

**THE IMPACT OF INTER-ETHNIC RELATIONS BETWEEN THE WANGA
AND THEIR NEIGHBOURS SINCE THE NINETEENTH CENTURY: THE
LUO, BUKUSU AND THE ITESO**

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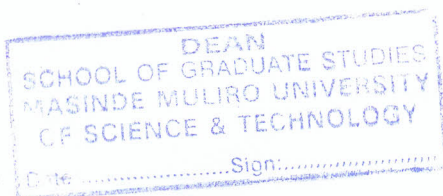
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DECLARATION

Declaration by the student:

This thesis is my original work and has not been presented elsewhere for a degree or any other award.

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Certification by the supervisors:

The undersigned certify that they have read and hereby recommend for acceptance of Masinde Muliro University of Science and Technology a thesis entitled, "The impact of inter-ethnic relations between the Wanga and their neighbours since the nineteenth Century: The Luo, Bukusu and the Iteso".

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ABSTRACT

The main concern of this study is the role played by the Wanga community in influencing their neighbours since the nineteenth century. First is a survey of how the Wanga state was formed. This state then had a political, economic and social interaction with its neighbours namely the Bukusu, Luo of Ugenya and the Iteso. The study seeks to resolve the roles of inter-ethnic relations and their influence on Wanga state formation and secondly the external influences of the advent of the Arab/Swahili and later British Imperialism. This had an impact on the rise of this state and on loss of independence. The objectives of this study are: to trace and explain the origins of the Wanga as a distinct community, discuss the nature of inter-ethnic relations between the Wanga and their neighbours and explain how they influenced the Wanga community in the nineteenth century. The study also analyses the influence of the Arab/Swahili encounter and British intervention on the fortunes of the Wanga state formation between 1868 and 1949. With the consolidation of colonial rule by 1920's the position of the Wanga was challenged by the Bukusu, the Luo of Ugenya and the Iteso who resented their rule. In terms of methodology, archival and oral sources were made use of. Questionnaires and interviews were also administered among the Wanga, Bukusu, Luo of Ugenya and the Iteso. I used a focus group discussion. The study population comprised of twenty elders from the Wanga, Bukusu, Iteso and the Luo of Ugenya. This involved both men and women. Purposive sampling technique was used to select five Wanga, Iteso, Bukusu and Luo of Ugenya elders. Thereafter, a pilot study was carried out among two Luo of Ugenya, Bukusu and Iteso elders to establish the reliability of data collection instruments. Materials in form of files at the Kenya National Archives in Nairobi were perused and analysed on western and Nyanza provinces. Oral interviews were undertaken among the Wanga, Bukusu, Luo of Ugenya and the Iteso. The study is based on Bonventure Swai's theory of the central leadership. According to Bonventure Swai, state formation in Eastern Africa was very much related to trade. This encouraged large scale political organization. Wealth created by this trade supported the central leadership. Davis and Moore advance the functional theory where stratification reflects the social organization of a society and would, therefore vary as a result of differences in social organizations. The study is also based on the theory of structural – functionalism as advanced by Johnson, Turner and Radcliffe. Johnson and Turner look at society as analogous to a living organism which becomes more complex due to growth and multiplication of its cells. In their view, society develops owing to the increase of its members. The findings revealed that there was an impact of inter-ethnic incursions on the formation of the Wanga kingdom as the Wanga related with the Bukusu, Iteso and the Luo of Ugenya. The Wanga hence never existed as a distinct community. As the Wanga interacted, these contacts encapsulated economic, social, cultural and political spheres of life. They tended to reinforce the development of a cultural identity. Land demarcation policies by the colonial government in which the Wanga were given lands that originally belonged to the Luo became a bond of contention.

