

Review Article

Moi and the Making of the Luyia Nation: The Moses Mudavadi Effect

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Abstract: The end of Kenyatta era in 1978 ushered in the Moi era in Kenyan parlance Nyayo era whose key leader the late President Daniel Arap Moi and his crop of politicians would rule Kenya for the next two decades ending in 2002. One of the enigmatic politicians of the Nyayo era was Moses Budamba Mudavadi; a man whose clout constantly shook the nascent Kenya. Mudavadi's name appeared in the media frequently from the scandals that entangled him. The controversial directions he gave as the KANU party Kakamega district torch bearer and later on KANU national general secretary made him brush shoulders with his political knockers who faced his wrath that sent them into political oblivion. Daniel Moi made many revere Mudavadi. The power he yielded was of an African king and dubbed "King of Mululu." Moses Mudavadi in his political prime days appeared the most influential cabinet minister from Western province – the home of the Luyia. This paper therefore, shows the social – political relationship that existed between Moses Mudavadi and Daniel Moi that chattered the way for the Luyia nation in the 1980's. It thus provides a narration on historiography of Luyia nation within the Kenya context so as to bring forth an understanding of Kenyan political terrain during Nyayo era.

Keywords: Moi, Luyia, Mudavadi, Effect.

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INTRODUCTION

President Moi, the official second president of Kenya, 1979 – 2002, ruled Kenya for 24 years. This era is commonly known as the Nyayo era – a word coined from a Kiswahili word that means footsteps. In his philosophy Moi presented himself to Kenyans and the world as a conscious leader who would follow the footsteps of his predecessor – demised Jomo Kenyatta in his bid to transform Kenya socially, economically and politically. After the political phobia that characterized change of guard had capsized and Moi gripped reins of power; to rule he had to shake the ship of his political detractors. In their fall out he brought on board his political cronies like Moses Mudavadi whom he had met in the mid 1940's who would play a crucial role in Moi's political achievements. President Moi appointed these royal political leaders to be his eye in provinces. For example, Joseph Kamotho was in charge of Central province, Robert Ouko manned Nyanza province, Nicholas Biwot guarded Rift Valley province while Moses Mudavadi presided over Western province.

President Moi and Moses Mudavadi had a unique friendship relationship. Unlike other politicians,

Mudavadi's and President Moi's friendship never simmered. Moi never thought of Mudavadi as an enemy. The second president of Kenya, Daniel Moi covered Mudavadi's mistakes, and appointed him to several ministries. The clout that Mudavadi harboured as a cabinet minister and leader of KANU party earned him social, economic and political glory albeit conflicts with those who coveted or hated his political outfit.

Paradoxically even though other scholars had researched and written academic papers on biographies of global, continental and Kenyan leaders none dared write about Mudavadi. Globally, Andrain Gilbert in 2002 wrote about Franklin D. Roosevelt while Wintle in 2007 wrote about Ataturk Mustafa Kemal. In Africa Catherine House in 2002 presented a document on Nelson Mandela. In Kenya, Erick Aseka in 2001 wrote about Mzee Jomo Kenyatta. Simiyu Wandibba in 2004 documented history of Josiah Mwangi Kariuki and Peter Wanyande in 2002 wrote about Daniel Otiende.

The history of the Luyia portend gaps as for a long time the focal politician from Luyia region; Moses Mudavadi history was missing from library shelves. It was therefore prudent for the writer of this paper to carry out a study on the Luyia political paradox leader

and thereafter document a paper to fill a gap on the Luyia historiography and Kenya at large for educational purposes and posterity.

President Moi's leadership style was a replica of the first president of Kenya - Jomo Kenyatta that witnessed blatant tribalism, corruption and political subjugation of contrary voices that eventually plummeted Kenya's economy during his reign. As Kenyatta had used a Kikuyu power base to promote disproportional privileges to the Kikuyu community and those who subscribed to his populist politics like the Luyia whose bedrock was Moses Mudavadi, so did Moi. By the end of his rule, most senior positions in government, the military, security agencies, and state owned corporations were held by Kalenjin and pockets of other tribal proponents like Luyia, Luo, Kamba and Coastal people (Khamisi, 2018).

Moses Mudavadi did not fit in the shoes of Moi's regime by default. His case was a special one as it was a payback time by his long-time pal – Daniel Moi. The late President Moi owed his success to Mudavadi whom he met in Baringo in the 1950's. Mudavadi smartly dressed in khaki shorts and Texan cowboy style hat scoured the 3, 700 square kilometres that formed Baringo district. Mudavadi pushed his battered Land Rover to its limits, as he went around the expansive and hilly district, collecting school fees and paying teachers as well as inspecting schools. The lanky 30-year old person called Daniel Toroitich Arap Moi was among the teachers in the region (Morton, 1988).

At first sight in the valleys of Kabarnet, Mudavadi the education officer and Moi a classroom teacher struck a friendship that would transcend decades of years culminating in the two occupation of Kenya's political echelon at the demise of Kenyatta in 1978. Moi as fate dictated, became the president of the Republic of Kenya. According to Lumwagi (O.I, 4/3/2016) Moi on the other hand contributed greatly to sustenance of his friend in the cold and harsh conditions of Baringo.

Moi used to fetch charcoal for Mudavadi on a bicycle from the rural for domestic use. As a reward, Mudavadi used his position as a school inspector to recommend the future president then a P4 teacher for an in – service course at Kagumo (Kiambuni) teacher training college. The course earned Moi promotion to a P3 teacher.

Kemoli (O.I, 14/4/2016) narrated that the road to success for Daniel Moi began when Mudavadi transferred Moi from Tambach to head the Kabarnet intermediate school which was nearer to Moi's home in Baringo district. Kemoli went on to state that the colonial government had a lot of trust in Moses

Mudavadi and often consulted him on many issues within his area of jurisdiction. The British consulted Mudavadi on an impending replacement of Ole Tameno (nominated to Legco in 1952) who had been recalled by the councillors in Rift Valley region for negligence of duty due to love of alcohol (Morton, 1988).

The race for a replacement saw Moses Mudavadi (Area Education Officer) whom the colonial government had set eyes on step down in favour of his pal, Daniel Moi citing the native of Rift Valley region being suitable for the seat (Moses Mudavadi was a Logooli from the larger Kakamega district). At Kabarnet, the elders of Baringo who included chief Joel Chemirmir, Joel Bultut and Moi's brother in law James Chelimo met in the office of the D.C called H.J Simpson. Enoch Kiprotich Ngulat refusal to take the seat became a blessing in disguise for Daniel Moi the then head teacher of Kabarnet Intermediate School. Moi even though proposed by two councillors from Sacho, Daudi and chief Tibi to inherit Tameno, refused the nomination at first and it took the assurance of the D.C, H.J Simpson and Moses Mudavadi that he could still get his retirement benefits from the colonial Ministry of Education in case he lost the election that he accepted to try his debut in politics (Lumwagi, O.I, 4/3/2016).

On 16 October 1955, during an Electoral College meeting at Nakuru, Moi's political star out shone his competitors when he garnered 27 votes against three of his opponent from Nandi. The appointment was confirmed by a telephone call by the then governor Sir Evelyn Baring to the Rift Valley P.C. This was a surprise to Moi who said:

I had not expected this at all and I was very hesitant to accept as my name had been put forward for the post of secretary to Baringo African District Council. I was not a politician, I was a teacher, and I liked teaching very much. After discussing the matter with a few friends, I decided to accept. I said to myself; let me go for a short period. If I do not like it, I can come back to teaching (Morton, 1998).

Mudavadi would again become instrumental during 1957 first ever African election Legco election meant to take eight African members to the Legco rather than nomination. Mudavadi during registration of voters in East Baringo convinced the voters to elect Moi. He even threatened to close schools in the area in case they erred in their selection (Morton, 1998). Moi won the elections (Rift Valley region) having garnered 4000 votes against Tameno's 1500 and Ole Tipi's 750 (Lumwagi, O.I, 4/3/2016).

Mudavadi, continued to offer Moi professional services while serving in the Legco. Mudavadi advised Moi to collaborate with the European government to procure Kenyatta's release.

Moi therefore, in the company of a carpenter called Cheboywo, paid Kenyatta a visit at prison in Kapenguria. Moi took to Kenyatta food and briefed him on the political situation in Kenya. It is from this visit that upon the sack of Odinga for disloyalty, Kenyatta appointed Moi Vice president in 1967 (Lumwagi, O.I, 4/3/1016).

President Moi for some time urged his friend Mudavadi to join him in politics and in 1968 Mudavadi heeded to the call and resigned from the civil service. Moses Mudavadi made debut in politics in 1969 even though together with J.D. Otiende, Mathew Mwenesi, Solomon Adagala, Bahati Semo and Ambrose Lukalo lost to the eloquent and flamboyant Peter Kibisu. Political analysts alleged that Kibisu's fallout with Kenyatta government over support of a motion in parliament against the Mwangale's parliamentary select committee on the assassination of J.M Kariuki in 1975 provided a chance for Moi to poke holes in Kibisu's revived case of assaulting a White man whom he accused for having a love affair with his wife in office at Shell company. Through the influence of Kenyatta's technocrats who included the late president Moi, Kibisu was incarcerated for 15 months in 1976 henceforth losing his Vihiga constituency representation in parliament.

In 1976, Moi by then the Vice - president of Kenya threw his weight behind Mudavadi who eventually became the M.P of Vihiga in a by - election that ensued following Kibisu's imprisonment. Mudavadi beat other competitors who included: Fredrick Omido, James Onamu, Laban Ombonyo Odanga, Lawrence Isigi, Bahati Semo and Richard Kinyangi. Subsequently Moi over saw Mudavadi's win over his bitter rivals like Bahati Semo including swaying courts verdicts in favour of Mudavadi whenever election petitions were filed to contest his wins. Moses Mudavadi emulated Moi's spirit of dedication in his service of Vihiga constituency that saw him elected to parliament whenever he vied. Moi would every year on 26 December attend the Maragoli cultural festival and use the dais to cement his friend's political supremacy (Mambuya, O.I, 4/3/2016).

The nature of Moi's and Mudavadi's friendship appeared of families than individuals. Moi reciprocated the good gesture Mudavadi extended to him by helping him whenever necessary. Mudavadi on the other hand, worked extra hard to please his friend (Alemba, O.I, 25/5/2016). Moi moved positions alongside his mentor, having risen to the most coveted post of presidency, while appointing Mudavadi to powerful cabinet ministerial posts.

The helm of Leadership: Mudavadi and the Nyayo era

August 22, 1978 appeared a sad day for Kenya as its incumbent President Kenyatta breathed his last after a very eventful life. The match to presidency for Daniel Moi was not a walk in the park even though the constitution of Kenya as stipulated had given him the mantle on a silver plate. It stipulated that the Vice president was to automatically assume office powers as the president for a period not exceeding 90 days. However Daniel Moi faced hostility from the GEMA and its insurgent militia (Ngoroko) formed by James Mungai (Khamisi, 2018). It took the efforts of the Attorney General – Charles Nonjob and Moses Mudavadi among other M. P's, to ensure Moi received the instruments of power and governance (Lumwagi, O.I, 4/3/2016).

In 1979, Mudavadi's military and administrative skills assisted Moi thwart GEMA caucus in Kenyan parlance Kiambu Mafia under the auspices of change the constitution crusade whose members included Kihika Kimani, Mbiyu Koinange, Dr. Njoroge Mungai, Kenneth Matiba, James Gichuru, Njenga Karume and Kimani Wanyoike, and a few non-Kikuyu leaders from Ukambani, Western, and Nyanza regions efforts to alter the constitution to bar Moi from presidency. Forthwith, Moi got hold on the reins of power as the second president of Kenya. He entrenched his friend's leadership in Vihiga constituency (Chakava, O.I, 14/4/2016).

When the late president Moi officially took the mantle of leadership of Kenya in 1979, he ensured that his pal, Mudavadi political woes became null and void. Mudavadi's bugging the Vihiga seat was imperative to Moi and so he would personally visit Vihiga constituency to campaign for his long-time buddy. With due respect, the people of Vihiga constituency did not disappoint their president.

During 1979, 1983 and 1988 general elections Mudavadi clinched the seat of Vihiga constituency later on Sabatia constituency and died while Sabatia Member of Parliament. Mudavadi as 1988 general elections approached, realized that Semo's influence was becoming a threat. He persuaded his friend the late president Moi to direct the Electoral Commission of Kenya to divide Vihiga constituency into two. Semo surprisingly became the first M.P of the tiny new Vihiga constituency unopposed in 1988 as Mudavadi curved all his supporting areas to form the new vast Sabatia constituency and became its first M.P unopposed the same year.

In 1981, Moi let his friend take over the leadership of Kakamega district KANU leadership in an unconstitutional swap between Mudavadi and the then

Kakamega district party chairman Wilson Mukhuna. Mudavadi with the support of Clement Lubembe among others unceremoniously became the party's boss (chairman) in Kakamega district despite protests from Robert Matano (KANU national organizing secretary general). This gave Mudavadi the impetus to join the KANU national executive committee. Mudavadi was so strong that he crushed any other Luyia politician's zest to equate self to him or rise above him. In 1985, Mwangale's teaming with Shikuku to besmirch Mudavadi's name in his clamour for KANU's vice chairman position hit a dead wall as he did not have enough clout – he wasn't even the Luyia spokesperson (Ng'weno, 1985). In 1987, Mudavadi's hegemony went as far as Busia and the like of Peter Okondo were not given any slight chance to become Busia division KANU big wig. Mudavadi went personally to Okondo's political den in Busia to tell him off; termed his moves political witch hunt (Ng'weno, 1987).

In 1988 Mudavadi became KANU's general secretary that made him second in command to Moi in KANU party hierarchy – Moi was the president and KANU party leader. However this position created turmoil in Luyia land politics. Mudavadi found himself in political loggerheads with his fellow politicians notably Martin Shikuku, Joshua Angatia and Elon Wameyo who tried to usurp his position. However Mudavadi's political tactics assisted by Moi thrashed their force. Moi ensured that Mudavadi's camp of proponents had more members who included: Samson M'maiti (M.P, Hamisi) Seth Lugonzo, (M.P, Ikolomani), Reuben Otutu (M.P for Lurambi South), Philemon Indire – a nominated M.P, Lubembe (M.P for Shinyalu) Wilson Mukhuna (M.P for Emuhaya) Burundi Nabwera (M.P for Lugari constituency) and Litunya - M.P of Butere constituency. According to Chakava (O.I, 14/4/2016) the political differences in Western province became so pronounced that it caught the attention of the late President Moi. He made a tour to Kakamega, and reconciled the wrangling nine leaders, who had formed two opposing camps, in a public rally at Kakamega. One camp was led by Mudavadi, and another one led by Shikuku.

In 1988, during the infamous Mlolongo (queue) voting system, Mudavadi's neurotic aspect of trait theory became pronounced. Despite president Moi's peace truce, Mudavadi did not let go his foes. He punished his political caviller Herman Mulinya from his Sabatia backyard. Mulinya lost his genuine representation of Gavudia ward – replaced by William Indumwa in a Mudavadi stage managed court petition. Shikuku was not also spared. Mudavadi using the provincial administration: P.C, Julius Kobia, D.C Nicholas Mberia, CID and his relatives like Erastus Mahiva ensured that Shikuku lost Butere KANU

representation and curtailed his desires to challenge him for the top seat in Kakamega district.

Conversely Mudavadi's sociability – characteristic of trait theory, assisted his proponents like Samson M'maiti's son Vincent M'maiti replace his father as M.P of Hamisi following his father's death in a road accident in August 1987. Mudavadi was also at the campaign provide another version, centre stage that saw his accomplice John Okwara trounce Shikuku in Butere parliamentary general elections replacing Ogembe as M.P of Butere in the controversial Mlolongo (queue) elections in Kenya banned after 1988 general elections.

Nevertheless, the late President Moi collaborated with Mudavadi and destroyed the critics. Mudavadi became so strong that he adorned the nickname "King of Mululu" and some leaders and people from Kakamega district like people of Emuhaya constituency led by Sammy Muhanji and Eric Khasakhala and people from Butere constituency led by John Okwara and their leaders paid his Mululu home homage. Paradoxically the late president Moi was little bothered with the power Mudavadi displayed around. Others who tried to rise like Kimani Wanyoike; equated self to Moi in his song – tawala Wanyoike – rule Wanyoike and Simeon Nyachae who criticised Mudavadi's drinking behaviour found themselves in jail or political cold. Bizarrely Mudavadi forgave them and talked the late president Moi into forgiving them (Lumwagi, 4/3/2016).

Surprisingly, Mudavadi's influence attracted even his sworn enemies like Shikuku who praised his Luyianism. Shikuku agreed that Mudavadi was humble; a minister who personally served visitors in his office tea. He was of the opinion that Mudavadi when it came to the national cake put his own Luyia first. Shikuku acknowledged the fact that Mudavadi transformed Western Kenya socially, economically and politically. As a minister, Mudavadi unapologetically had the nerve for finding jobs for his people in every ministry he headed. Actually, he secured the likes of Burundi Nabwera and Amos Wako lucrative positions of Minister of Foreign Affairs and Attorney General respectively.

Pomp and End of an Era

In 1980, a year after Moi had officially become the president of Kenya (1979); rewarded his old friend Mudavadi the slot of Ministry of Education. In 1982 Moi appointed Mudavadi minister for Water Development and the same year minister for Culture and Social Services. In 1983 the late president Moi feted Mudavadi Ministry of Local Government and Physical Planning (Nzioki and Dar, 1982). During his tenure at the ministries Mudavadi was accused by

fellow M.P's of nepotism and tribalism. While at the Ministry of Education, Mudavadi had the audacity of recruiting many students to teacher colleges from Luyia dominated Western province than any other area amid cries of foul from M.P's from Central province.

Mudavadi in justifying his actions claimed that Central province had enough teachers and saw no need of training teachers from Central province and posting them in other regions. The graduates of the colleges eventually were posted to Western province and Rift Valley province; homes of Moi and Mudavadi to ameliorate the teething problem of teacher shortage and improve on education standards. It is noted that it was the first time all Luyia M.P's came to the rescue of Mudavadi. Mudavadi also recruited many Luyia to work in the Ministry of Water Development and Ministry of Local Government and Physical Planning. Surprisingly when transferred from the Ministry of Water Development, many Luyia were laid off (Chakava, O.I, 14/4/2016).

1983, Mudavadi's dissolution of the City Council and replacement with a commission is said to have little difference in service delivery other than the many Luyia seen on the streets sweeping, collecting tax or as kanjo – City Commission guards (Kemoli, O.I, 14/4/2016). Arguably, Mudavadi's detractors shot down his character; linked him to the late President Moi's populism politics that deconstructed the GEMA, practiced nepotism, tribalism and detained those of different political opinion without trials. Such bad governance made Kenya's economy crunch in the 1980's (Wanyande, Omosa, Ludeki, 2007).

On 7th February 1989, the unexpected happened as Moses Mudavadi breathed his last after ailing for some time (Musalia, 2019). On 18th February 1989 the late president Daniel Moi led more than 10,000 mourners including foreign and local mighty in a Voice of Kenya broadcast state burial ceremony at Mudavadi's home in Mululu. Moi eulogized Mudavadi as a bosom friend and dedicated leader and vowed to look after his family (Ng'weno, 1989). Moi fulfilled this promise when he assisted Mudavadi's son Musalia Mudavadi to inherit his father's seat unopposed at the age of 29 years the same year (1989). Musalia would become the youngest minister in the late president Moi's cabinet and notably Moi's Vice - president towards the end of his tenure in 2002; a renown politician who has served as minister of Finance, Deputy prime minister; eyes for the seat of presidency of Kenya and has at one time had a shot at it.

CONCLUSION

The friendship between the late president Moi and Moses Mudavadi was intriguing. The two interchangeably assisted each other in life and ended up

as top dogs in Kenyan politics. Moi through his point man Moses Mudavadi established good relationship with the Luyia of Western Province who benefited from pockets of development the late president Moi procured. However the struggle for Moi's recognition and his endearment to Mudavadi caused political temperatures to rise in Luyia land that Moi himself was compelled to cool down. Moi's friendship with Mudavadi transcended Mudavadi's death as Moi would continue looking after his friends family through his son Musalia Mudavadi.

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