, maize, maize meal, sugar, milk, rice, wheat flour, beans, groundnuts, simsim, bananas etc), industrial goods (cooking fats and oils, petroleum products), fish and forest resources (charcoal and timber).

Although the above list of items that exchanged hands between the Babukusu and the Bagisu is far from being exhaustive, several observations on the nature of transactions can be identified. Given the strong industrial base in Kenya, most of the processed items including cooking fats/oils, wheat flour, petroleum products, maize meal, sugar and bread were produced in Kenya and sold across the border to Uganda. On the other hand, most agricultural commodities including un-milled maize meal, beans, groundnut, bananas and rice, charcoal that were locally produced in Bugisu and elsewhere in Uganda were transacted across the border into Kenya. Most of these import/export transactions along the border exploited the old unofficial networks that had historical and cultural connections. Between 1970 and 1980 however, the transactions became more complicated as the political climate in the two countries and border restrictions heightened price differentials and greatly affected the production of certain items leading to scarcity in several areas. This was also exacerbated by the entry of other market functionaries, including the rich businessmen, Multinational Organisations and others that had both direct and indirect influence on the local cross-border trade.

By far, the most intricate nature of the informal transactions between the Babukusu and the Bagisu across the border involved cash crops mainly coffee and cotton. Although the nature and direction of their transaction across the border was a function of the price

differentials in both Kenya and Uganda, other intervening variables were obtained from the oral sources. With respect to coffee, one source (Kolia, O.I, 2005) pointed out that although there were overwhelming income variations arising from the coffee supplied to Kenyan factories with what was fetched from that supplied to Ugandan factories, the mode of payment also influenced the manner in which the coffee was smuggled into Uganda. The failure by Kenyan factories to pay farmers on time and the more accessibility to certain Ugandan factories was also an important consideration in the decision to sell coffee to Ugandan factories in the 1970s. The issue of accessibility perhaps more than price was significant in the trans-border transactions involving cotton than coffee. Ugandan cotton farmers reportedly delivered their lint to Kenyan ginneries located close to the border than take the trouble of having to cover many kilometres to deliver the cotton to the ginneries located in Mbale (Munyanda, O.I, 2005). One thing that seems strikingly similar is the fact that whichever direction the products moved, there was an overwhelming consideration for the risk of border crossing and the added advantages of accessing additional scarce items and enhancing kin relations with the respective areas visited.

Whether it was coffee, cotton or the agricultural and industrial commodities, there was a clear effort through this informal trade by both the Babukusu and the Bagisu to mould the border into something that benefited them. There were certainly various categories within such informal participants in the cross-border trade. They could broadly be delineated into three, the small timers or what Nugent (2002) has identified elsewhere as armpit traders, the commission workers and the rich bulk traders. The first and second categories comprise mainly the local Babukusu and Bagisu and are distinguished by the nature of their transactions and the volume of goods transacted. While armpit traders dealt in petty or small quantity items, the commission workers whether on foot or on bicycles worked for the rich to smuggle bulk goods across the border in order to earn a commission. Their success highly depended on the discrete nature of the operations and on their ability to develop good working relations with the police and border personnel. The bulk traders involved many rich merchants and companies from Kenya, Uganda and outside.

The active participation of the Babukusu and the Bagisu in these informal activities stretched into the 1980s and beyond and is responsible for the rise of prominent trading centres such as Lwakhakha, Suam and Chepkube. Although these border centres appear neglected in their physical outlook, they actually remained active in terms of cross-border trading activities. Malaba seems to be the busiest centre with infrastructural facilities including roads, telecommunication, power lines and supporting institutions such as banks, yet within the context of the 1970s and early 1980s Chepkube was perhaps the most active in the entire East Africa region, having earned itself the name *Soko ya Magendo* (the Smuggling Market).

There is no doubt that the propitious nature of the informal economy together with the rapid growth of the border trading centres attracted myriad other participants and activities beyond the limited context of Bukusu-Bugisu. In regard to coffee specifically, many people, including prominent Kenyan politicians took advantage of the chaos in Idi Amin's Uganda to make a fortune from coffee smuggling at Chepkube. During the 1977-79 period for instance, Ugandan coffee smuggling by the Kenyan top leadership did a lot to undermine morality in the police force that the then Kenyan Police Commissioner acknowledge. Indeed, Chepkube became the tag used to refer to senior police officers named in Parliament as accomplices in the illicit business ([http://www.nationaudio.com/News/DailyNation/02032003/Comment/Special\\_Report08.html](http://www.nationaudio.com/News/DailyNation/02032003/Comment/Special_Report08.html)). While two MPs - Muhuri Muchiri and (the late) Jesse Gachago - were jailed for smuggling, a lot more people in the Kenyan government, including President Kenyatta's kitchen cabinet, were said to be deep in the vice. It was said that some members of Kenyatta's inner circle had taken advantage of his advanced age and failing health to circumvent the law and engage in what may be classified as illicit activities (Ibid.).

It is significant to also point out that owing to the discrete and contraband nature of this trade there was always a real constant threat of being infiltrated by criminal elements. Following the degenerated security situation in the region and the lack of appropriate border policing mechanisms, arms found their ways in civilian hands and were equally transacted across the border. Also important was the issue of women's engagement in prostitution within the main border trading centres. The degenerated security situation

was also reflected in the increase in the number of refugees, especially those fleeing the tyranny of the Amin's misrule into Kenya (Ochwada, 2004: 69).

Perhaps, what needs to be emphasized is that whereas there is no doubt that the networks which the two communities exploited during the informal activities reflected long established primordial links, it is also not difficult to see their activities as being a resistance to the embodiment of the states' power which the border represented. As the Kenyan and Ugandan states started to embrace the renewed mood for regionalism, coupled with the calm political environment and strong local Pan East African initiatives from the 1980s, the fluidity within which these informal activities thrived began to wane. Deliberate policy decisions on the part of the political leadership meant that such trans-border activities become more channelled through the semi-informal social networks that continued to evolve in the borderland as we demonstrate in the next chapter.

## **6.6 Summary**

This chapter has generally examined the role played by the independent Kenya and Uganda governments in enhancing harmonious trans-border community relations between the Babukusu and the Bagisu up to 1980. It has been argued that unlike in the colonial period, the new independent leaders in Kenya and Uganda readily acknowledged the negative effects arising from the inherited colonial boundaries but were reluctant, if not totally unwilling to support policies that would restrain state sovereignty and their power. In terms of borders generally, the leaders through the OAU supported the persistency of the status quo in as far as the running of borders was concerned. This status quo meant that both the Babukusu and the Bagisu, like the case was with other African communities remain in the former colonial defined geopolitical spaces. Having operationalised the status quo, the challenge of the new political leaders was to weave together a new political community out of the diverse ethnic groups through which it could meet the many social, economic and political challenges.

In view of the above, the chapter has demonstrated, however, that the construction of a national community both in Kenya and Uganda was embedded in the intractable debates on regionalism that sought to give some power to certain regions and communities. The failure of the nationalist project, coupled with the economic attempts at a broader regionalism saw the emergence of inter-state tensions and civil strife in Kenya and Uganda. These phenomena greatly undermined border community relations. While this was happening at the state level, however, a vibrant informal economy was evolving within the Bukusu-Bugisu borderland and challenging the statist restrictions on the economic, social and cultural levels. By 1980, the volatile scenario generated by the inter-state rivalries, the dwindling economic performance of the countries and the challenge of the informal economy had to be confronted within the emerging political transitions of the period as the next chapter seeks to demonstrate.

## CHAPTER SEVEN

### RENEWED PAN EAST AFRICANISM AND BORDERLAND BABUKUSU-BAGISU INITIATIVES, 1980-1997.

#### 7.0 Introduction

By 1980, when both Kenya and Uganda were witnessing major political transitions the regional, national and local initiatives that were influencing the border relations between the Babukusu and the Bagisu were undergoing a major transformation. By 1977, the previously vibrant EAC economic bloc had collapsed because of serious structural economic problems and the ideological differences between the leaders in the region. Nationally in Kenya, August 1978 saw a political transition with the death of the founding president Jomo Kenyatta and his replacement by Daniel Toroitich Arap Moi. In Uganda on the other hand, Idi Amin was ousted in April 1979 and replaced for two months by Y.K Lule's government. However, two months later, Lule was toppled and replaced by Godfrey Binaisa who was subsequently replaced by Milton Obote in December 1980. These transitions were taking place at a time when the Kenya-Uganda border communities, and particularly the Babukusu and the Bagisu, were deeply immersed into an apparently vibrant informal economy as we have seen in the previous chapter. This chapter specifically analyses the two communities' relations at the border within the newly reinvigorated spirit of regionalism that finally saw the signing of the treaty for the new East African Community in Arusha, Tanzania, on April 27, 1997. Together with the global, continental and regional initiatives in response to the dwindling state economies, the chapter also specifically examines both state and non-state initiatives by the ordinary Babukusu and Bagisu. The latter non-state initiatives as the chapter demonstrates had a supra-national orientation and continually challenged state-centrism as an option in confronting the dynamics at the Kenya-Uganda border.

## 7.1 The Dwindling State Economies and Renewed Regionalism

The political transitions in Kenya and Uganda around the early 1980s coming as they did after a volatile political scene characterised by Amin's military dictatorship and a general state antimony between the political leaders in the region were occurring at a time when global and continental concerns about the declining performance of especially African economies were being raised. Concerns were specifically being raised at the poor manner in which the states were managing both the political and economic affairs of communities in the various African countries. The gist of the lamentation was that African states had declined in their capacity to institute meaningful social, political and economic changes that would usher in greater freedom and material prosperity for their people. They had not only become deficient in managing the economy and the natural environment but that also their nature of performance often gave rise to divisions and conflicts (Nzongola-Ntalaja, 1997: 19).

The disappointing African economic performance towards the 1980s was happening at a time when numerous efforts had been put in place to stimulate industrial growth, foster agricultural production and other development programmes to bring about more fundamental changes in the economic situation inherited at independence. As Asante (1999: 734) argues, despite Africa boasting of vast resources, the hopes of 1960s and 1970s that a combination of trade with aid from the industrial nations would provide the necessary resources to satisfy national aspirations for autonomous, self-sustaining development had failed to materialize. Neither the trade nor the aid policies practiced by the industrialized nations appeared capable of accelerating economic expansion.

The economic stagnation in most African countries characterized by the sluggish economic growth, low levels of productivity, fractured industrial bases, low levels of life expectancy among many others continued to convince African leaders, intellectuals and policy specialists that urgent strategies needed to be put in place to manage the dire economic and social problems experienced on the continent. More worrying as Asante (ibid.) further observes was the fact that Africa had become a fertile ground for neo-

colonialism and dependency, which greatly contributed to the continent's problems. By the end of 1970s, Africa's dependency on the economies of the industrialized Western countries in terms of foreign interest, foreign investments, foreign technology, foreign expertise, foreign theories of development and economic growth among others had become greater than ever before (Ibid.). No doubt these developments turned most African countries into subordinate positions compared with those of the West. This disturbing condition was aggravated by the impact of the global crises accelerated by the conditionalities from the International financial lending institutions, Bretton Woods institutions and the World Bank and the oil shocks (Mkandawire and Soludo, 1999).

Confronted with these implacable realities, African leaders had to reassess their options and devise alternative paths towards economic development. The fundamental concern with the imminent economic catastrophe and collapse required that the leaders not only confront their internal economies but also reassess their linkages with the Western countries. The failure of the North-South Dialogues to realize the objective of the New International Economic Order (NIEO) had brought home the reality of how unjust the international system had become against African states. The NIEO favored developed countries over developing ones. Consequently, NIEO failed miserably to constitute a source of inspiration in addressing the continuing severe economic imbalances in the relations between the developed and developing countries (Aseka, 2005: 184). As a result, developing countries, particularly those in Africa became trapped in the negative effects of the deteriorating terms of trade and high interest rates, a situation that made it difficult for them to earn the much needed foreign exchange resources for the purposes of development (Asante, 1999, 735; Ochwada, 2004: 70).

Building on the former OAU and ECA initiatives, and working within the hindsight of the foregoing degenerated economic reality, African leaders, intellectuals and policy specialists through the February 1979 Monrovia and the April 1980 meetings adopted numerous policy documents, including the Lagos Plan of Action (LPA) and the Final act of Lagos (FAL) that collectively envisaged the formation of the African common market, free trade areas and economic union. These documents generally emphasized self-

reliance, self-sustenance and economic cooperation and integration among African states. As a counter strategy to the increasing phenomenon of over-dependence, African states resolved to adopt a far-reaching regional approach based primarily on collective self-reliance. They envisaged the accomplishment of the foregoing objectives in phases within the three sub-regions of Eastern and Southern Africa, Central Africa and West Africa.

It is important to note however that these impressive continental developments were also increasingly benefiting from global trends towards regionalism. As Adetula (2004: 20) has observed, most of the regional integration efforts in Africa at the time to some extent held theoretical allegiance to the European process of integration. This observation is exact in regard to the fact that there had been sustained global consensus on the need for closer cooperation and regional integration between states. The dominant idea within this global consensus was that regional integration was an effective means of promoting the goals of self-reliance and economic development. This idea did not however just remain at the theoretical level but was demonstrated practically. The most powerful and wealthiest countries in the world were collectively pursuing regionalism and this was proving very successful. These efforts had seen the emergence of successful regional economic blocs in Europe, America and Asia. As expected therefore, African states including those in East Africa could not but respond to these positive global trends.

In Africa, the LPA provided the first comprehensive continent-wide formulation and articulation of the preferred long-term economic and development objectives through regionalism (Browne and Cummings, 1984). Regionalism as a counter-strategy to Africa's over-dependence on the North was therefore vigorously pursued within the context of the LPA. Apart from the more orthodox benefits promised by former regional groupings, including the EAC, in the name of expanded trade and investment, the new economic integration was advocated as a means of reducing external vulnerability. It was hoped that regional economic integration would break the dependency syndrome by helping each member nation to export manufactured goods and eventually capital goods to their neighbours (Asante, 1999: 736). The underlying premise thus was the desire by African states and leaders to determine as far as possible their own economic policies

based on their national aspirations, natural resources and political ideologies outside the influence of the developed countries.

The East African leaders, bound by the continental commitments, followed up on the LPA as a new source of inspiration for greater regional integration and Pan Africanism. The Assembly of Heads of State and Government of the OAU in April 1980 adopted LPA as a blueprint for the economic and political development of Africa. By 14<sup>th</sup> May 1984 when the three East African leaders met in Arusha, Tanzania to sign the formal winding up of the old EAC, the reality of new regionalism had dawned on them. It was clear that despite the former organisational faults and ideological differences that had brought EAC to its knees, a new spirit of regionalism could be opened taking strong impetus from regional and continental developments. It is no wonder therefore that within the same year, presidents Julius Nyerere, Daniel Arap Moi and Apollo Milton Obote of Tanzania, Kenya and Uganda, respectively, signed the East African Community Mediation Communiqué. As Ochwada (2004: 72) has observed, this Communiqué heralded a new era in East African cooperation.

Though slowed down by the political developments in Uganda following the ousting of Obote in 1985, the steady progress towards regionalism yielded a number of successes. Numerous meetings were convened under the auspices of the new EAC spirit such as the East African Judicial Committee, Environmentally Sustainable Development, the Promotion of Trade and Defense and Security. These meetings were in part responsible for the more bold steps and new commitments taken by the region's leaders towards regionalism. The latter commitments witnessed the signing of an accord that brought into being the Secretariat of the Tripartite Commission for East African cooperation on March 14<sup>th</sup> 1996. Subsequently on 29<sup>th</sup> April 1997 in Arusha Tanzania, the heads of state of three East African countries ratified the Treaty of the East African Cooperation that sought to promote closer cooperation among the three countries in terms of the physical, monetary, immigration, infrastructure and service fields (Ikiara, et. al, 2003).

Although the foregoing initiatives once again demonstrated the willingness of the leaders to adopt regional integration as a more viable and realistic development strategy, it was clear that East African leaders could not afford to go back to the purely economic arguments that had led to the failure of EAC in 1977. Whereas economic cooperation and integration and the building of state institutions appeared plausible approaches that could give impetus to progress and development in the East African countries, there was need to shift and consider initiatives that particularly involved the experiences of the ordinary citizens in the region and whose plight the integration schemes targeted. Within the context of Kenya and Uganda specifically, two responses to regional integration and the attempts to address border dynamics could be discerned. On the one hand, there was the continuity of state-centric approaches couched within the inter-state policies of the political leadership at the time. On the other hand, however, the emerging trends towards regional integration received great impetus from several supranational non-state social factors including the civil society that influenced the nature of integration especially within the Bukusu-Bugisu borderland. The latter forces continued to benefit from the general wind of democratisation in the region arising from both local and global developments taking place in the late 1980s and early 1990s. It is to these two dimensions that we now turn.

## **7.2 Regionalism and the Kenya-Uganda Borderland: The States Response, 1980-1997**

Regionalism as a dialectical unity of social, economic and political processes has been used to describe any international grouping which is less than global in scope, and which is characterized by some mutual relevance among its members (Cocks, 1980, Adetula 2004). Such mutual relevance can be based upon frequency of cross border contacts and transactions, common aims and attributes, economic complementarity and many others. Thus a border or more specifically a borderland and the relations generated within it are central to the process of regionalism. A borderland<sup>1</sup>, defined characteristically as a sub-

---

<sup>1</sup> For an elaborate discussion on borderlands in Africa including their comparative, legal, philosophical and multidisciplinary nature see Asiwaju A. I and Adeniyi P. O eds (1996)

national area whose social, economic and political life is directly and significantly affected by proximity to an international border (Asiwaju, 1985) is central to the nature and functioning of regionalism generally and inter-state relations in particular.

As already observed, the human factor within the Kenya-Uganda borderland and the marginal interest with which the political elites paid to the cross-border informal economic activities contributed to the dismal performance and eventual collapse of the earlier efforts towards regional integration. Regionalism and regional integration specifically targets people and their relations within the various geographical spaces. It is important therefore to examine the response of the states to the realities of border populations and to the social, cultural and economic relations they generate within the borderland since such relations form the context within which the laws and politics operate.

In Kenya and Uganda specifically, the positive developments towards new regional integration had to be domesticated with a meaningful focus on the challenges arising from the dynamics taking place within the borderland areas. These latter events were dawning to the new leaders the reality that even with the collapse of the former EAC, the issue of common borders, including community relations along them required to be confronted within the new spirit of regional integration. The social, economic and political developments that were taking place only showed that the mistakes that led to the collapse of the former EAC could only be learnt and shouldered if the states were to confront their innumerable challenges. It was necessary to re-examine the overwhelming emphasis the former EAC laid on economics and the centrality of the state as the principal organisational unit in the affairs of the people. Much of the former EAC energy had been expended on economic cooperation and integration as was perceived through the state-centric mould that encapsulated the political elites and institutions. Yet the reality of the informality at the border seriously challenged any fictitious pretensions towards a state focused approach that ignored borderland communities and their activities.

From 1980s, it is clear that both economic and political considerations continued to be central to the two state's policies towards borderland community interactions. It is within these two broad categories that the inter-state commitments towards borderland issues were formulated and initiated. Economically, the historical linkages between the two territories had to be sustained through a harmonious interaction at the border. While Uganda's mining and electric production still serviced the Kenyan economy, Kenya's strong industrial base continued to supply Uganda with manufactured goods. On top of this was the continued reliance of Uganda on Kenya's transport network of roads and railways for her import and export needs. At the level of the state, these were primary economic considerations that had not only been threatened by the collapse of the former efforts towards regionalism but, which faced a further threat from the thriving border informal economy, political instability and general insecurity in the region. At the national level, the informal economy conducted across the border led to serious problems of tax evasion that had cost the two governments a lot of money in terms of revenue loss (Ackello-Ogutu, 1997: 16). The case of uncollected revenue from smuggled goods, the corruption associated with the trade and the fear of dumping inferior goods were just but three major economic implications of the informal border trade to the Kenyan and Ugandan economies.

The beginning of the 1980s saw a concerted effort by both Moi and Obote to respond to the border challenges and no better place could this begin except in the affected areas of Western Kenya and Eastern Uganda, specifically. Within a month of Obote's leadership, the two leaders met in Webuye at Bungoma district and agreed on several methods of economic cooperation between Kenya and Uganda and to fight smuggling and cattle rustling across the border (Okoth, 1992: 82). They met again in Kakamega in western Kenya in February 1983 and agreed to appoint a joint ministerial committee to streamline administrative arrangements for easier local movements along the border, and to facilitate quick prevention and investigation of customs offences. These joint meetings in essence marked a broader appreciation, among the new leadership of the centrality of confronting the challenges posed by the border not just from the national but also from a reinvigorated regional dimension. Yet, these economic changes as they related to the

border could not be confronted without recourse to the fragile political developments in the region and to the challenges to power that the borderland activities posed to the individual leaders. It is within this contradictory political realm that the economic policies on the borderland specifically and on the renewed regionalism generally were consummated.

By far, perhaps the most pressing issue to the political leadership in the two countries from the 1980s was the implications of borderland dynamics to each leader's political power. These fears were compounded by the waning popularity of the regime in the case of Kenya and the fragile transition in the case of Uganda. In Kenya, the popularity that Moi gained after the death of Kenyatta due to his early progressive *Nyayo*<sup>2</sup> policies that included the releasing of political detainees and dealing away with detention without trial was complicated by the attempted 1982 coup. After this, the clamp down on political dissenters was so intense that most dissenters fled into exile using common borders as exit points. In Uganda, on the other hand, following the 1980 elections that brought Obote to power for the second time, extra judicial killings of opponents had created serious political and economic problems that forced many Ugandans to move into exile. The 1980-1985 guerrilla campaign against Obote in Uganda had made the Ugandan leader cautious of the potential dangers to his regime posed by transnational connections.

Thus, for Moi and Obote, the period between 1980 and 1985 represented one in which the border and the relations generated across it constituted a volatile arena within which the security of their powers hanged. Specifically important were the activities of the various immigrants that were not only armed but some of who enjoyed external support. Specifically in Uganda, Yoweri Museveni and the National Resistance Army (NRA) were increasingly getting both regional and external support in terms of money, arms and suitable training camps (Berg-Schlosser and Siegler, 1990: 127). By the time Obote was deposed in 1985 by elements of his own army led by General Tito Okello Lutwa and Brigadier Bazillio Okello, the issue of illegal immigrants across the common Kenya-

---

<sup>2</sup> *Nyayo* is a kiswahili word meaning footsteps. As Moi's political programme *Nyayo* basically meant that his policies would follow in the footsteps of those of Jomo Kenyatta.

Uganda border had stalked the political regimes in the two countries for about five years. As Okoth (2000: 289) argues, Obote's policy towards Kenya during 1980 to 1985 was to try to get Nairobi to curb exile activities so as to reduce the tempo of the guerrilla campaign against his administration.

The concern for a broader regional approach to addressing the common political issues related to the border between the two countries was behind Kenya's hosting of peace talks between the new military government of General Tito Okello and Museveni's NRA, which resulted in the signing of a peace agreement. Though acting as an arbiter between the two conflicting camps, the message that was resounding from Moi was that the regional political problems could only be resolved politically through collective consultation and not militarily. The Okello-Museveni agreement was however not honored and fighting resumed until Museveni captured state power in January 1986. As a source (Kolia, O.I, 2005) confirmed, the political developments in Uganda had increasingly come to demonstrate to Moi that the only secure and long lasting solution to addressing border issues was to enhance good neighborliness. Though the meetings appeared an appropriate starting point in enhancing good relations at the border, therefore, a broader regional approach involving the new Ugandan leader, Museveni and Moi had to be pursued.

Okoth (2000: 289) has argued that Museveni's initial policy towards Kenya was reminiscent of Amin's policy towards Kenya, which was based on brinkmanship. What perhaps needs to be observed is that whether based on brinkmanship or pragmatism, both Moi and Museveni's relations continued to appreciate the centrality of their common border and so they increasingly pursued a policy that favored diplomacy, political and economic cooperation within the regional realm. Yet like for their predecessors in the respective countries, the border to the two leaders represented a domain of contested sovereignties in which each regime felt threatened. This was a result of not only the internal political policies that were pursued by the two leaders to maintain their authority but also because of the nature of the external linkages that each of the leaders developed at the time and which threatened the other in real and perceived terms.

In regard to internal politics in Kenya, three developments following the abortive 1982 coup had been significant in transforming the Moi regime from its relatively former populist stance to a repressive one. These included the 1982 parliamentary bill that introduced the infamous section 2 (A) to the Kenyan constitution making the country a *de jure* one-party state, the restitution of detention without trial in June 1983 and the 1986 removal of security of tenure for the constitutional offices of judges, the attorney general and the comptroller and auditor-general (Nasong'o, 2005: 22). These changes together with the adoption of the 1988 queue voting system marked a major phase in the consolidation and personalization of Moi's power in Kenya. In Uganda on the other hand, the shaky political transition that Museveni inherited in 1986 coupled with his policy of proscribing the activities of all political parties within the new constitution was significant in shaping the political developments in the country.

Thus, to Moi and Museveni, the personalization of power and the crack down on political opponents, real or perceived, continued to make the border a central arena in the practice of power. More significant is that within the context of a heightened clamp down on political opponents and their activities by both the Moi and Museveni regimes, most of these opponents either fled into exile in the respective countries and beyond or were forced to operate underground leading to the emergence of underground organizations. In Kenya for instance, there was a strong belief within the Moi establishment that the activities of an underground movement, Mwakenya- *Muungano Wa Wazalendo Wa Kukomboa Kenya* (Patriotic Union for the Liberation of Kenya) had strong external networks in Uganda and beyond. As one source (Wamimbi, O.I, 2005) confirmed, Moi seriously believed that the border communities offered the organizational networks and support for these groups. In Uganda, on the other hand, there were strong fears that Moi was secretly and militarily assisting the rebels in northeastern Uganda to destabilize the Museveni government (<http://www.country-data.com>). Most of these rebels were said to be based in the Turkana area within the Kenyan border area.

That the border was at the center of constant inter-state tensions was therefore without question. Both Moi and Museveni mistrusted each other and this was expressed in the counter accusations over each providing support for its opponent and acting as a base for these opponent's conspiratorial activities (Berg-Schlosser and Siegler, 1990: 127). This mistrust and counter accusations had both economic and political implications to the cross border relations between the two countries. For instance, the decision in 1987 by the National Resistance Movement (NRM) government to reduce the cost of transporting its coffee to the Kenyan port of Mombasa by shifting from private Kenyan trucking companies, thought to have connections with Kenyan government figures, to rail delivery was seen by the Kenyan authorities as a consequence of the leaders mistrust of each other (Uganda News at [www.country-data.com](http://www.country-data.com)). Also significant were plans to shift some of its other trade from Kenyan to Tanzanian routes. The Kenyan government and its press reacted strongly by castigating Uganda, disrupting supplies and telephone service, and unilaterally closing the border on several occasions. In response, in the middle of 1987 Uganda closed down its supply of electricity to Kenya and suspended all coffee shipments through Kenya.

The foregoing economic consequences arising from the mistrust between Moi and Museveni undermined the spirit of regionalism and worked against the free interaction of the two states at the border. Yet, despite the economic sabotage to the two countries occasioned by the sour relations between the two leaders, the counter accusations over conspiratorial activities between the two leaders continued. Their mistrust of each other continued to be fuelled by external links and dynamics taking place in the two countries. Especially, Uganda's economic and military collaboration with Libya, Cuba and North Korea strengthened fears within Kenya, with its distinctly pro-Western orientation, that Uganda could become an outpost of subversive forces. More concern was raised in Kenya over the reality that the common border could become a transit point for the training of subversive groups not only in Uganda but also in other countries including Libya and Cuba. Not only were the border communities seen as conduits but were also viewed as offering the support and being active participants in the underground movements.

From 1986 to 1990, the gains of regional integration in East Africa appeared seriously threatened by the foregoing tensions and mistrust between Museveni and Moi. Perhaps the worst period of these tensions came in 1987 when Kenya expelled the Ugandan High Commissioner and closed the Libyan's Peoples Bureau (Embassy) in Nairobi. Uganda retaliated by arresting six Kenyan diplomats, including the Acting High Commissioner (EAS, Dec 3, 1987). These tensions caused a major diplomatic row, the closure of the common border, and for three days in mid December 1987, there was firing across the border and it appeared the two countries would go to war. Flurry high level communications followed by a meeting of Museveni and Moi at Malaba border managed to diffuse the tension although each nation's fears of cross border insurgency were heightened. The meeting held on 28 December 1987 resulted in Uganda withdrawing its anti-aircraft guns and missiles from the border and promising to provide better security to Kenyan truck drivers waiting to transport 10,000 tons of goods to Kampala (Throup, 1991: 190)

Despite the progress toward peaceful negotiations, border community relations and the leaders' fears for insurgency in the respective countries caused constant alarm at the border. This was compounded by the problems of insecurity and cattle rustling that affected the general response of the leaders to the dynamic relations at the border. On March 2 1989 for instance, it was reported that about 300 armed forces believed to be Ugandans intent on stealing cattle killed a Kenyan army officer in Kenya's West Pokot district (Weekly Review, 10 March, 1989; Throup, 1991: 187). Kenyan security forces responded by killing seventy-two of the alleged cattle rustlers. Five days later, the Kenyan government claimed that a military aircraft from Uganda had dropped two bombs near a police post near Oropoi that had killed five people and injured seven others (EAS, 11 March 1989). Though the Ugandan government denied complicity and suggested that the aircraft originated in Sudan, inter-state tensions between the two countries were threatened. This state of affairs cooled down only momentarily in August 1990 when both Museveni and Moi met and agreed to restore full diplomatic ties and strengthen border security.

Cases of cattle rustling across the Kenya-Uganda border, though less common in the Babukusu-Bagisu borderland area, generally recurred and on the overall were also significant in testing the sincerity of not only the leaders' commitments to the ideals of regionalism, but also to their approach to the challenges raised by community relations across the border. Also significant in this regard were the serious problems raised over the lake Victoria waters. The conflict over Lake Victoria, though little paid attention to, was responsible for inter-state tension including the July 1988 military stand off between the two countries when several Ugandan soldiers attacked fishers at Sumba Island in Kenyan territory on Lake Victoria. The military response by Kenyan security forces during this latter incident that inflicted several casualties on the Ugandan soldiers caused a major diplomatic row at the border and further damaged the volatile inter-state relations between Kenya and Uganda.

From 1990 to 1997, the fears for the presence of insurgency continued to be compounded by each respective leader's intolerance and crackdown on political opponents. With the wave of democratisation sweeping across the region at the time and the freedom at which the process of globalisation was harnessing trans-border networks worldwide, such fears could not but be strengthened. These twin processes increasingly heightened Museveni's and Moi's fears on the volatility of not only the Babukusu-Bagisu borderland area, but the entire Kenya-Uganda border. The refugee crisis in the borderland area arising from both the victims of the political crack down in the two countries, and in Kenya, from the victims of the 1991-1993 ethnic clashes that took place in parts of western Kenya and Rift valley, were significant developments. While the crack down on political opponents by Moi and Museveni had a history that we alluded to above, the political dynamics that led to the 1991-1993 ethnic clashes in Kenya need not detain us<sup>3</sup>. Of particular relevance to our study are the implications of these historical events to the borderland relations and how these influenced the states responses to the challenges posed by the borders. Specifically in regard to the Babukusu-Bagisu borderland, the activities of the February Eighteen Resistance Army (FERA) deserve special mention.

---

<sup>3</sup> For a full history of the politically instigated ethnic clashes in Kenya see Kiliku ( 1992)

FERA, named in remembrance of February 18, 1957, the date Dedan Kimathi, the Mau Mau freedom fighter was hanged by the British colonial government in Kenya is believed to have been an underground political movement that was formed at the height of ethnic conflicts in the early 1990s mostly in Western Kenya and Eastern Uganda. Led by a Kenyan Brig John Odongo and his deputy Ibrahim Wafula, FERA was believed to have had a political wing headed by Patrick Wangamati ([www.dehai.org/archives](http://www.dehai.org/archives)). The aim of the movement was to militarily topple Moi and KANU from power for his role in torturing political opponents, instigating ethnic clashes and practising bad governance. The movement was believed to have enjoyed political connections with Uganda and Rwandan governments (EAS, Sept. 1997). Both Museveni and the Rwandan leader, Fred Gisa Rwigyema who was killed in battle and replaced by Paul Kagame before the latter took over power are said to have had strong connections with the FERA leadership in the formative years. FERA's military training was carried out in Bugasira in Western Rwanda, Nakivale in Uganda, in Bungoma and in the caves of Mt. Elgon while dozens of guerrillas were also sent for training in Libya, Rwanda, Mozambique and Sudan (<http://www.mail-archive.com>).

Whether FERA really existed or was a creation by Moi's government as pretext to suppress political opposition is not clear. For our context, FERA was responsible for the volatile inter-state relations between Moi and Museveni mainly arising from the perceived activities of the movement within the Babukusu and Bagisu borderland area. FERA was said to be active in Western Kenya and most of the opposition politicians including Masinde Muliro, Raila Odinga, George Kapten and Martin Shikuku were members. By 1992, it was claimed that the movement had recruited about 10,000 guerrillas and 250 specialised commandoes who were waiting to launch attacks on the Moi government. Most of these recruits are said to have come from among the Babukusu in Bungoma and the Bagisu of Mbale ([www.mail-archive.com](http://www.mail-archive.com)).

Between 1992-1995, the KANU government embarked on a methodological suppression of the perceived members or collaborators of the movement, arresting and detaining

hundreds of people mainly from Bungoma. According to newspaper reports, several tens of other people died in the onslaught on FERA agents, most of them being residents of Sirisia in Bungoma which had earlier been ravaged by the politically instigated ethnic clashes pitting the majority Babukusu against the Saboat (Ibid.). As oral sources confirm, the onslaught on perceived FERA members forced several young men from the Babukusu to flee across the border into Bugisu area in Uganda (Kolia, O.I, 2005). The same oral sources are however emphatic that FERA actually never existed and was simply a creation of the state since nothing like a guerrilla movement existed in Bungoma.

That the perceived activities of FERA caused a serious diplomatic row between Moi and Museveni was not in doubt. Between 1994-1995, the reluctance by Museveni to hand over Odongo to the Kenyan Government for trial complicated the relations between the two leaders and heightened the fear within the Kenyan establishment that Museveni was indeed a complicity in FERA's activities. Uganda, on its part, argued that Odongo was a protected political refugee and instead took him to a third country, Ghana, where he stayed for three years and only returned to Kenya on amnesty granted by president Moi in 1997. His other accomplice, Wangamati who had also fled Kenya for Ghana in 1994 was later arrested at the airport on return and held incommunicado for nine weeks before being released without charge (Amnesty International, 1998 Report). Apart from the two, several people from the Babukusu and the Bagisu, including a 74 year old Joseph Barasa Wekesa had been charged and imprisoned in a number of Kenyan jails including the famed Kamiti maximum prison.

Thus, by 1997 when the two leaders signed the treaty signalling the birth of the new East African Community in Arusha, Tanzania, the border dynamics had created a volatile inter-state scenario that complicated the gains of regionalism. Both political and economic issues had been at the centre of the two leaders' response to the borderland relations between the Babukusu and the Bagisu. Yet, perhaps the only thread that seem to have held the positive developments of regionalism over this period were the non state social factors characterised by the activities of individuals, civil societies, informal professional groups among many others that were active at the time.

### 7.3 Regionalism and the Kenya-Uganda Borderland: Babukusu-Bagisu Initiatives to 1997

Borderlands have been categorised in terms of location as being furthest from the core areas and capitals and these have had implications at the way in which governments and other administrative units provide them with regional facilities or non-ubiquitous goods and services (Adejuyigbe, 1988: 33). Usually because of the limited and sometimes neglected manner with which national policies pay to these fringe areas of their territories, borderland populations have to rely on the strong non-state social and cultural networks to have access to such services and facilities. This interaction may take the form of being either within the respective political unit and country or within the respective borderland that stretches into the neighbouring country. Though the dividing line between these two forms is thin because of the constant overlaps, our purpose in this section is to specifically analyse the supranational non-state social-cultural linkages within the Babukusu-Bagisu borderland area from 1980 to 1997.

As already observed, the two states' response to the dynamics within the Babukusu-Bagisu borderland was mainly focused on the economic and political realms while showing marginal interest to the border populations and their historical interactions over the border. Theoretically, the states' response, by concentrating on economic and political factors, was conjured within the power perspective where each state took up the responsibility to promote its interests and those of its people against the opposition of other groups in the international system (Chazan, 1999). In terms of relations between communities across the border, the power factor became a dominant component in determining the direction which both the economic and political policy affecting such trans-national relations would take. Away from such a state centred theoretical formulation however, borderland analysis insists on human agency as the main actor in initiating change as opposed to the power framework. In terms of relations between states, it is not only the political institutions at the level of the state or the international

realm that are important but rather the basic units of social, historical and political interaction fostered at the individual and community levels.

Borderland perspectives consider both the state and society relations as being central to the understanding of the intricacies of regional integration since it harmonises both the state power dynamics and the non-state actors. Whereas official institutions are significant actors, civil society institutions including individuals, social groups, traditional authority structures, informal trading networks, among others, are important considerations. The study of the interests, organization and capacities of these non-state entities affords a better view of the regional integration process by which they interrelate and act as key components in the relations between the various states. Ochwada (2004: 74) has observed the following in regard to the potentials of civil society institutions in fostering the gains of regionalism:

The institutions which civil society helps to build are likely to be long lasting, given that the same civil society possesses the capacity to re-examine and re-evaluate them from time to time in the event they are rendered obsolete. Unlike the state, which operates above the civil society and whose institutions may be synonymous with the ideals of certain leaders predisposed towards prebendalism, the realm of civil society allows for flexible and innovativeness from the bottom. This is because the domain of civil society is that of public opinion and the culture of respecting individual rights and their participation in the decision making process. Thus, civil society embraces the bottom-up approach- an alternative framework that could be adopted in solving the problems besetting Africans.

Without relapsing into the definitional debates on civil society<sup>4</sup> our loose use of the term in this context refer to a realm of organized social life that is open, voluntary, self generating, at least partial self supporting, autonomous from the state and bound by a shared set of rules (Nasong'o, 2005:69). Associated with society generally, it involves

---

<sup>4</sup> For debates on the definition and nature of civil society see Harbeson (1994) and Mamdani (1995)

members acting individually or collectively in the public sphere to express their interests, passions, preferences, and ideas, to exchange information; achieve collective goals; make demands on the state; improve the structure and functioning of the state and hold state officials accountable. On the basis of this, we take into consideration all social-cultural and historical forms of interaction between the two communities at the border that go beyond the formal structures of the states. These informal structures are meant to fulfill several social, economic and political goals within these communities away from the state initiated mechanisms.

From the early 1980s to 1997 various groups came up both within the Babukusu and the Bagisu to advocate the broader participation of individuals in shaping the nature of their interaction across the border. These developments, obviously benefiting from the previous historical networks, have mainly been in response to the two state's failure to initiate meaningful economic and political transformations in line with the dynamics taking place within the borderland areas. The dwindling economy and the political problems in the region were major manifestations of the failed state. As Akokpari (2000) has observed, the failure of the states arose from the fact that they were neither able to distribute the meager political and economic resources of the state fairly among its diverse competing constituents nor promote fair competition for these resources. This failure, which was compounded by the petty ideological power rivalries among the leaders, had not only heightened tensions but had also led to conflicts that displaced people.

As already observed, before the 1980s the informal responses to the states in the Bukusu-Bugisu borderland had been manifested through the shared historical dynamics taking place and through the activities of the vibrant informal economy. Economically and politically, the Bukusu-Bagisu borderland was slowly but surely witnessing a context of what Baubock and Rundell (1998) have called blurred boundaries, characterized by an irrevocable blurring of both ethnic and national identities. With the dwindling of national resources, the cross-border informal economy within the borderland was emerging as a veritable alternative for the economic survival among the large sections of the Babukusu

and Bagisu peoples. Thus as the economic transactions and revenues greatly decreased between Kenya and Uganda, informal trade across the borderland grew rapidly and this spelt critical implications for the state-society relations. That the vibrancy of this trade spelt a popular societal resistance to the states and masked the realities of strong socio-historical linkages has been demonstrated.

The developments towards closer inter-communal interaction across the border gathered momentum from the 1980s due to several global and local dynamics. Globally, the process of globalization that led to increased interconnections and interchanges between people, goods and services constantly challenged the centrality of borders as veritable instruments in restricting interaction and mobility (Aina, 1996; Zeleza 2003). Within Kenya and Uganda, like elsewhere in the world, this process led to an increased awareness and consciousness among various groups of people between the two communities and others beyond. This awareness resulted in the blurring of the common border as various cadres of groups, students, women's movement, business people among others from the Babukusu and the Bagisu increasingly came into contact with one another.

Arising from the foregoing global developments is the implication of the various dynamics on the local politics. Especially with the end of the Cold War in the late 1980s, a global political process was unleashed all over the world that systematically dismantled the various authoritarian forces. In Africa, this process had a greater resonance with the strong democratization wave that swept across the continent. A greater achievement of the democratization process in Africa generally, and Kenya and Uganda in particular is that it gave people the impetus to re-examine the limits of state power that had continued to impose bottlenecks on individual liberties and freedoms, including the right to associate with groups on a supranational platform. But these achievements often went counter to the authoritarian objectives of some leaders who sought to remain in power through unpopular machinations that often divided people along ethnic lines and induced conflicts.

Within Bukusuland and Bugisu borderland specifically, the foregoing global, regional and local dynamics continued to be compounded by the political and economic realities taking place in the two countries. On top of the implications that the uncertain inter-state relations and the dwindling economies had on border relations, the early 1990s witnessed perhaps one of the worst political developments in the region arising from the effects of the politically instigated ethnic clashes. Taking place in Bungoma and parts of Trans Nzoia, and pitting the Babukusu against some Kalenjin sub-groups, mainly the Sabaot, the ethnic clashes had a resounding effect on the nature of borderland relations in the early 1990s. The ethnic clashes resulted in hundreds of deaths, displacement and sparked off one of the highest movements of refugees cross the Kenya-Uganda border in the independent period. The ethnic clashes also led to the economic decline and to other forms of social and political insecurities in Bungoma (Kiliku, 1992, Kakai, 2000)

The question of ethnic clashes representing a gloomy side of the failure of the state to protect and guarantee security to its people has been observed (Okoth and Ogot, 2000). In terms of the border relations between the Babukusu and Bagisu in particular, the ethnic clashes came to demonstrate the manner in which historical linkages could be a resource in dealing with a crisis. Both immediate and long-term political and economic networks between the two peoples continued to play a fundamental role in promoting a complex interplay at which cooperation and assistance was sustained. For the Babukusu immigrants who crossed the border, accommodation and shelter were easily provided by their Bagisu kinsmen (Munyanda, O.I, 2005). In this regard, the historical linkages dictated the choice of destination, perhaps confirming Adepoju's (1996: 25) observation that immigrants always move to countries of destination about which they have information pertaining to settlement and adjustment, employment prospects and social networks formed by chain migrations involving close relatives and friends along ethnic bonds and other social networks.

The social networks between the two peoples did not just become fruitful to the immigrants but continued to be a source of economic survival and support to the families of the victims and generally to the two communities. Especially after the ethnic clashes

informal networks, involving both men and women in the 1990s increasingly came to act as conduits of information and a source of both social and financial assistance. Manifested in what are called locally as *Kimikanda* or small financial assistance groups, these social networks cut across clan and boundary limitations and usually had broad objectives. The members of such groups met on an occasional basis in homes on either side of the border to deliberate and engage in common financial and economic objectives. The meetings, which usually took place on an agreed periodic framework, acquired the name merry-go round because of their nature of rotating among the members and across the borders. Most of these meetings were constantly nourished by the frequent informal invitations among the members to participate in particular cultural ceremonies, including circumcision and wedding ceremonies. Such occasions became key forums of not only socializing and rehearsing closer cooperation, but also formed the foundation at which other common social, economic and political activities were transacted.

Ideally, although the informal activities of interaction within the Bukusu-Bugisu borderland cannot be limited to *Kimikanda*, the increasing role that such contacts between the two peoples converted the border from a barrier to a bond signified important potentials for regionalism. As more of these informal activities became recognized within the communities as viable alternatives to confronting the various social, economic and political issues, their regional appeal could not be ignored by the restrictive state policies. As to whether the restrictive national policies aimed at controlling cross-border populations will curtail the functioning of such informal arrangements is in doubt. As one source (Kolia, O.I, 2001) pointed out, as long as there will continue to be kin relations across the border, state restrictions on border transactions will never succeed. Given the vast nature of the boundary and the limited resources available to the governments, only empowering such harmonious trans-border interactions would ensure that their discrete and illegal nature is checked. Yet, informally as they have been, these initiatives have translated the Bukusu-Bugisu borderland into an arena where the two peoples freely conduct their activities on either side of the border. The case of business and schooling can bear evidence to this. There are, for instance, several shops run by the Bagisu in Lwakhakha Kenya while the same happens for the

Babukusu on the Ugandan side. Prominent Bukusu businessmen, including a Bungoma councilor own shops in Bugisu shopping centers including Busereri and Nabumali. In this context, the businessmen take advantage of the price differentials in the two countries to make profits. In terms of education, the 1990s witnessed many Bukusu students attending secondary schools in Bugisu. This development has been due to not only the informal relations along kinship lines but also because the schools in Uganda are more affordable and students tend to have more access to government waivers there than in Kenyan schools. Ugandan schools as one source (Munyanda, O.I, 2005) noted also tend to offer comparatively more opportunities for further advancement.

But if the foregoing activities reflected the manner in which the various non-state actors continued to challenge the statist models on strict border control, they also project viable potentials for a trans-border or regional approach to addressing community relations across nation-state borders. Although the political leadership prefers to maintain the strict status quo at the border, these informal groups continue to project a political order that demands a broader based participation of individuals in shaping their destiny. As some of these informal activities increasingly achieve formal recognition, the policy initiatives towards regionalism cannot afford to ignore them. This is perhaps one of the main issues that prompted the debates on the appropriate constitutional framework for the civil society type of mode of integration (Ochwada, 2004). From the 1990s, the Bukusu Bugisu borderland specifically, has witnessed an increased participation of individuals and groups the integration efforts at a more-semi formal platform. Complementing the various ongoing informal initiatives, this has had a resounding impact on the reinvigoration of a supranational approach to border community relations between the Babukusu and the Bagisu. The case of the *Insu ya Masaaba* (House of Masaaba) and other related socio-cultural groups among the two communities deserve special attention.

The history of *Insu ya Masaaba* as a cultural institution aimed at bringing together the descendants of Masaaba (both Babukusu and Bagisu) goes beyond the 1980s. It owes its birth to the various African initiatives during the colonial period that expressed an awareness of the cultural unity between the two peoples that went beyond the present

confines of the border. The aim of such cultural initiatives was to allow for a broader participation in the affairs of each other on the basis of them having similar cultural, linguistic and historical backgrounds. Generally, because of the limitations of the colonial regime, this consciousness was aimed at creating a supra-national community in which common interests could be secured by common action (La Fontaine, 1969: 186). Though more active in Bugisu than in Bukusuland, these efforts benefited from the colonial political developments taking place at the time, especially the British policy of divide and rule. Among the Babukusu and Bagisu specifically, the quasi recognition of the Wanga and Baganda respectively by the political establishment and how this gave impetus to the resurgence of the need for broader cultural unity has already been pointed out.

The spirit of *Insu ya Masaaba* was also alive after independence although its objectives, like those of other associations that sought cultural unity were conflated within the nationalist state building rhetoric. In Bukusuland as in Bugisu, the institutional framework for cultural unity was tamed through the imposition of non-existent provisions for the overall chief, Paramount in the case of the Babukusu and *Umuinga* in the case of the Bagisu. The *Umuinga* of Bugisu, Mzee Y. B Mungoma suffered the fate of the 1967 Obote revolution when a semi federal state was transformed into a republic and all cultural institutions including the Kingdoms of Buganda, Bunyoro/Kitara, Ankole and Busoga were abolished. In Bukusuland, the institutions of the Paramount Chief seem to have died a natural death following the political transitions that took place in the 1990s. Thus in Bukusuland and Bugisu, John Nabutola and Mungoma were the first and last 'overall' cultural leaders to be installed. Needless to mention, these developments gave impetus to the cultural recognition and consciousness among the various communities. It is this background that reinvigorated the emergence of the institution of *Insu ya Masaaba*.

From 1986, the idea of cultural institutions was resurrected in Uganda by the Museveni NRM regime paving way for the restoration of the Kabaka of Buganda. He subsequently gave a green light to other communities to constitute their respective cultural institutions at their own will or choice. It is clearly within these political dynamics that the history of

*Insu ya Masaaba* as an institution could be located. The institution, in recognition of the reality of the historical lack of an overall leader among both the Babukusu and Bagisu, aimed at creating a strong body of elders from the communities who would constitute a cultural board or House of elders for the purposes of broader trans-border unity and identity. The *Insu ya Masaaba* was to be as all embracing and non-political as possible and take into consideration representation from the two districts of Mbale and Sironko in Uganda and Bungoma and Trans Nzoia in Kenya where the Babukusu and Bagisu descendants of Masaaba are located (LLA, Report, 2005).

The *Insu ya Masaaba* relied on the former networks of relations developed across the common border to enhance the cultural unity of both the Babukusu and the Bagisu. These networks had been taking shape through the constant cultural contacts between the two peoples from the pre-colonial times. Such informal contacts were enhanced through regular exchange of visits between Babukusu of Bungoma/Trans Nzoia and the Bagisu of Mbale. The rebirth of these initiatives through *Insu ya Masaaba* came about in 1994 when the L. C Chairman of Mbale district, Wilson Weasa Wamimbi in a company of several district councilors<sup>5</sup> drawn from all the counties of Bugisu paid a visit to Bungoma and Trans Nzoia (LLA Report, 2003). As the oral sources (Wamimbi, O.I, 2005) confirm, this was perhaps one of the most highly powered delegations to have ever come together with a view of visiting Bukusuland from Bugisu in the independence era. Its aim was to reaffirm the cultural unity between the two peoples and to chart out a common course through the institution of *Insu ya Masaaba* (ibid). These elders did not only meet and talk to Babukusu elders but also visited important historical places in Bungoma and Kitale, including the Kitale Museum.

In the same year, 1994, the Mbale District Council invited elders from Bungoma to visit Mbale district to witness the Masaaba Festival Day that was held in Lukhobo hall at

---

<sup>5</sup> The councilors who were in the delegation included, Charles Wagwabubi Siango from Bunambutye, Bulambuli County; Dan Nangela from Sisiyi sub-county, Bulambuli county; Charles Wanyaka Nambasi from Busulani/Zesui sub-county, Budadiri county; Silver Wakwaba from Buyobo/ Buteza sub-county, Budadiri county; Alphonse Namugowa from Northern division, Mbale municipality; Wilson Weasa Wamimbi from Bukhiende/Busano sub-county Manjiya county; X. M. M Gunigina from Bubutu sub-county, Bubulo county; Lawrence Jacob Wabuti from Buwabwala/Bupoto sub-county, Buulo county; Charles Walimbwa, from Butiru sub-county, Bubulo county.

Malukhu, Mbale. A delegation of fourteen elders including one lady, Rose Masinde honoured the visit whose objectives included, among other things, the opening of the circumcision ceremony at Bumutoto and Bungokho in Mbale that was presided over by the Bungoma County Council chairman, Mr Matere Wanjala as the Guest of Honour. Like the case was with the previous visit, the Babukusu elders were taken through all the counties of Mbale and introduced to key historical places in Bugisuland. Among the issues discussed included cooperation on common cultural areas of concern beyond the limitations of the border and the strengthening of the institutional basis for their future interaction as members of *Insu ya Masaaba* (Munyanda, Wakiro, O.I, 2005).

As for enhancing continued closer cooperation between the two peoples therefore, the visits and the determination to strengthen *Insu ya Masaaba* marked a major turning point in the relations between the two peoples. Coming as they did in the volatile political years of the 1990s that were characterized by uncertain inter-state relations, these efforts opened more avenues for social, economic and political interactions across the border. Among the greatest successes of these meetings was the re-opening of the Lwakhakha border point in the mid 1990s after several years of closure. The border according to several sources (Wamimbi and Wakiro, O.I, 2005) was reopened after the elders from the two-district councils put pressure on their respective capitals in Nairobi and Kampala. This pressure and the general objectives of the *Insu ya Masaaba* were supported by not only the elders but indeed by the political leadership in the two districts. Both Masinde Muliro and Wamalwa Kijana, the key political figures in Bungoma in the 1990s are said to have held meetings in Mbale during which they emphasized the importance of the Bamasaaba unity (Kolia, O.I, 2005).

#### 2.1 Summary

Yet *Insu ya Masaaba*, although being the most all embracing, is not the only initiative that has appealed to the cultural domain in harnessing the unity between the Babukusu and the Bagisu. On a more limited extent were the efforts in Bungoma by the Bungoma Professional Group (BPG) whose gains included the successful hosting of the Lumboka-Chetambe war Memorial festivities of 1995 which many participants from both Bukusuland and Bugisu attended. In Bugisu on the other hand, other initiatives include

those of the Glory Kingdom of Bamasaba (GKB) of Wash Kany and the Bugasya Mu Bugisu (BMB). The latter initiatives are mainly political in nature and objectives. While the BPG was mainly concerned about the importance of cultural unity as a means of supporting some of its members to gain power during the 1997 Kenyan multiparty elections, the two Bugisu initiatives focus mainly on cultural leadership among the Bagisu. Favoring the establishment of a Kingdom in Bugisu, both GKB and BMG front and compete for the headship of the Kingdom. On the overall however, all the latter three initiatives aspire to achieve their objectives through a trans-border approach that brings together both the Babukusu and the Bagisu.

Although the list of the individuals and groups among the Babukusu-Bagisu engaged in trans-border social-cultural activities cannot be exhaustive, their initiatives represent one way in which cultural and historical linkages shared across the border could form an important component in the efforts towards regionalism. By re-examining such socio-cultural initiatives beyond the state, it is possible to moot a more realistic framework that better grasps the meaning and patterns of regional integration by appreciating their myriad challenges over time. These trans-border community initiatives offer a useful potential if incorporated within the broader regional framework. Though the signing of the EAC treaty in 1997 has promised a major breakthrough in regionalism in East Africa, the informality with which historical linkages across the border continue to wield support among its members only calls for their incorporation into the statist initiatives. These initiatives have lived on beyond 1997 and continue to witness a rebirth through the lively debates<sup>6</sup> on the mode of cultural institution currently taking place in Kenya and Uganda.

#### 7.4 Summary

This chapter has broadly discussed developments in Pan East Africanism and the borderland Babukusu-Bagisu initiatives from 1980 to 1997. The overall objective of the

---

<sup>6</sup> During my field work in Mbale, a major debate among the Bagisu revolved around the issue of cultural leadership and whether Bugisu should adopt Kingdoms as an approach or basically stick to the broad based cultural leadership strategy. Two groups, Glory Kingdom of Bamasaba and Bugasya Mu Bugisu seemed to favour Kingdoms with one of their own as King.

chapter was to examine the extent to which borderland relations between the two peoples provides amicable grounds for fostering harmonious relations and integration not only between Kenya and Uganda but regionally. Though emerging as global and continental responses to the dwindling economies, regionalism in East Africa as we observed has been informed by inter-play between both state and non-state factors. The statist policies in Kenya and Uganda as we noted were overly conflated within the bitter inter-state rivalries, mistrust and counter accusations among the political elite that cast doubts and eroded any gains towards regionalism. The hope for the sustenance of the new initiatives towards Pan East Africanism, as we have observed, will be determined by the interweaving of a complex web of historical, economic, social and political issues. Certainly, the commitment towards regionalism need to go beyond the previous economic and state centric perspectives that have proven to be not only unworkable but which have also led to serious ideological conflicts and eventual collapse of past regional integration schemes. The borderland propositions obviously present lively insights in incorporating non-state actors that have missed out in previous integration efforts. Such non-state actors including the activities of individuals and informal groups already enjoy supra-national orientations as we noted. Definitely, efforts towards promoting regional integration need to consider and incorporate the active people-centred initiatives taking place within the borderland and which are increasingly turning the border into a bond of interaction and cooperation and not as a divisive mechanism.

## CHAPTER EIGHT

### CONCLUSION

This research has endeavoured to examine the Kenyan and Ugandan context within the emerging broader theoretical and practical considerations involving border community relations through a focus on the experiences of two communities, the Babukusu of Western Kenya and the Bagisu of Eastern Uganda. The historical terrain traversed has sought to capture, from this microcosmic level, forms of trans-border socio-cultural, economic and political relations that have evolved from the pre-colonial to the colonial and post-colonial periods in the history of the two East African countries. Certainly, this is a historical terrain that has not only invoked diversities but one that has also provided opportunities and barriers that continue to inform the varied historical trajectories in the region generally and among the two case communities in particular. From the continental, regional and local inter-state levels, the nexus of this study hinges on practical and theoretical implications not only for scholarly considerations but also for policy-making and further research.

Generally, this research was justified on the reality that despite the increasing importance that borders continue to generate globally, the African and specifically East African context has not been given a systematic and sufficient treatise by historians. Border regions or specifically borderlands as sub-national areas whose social, economic and political life is directly and significantly affected by proximity to international boundaries, remain the centre at which questions of territoriality and citizenship are negotiated and settled world over. As we have demonstrated in the study, trans-border interactions can help foster, promote and maintain peace and human understanding among nations and prosperity along national borders. Our argument therefore is that because borders and border relations are good barometers of good neighbourliness, one way of promoting good neighbourliness is for the border people to know their common past. The lack of appreciation of history within border areas has, as we argue, witnessed the rise in the number of inter-state conflicts and tensions, with Africa perhaps having the worst share of these sad developments.

While this study is in agreement with most analysis on the African condition as generated by the problems at the common borders, its main contribution lies in specificity and in proffering the way forward. On the problems generated at the borders, this work falls on the shoulders of previous scholars who argue that part of the explanation for Africa's current problems, especially those related to disunity, lie in the inability of states to confront and seek answers to the problems posed by borders. At the centre of such problems, has been a breakdown in relations between the relevant states and communities traversed by a common border. It is significant, as we argue, therefore, that African states cannot respond effectively to the challenges of unity without having to directly confront the question of the borders of the nation states. As has been emphasized, the failure to acknowledge the vitality of African spaces and most importantly the cost of this failure in terms of human lives and human suffering, calls for a deliberate renewal not only in conceptual tools, but also very practically, of political governance and policy options.

By examining the historical context within which borders emerge in Africa and East Africa in particular, this study departs from other works in analysing their evolution and transformation over time. Within these dynamics, we observe that the history of the Babukusu and the Bagisu peoples who traverse the Kenya-Uganda border precedes the configuration of the present common border. Although it is true, as most scholars have argued, that the 1884-85 Berlin Conference marked an important watershed in the configuration of African borders, including the Kenya-Uganda one, our research has revealed that studies need to go beyond this period and re-examine the specific history of community relations. The historical moment of the scramble and partition of Africa need to be viewed in the light of other processes of social, economic and political restructuring of the people's history which had long developed before the historical moment of the Berlin Conference. This is because, as we observe, current borders of Africa are a result of a lengthy history, which must take into account the developments well beyond the accidents of colonial partition if the internal forces of fragmentation and unification of the continent are to be understood.

By examining the history of community relations between the Babukusu and the Bagisu beyond the Berlin Conference, our study contributes to locating the border realities into proper context. As we observe in regard to trans-border relations, the history of individuals or communities traversing the common border and its interrelatedness to social structures including social stratification, social institutions and interpersonal relationships mould and structure individual and collective experiences. These experiences are in turn responsible for the nature and evolution of boundaries and their implications on the various states. Thus, contrary to the observations by some scholars that African countries such as Kenya and Uganda entered the world of international relations only after independence, our study notes that such an entry can only be located in history. Though it is true that before colonialism such countries were inhabited by diverse nations, it doesn't mean that they lacked state organisation. The so-called community relations were actually international relations among nations.

Strictly speaking the concept of the border within the community relations of the Babukusu and the Bagisu makes analytical sense when viewed within the colonial context. This is true in so far as we recognize the notion of imposing the boundaries dividing the two communities as a colonial creation. With the parcelling out of land and the creation of a border by the British colonial administration towards the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, a clear and systematic process of alienating and separating the hitherto co-existing peoples was put in place. Taking the specific case of the two communities, our study demonstrated how the colonial border was drawn across well-established lines of interaction, thus dividing the two people's shared culture area. In this analysis, we arrive at similar conclusions with scholars who have studied other cases elsewhere in Africa. Through the colonial partition, as we observe, forms of inter-societal relations, including in every case, a dominant or active sense of community based on traditions concerning common ancestry, usually very strong kinship ties, shared socio-political institutions and economic resources, common customs and practices, and sometimes acceptance of a common political control were disrupted.

That the colonial creation of the border between the Babukusu and the Bagisu peoples conflicted and transformed the history of interaction between them cannot be gainsaid. Looked at from the lenses of the present configurations between Kenya and Uganda, our study falls in agreement with observations elsewhere that the present border, since its demarcation has neither been congruent nor coterminous with the more natural, much older ethno-cultural boundaries which predate the two modern nation states. The creation of the border did not take into consideration the informal network of historical relations, which had existed for centuries at the level of the two communities or cultural areas astride the bi-national boundary. Our study specifically locates this reality within the process of the configuration of the border and the colonial and African initiatives to its nature and transformation over time.

Taking the historical moment of the 1884-5 Berlin Conference as a primary case in the crafting of colonial boundaries, this study emphasized that the power struggles among the European nations led to the evolution of the Kenya-Uganda border and indeed other borders in Africa. In the case of East Africa, the British colonialists emerged as the central players both in the management of the borders and in the general social, political and economic transformation of the region. As noted, the creation and later the British management of this boundary was strictly done on the metropolitan western statist model. Again it is important to point out that the demarcation of the Kenya-Uganda border like that of other parts of Africa was done without any slightest regard of the local population and the historical ties that had engendered and fostered their development over time. The interests of those in the border area were not envisaged, except as a dim, matriculate presence in the background.

The British colonial policy on the management of the Kenya-Uganda border emphasized the distinctness between the Babukusu and the Bagisu peoples. Within this policy, it became necessary that the historical inter-ethnic solidarities and ties between the two communities be diffused, incorporated and controlled within the framework of the colonial state. Clearly captured under the colonial edifice of 'divide and rule', the Babukusu and Bagisu were territorially separated as the British ensured the effective

exertion of political power in the exaction of revenue, autonomy, security and legitimisation of hegemony, all of which were necessary for the functioning of the colonial system.

Together with the foregoing policy issues, the two regions occupied by the Babukusu and the Bagisu were administratively controlled separately, one in the present Kenya and the other in present Uganda. Various restrictive measures were put in place to emphasize the distinctive nature of these two regions and the peoples. Several regulatory mechanisms were set up at the common border by the British colonialists to control the flow of goods and persons on the one hand, and to apply the instruments of the state on the other. All these measures were mainly done not only to make smooth the British administrative procedures often bogged by local resistances, but also to protect settler agricultural interests and to raise revenue necessary for running the two regions. The custom officials, the Police, the border police posts and other related state instruments were initiated with the sole objective of apprehending and punishing the defaulters who tended to violate the restrictions set up at the border. These restrictions, as the study demonstrates, did not however effectively work to curtail the historical forces of community relations across the border.

The findings that the boundary dividing a putative ethnic group or culture area does not sufficiently override the forces conspiring against its maintenance are not uniquely new. In this, our research has followed in the footsteps of many other studies of African ethnicity that have questioned the validity of colonial partitions. The nature of response towards the colonial partition however varies from one region to another. In the context of the Kenya-Uganda border, we demonstrated how the partition, and its impact on the cultural and ethnic unity of the two communities often cultivated and reinforced the pre-partitioned networks of intra-group or intra-ethnic relations. In most cases, the two peoples considered the boundary as binding only to the colonial power and not to their own relations that they considered "inviolable". The sense of unity and belonging, designated by "brother", continued to be cultivated by a touch of sacredness through the concepts and notions of common origin, migration and settlement.

The various trans-border historical linkages between the Babukusu and the Bagisu were not just reinforced by their close geographical proximity but also by their common social, economic and political experiences under colonialism. The clearest expression of this experience was through the cultural and political nationalism as was manifested through the trans-border activities of Dini Ya Musambwa (DYM). As a movement accentuated by religious, political, economic and social grievances, DYM provided a significant space for the interaction of the Babukusu and the Bagisu. As we also demonstrated, the activities of DYM, being an expression of regionalism were merely a refraction of identity politics both at the national and local levels that fed the decolonisation process both in Kenya and Uganda. The decolonisation process definitely matured because of the unity of the local, regional and global initiatives. The role of Pan Africanism in evoking the spirit of regionalism has been central to decolonisation debates, yet as our study emphasises, the border dynamics informing the debates on regionalism have not been underscored in most studies.

It is clear that one way in which border issues and particularly border community relations can be factored within the debates on Pan Africanism and regionalism is to envisage such relations as invisible ethno-cultural developments underneath the visible national boundary. The former clearly undermines the latter as it penetrates into the various national territories and defiantly crosses the national boundary. This invisible boundary is maintained and nourished by the historical linkages cutting across the well-safeguarded national borders. The invisible border or what some scholars have called 'geography from below' has remained a visible landmark in the interaction of communities across the international borders. Social, economic and political activities at the level of communities crisis-cross the border and are responsible for the evolution and transformation of not only the border but also trends towards regionalism in particular.

At independence, as our study has emphasized, the legitimacy of colonial boundaries remained one of the most enduring colonial legacies. Indeed, this is an observation that has overwhelmingly been noted by most research on the African scene. But away from

most conventional analysis, our research examines the specific unique reality of the Kenya-Uganda case. This is specific in the sense that the two countries of Kenya and Uganda emerge from a singular colonial power, Britain, and at the same time, are confronted with the reality of the inherited colonial economic institutions towards regionalism. These realities then become important in examining the nature of response by the independent governments to the challenges posed by the common border in general and border community relations specifically. Unlike the colonial period, the new leaders in Kenya and Uganda acknowledged the disastrous effects of the colonial partition of the region and continent in general, but were reluctant if not totally unwilling to support policies that were likely to restrain state sovereignty and consequently their own power. Through the continental institutions of OAU, the new leaders advocated for the persistence of the status quo in as far as the management of the border was concerned. Specifically in terms of border community relations, our study highlighted the impact of national consciousness as well as the social, economic and political dynamics taking place in the two countries as important factors determining its evolution and transformation over time.

The relationship between the independent states and border communities has far been complex when examined within the prism of attempted efforts towards regional integration in East Africa generally. As observed, regional integration, which is often perceived as a prelude to unification and characterised by the existence of homogenous rules and principles governing behaviour in a particular spatial area faced innumerable challenges. The question that we emphasize in this study is that most of the efforts towards regional integration were state-centred and economic in character and objectives. The state centred economic arguments hardly paid attention to the particular social and political histories that informed the countries whose people were meant to benefit from the regional integration initiatives. Moreover, such efforts were conjured within the narrow inter-state political rivalries and constricted by poor political performance and civil strife in the two countries.

In offering an explanation to the dismal performance of regional integration, our study draws attention to the neglect national policies have paid to border community relations. Within the specific context of the Babukusu and the Bagisu people we demonstrate that there seem to be a kind of regional integration that has historically been taking place 'from below'. This integration seems to be occurring from the margins of official institutions, through socio-cultural solidarities and inter-state commercial networks. The case of the informal economy and social networks of relations across the borderland offers the basis for re-examining the alternatives towards regional integration since, as we note, they inform the dynamics upon which inter-state relations are connected. Whether one views the borderland developments as a resistance to the state or as an opportunity seized by the borderland peoples, they definitely offer clues that have policy relevance for the governments. More specifically, the socio-historical linkages between the Babukusu and the Bagisu who remain attached to their kith and kin across the border need to be put in locus with the governance problematics of the two states of Kenya and Uganda. Ending our analysis as we do in 1997 when the leaders in the region commit themselves to rejuvenate the spirit of regionalism, our research conceals a new hope that an all inclusive process, harmonising state-centric and borderland issues would provide some new light for the appreciation of border realities.

The foregoing conclusions regarding the research in the history of the Babukusu and Bagisu relations across the Kenya-Uganda border involved a critical interplay between theory and the practical materials availed in the field. There is no doubt that the questions we raise and analyse, and the conclusions we arrive at lend themselves to theoretical rigour. The historical approach that we adopt does not preclude the fact that issues concerning community relations across boundaries are multi-disciplinary in nature. The historical method need to open up frontiers of investigation that go beyond the rhetoric and engage into a more systematic analysis that situates them into proper context and perspective. The historical and theoretical reflections informing this study have evolved over a wide disciplinary and periodic spectrum. The challenge to the researcher therefore was to identify and integrate meaningful approaches that speak directly to the context and reality under investigation.

Indeed, beginning 1907 when Lord Curzon observed that borders are “a razor’s edge on which hang suspended the modern issues of war or peace, of life or death to nations”, systematic studies on borders bound under numerous theoretical formulations have evolved. Most, if not all of these theoretical formulations as applied to the study of African borders have their roots in the West. However being western grown alone may not be an issue given that borders of Africa are themselves structurally and functionally as much extensions of Western European parallels. In this case therefore, it would make justifiable sense to study them within Western models since perhaps their practical and theoretical problems can hardly be expected to be fundamentally different. Yet, the fact is that although African and Western borders share key characteristics as separators and integrators, the conditions and realities informing their evolution and transformation are different. Thus, Western theoretical replicas may not necessarily work for African conditions and realities.

Our study has traversed through two theoretical traditions generally categorised into ‘State-centric’ and “borderlands” perspectives. The former seem to have been the handmaiden of disciplines such as international law, international relations, diplomatic history, international politics and political geography among many others. On the other hand, the borderlands theoretical formulations have in the recent past attracted works in history, sociology and other human and social sciences. From an analytical point of view, our research revealed that the two theoretical perspectives offer connected but contradictory perspectives on borders and border community relations. There are works which study borders from traditional perspectives and which conceptualise borders as tools of separation and control, limiting people’s movement within territories, and marking the point where the authority of one state ends and that of another state begins. Scholars in this camp view borders primarily as sources of political conflicts that undermine national peace and slow down the pace of international co-operation and integration. These scholars also see border residents or border landers as potential deviants who may conduct subversive cross-border activities, including smuggling, prostitution and illegal immigration, which demonstrate the ambiguity of borderlanders

identities. In view of this, the scholars suggest that borders should be kept under close government supervision via police patrols, customs and immigration regulations, barbed or electrified wires, watch towers, and even military planes constantly flying over them.

The second theoretical perspectives, which seem to benefit from current debates on globalisation and regional integration is hinged on the observation that since borders are entities of control, they impede the creation of common markets that would allow free movement of capital, people, goods and services among member states of integrating regions. In this sense therefore, the theorists in this school argue for the opening up of borders and freeing them from unnecessary state controls in order for them to benefit the majority of people especially the border communities. In any case, the latter are viewed as people whose life experiences are characterised by poverty, cross-border conflicts and subjugation to governments power abuse. Thus, any effort that would free the borders would make a positive change in the lives of the border communities. Indeed they are the ones who readily embrace regional integration in the hope that it would among other things bring about peace, economic growth and an improvement in the social welfare of the region.

The latter perspectives have derived their persuasive appeal from the international legal instruments and resolutions on the nature and functioning of state boundaries. Legally, some scholars have argued that the rigid nation-state borders that confine populations to their own proper places and homelands, from which they derive their identity and citizenship rights, violate article 13 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, which states that everyone has the right to freedom of movement and residence in any state. This violation therefore in turn inhibits people's accessibility to equal opportunities and access to human and citizenship rights far better than the nation-states. Practically, these legal provisions respond to genuine border dynamics. While several 'sub-national areas' or borderlands are usually planned and developed within contexts of individual nation-states, observable geographic, demographic, cultural, economic and historical links and interpenetrations with other "sub-national areas" on the other side of the given

international boundary make the national less realistic and less desirable than the international trans-boundary approach to planning.

While it was easy for our research to fault the state-centric approaches, especially in their top-down focus, overwhelming emphasis on state power and their general neglect of border communities as important agents that could foster change, their contributions could not be ignored. Their focus on the constraints emerging from inequalities of power among nation states became a vital contribution in the analysis of the Kenyan and Ugandan contexts. Yet, it was necessary to critique the top-down social, economic and political dimensions within this perspective that ignore not only border issues but generally the human agency by assuming that ordinary citizens living across the borders are powerless and lack any influence on the institutionalised power relations.

The overwhelming inspiration to the research was however derived from the borderland perspectives that specifically focus on the diversities within the lived experiences of communities themselves. The latter approaches, which adopt bottom-up perspectives, uncovers some complex mechanisms that operate within and between grassroots, sub-national, national, regional and global levels to transform processes of trans-border cooperation and regional integration. It is within this perspective that we were able to perceive the extent at which historical experiences among border communities shape the nature and transformation of boundaries including efforts towards regional integration. Our theoretical strength in this research therefore lay in the integration of the intellectual strengths in both perspectives in explaining the experiences of the Babukusu of Western Kenya and the Bagisu of Eastern Uganda.

The foregoing scholarly and theoretical contributions emerging from the findings of this research raises relevant policy concerns. Given the importance of boundaries within the current global and regional reality where the social, economic and political connections cross-cut borders more easily than any other time before, the importance of border community relations need to be factored within the various national policy frameworks. New concerted efforts need to be made to appreciate the experiences of border

communities and to convert borders from their prevailing postures as ramparts into new veritable functions as bridges. In any case whether as pretexts or real causes, border populations and the relations they generate across the boundaries have and will continue to function as catalysts and compelling influences on the quality of communication between the respective political regimes and administrations existing on both sides of the boundary.

This study therefore provides part of the answer to the intricate policy question that border management could raise. There is need for the policy framers, practitioners, governments and other stakeholders to be prepared to undertake a radical revision of age-old policy instruments and supportive tradition of scholarship that are now realized to be inadequate, indeed irrelevant, to the realities of border regions. This specifically refers to state centric policies that mainly derive from international diplomacy, law and international relations, which so far treats relations between and among sovereign states, including the relations across their common borders. Such state-centric approaches require that inter-relating sovereignties be treated as autonomous and primary units of analysis. However, the attendant view of a structural border between and among such sovereignties becomes a fiction in the context of the complex and numerous interconnections between historically contiguous states. Borderlands situations call for an alternative policy option that will recognise the essential dialectic position in which the locality is internationalised and the internationality localised.

In terms of specific policy for the success of regional integration, while it is possible to envisage the traditional border management policy that recognizes the use of both legislative-judicial processes and the executive instruments of government, a realistic approach need not ignore the geographic and historical realities on the ground. This means, in effect, that while in the principle of the "intangibility of frontiers inherited from colonial masters" may be respected and maintained because of the problems and difficulties inherent in asking for boundaries to be shifted or nullified, their function as lines of demarcation, division and separation should be modified for them to assume a simpler function as lines of productive contact and cooperation. Only through this can the

viability and contribution of border community relations be enhanced in the wider debates on regional integration.

Finally, some of the propositions and conclusions above would definitely require further research to identify and define issues more precisely. Efforts towards understanding the dynamics within African borderlands should indeed consider the importance of scientific research, which entails data and information gathering, analysis and re-analysis. The case of East African borders as we noted has not received adequate attention from scholars. It may be necessary to open up other new frontiers of analysis especially in regard to other border cases and see how they define the nature and evolution of boundaries. In addition, given that our analysis stops in 1997, it may be worthwhile to focus research in the area especially in the period beyond. This is particularly more significant in regard to the efforts towards regional integration that are currently being undertaken in the three countries of Kenya, Uganda and Tanzania. Research could, for instance, examine the dynamics at the border and specifically the socio-cultural, economic and political context of the communities in the light of the present efforts towards the East African Community. Given the multidisciplinary nature of border studies, such research initiatives should bring on board specialists from other disciplines, including political science, economics, sociology and international relations among others. The latter should generate specific data that could constitute a pool from which a truly multi-disciplinary approach could benefit. Research programmes need to generate reliable and regular flow of data on border areas and help integrate research findings within the policy frameworks of the individual countries. It is only when genuine research findings are integrated within policy that the challenges across African borders can be appreciated and be confronted.

## BIBLIOGRAPHY

### PRIMARY SOURCES

#### a) Archival Documents

- Entebbe Secretariat Archives (ESA), Uganda, W. Ansorge A2/3, 1899.  
 ESA, F. Jackson A11/1, 1900  
 ESA, Grant to Grabtree A 10/1, 1901  
 ESA, Grant to Entebbe, A 10/2, 1902  
 ESA, A.G. Boyle, SMP 1760/08, 1908  
 ESA, Political Records A 10/1-27/3-8 1904 to 1920  
 ESA, SMP 1760/08, Guy Eden, 1923  
 ESA, Political Records 1925-1960.  
 ESA, Handing over Reports 1950-1958  
 ESA, Annual Reports 1958.  
 KNA, DC/EN 1/1 Elgon Nyanza District Annual Report, 1956-1959  
 KNA, DC/EN 2/4 Political Records: Ethnology, 1959  
 KNA, DC/EN 3/1/1 Political Records: Historical and Customs, 1930  
 KNA, DC/EN 3/1/2 Political Records: South Kitosh Political History  
 KNA, DC/EN 3/3/2 Abaluyia Land Law and Custom, 1930  
 KNA, DC/NN I/I-38 North Kavirondo District Annual Report, 1917-1960  
 KNA, DC/NN I/40 Synopsis of North Nyanza District, 1961  
 KNA, DC/NN 2/1-21 North Nyanza Handing over Reports, 1950-1958  
 KNA, DC/NN 3/2-20 Political Records, North Nyanza, 1931-1959  
 KNA, DC/NN 8/1/1 Native Land Tenure, 1930  
 KNA, DC/NN 10/1 Religions, Sects and Political Associations 1926-1940  
 KNA, DC/NN 10/1/5 Dini Ya Msambwa, 1946-1949  
 KNA, DC/TN 3/1 Dini Ya Msambwa and its Customs, 1955-1961  
 KNA, PC/NZA 1/3-22 Nyanza Province Annual Report, 1907-1927  
 KNA, PC/NZA 2/11/3 African Education, 1931-1947  
 KNA, PC/NZA 3/10/1 Native Education, 1925-1929  
 KNA, PC/NZA 3/31/8/1 Ethnology of Tribes of North Kavirondo District, 1913  
 KNA, PC/NZA 3/33/8/4 Local Native Councils-General 1926-1927  
 KNA, PC/NZA 3/33/8/8 North Kavirondo Local Native councils, 1928  
 KNA, PC/NZA 3/33/8/9 Nyanza Province: North Kavirondo Local Native Council, 1929  
 KNA, PC/NZA 3/66/1 Nyanza Province: Miscellaneous Confidential Papers, 1905-1919  
 KNA, PC/NZA 4/5/6 Monthly Intelligence Reports, May, 1936- August, 1937  
 KNA, PC/NZA 4/4/95 Nyanza Province: Annual Report, 1956  
 KNA, PC/NZA 4/4/100 Elgon Nyanza District Annual Report, 1956  
 Mbale District Archive (MDA), Documents, 1938-1960.

#### b) Government Reports

Colony and Protectorate of Kenya, 1931, Committee on Land Tenure in the North Kavirondo Reserve, 1930, Nairobi: Government Printer.

Colony and Protectorate of Kenya, 1919, Report of Education Commission of the East African Protectorate, 1919, Nairobi: Swift Press.

Colony and Protectorate of Kenya, 1934, Kenya Land Commission Evidence, Vol. 111, Nairobi: Government Printer.

District Agricultural Office Documents, Mbale.

Republic of Kenya, 1997, Bungoma District Development Plan, 1997-2001, Nairobi: Government Printer.

Kiliku, K, 1992, Report of the Parliamentary Select Committee to Investigate Ethnic Clashes in Western and other parts of Kenya, Nairobi: Government Printer.

Uganda Government, 1957, Land Tenure in Uganda, Endebbe, Government Printer.

Uganda Government, 1991, Ministry of Planning and Economic Development Report, Endebbe, Government Printer.

**c) Private Collections**

Bugasya Mu Bugisu, 2005, Memorandum and Minutes of Meetings, 2005.

Bugasya Mu Bugisu, n.d, The Work of Wataba Nagwere, the 6<sup>th</sup> Omugashya.

Bugasya Mu Bugisu, 2005, The History of Bugashya in Bugisu, The Research Committee.

Bugasya Mu Bugisu, 2003 Draft Constitution, Zainab Wambembe and others.

Glory Kingdom of Bamasaba, 'Newspapers by the Organisation', 2005.

Lumasaba Language Academy (LLA), 2006, Constitution of the Association.

Lumasaba Language Academy (LLA), 2005, Minutes of Meeting of Bamasaba Elders

Lumasaba Language Academy (LLA), 2004, Minutes of the Meeting of Bamasaba Elders,

Lumasaba Language Academy (LLA), 2003, 'Masaaba Cultural Institution',

Lumasaba Language Academy (LLA), 2003, 'Facts about the Academy', May.

Lumasaba Language Academy (LLA), 1984, 'Memorandum and Articles of the Association'.

Mbale District Archives, Document, 1938

Musoke, D. B, n.d, Bamasaba Mirembe, Reproduced by LLA

**d) Internet Links**

<http://www.dehai.org/dehai-news>

<http://www.dehai.org/archives/FERA>

<http://www.eastandard.net>

<http://www.mbale.go.ug>

<http://www.mbale.archives.com>

<http://www.nationmedia.com>

<http://www.ugandanews/archives.com>

**e) Oral Evidence**

Evidence was also derived from Oral Interviews. A list of the Informants is provided at the end of this Bibliography (Appendix).

**f) Newspapers**

East African Standard (EAS)

Baraza

The Daily Nation (DNA)

Weekly Review (WR)

## SECONDARY SOURCES

- Ackello-Ogutu C., 1997, Unrecorded Cross-Border Trade Between Kenya and Uganda: implications for Food Security, Nairobi: AFR/SD and REDSO/ESA.
- Adar, G. and M. Ngunyi, 1994. 'The Politics of Integration in East Africa Since Independence', in Walter O. Oyugi (ed) Politics and Administration in East Africa, Nairobi: EAEP.
- Adedeji, A., 2002, History and Prospects for Regional Integration in Africa', Paper presented at the African development Forum, Addis Ababa 5 march.
- Adetula, V. A. O, 2004, 'Regional Integration in Africa: Prospect for Closer Cooperation Between West, East and Southern Africa', Paper presented at the IDASA/FREDSKORPSET Meeting, Johannesburg, South Africa.
- Adejuyigbe, O., 1988, Identification and Characteristics of Borderlands in Africa', in A.I Asiwaju and P.O Adeniyi (eds), Borderlands in Africa: A Multidisciplinary and Comparative Focus on Nigeria and West Africa, Lagos: University of Lagos Press.
- Adepoju, A. and T. Hammar eds, International Migration in and from Africa: Dimensions, Challenges and Prospects, Dakar: PHRDA
- Aina, A. T., 1996, Ties Between Emigration and Destination Countries: Historical, Colonial and Cultural, in A. Adepoju and T. Hammar (eds), International Migration in and from Africa: Dimensions, Challenges and Prospects, Dakar: PHRDA.
- Ajayi, A.J.F, 1982, Expectations of Independence', Daedalus, Vol 111 No.2.
- Ajulu, R., 1992, Kenya, the Road to Democracy' Review of African Political Economy, No. 53 March.
- Ajomo, M.A, 1996, Legal Perspective on Border Issues', in A.I Asiwaju and P.O Adeniyi (eds), Borderlands in Africa: A Multidisciplinary and Comparative Focus on Nigeria and West Africa, Lagos: University of Lagos Press.
- Ake, C., 1978, Revolutionary Pressures in Africa, London: Zed Press
- Akokpari, J.K, 2000, The Political Economy of Migration in Sub-saharan Africa', in A. Imtiaz and O. Kane (eds), Identity, Culture and Politics, Vol. 1 No.1.
- Amin, S., 1995, Migrations in Contemporary Africa: A Retrospective View', in Baker J. and Aina T. eds, The Migration Experience in Africa, Sweden: Nordic Afrikainstitute.
- Amnesty International, 1998, 1998 Annual Report Index: Africa Region, Kenya, London: AI
- Anderson, B., 1983, Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origins and Spread of Nationalism, London: Verso.
- Asante, S.K.B., 1999, Pan Africanism and Regional Integration', in Mazrui A.A. (ed.) Unesco General History of Africa Vol VIII: Africa Since 1935, London: Unesco/James Curry.

- Aseka, E.M., 2005, Pitfalls of Ideology, Social Policy and Leadership in Africa, Nairobi: EME Publishers.
- \_\_\_\_\_, 1989, 'Political Economy of Buluyia', PhD Thesis Kenyatta University.
- Asiwaju, A.T. 2002, 'Comparative Borderlands Studies and Policy Making in Africa: A Nigerian Historian's Lived Research Career Experience'. Paper presented to PAS Northwestern University No. 2-22.
- Asiwaju, A. I. (1996) 'Borderlands in Africa: A Comparative Research Perspective with Particular Reference to Western Europe', in P. Nugent and A. I. Asiwaju (eds) African Boundaries: Barriers, Conduits and Opportunities, London: Pinter, pp 253-265
- Asiwaju, A. I. and P.O. Adeniyi (eds) (1996) Borderlands in Africa: A Multidisciplinary and Comparative Focus on Nigeria and West Africa, Lagos: University of Lagos Press
- \_\_\_\_\_, 1992, 'Borders and Borderland as Linchpins for Regional Integration in Africa: Lessons of a European Experience', Africa development Vol. XVII, No.2.
- \_\_\_\_\_, (ed), 1985, Partitioned Africans: Ethnic Relations Across Africa's International Boundaries, London: C. Hurst.
- Bach, D.C, 1999, Regionalisation in Africa: Integration and Disintegration, Oxford: James Curry.
- Barth, F., 2000, 'Boundaries and Connections', in A. P. Cohen (ed.) Signifying Identities: Anthropological Perspectives on Boundaries and Contested Values, London: Routledge, pp. 17-36.
- \_\_\_\_\_, 1969, Ethnic Groups and Boundaries: The Social Organisation of Culture Difference, Boston: Little, Brown & Co.
- Barry, B. 2001, Senegambia: Advocating for a Regional Historical Perspective, Amsterdam: Sefis – CEAA.
- Baubock, R. And J. Rundell (eds), 1998, Blurred Boundaries: Migration, Ethnicity, Citizenship, London: Ashgate Publishing Limited.
- Bayart, J.F.(ed), 1996, La Greffe de l Etat, Paris: Khartala
- \_\_\_\_\_, 1991, 'Finishing With the Idea of the Third World: The Concept of the Political Trajectory' in J. Manor (ed.), Rethinking Third World Politics, London: Longman.
- Ben Arrous, M, 2000, Mapping Contemporary Africa: A Geography from Below Perspective, Dakar: Codesria.
- \_\_\_\_\_, 1996, Beyond Territoriality: A Geography of Africa from Below, Dakar: Codesria.

- Berg-schlosser, D. and R. Siegler, 1990, Political Stability and Development: A Comparative Analysis of Kenya, Tanzania and Uganda, London: Lynne Rienner Publishers.
- Bernet, G., 1959, 'The Eastern Boundary of Uganda in 1902', in Uganda Journal, Kampala: The Uganda Society, March.
- Bogonko, S.N, 1980, Kenya 1945-1963: A Study of African National Movements, Nairobi: Kenya Literature Bureau.
- Boubacar, B. 2001, 'Senegambia: Advocating for a Regional Historical Perspective'. Amsterdam: Sefis – CEAA.
- Brown, G, 1972, Phonological Rules and Dialect Variation: A study of the Phonology of Lumasaba, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Browne, R. S and R. J. Cummings, 1984, The Lagos Plan of Action Vs Berg Report: Contemporary Issues in African Development, Lawrenceville, N.S Brunswick.
- Brownlie, I. (1979) African Boundaries: A Legal and Diplomatic Encyclopaedia, London: Hurst.
- Bunker S., 1987, Peasants Against the State: The Politics of Market Control in Bugisu, Uganda, 1900-1983, Urbana: University of Illinois Press.
- Chazan, N., etal, 1999, Politics and Society in Africa, Boulder, Lynne Rienner.
- Clapham, C. etal, 2001, Regional integration in Southern Africa: Comparative International Perspectives, Pretoria: SAIIA.
- \_\_\_\_\_, 1996, Africa and the International System: The Politics of State Survival, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Clark, J. D., 1970, The Prehistory of Africa, London: Cambridge University Press.
- Cocks, P., 1980, 'Towards a Marxist Theory of European Integration', in International Organisation, Vol. 34 No. 1.
- Collins, J. D. (1984) 'Partitioned Culture Areas and Smuggling: The Hausa and the Groundnut Trade across the Nigeria-Niger Border from the mid-1930s to the mid-1970s', in A. I. Asiwaju (ed) Partitioned Africans, Lagos: University of Lagos Press
- Collins, J. D. (1976) 'The Clandestine Movement of Groundnuts across the Niger-Nigeria Boundary', Canadian Journal of African Studies X (2): 259-78
- Comaroff, J. L and J. Comaroff, 1997, Of Revelation and Revolution: The Dialectics of Modernity on a South African Frontier, Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
- Connor, W., 1994, Ethnonationalism: The Quest for Understanding, Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press.

- Cooper, F., 2002, Africa Since 1940: The Past of the Present, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Curzon, L., 1907, 'Frontiers', The Romance Lectures, London: Oxford University press
- Davidson, B, 1992, The Black Man's Burden: Africa and the Curse of the Nation-State, London: James Curry.
- Dealing, J.R., 1974, "Politics in Wanga, Kenya C.1650 to 1914" Ph.D Dissertation, Northwestern University.
- De Wolf, J.L, 1977, Differentiation and Integration in Western Kenya: A Study of Religious Innovation and Social Change among the Bukusu, The Hague, Netherlands: Mouton.
- \_\_\_\_\_, 1971, "Politics and Religion among the Bukusu", Makerere: Universities Social Sciences Council Conference Dec, 14-17th.
- Donnan, H and Wilson T., 1999, Borders, Frontiers of Identity, Nation and State, London, Berg
- Doornbos, M., 1991, Linking the Future to the Past: Ethnicity and Pluralism', Review of African Political Economy, Vol 19, No. 52. UK:Roape
- Ehret, C., 1998, An African Classical Age, Charlottesville: The University of Virginia Press.
- \_\_\_\_\_, 1971, Southern Nilotic History: Linguistic Approaches to the Study of the Past. Evanston: Northwestern University Press.
- \_\_\_\_\_, "Cushites and the Highland and Plains Nilotes." In B.A. Ogot and J. A. Kieran (ed.), Zamani: A Survey of East African History. London, Nairobi: Longmans and East African Publishing House, 1968.
- Elias, T. O., 1965, "The Charter of the Organisation of African Unity", American Journal of International Law.
- Esedebe, P. O., 1980, Pan-Africanism: The Idea and the Movement, 1776-1991, Washington: Howard University Press.
- Fawcett, 1918, Frontiers: A study in Political Geography, Oxford: Oxford University Press
- Feierman, S., 1990, Peasant Intellectuals: History and Anthropology in Tanzania, Madison.
- Fanon, F., 1990, The Wretched of the Earth, Harmondsworth: Penguin
- Frost, R., 1978, Race Against Time: Human Relations and Politics in Kenya Before Independence. London: Rex Collins Ltd.
- Gayer, C. M.A, 1957, Bugisu Land Tenure Report, Endebbe: Government Printer.
- Gimode, E. A, 2003, The Syncretising Dialectic in the Historical Development of Religion:

- The Case of Selected Western Kenyan Zone Communities 1700-1950' PhD Thesis, Kenyatta University.
- \_\_\_\_\_, 1996, 'Attempts at economic Integration in East Africa: Memories, Problems and Prospects', Paper Presented at the 4th Historical Association of Kenya symposium at Kenyatta University, 6-8 December.
- Geertz, C., 1973, The interpretation of cultures. New York: Basic Books.
- Gertzel, C., 1972. 'Leadership and Institution Building in Uganda'. in: *Africa Review* 2/1.
- Glassner, M.I., 1996, Political Geography, New York: John Wiley and Sons, inc.
- Gould, W.T.S, 1995, 'Migration and Recent economic and Environmental Change in East Africa, in Baker J. and T. Aina (eds), The Migration Experience in Africa, Sweden: Nordic Afrkainstitute.
- Griffiths, I., 1996, 'Permeable Boundaries in Africa', in P. Nugent and A. I. Asiwaju (eds) African Boundaries: Barriers, Conduits and Opportunities, London: Pinter, pp 68-84
- Haberson, J.W et al, (eds), 1994, Civil Society and the State in Africa, Boulder: Lynne Rienner.
- Hansen, A., 1994, 'The Illusion of Local Sustainability and Self-sufficiency: Famine in a Border Area of Northwestern Zambia', Human Organization 53 (1): 11-20
- Hansen, A., 1993, 'African Refugees: Defining and Defending their Human Rights', in R. Cohen, G. Hyden and W. Nagan (eds) Human Rights and Governance in Africa, Gainesville, FL: Universities of Florida Press
- Hansen, H.B., 1984, Mission, Church, and State in a Colonial Setting: Uganda, 1890-1925. New York: St. Martin's Press, 1984.
- Hansen, N., 1981, The Border Economy: Regional Development in the Southwest, University of Texas, Austin.
- Hargreaves, J.D., 1963, Prelude to the Partition of West Africa. London: Macmillan.
- Heald, S., 1999, Manhood and Morality: Sex, Violence and Ritual in Gisu Society, London: Routledge
- \_\_\_\_\_, 1989, Controlling Anger: The Sociology of Gisu Violence. London: Manchester University Press.
- Herbst, J., 2000, States and Power in Africa: Comparative Lessons in Authority and Control, Princeton: Princeton University Press.
- Hobley, C.N., 1970, Kenya From Chartered Company to Crown Colony: Thirty years of Exploration and Administration in British East Africa, 2<sup>nd</sup> Ed., London: Frank Cass and Co. Ltd.

- Hobsbawn, E and Ranger, T.O (eds), 1983, The Invention of Tradition, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Holdich, T.H., 1916, Political Frontiers and Boundary Making, London: Macmillan.
- Huntingford, G.W.B., 1944, The Western Tribes of the Bantu Kavirondo, Nairobi: Ndia Kuu Press.
- Ibrahim, J., 1997, Expanding Democratic Space in Nigeria, Dakar: Codesria.
- Ihonvbere, J.O., 1995, 'Beyond Governance: The State and Democratisation in Sub-Saharan Africa', in Journal of Asian and African Studies, No. 50.
- Ikiara, M. et al., 2003, Regional Integration Study of East Africa: The Case of Kenya, Nairobi: KIPPRA Working paper No. 9
- Iliffe, J., 2005, 'Breaking the Chain at its Weakest Link: TANU and the Colonial Office', in Maddox G and J. Giblin, eds, In search of a Nation: Histories of Authority and Dissidence in Tanzania, Oxford: James Currey.
- Ingham, K., 1962, A History of East Africa, London: Longman.
- Kabwegyere, T.B., 1974, The Politics of State Formation: The Nature and Effects of Colonialism in Uganda, Nairobi, Dar es Salaam and Kampala: East African Educational Publishers.
- Kakai, P. W., 2000, 'History of Inter-Ethnic Relations in Bungoma, Mt. Elgon and Trans-Nzoia Districts C. 1875-1997', Ph.D. Thesis, Kenyatta University.
- Kamazima, S.R. 2000, 'Rethinking Cross-border Cooperation, Regional Integration and Globalization: Some Theoretical and Methodological Issues'. Paper presented at Madison, Wisconsin Nov. 9.
- Kaniki, M. H. Y., 1985, 'The colonial economy: the former British zones' In A.Boahen ed. Africa under colonial domination, 1880-1935. General History of Africa, Vol. 7 : 382-419 Paris: UNESCO; Ibadan, Nairobi: Heinemann; California: University of California Press.
- Kanogo, T., 1985, Squatters and the Roots of Mau Mau, Nairobi: E.A.E.P.
- Kasfir, N., 1976, The Shrinking Political Arena: Participation and Ethnicity in Africa Poitics. Berkeley: University Press.
- Karugire, S. R, 1980, A Political History of Uganda, London: Heinemann.
- Katzenellenbogen, S. (1996) 'It Didn't Happen at Berlin: Politics, Economics and Ignorance in the Setting of Africa's Colonial Boundaries', in P. Nugent and A. I. Asiwaju (eds) African Boundaries: Barriers, Conduits and Opportunities, London: Pinter, pp 21-34
- Khamalwa, J.P.W, 2004, Identity, Power and Culture: Imbalu Initiation Ritual Among the Bamasaba of Uganda, Bayreuth: Bayreuth University.

- Kipkorir, B.E., 1973, "Colonial Response to Crisis: The Kolloa Affray and Colonial Kenya in 1950", in Kenya Past and Present Vol.2 No. 1.
- \_\_\_\_\_, 1972, "Kolloa Affray, 1950" in Trans-African journal of History Vol. 2 No. 2.
- \_\_\_\_\_, 1970/71, "The Kalenjin Phenomenon and the Misri Legends". Seminar Paper No. XII, Department of History, University of Nairobi.
- Kiwanuka, M.S.M, 1972, A History of Buganda. London: Longman
- Ki-Zerbo, J. 1981, African Prehistoric Art', in Kizerbo ed. General History of Africa I:Methodolgy and African Prehistory. Paris UNESCO
- Kodjo, E. And Chanaiwa, D., 1999, Pan Africanism and Liberation' in A.A. Mazrui eds General History of Africa VIII: Africa since 1935, London: James Currey.
- Kopytoff, I. (1987) 'The Internal African Frontier: The Making of African Political Culture', in I. Kopytoff The African Frontier, Bloomington: Indiana University Press
- La Fontaine, J.S., 1969, 'Tribalism among the Gisu: An Anthropological Study', in P. H. Gulliver, Tradition and Transition in East Africa: Studies of a Tribal Element in the Modern Era, London: Routledge and Kegan Paul.
- \_\_\_\_\_, 1960, 'The Gisu', in A. I., Richards (ed.), East African Chiefs, Faber.
- \_\_\_\_\_, 1959, The Gisu of Uganda, International African Institute, London.
- Lavergne, R. (ed) 1997. Regional Integration and Cooperation in West Africa. Ottawa, IDRC.
- Lal, B. B., 1995, 'Symbolic Interaction Theories', American Behavioural Scientist, Vol. 38 No. 3
- Leys, C., 1975, Underdevelopment in Kenya: The Political Economy of Neo-colonialism, 1964-1971, Berkeley: University of California Press.
- Lonsdale, J. M., 1989, 'The Conquest State, 1895-1904', in W. R Ochieng (ed.) A Modern History of Kenya, Nairobi: Evan Brothers.
- \_\_\_\_\_, 1970, "Political Association in Western Kenya", in I. Robert and A. Mazrui (eds.), Protest and Power in Black Africa, New York, Oxford University.
- Low, D. A, 1962, Political Parties in Uganda, 1949-1962, London: Athlone Press.
- Lukhobo, 1957, Report of the Land tenure Proposals Committee, Bugisu District (Mimeo)
- Maddox, G. and Giblin, J (eds.), 2005, In Search of a Nation: Histories of Authority and Dissidence in Tanzania, London: James Currey.

- Mafeje, A., 1992, In Search of an Alternative: A Collection of Essays on Revolutionary Theory and Politics, Harare: SAPES.
- Makila, F.E., 1982, "Significance of Chetambe Fort in Bukusu History", Department of Culture Official Monograph Nairobi.
- \_\_\_\_\_, 1978, An Outline History of Babukusu, Nairobi: East African Publishing House.
- Maloba, W., 1989, "Nationalism and Decolonisation, 1947-1963", in W. Ochieng' (ed.) A Modern History of Kenya 1895-1980, Nairobi: Evans Brothers Ltd.
- Mamdani, M., 2002, 'African States, Citizenship and War: A Case Study', International Affairs, Vol. 78, No. 3 July.
- \_\_\_\_\_, 1996, Citizen and Subject: Contemporary Africa and the Legacy of Late Colonialism, Oxford: James Currey.
- \_\_\_\_\_, 1995, 'A Critique of the State and the Civil Society Paradigm in Africanist Studies', in M. Mamdan and E. Wamba-dia-Wamba (eds), African Studies in Social Movements and Democracy, Dakar: Codesria.
- \_\_\_\_\_, 1983, Imperialism and Fascism in Uganda, Nairobi: Heinemann.
- \_\_\_\_\_, 1976, Politics and Class Formation in Uganda, London: Heinemann.
- Martinez, D. J., 1986, Across Boundaries: Transborder Interaction in Comparative Perspective, El Paso: Western Texas press.
- Maxon, R.M, 2002, 'Colonial Conquest and Administration' in Ochieng W. R (ed), Historical Studies and Social Change in Western Kenya: Essays in Memory of Professor G.S Were, Nairobi: EAEP.
- \_\_\_\_\_, 1989, Conflict and Accommodation in Western Kenya, the Gusii and the British, 1907-1963, London: Associated University Press.
- Mazrui, A.A, 1977, Africa's International Relations ,Heinemann and Westview Press.
- \_\_\_\_\_,and Tidy, M., 1984, Nationalism and New States in Africa, from 1933 to the Present, Nairobi, Heinemann, 1984.
- Mbembe, A., 1999, 'At the Edge of the World: Boundaries, Territoriality, and Sovereignty in Africa', in CODESRIA BULLETIN No. 3 and 4.
- Mc Ewen, A. C., 1971, International Boundaries in East Africa, London: Oxford University Press.
- Merkx, J., 2000, 'Refugee Identities and Relief in an African Borderland: A Study of Northern Uganda and Southern Sudan', Geneva: UNHCR Working Paper No.19
- Mkandawire, T. and Soludo, C., 1999, Our Continent, Our Future: African Perspectives on Structural Adjustment, Dakar: Codesria.

- Morgenthau, H., 1973, Politics Among Nations: The Struggle for Power and Peace, Calcutta: Scientific Book Agency.
- Muller P.O and de Blij H. J, 1997, Geography: Realms, Regions and Concepts, London: John Wiley and Sons, Inc.
- Munene, G. .M., 1995, 'Cold War Disillusionment in Africa', in G.M Munene (eds), The United States and Africa: From Independence to the end of the Cold War, Nairobi: East African Educational Publishers.
- Mungeam, M., 1966, British Rule in Kenya 1895-1921, London: Oxford University Press.
- Murunga, G.R, 1998,, "The Evolution of Mumias into an Urban Centre to circa 1940", M.A. Thesis Kenyatta University.
- Mustapha, R.A, 1992, 'Identity Boundaries, Ethnicity and National Integration in Nigeria', CODESRIA Seminar, Nairobi, Nov 16-18.
- Mutibwa, P., 1992, Uganda Since Independence: A Story of Unfulfilled Hopes, London: Hurst & Co.
- Mutoro, H.W., 1975, "The Abaluyia Reactions to Colonial Rule, 1880-1930", Student/Staff Seminar, Department of History, University of Nairobi.
- Mwanzi, H. A., 1986, 'The Place of Theory in African History', Paper presented at the UNESCO conference on the revision of History Textbooks in East and Central Africa, Nairobi: March 25-30.
- \_\_\_\_\_, 1985, 'African initiatives and resistance in East Africa, 1880-1914', In A. Boahen ed General History of Africa VII: Africa Under Colonial Domination. London: Heinemann/Unesco.
- \_\_\_\_\_, 1977, A History of the Kipsigis, Nairobi: East African Literature Bureau.
- Nasimiyu, R., 1984, 'The Participation of Women in the Political Economy of Kenya: A Case Study of Bukusu Women in Bungoma District, 1902-1963", M.A. Thesis, University of Nairobi.
- \_\_\_\_\_, 1980, "The Tradition of Resistance Among the Babukusu" Staff Seminar Paper No. 7, Department of History University of Nairobi.
- Nasong'o S. W, 2005, Contending Political Paradigms in Africa: Rationality and the Politics of Democratization in Kenya and Zambia, New York and London: Routledge
- Neocosmos, M., 1998, 'From Peoples Politics to State Politics: Aspects of National liberation in South Africa' in A. Olukoshi (ed.) The Politics of Opposition in Contemporary Africa, Uppsala: Nordic Africa institute.
- Nickel, J. 1987. Making Sense of Human Rights. Philosophical Reflections on the Declaration on Human Rights. Berkeley. California Press.

- Nugent, P., 2002, Smugglers, secessionists and Loyal Citizens on the Ghana-Togo Frontier, Athens: OhioUniversity Press.
- \_\_\_\_\_, and A.I. Asiwaju (eds). 1996, African Boundaries: Barriers, Conduits and Opportunities. London: Frances Printer.
- \_\_\_\_\_, 1996, 'Arbitrary Lines and the People's Minds: A Dissenting View on Colonial Boundaries in West Africa', in P. Nugent and A. I. Asiwaju (eds) African Boundaries: Barriers, Conduits and Opportunities, London: Pinter, pp 35-67
- \_\_\_\_\_, and A. I. Asiwaju (1996) 'Conclusion: The Future of African Boundaries', in P. Nugent and A. I. Asiwaju (eds) African Boundaries: Barriers, Conduits and Opportunities, London: Pinter, pp 266-272
- \_\_\_\_\_, and A. I. Asiwaju (1996) 'Introduction: The Paradox of African Boundaries', in P. Nugent and A. I. Asiwaju (eds) African Boundaries: Barriers, Conduits and Opportunities, London: Pinter, pp 1-18
- Nyong'o, A. P., 1989, 'State and Society in Kenya: The Disintegration of the Nationalist Coalition and the Rise of Presidential Authoritarianism', 1963-1978, in African Affairs vol. 88 No. 1.
- Nzongola-Ntalaja and M. C. Lee, 1997, The State and Democracy in Africa, Harare: A.A.P.S Books.
- Obudho, R.A, 1984, National Urban and Regional Planning in Kenya', Third World Planning Review 6, 4.
- Ochieng', W., ed., 1989, A Modern History of Kenya 1895-1980, Nairobi: Evans Brothers Ltd.
- \_\_\_\_\_, 1974, An Outline History of Nyanza up to 1914, Nairobi: E.A.L.B.
- Ochwada, H., 2004, Rethinking East African Integration: From economic to political and from State to civil society', Africa Development vol XXIX, No 2., Dakar: Codesria.
- O'Connor, 1962, Report of the Commission Appointed to Review the Boundary Between Bugisu and Bukedi, Entebbe, Government Printer.
- Odhiambo, E.A.S, 2002, 'Historicizing the Deep Past in Western Kenya' in Ochieng W. R (ed), Historical Studies and Social Change in Western Kenya: Essays in Memory of Professor G.S Were, Nairobi: EAEP.
- \_\_\_\_\_, 1996, 'Reconditioning the Terms of Fact: Ethnicity, Nationalism and Democracy as Political Vectors', in B.A Ogot (ed.) Ethnicity, Nationalism and Democracy in Africa, Maseno: Maseno University.
- \_\_\_\_\_, 1985, 'Politics and Nationalism in East Africa' in A. Boahen (ed.) General History of Africa VII: Africa Under Colonial Domination, London: Heinemann/Unesco.

- Odhiambo E.A.S and Lonsdale J. (eds), 2003, Mau Mau and Nationhood: Arms, Authority and Narration, Oxford: James Currey.
- Ogot, B. A., 2003, 'Mau Mau and Nationhood: The Untold Story', in E.S.A Odhiambo and J. Lonsdale (eds), Mau Mau and Nationhood: Arms, Authority and Narration, Oxford: James Currey.
- \_\_\_\_\_, 2002, 'A Historical Portrait of Western Kenya up to 1895' in W. R. Ochieng (ed), Historical Studies and Social Change in Western Kenya: Essays in Memory of Professor G.S Were, Nairobi: EAEP.
- \_\_\_\_\_, 2000, 'A Historical Portrait of Western Kenya up to 1895', in W. R. Ochieng (ed), Historical Studies and Social Change in Western Kenya: Essays in Memory of Professor G.S Were, Nairobi: EAEP.
- \_\_\_\_\_, (ed), 1996, Ethnicity, Nationalism and Democracy in Africa, Maseno: Maseno University.
- \_\_\_\_\_, 1995, 'The Decisive Years, 1956-1963' in B.A Ogot and W.R Ochieng (eds), Decolonisation and Independence in Kenya 1940-1993, London
- \_\_\_\_\_, 1967, History of the Southern Luo, Nairobi: East African Publishing House.
- Ojo, O.J.C, 1985, 'International Actors' in J. C. Olatunde et al, (eds) African International Relations, Lagos/London: Longman Group.
- \_\_\_\_\_, etal (eds), 1985, African International Relations, Lagos/London: Longman Group.
- Okoth, G. P, 2002, 'International Relations Between Western Kenya and Eastern Uganda' in W. R. Ochieng (ed), Historical Studies and Social Change in Western Kenya: Essays in Memory of Professor G.S Were, Nairobi: EAEP.
- \_\_\_\_\_, and Ogot B.A (eds), 2000, Conflict in Contemporary Africa, Nairobi: Jomo Kenyatta Foundation.
- \_\_\_\_\_, 1999, 'Historiography of Kenya's foreign Policy' African Review of Foreign Policy, Vol. 1 No. 1 March
- \_\_\_\_\_, 1995, 'Uganda's Geopolitical Significance Since 1894' in P.G Okoth, et al, eds, Uganda: A Century of Existence, Kampala: Fountain Publishers.
- \_\_\_\_\_, 1994, 'The Political Economy of Human rights Crisis in Uganda, 1962-1985', Transafrican Journal of History
- \_\_\_\_\_, 1992, 'Intermittent Tensions in Uganda-Kenya Relations: Historical Perspectives' Transafrican Journal of History, Vol. 21.
- Oliver, R., 1952, The Missionary Factor in East Africa, London/New York: Longmans.
- Olukoshi, O. A and B. Laaso, 1996, Challenges of the Nation State in Africa, Uppsala:

Nordiska African Institute.

- Onyango, M.O., 2002, 'The Geographical Setting of Western Kenya' in Ochieng W. R (ed), Historical Studies and Social Change in Western Kenya: Essays in Memory of Professor G.S Were, Nairobi: EAEP.
- Opoku, A. K, 1985, Religion in Africa during the colonial era' In A. Boahen ed General History of Africa VII: Africa Under Colonial Domination. London: Heinemann/Unesco.
- Oppenheim, L., 1955, International Law, Lauterpacht.
- Orwa, D.K, 1985, 'Theories of International Relations' in J. C. Olatunde et al,( eds), African International Relations, Lagos: Longman Nigeria.
- Osogo, J.N., 1976, East Africa's People in the Past, Nairobi: Longman
- \_\_\_\_\_, 1966, A History of Baluyia, Nairobi: Oxford University Press.
- Otim, P.O, 1993, 'Aspects of the Land Question in Mbale District', Kampala: CBR
- Oyugi, W.O, 1992, Politics and Administration in East Africa, Nairobi: Konrad Adenauer Foundation
- Prescott, J.R.V. 1987, Political Boundaries and Frontiers. London: Unwin and Unwin.
- Purvis, J. B., 1909, Through Uganda to Mount Elgon, London: t. Fisher Unwin
- Ranger, T.O, 1983, 'The Invention of Tradition in Colonial Africa', In E. Hobsbawm and T.O Ranger eds. The Invention of Tradition, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Riley, S. P., 1991, 'The Democratic Transition in Africa, An End to the One-Party State?', Conflict Studies, No. 245, United Kingdom.
- Roberts, A., 1962, "The Sub-Imperialism of the Baganda," Journal of African History, 8, No. 3.
- Rosberg, C.G., and Nottingham, J., 1966, The Myth of Mau Mau: The Origin of Nationalism in Kenya, New York: Preager Publishers.
- Roscoe J., 1924, The Bageshu and other Tribes in the Uganda Protectorate, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- \_\_\_\_\_, 1915, The Northern Bantu: an account of some Central African tribes of the Uganda Protectorate. Cambridge, University Press.
- Rothchild, D., 1968, Politics of Integration: An East African Documentary, Nairobi: East African Publishing House.
- Said, W. E, 1994, Culture and Imperialism, London: Vantage Books.

- Sakwa-M'Sake, G.L., 1971, "A History of the Political Organization of Wanga, C. 1880-1926", B.A. Dissertation, University of Nairobi.
- Schoenbrun, D.L, 1998, A Green Place, Agrarian Change, Gender and Social Identity in the Great Lakes Region to 15<sup>th</sup> Century, Kampala: Fountain Publishers.
- Scott, J.,1990, Domination and the Arts of Resistance: Hidden Transcripts, New Haven/London: Yale University Press.
- \_\_\_\_\_, 1985, Weapons of the Weak: Everyday Forms of Peasant Resistance, New Haven/London: Yale University Press.
- Shilaro, P.M., 1991, 'Kabras Culture Under Colonial Rule: A Study of the Impact of Cristianity and Western Education', M. A Thesis, Kenyatta University.
- Shimanyula, J.M., 1978, Elijah Masinde and the Dini Ya Msambwa, Nairobi: Transafrica Publishers.
- Shivji, I., 2003, 'The Rise, The Fall and the Insurrection of Nationalism in Africa', Paper Presented during the CODESRIA, East African Regional Meeting in Addis Ababa
- Simiyu, V.G., 1997, Elijah Masinde, Nairobi: E.A.E.P.
- \_\_\_\_\_, 1991, "The Emergence of a Sub-Nation: A History of Babukusu to 1990" in Transafrican Journal of History Vol. 20 .
- \_\_\_\_\_, 1988, 'The Democratic Myth in the African Traditional Societies', in W.O Oyugi *et.al* (eds.), Democratic Theory and Practice in Africa, London: Jams Curry Publishers.
- \_\_\_\_\_, 1986, 'The Emergence of a Sub-Nation: Babukusu of Bungoma District, 1500-1900', Paper Prepared for the Symposium on the Proposed Chetambe Cultural Centre.
- \_\_\_\_\_, 1982, 'Oral Traditions: A Conspiracy of the Elders', Paper presented to the UNESCO Seminar, Kisumu.
- Smith, A. D., 1986, The Ethnic Origins of Nations, Oxford: Blackwell Press.
- Spear, T., 1982, Traditions of Origin and their Interpretation: The Mijikenda of Kenya Athens, USA: Ohio University Press.
- Stone, J. C., 1995, A Short History of the Cartography of Africa, Lewiston (N.Y): Edwin Mellen.
- Strassoldo, R. 1989, 'Border Studies: the State of Art in Europe' in A.I. Asiwaju and P.O. Adeniyi (eds), Borderlands in Africa: a Multidisciplinary Comparative Focus on Nigeria and West Africa, 383-396: Lagos: University of Lagos Press.
- Throup D., 1991, 'Kenya's Relations with Museveni's Uganda', in H.B Hansen and M. Twaddle (eds), Changing Uganda, London: James Curry.

- Touval, S., 1985, 'Partitioned Groups and Inter-State Relations' in A. Asiwaju (ed.), Partitioned Africans: Ethnic Relations Across Africa's International Boundaries, London: C. Hurst.
- \_\_\_\_\_, 1972, The Boundary Politics of Independent Africa. Cambridge: Harvard University Press.
- \_\_\_\_\_, 1969, 'The sources of Status quo and Irredentist Policies', in Widstrand C.G.(ed.), African Boundary Problems, Uppsala: Scandinavian institute of African Studies.
- Turner, V. W, 1969, 'Symbolisation and Patterning in the Circumcision Rites of Two Bantu Speaking Societies' in M. Douglas and P. Kaberry (eds), Man in Africa London: Tavistock Publications
- Twaddle, M., 1993, Kakungulu and the Creation of Uganda, London: James Currey.
- \_\_\_\_\_, 1969, 'Tribalism' in Eastern Uganda' in P.H. Gulliver (ed), Tradition and Transition in East Africa: Studies of a Tribal Element in the Modern Era, London: Routledge and Kegan Paul.
- Vansina, J., 1990, Paths in the Rainforest, London.
- \_\_\_\_\_, 1985, Oral tradition as History. Madison: University of Wisconsin
- Wafula M., 1997, 'Leadership from the Graves: The Case of the Bukusu Traditional Society', Journal of the Institute of African Studies University of Nairobi, Vol. 2.
- Wafula, P., 2001, ' Brothers in the Wilderness: The Dilemmas of Dual Citizenship and the Cross-Border Migrations Between the Bukusu of Western Kenya and the Bakisu of Eastern Uganda since Independence' Paper Presented During the Codesria Governance Institute.
- \_\_\_\_\_, 2000, 'Politics and Nationalism in Colonial Kenya: The Case of Babukusu of Bungoma District, C. 1894-1963', M. A. Thesis, Kenyatta University.
- Wagner, G., 1970, The Bantu of Western Kenya, London: Oxford University Press.
- \_\_\_\_\_, 1949, The Bantu of North Kavirondo with Special Reference to the Vugusu and Logoli Vol. 10 London: Oxford University press.
- Walakira, L., 1983, 'Circumcision Ceremony Among the Bagisu', in The Second National Theological Week, August
- Wandibba, S., 1972, "The Bukusu Forts", B.A. Dissertation University of Nairobi.
- Wangusa T., 1989, Upon This Mountain, London: Heinemann.
- Wanyama, F. O., 'The Role of the Presidency in African Conflicts' in G. Okoth and B. A Ogot (eds), Conflict in Contemporary Africa, Nairobi: Jomo Kenyatta Foundation.

- Were G. S., 1982, 'The Bagisu and their Past: Some Notes on their Legends about Creation, the Origins of Death, the Economy of their Ancestors and the Phenomenon of Kintu', Transafrican Journal of History, Vol. 11.
- \_\_\_\_\_, 1978, 'The Economy of Pre-Colonial Bugisu', Journal of African Studies, Vol. 6.
- \_\_\_\_\_, 1977, Essays on African Religion in Western Kenya, Nairobi: E.A.P.H. 1977
- \_\_\_\_\_, 1972, 'Politics, Religion and Nationalism in Western Kenya, 1942-1962: Dini ya Musambwa Revisited', in B. A Ogot and J.A Kieran eds., Zamani: A Survey of East African History, Nairobi: EAPH.
- \_\_\_\_\_, 1967, History of the Abaluyia of Western Kenya C. 1500-1930, Nairobi: E.A.P.H.
- Wesonga, R., 1985, "The Pre-colonial Military Organization of the Bukusu", Wandibba S. (ed), History and Culture in Western Kenya; Nairobi, G.S. Were Press 1985.
- Wipper, A., 1977, Rural Rebels: A Study of Two Protest Movements in Kenya, Nairobi: O.U.P. 1977
- \_\_\_\_\_, 1971, "Elijah Masinde – A Folk Hero" in B.A. Ogot (ed) Hadith 3, Nairobi, E.A.P.H. 1971.
- Zdenek C., 1969, The OAU and its Charter, London: Praeger
- Zezeza, P.T., 2003, Rethinking Africa's Globalization, Trenton, Africa World Press.
- \_\_\_\_\_, 1993, A Modern Economic History of Africa, Dakar: Codesria Book Series.
- \_\_\_\_\_, 1997, Manufacturing African Studies And Crises, Dakar, CODESRIA

## APPENDIX 1: SAMPLE QUESTION GUIDELINE

### A. Personal Information

Name:

Age:

Sex:

Ethnic Group:

Nationality:

Educational Background:

Address and Location Residence:

Date of Interview:

### B. Background Information on Community Relations

1. What is your place of birth?
2. How long have you stayed in this place?
3. Do you have members of your family, clan or ethnic group staying in this area?
  1. Please give a brief history of your ethnic community. Trace the migratory routes of your ancestors, where they settled for specific periods, possible communities they interacted with, nature of interaction and specific events associated with the migratory history of your ancestors?
  2. Which other ethnic groups live here? Have they lived here for a long time? Explain.
  3. How have these groups (in 5 above) interacted with your community from the past?
  4. Do you remember any major aspects of these relations, both at the community and individual levels? Explain them in detail and the period within which such relations took place.
  5. What activities and occupations do you and your community engage in? Have these occupations been changing or are still similar to the traditional ones? Explain.
  6. What are the activities and occupations of your neighbouring communities? Have such occupations and activities enhanced inter community relations between your people and the neighbours? Explain.

### **C. Factors specific to Community Relations in the Colonial Period**

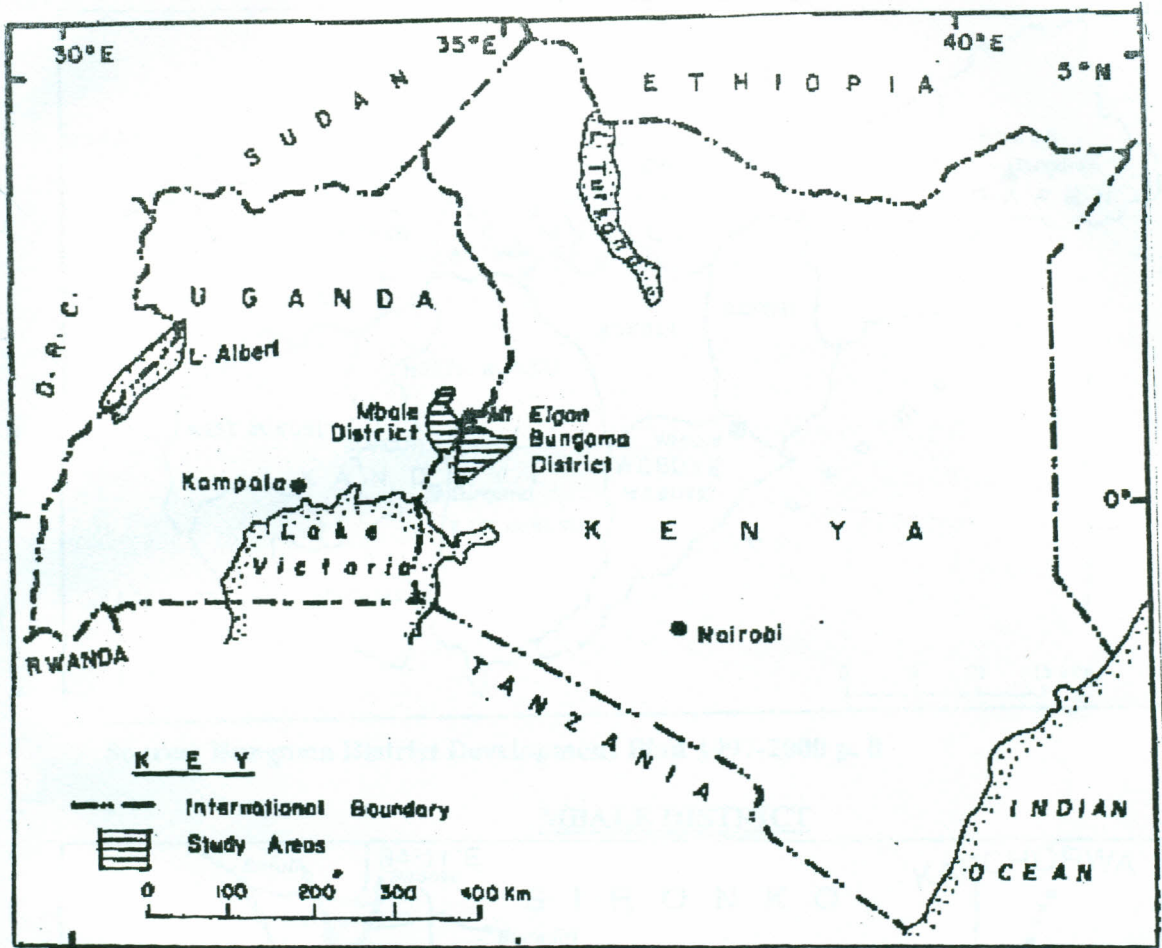
1. When did your community first come into contact with the Swahili-Arabs and Europeans?
2. What was the nature of their contact?
3. How did this contact affect your initial relations with the neighbouring communities?
4. What are some of the requirements expected of your community following the formal imposition of colonial rule by the Europeans in your area?
5. What were the effects of these requirements on the nature of relations between your community and the neighbouring ones?
6. When do you think the Kenya –Uganda boundary was established?
7. How did the establishment of this boundary affect your relations with the neighbouring communities on the other side of the border?
8. Could you list some of the common grievances upheld by you and your community these new changes? Explain.
9. What solutions did you have to the social, political and economic changes that the

establishment of colonial rule introduced in the area and colony in general?

10. What was the colonial government's response to your grievances?
11. Did your community and the neighbouring one across the border engage in any common social, economic and political organizations during this time? Explain the nature of the organizations, its leaders and their inter-relations?
12. What were some of the successes and failures that these organizations encountered?
13. How did the colonial government respond to the activities of such organizations?

#### **D. Community Relations During the Independent Period**

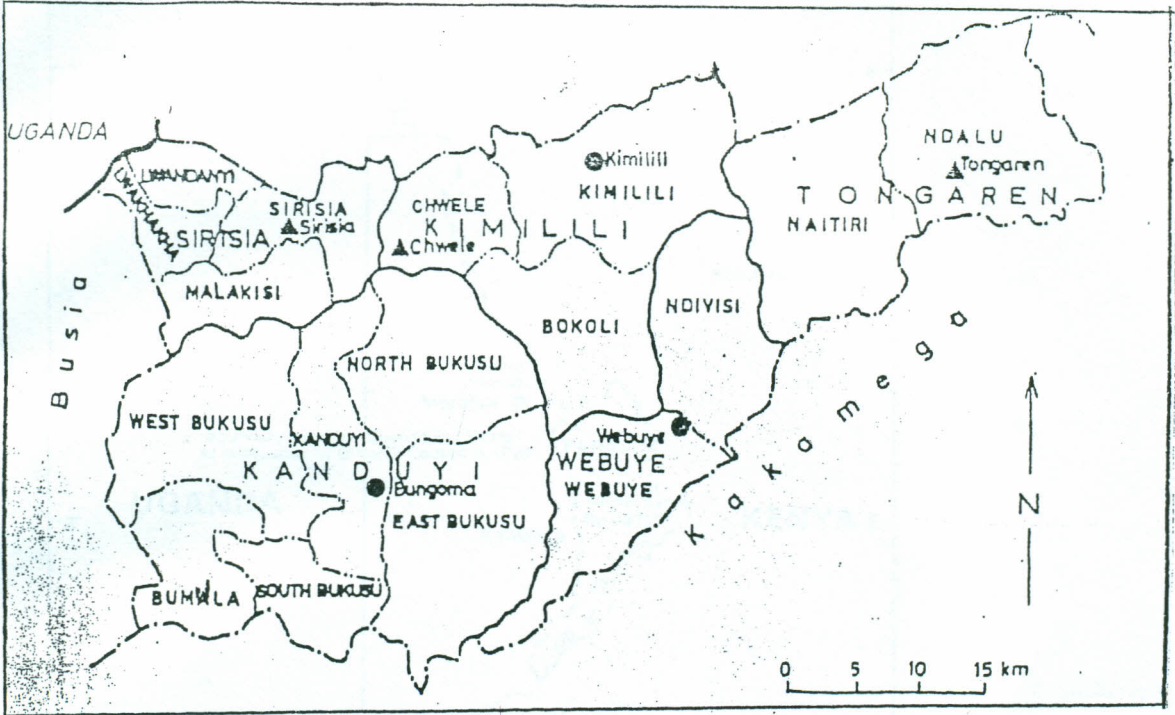
1. Did the coming of independence in your country bring about any changes in the nature of relations between your community and the neighbouring one across the border? Explain.
2. How did the people generally respond to these changes?
3. What activities did your community engage in after the attainment of independence in your country?
4. What was the independent leaders' initial response to the various common activities that you engaged in with your neighbours across the border?
5. What in your view significantly changed in your relations and that of the neighbouring community across the border with the attainment of independence? Were there any restrictions?
6. What role did the independent governments of Kenya and Uganda play in enhancing the relations between your community and the one across the border? Explain.
7. How has your community responded to the various changes initiated by the independent governments of Kenya and Uganda?
8. When do you think the East Africa Community was formed?
9. What have been the benefits of the East African community to the relations between your community and the neighbouring one across the border?
10. How have the relations between your community and the neighbouring ones across the border enhanced harmonious community and state relations in the region?

APPENDIX 2: MAP SHOWING AREA OF STUDY

Source : Extracted from the Kenya National Atlas 2005.

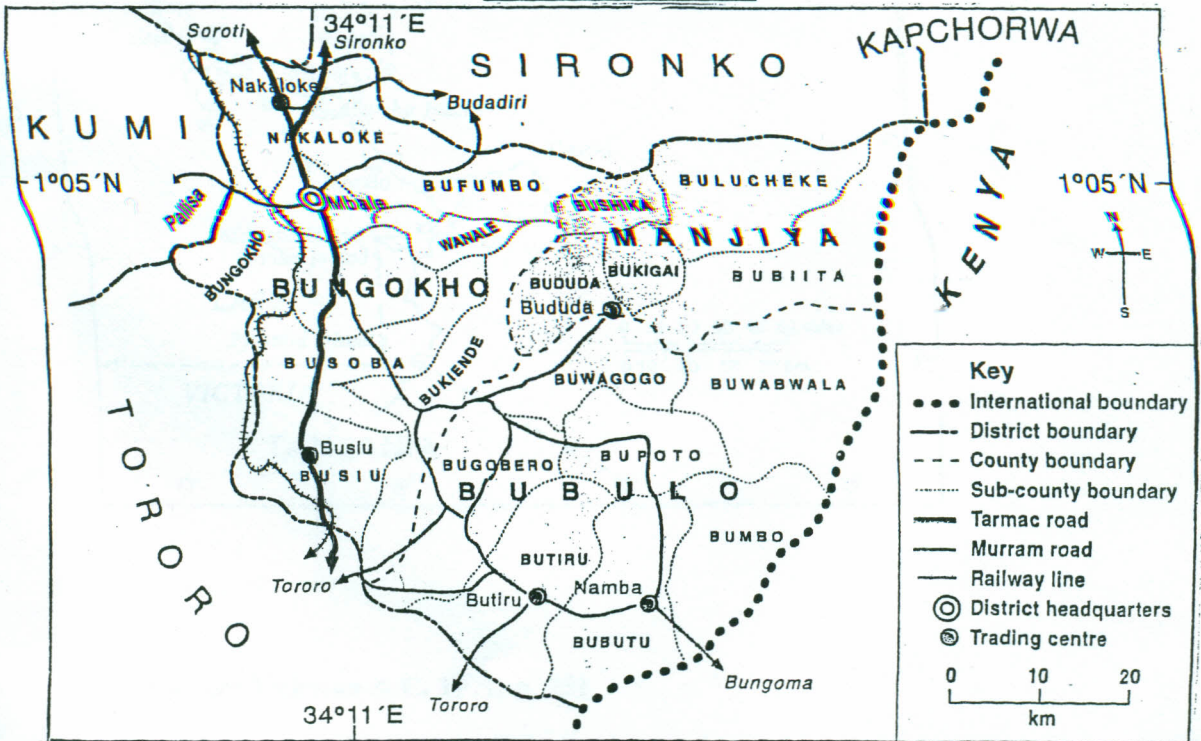
**APPENDIX 3: MAPS SHOWING THE ADMINISTRATIVE DIVISIONS IN BUNGOMA AND MBALE DISTRICTS.**

**BUNGOMA DISTRICT**



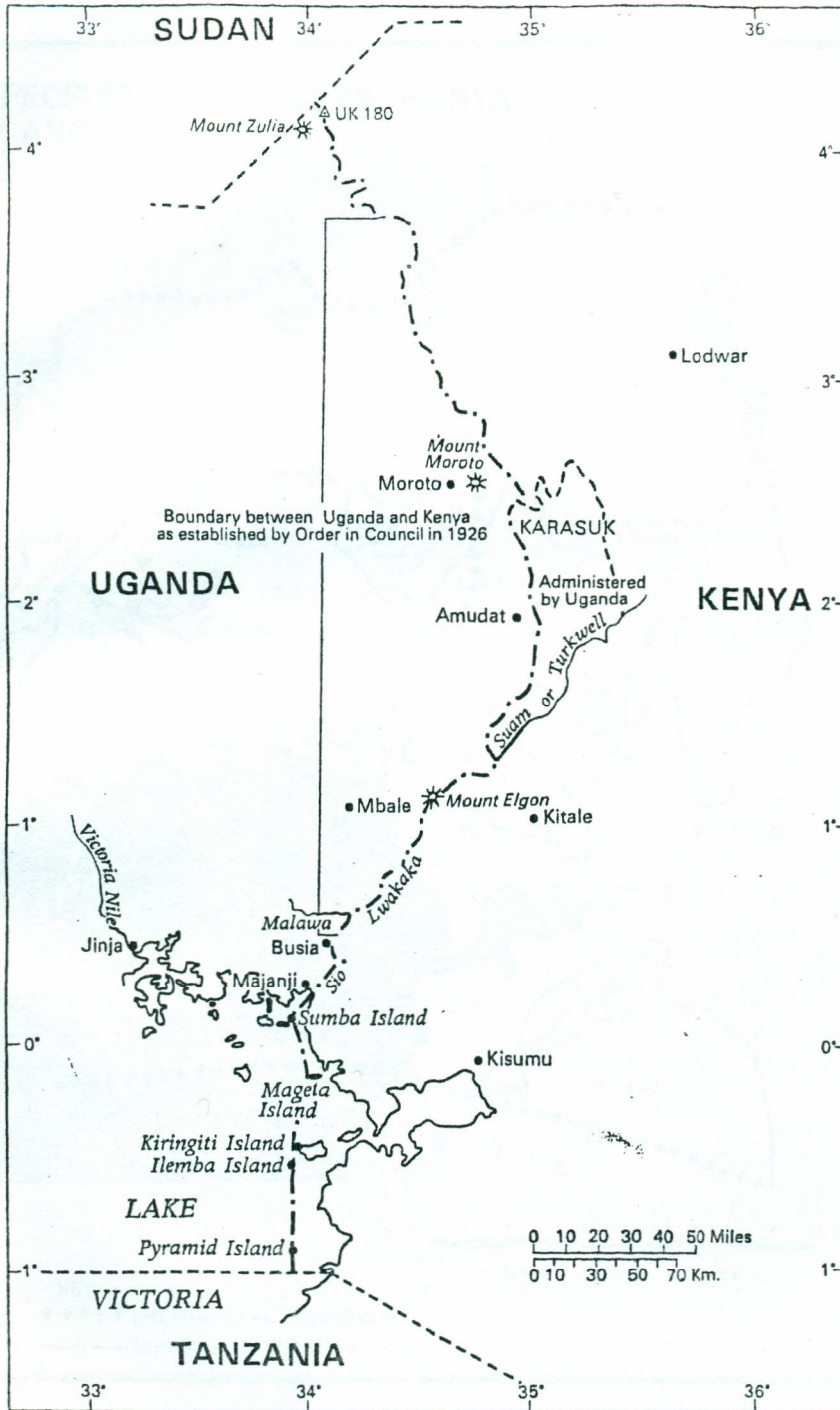
Source: Bungoma District Development Plan 1997-2000 p. 8

**MBALE DISTRICT**



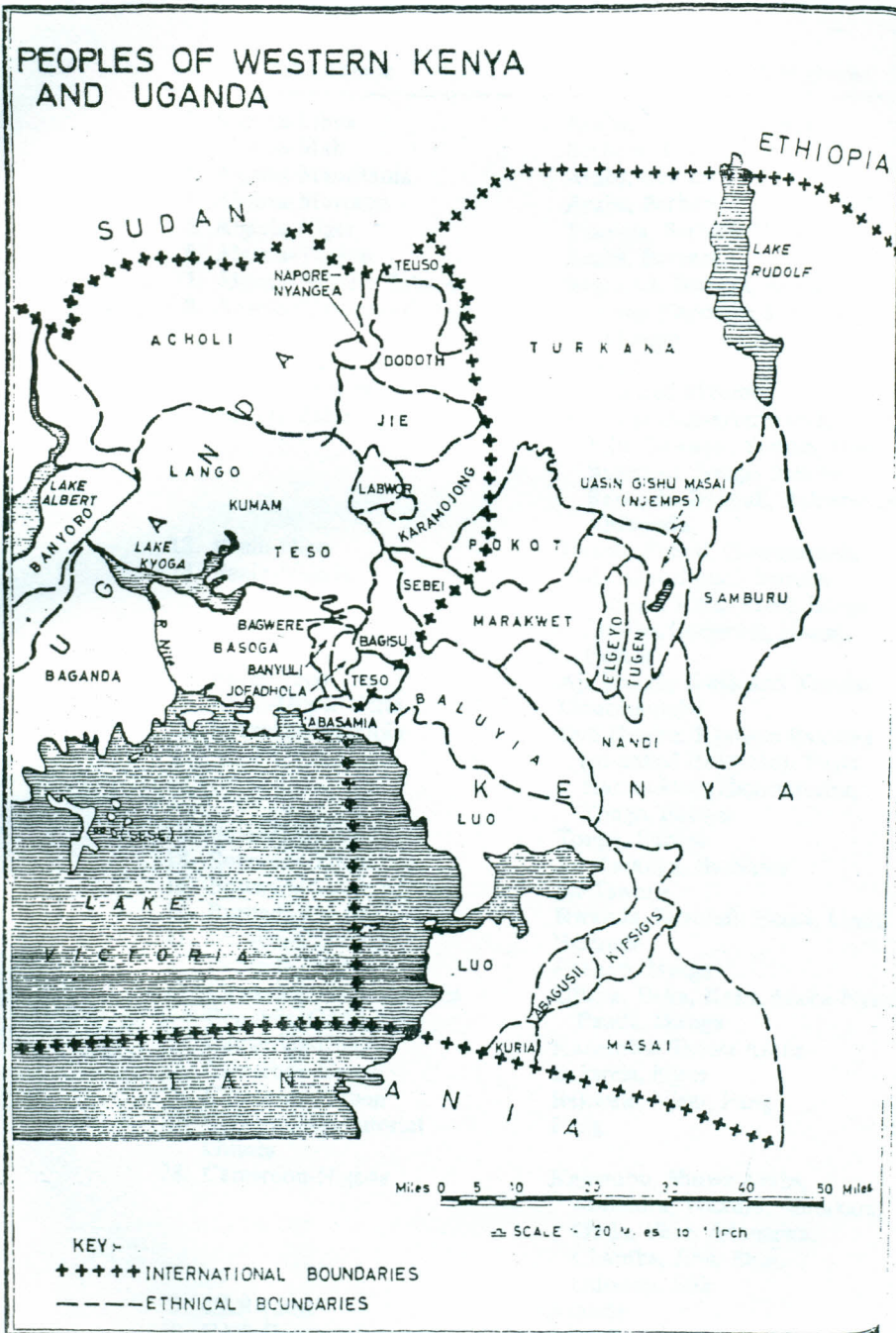
Source: Extracted from the Uganda Districts Information Handbook 2002 p. 119

**APPENDIX 4: MAP SHOWING THE KENYA UGANDA BOUNDARY**



Source: McEwen A.C, 1971, p. 251.

**APPENDIX 5 : MAP SHOWING COMMUNITIES LIVING ALONG THE KENYA-UGANDA BORDER.**



Source : Were, G.S., 1967, p. 40

**APPENDIX 6: PARTITIONED AFRICAN CULTURE AREAS: A CHECKLIST**

<i>Boundaries</i>	<i>Partitioned ethnic groups</i>
1. Algeria-Libya	Arabs, Berbers, Tuaregs
2. Algeria-Mali	Berbers, Tuaregs
3. Algeria-Mauritania	Arabs, Berbers
4. Algeria-Morocco	Arabs, Berbers
5. Algeria-Niger	Tuaregs, Berbers, Hausa
6. Algeria-Tunisia	Arabs, Berbers
7. Algeria-Western Sahara	Reguibat, Berbers, Arabs
8. Angola (Cabinda)-Congo	Villi and Bayombe Sub-groups of Bakongo
9. Angola-Namibia	Ovambo
10. Angola-Zambia	Lunda and Mbemba
11. Angola-Zaire	Bakongo Sub-groups including the Villi, Bawoyo, Yombe, Mbata, Bankanu, Songs; Baholo; Bapende, Bapindi, Bakwese and Ambundu
12. Benin-Niger	Hausa, Fulani, Gourmantche
13. Benin-Nigeria	Adja (Gun/Egun), Yoruba (Anago, Ketu, Sabe), Borgu (Bariba/Borgawa), Hausa, Fulani
14. Benin-Togo	Aja (mostly Ewe), and Yoruba
15. Benin-Upper Volta	Gourmantche
16. Botswana-Namibia	Ova Herero, Khoisan Basarwa (so-called Bushmen), Bayei, Hambukush/Hambusushu, Tonga, Subiya
17. Botswana-Zambia	Tonga, Subiya
18. Botswana-Zimbabwe	Va-Kalanga, Ba-Birwa
19. Botswana-South Africa	Ba-Tswana
20. Burundi-Rwanda	Rwanda, Burundi, Hema, Lindu
21. Burundi-Tanzania	Burundi
22. Burundi-Zaire	Bahavu, Nyaga
23. Cameroon-Central Africa Republic (CAR)	Gbaya, Baka, Kaka, Maka-Nyem, Pande, Ikenga
24. Cameroon-Chad	Kanembu, Shuwa Arabs
25. Cameroon-Congo	Bakwele, Njem
26. Cameroon-Gabon	Bakwele, Njem, Fang
27. Cameroon-Equatorial Guinea	Fang
28. Cameroon-Nigeria	Kanembu, Shuwa Arabs, Mandara, Wakura, Matakam, Gude, Veve, Adamawa, Chamba, Jibu, Ekoi, Ododop, Efik
29. CAR-Chad	Azande
30. CAR-Congo	Azande
31. CAR-Sudan	Azande, Fertit, Kriesh, Banda

Continued next Page

<i>Boundaries</i>	<i>Partitioned ethnic groups</i>
32. CAR-Zaire	Azande; Mundzombo; Ngbandi, Sango, Yakoma, Ngbako, Manja, Gbaya; Bandain
33. Chad-Libya	Tubu, Tuaregs, Berbers, Arabs
34. Chad-Niger	Tubu, Tuaregs, Kanembu, Fulani
35. Chad-Nigeria	Kanembu/Kanuri, Shuwa Arabs
36. Chad-Sudan	Tubu, Bidiyat, Kriesh, Fur, Banda, Massalit
37. Congo-Gabon	Maka (Njem), Echira, Teke, Kota
38. Congo-Zaire	Bakongo
39. Djibouti-Somalia	'Afar, 'Iise (Issa), Somali
40. Djibouti-Ethiopia	'Afar, 'Iise
41. Egypt-Libya	Arabs, Berbers
42. Egypt-Sudan	Nubians
43. Ethiopia-Kenya	Somali
44. Ethiopia-Somalia	Somali
45. Ethiopia-Sudan	Beni Amir, Annak, Dinka
46. Equatorial Guinea-Gabon	Fang
47. The Gambia-Senegal	Wolof, Serrer
48. Ghana-Ivory Coast	Sanwi, Afema, Lobi
49. Ghana-Togo	Ewe, Akposso, Konkomba, Ahufo, Moba
50. Ghana-Upper Volta	Mossi, Dangara Kusasi, Dyula (Dioula), Sissala, Birifor, Padon, Mankana, Bissa, Aculo
51. Guinea(Bissau)-Guinea (Conakry)	Bambaraca (Baydyaranke in Guinea-Conakry)
52. Guinea(B)-Senegal	Dyula
53. Guinea(C)-Ivory Coast	Mandinka, Tchien
54. Guinea(C)-Liberia	Guerze or Kissi (called the Kpelle in Liberia), Mende, Peul (Fulani), Mano, Kra, Tchien
55. Guinea(C)-Mali	Bambara
56. Guinea(C)-Senegal	Tukulor (Toucouleur), Dioula, Manjak
57. Guinea(C)-Sierra Leone	Mende, Susu, Baga
58. Ivory Coast-Liberia	Mende
59. Ivory Coast-Mali	Peul (Fulani)
60. Ivory Coast-Upper Volta	Fulse, Nabe, Guin, Lobi
61. Kenya-Somalia	Somali
62. Kenya-Sudan	Turkana, Danyiro
63. Kenya-Tanzania	Maasai, Luo, Kuria
64. Kenya-Uganda	Luyia, Teso, Luo, Karopakot, Turkana, Marukwet, Samia, Hesu, Seuci, Bagisu
65. Lesotho-South Africa	Sotho
66. Liberia-Sierra Leone	Vai, Gbande, Kissi, Mende
67. Libya-Niger	Tubu, Tuaregs

Continued next Page

<i>Boundaries</i>	<i>Partitioned ethnic groups</i>
68. Libya-Sudan	Berbers, Arabs
69. Libya-Tunisia	Berbers, Arabs
70. Malawi-Mozambique	Yao, Sena, Nyanja, Chewa, Ngoni
71. Malawi-Tanzania	Ngonde
72. Malawi-Zambia	Chewa, Ngoni, Tombuka, Ngonde
73. Mali-Mauritania	Soninke, Toucouleur (Tukolor)
74. Mali-Niger	Tuaregs, Mandinka
75. Mali-Senegal	Mandinka, Soninke
76. Mali-Upper Volta	Peuls (Fulani), Bobo, Samo, Bolou, Senoufo, Bwaba, Pona, Maka
77. Mauritania-Morocco	Moors
78. Mauritania-Senegal	Tukolor, Soninke
79. Mauritania-Western Sahara	Moors, Reguibat
80. Morocco-Western Sahara	Tekna, Arabs, Berbers
81. Mozambique-South Africa	Swazi
82. Mozambique-Swaziland	Swazi
83. Mozambique-Tanzania	Makonde, Yao, Ngoni, Matengo
84. Mozambique-Zambia	Chewa, Ngoni, Nsenga
85. Mozambique-Zimbabwe	Barwe, Ndau, Manyika
86. Namibia-South Africa	Nama
87. Namibia-Zambia	Subiya
88. Niger-Nigeria	Hausa, Fulani
89. Niger-Upper Volta	Peul (Fulani), Gurmantche
90. Rwanda-Tanzania	Ha, Haya, Zinza, Hangaza
91. Rwanda-Uganda	Banyarwanda (Kigesi), Bujumbira
92. Rwanda-Zaire	Rwanda
93. South Africa-Swaziland	Swazi
94. South Africa-Zimbabwe	Tonga, Venda
95. Sudan-Uganda	Acoli, Kakwa, Jiya, Lango, Dongatona
96. Sudan-Zaire	Lugbara, Alur
97. Tanzania-Uganda	Haya
98. Tanzania-Zaire	Boyo
99. Tanzania-Zambia	Mambwe, Inamwanga
100. Togo-Upper Volta	Bissa, Kusasi
101. Uganda-Zaire	Alur, Batoro
102. Zaire-Zambia	Lunda, Unga, Lungu
103. Zambia-Zimbabwe	Balocalough

**APPENDIX 7: TABLE SHOWING THE MAJOR INTEGRATION ARRANGEMENTS IN AFRICA**

Grouping	Year of Est.	Member States
Central Africa Customs and Economic Union (UDEAC). Replaced in 1998 by the Central African Monetary and Economic Community (CEMAC)	1966	Cameroon, Central African Rep. Chad, Congo, Equatorial Guinea and Gabon
East Africa Cooperation (EAC)	1967	Kenya, Tanzania, Uganda. In 1997 East African Community was launched.
Southern African Customs Union (SACU)	1969	Botswana, Lesotho, Swaziland, South Africa.
Mano River Union (MRU)	1973	Liberia, Sierra-Leone and Guinea
West African Economic Community (CEAO). In 1994 it was replaced with West African Economic and Monetary Union (WAMU)	1973	Benin, Burkina Faso, Cote d'Ivoire, Mali, Mauritania, Niger, Senegal
Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS)	1975	Benin, Burkina Faso, Cape Verde, Cote d'Ivoire, The Gambia, Ghana, Guinea, Guinea Bissau, Liberia, Mali, Mauritania (until 2001), Niger, Nigeria, Senegal, Sierra-Leone, Togo
Economic Community of the Great Lakes countries (CEPGL)	1976	Burundi, Rwanda and Zaire
Southern African Development Coordination Conference (SADCC).	1980	SADC was established in August 1992 in Windhoek, Namibia, to replace the Southern African Development Coordination Conference (SADCC). It currently groups 14 member states; Angola, Botswana, the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC), Lesotho, Malawi, Mauritius, Mozambique, Namibia, Seychelles, South Africa, Swaziland, Tanzania, Zambia and Zimbabwe. A free trade protocol was signed by the SADC countries in 1996.
Preferential Trade Area (PTA)	1981	Burundi, Comoros, Djibouti, Ethiopia, Kenya, Lesotho, Malawi, Mauritius, Rwanda, Somalia, Swaziland, Tanzania, Uganda, Zambia and Zimbabwe.
Economic Community of Central African States (ECCAS)	1984	Burundi, Cameroon, Central African Rep., Chad, Congo, Equatorial Guinea, Gabon, Rwanda, Sao Tome & Principe and Zaire.
African Economic Community (AEC)	1991	All members of the OAU
Common Market for Eastern and Southern Africa (COMESA). This is expected to replace the PTA.	1993	15 countries attended the PTA Summit in Kampala in 1993 and later signed the Treaty, which established COMESA. They are Tanzania, Kenya, Uganda, Madagascar, Mozambique, Ethiopia, Rwanda, Sudan, Zambia, Malawi, Swaziland, Lesotho, Namibia and Mauritius.

## APPENDIX 8: TABLE CONTAINING LIST OF INFORMANTS

Name	Gender	Age (Estimated)	Ethnic community	Location/ District	Date of Interview
Amidu Gizamba Muduku	Male	50 years	Mugisu	Bukonde Sub-county, Mbale	July, 18, 2005
Keya Rosemary	Female	65 years	Bukusu	Sirisia Division, Bungoma	16 <sup>th</sup> April, 2004
Khaukha Gideon	Male	60 years	Mugisu	Cultural office, Mbale	July, 17 <sup>th</sup> , 2005
Kolia Wanyama	Male	70years	Bukusu	Sirisia Division, Bungoma	July 5 <sup>th</sup> 2005
Masete Joyce	Female	65years	Mugisu	Municipality, Mbale	July, 17 <sup>th</sup> 2005
Munyanda Situma	Male	70years	Mugisu	Bubulo County, Mbale	15 <sup>th</sup> July, 2005
Nabangi Peter	Male	74 years	Bukusu	Bumula division, Bungoma	17 <sup>th</sup> April 2004
Nabutola John	Male	75 years	Bukusu	Bumula division, Bungoma	20 <sup>th</sup> April 2004
Namawondo Peter	Male	70 years	Mugisu	Manjiya County, Mbale	18 <sup>th</sup> July, 2005
Namunane Eliud	Male	60 years	Bukusu	Malakisi location, Bungoma	18 <sup>th</sup> April 2004
Nayoma Priscilla	Female	70 years	Bukusu	Webuye division, Bungoma	5 <sup>th</sup> March 2004
Otunga Silvester	Male	75 years	Bukusu	Bumula division, Bungoma	15 <sup>th</sup> March 2004
Wafula Silvester Wekesa	Male	72 years	Bukusu	Bumula division, Bungoma	10 <sup>th</sup> August 2004
Wafuta Namwata Nagimesi	Male	70 years	Mugisu	Bulambuli county, Mbale	17 <sup>th</sup> July 2005
Wagwabubi Charles Siango	Male	72 years	Mugisu	Bunambutye, Mbale	18 <sup>th</sup> July 2005
Wakiro Canon C.	Male	75 years	Mugisu	Municipality, Mbale	15 <sup>th</sup> July 2005

Wanjala Matere	Male	70 years	Bukusu	Bumula division, Bungoma	5 <sup>th</sup> August 2004
Waliaula Joseph Lukhale	Male	68 years	Bukusu	Malakisi Location, Bungoma	10 <sup>th</sup> April 2004
Wamimbi Wilson Weasa	Male	70 years	Mugisu	Bungokho County, Mbale	19 <sup>th</sup> July 2005
Wanasolo Nathan Wilson	Male	68 years	Mugisu	Bulucheke sub-county, Mbale	18 <sup>th</sup> July 2005
Wangwe Livingstone	Male	72 years	Bukusu	Malakisi Location, Bungoma	12 <sup>th</sup> April 2004
Wash Kanyanya Joseph	Male	35 years	Mugisu	Sesui, Mbale	19 <sup>th</sup> July 2005