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From resistance to assimilation: Tracing the dwindle of indigenous Chasu personal names under colonial influence

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Abstract: Colonisers suppressed and detached Africans from their cultural heritage and identity. One aspect mirroring this determination is the replacement of African names with foreign names. Like many other communities, the Chasu-speaking community has experienced significant shifts in its naming practices over the past century. The present study evaluates Chasu's lost and surviving names and the dynamics of the Chasu naming system from colonialism to date under the lens of Linguistic Imperialism theory. The data were collected from 380 subjects, both old and young people. The findings show that in the early stages of colonial rule, the Chasu community opposed the use of colonial names to preserve their cultural identity. However, as colonialism progressed, opposition to colonial rule gradually declined, leading to the gradual acceptance of colonial practices, including personal naming. Even after independence, colonial influence on naming practices continued. Indigenous Chasu names have declined significantly, especially among women. This underscores the need for initiatives to preserve indigenous Chasu names to maintain cultural heritage and identity. This can be done through community initiatives, policy changes to protect indigenous names, and creating databases of indigenous Chasu names to guide parents in naming their children.

Keywords: Cultural heritage and identity, Indigenous Chasu personal names, Linguistic imperialism, Neocolonialism and personal naming, Religion and personal naming in Africa

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1. Introduction

Chasu (alternatively referred to as Chathu, Chiasu, Athu, or Pare) derives its name from the root "Asu," the place where the language is largely spoken. The residents of the Asu area identify themselves as "Vaasu" and are generally referred to as "Pare" by outsiders. Geographically, the Asu/Pare people are part of an ethnic group residing in the Pare Mountains in northeastern Tanzania, specifically in the Mwanga and Same Districts of the Kilimanjaro Region. Guthrie (1948) classifies Chasu within Zone G20, along with Tubeta (G21), Mbugu (G221), Shambala (G23), and Bondei (G24), assigning Chasu the code G22. Maho (2009) further divides Chasu into northern (G22A) and southern (G22B) dialects. LOT (2009) categorises Chasu under the Ruvu-Pwani group (Class B) alongside Kidigo, Kipokomo, Kisegeju, and Kiswahili.

The 1948 census indicated that Chasu had 98,959 speakers (Moffett, 1958). By 2009, this number had increased to an estimated 530,341 speakers (LOT, 2009), the number reflecting all its speakers across Tanzania. Given the growth trend from the 1948 census to the 2009 LOT's statistics, it is probable that the number of Chasu speakers has continued to rise. Chasu has two major dialects: Northern Chasu (Chasu cha Ughu/Ugu) and Southern Chasu (Chasu cha Ishi). The southern dialect includes several sub-varieties, such as Kisuji/Kimamba, Kimbaga, and Kigonja (Kagaya, 1989; Kotz, 1909). The northern and southern dialects of Chasu differ mainly in tone and slightly in vocabulary (Mreta, 1998; Odden, 1985). There are also a few phonological differences. For instance, Kotz (1909) notes that in the southern dialect, the sounds /s/ and /z/ are replaced by /θ/ and /ð/, respectively, in the northern dialect. According to Mreta (1998), additional

differences are found in the bilabial fricative /β/ and velar fricative /ɣ/, which are replaced by the labio-dental fricative /v/ and velar plosive /g/ in the northern dialect. Moreover, the pre-nasalised palatal stop /nð/ in the northern dialect is replaced by the pre-nasalised alveolar fricative /nz/ in the southern dialect. Despite these differences, the speakers of the two dialects are mutually intelligible.

As is the case with many African societies, naming is one of the crucial cultural practices among Chasu speakers, and it has been practised for generations. The indigenous names (the names given within specific cultures or communities) given to the Asu people have largely been connected to various aspects within the community. Many of these indigenous names have been associated with circumstances of childbirth, gods-invoking names, and flora and fauna names (Msuya, 2021; Sebonde, 2020). Thus, it is clear that indigenous names among the Chasu people have always held specific meanings, a reality that is found in different parts of Africa (Agyekum, 2006; Akinnaso, 1980; Faloju & Fadairo, 2020; Fasiku, 2006; Herbert, 1996; Leyew, 2003; Lusekelo & Mtenga, 2020; Mbiti, 1970; Moyo, 2012; Muzale, 1998; Orkaydo, 2015; Shigini, 2020; Swilla, 2000; Suzman, 1994; Yusuf et al., 2014). However, most African societies have witnessed a drastic change in personal names and naming customs. Scholars such as Arega (2016), Aribowo and Herawati (2016), Fakuade et al. (2018), Lusekelo and Muro (2018), and Mensah et al. (2020) point out that people in some societies have abandoned their indigenous names in favour of foreign names. This shift started to manifest when many African societies started to be ruled by colonisers (Agyekum, 2006; Chauke, 2015; Lusekelo, 2014; Lusekelo, 2018; Makoni et al., 2007; Moyo, 2012; Mutunda, 2011; Swilla, 2000). It is remembered that by the end of the 19th century, colonialism officially entered Sub-Saharan Africa (Gardner & Roy, 2020; Mhlambi & Hanchett Hanson, 2024; Rashid, 2014), sparing only a few African countries. Colonialism in Africa, including Tanzania, had significant impacts on economic, political, and cultural spheres, to name a few. One of the cultural consequences fuelled by colonialism was the change in the entire practice of naming children during that period. Children born during that time were often named by their parents with names rooted in their colonial masters. This trend was evident in many colonised communities, including the Asu community. This situation triggered changes in personal names among Chasu speakers during and after the colonial era.

Several studies have been conducted on personal naming practices in many parts of Africa focusing on aspects like criteria involved in bestowing names (Agyekum, 2006; Didena, 2021; Kileng'a, 2020; Minkailou, 2017; Msuya, 2021; Mutunda, 2016; Olatunji et al., 2015; Rubanza, 1995; Sebonde, 2020; Shigini, 2023; Ubahakwe, 1982); linguistic description of the structure of personal names (Asiimwe, 2022; Imoh, 2021); the significance of personal names (Buberwa, 2017; Mensah & Mekamgoum, 2017); naming practices during and after colonialism (Likaka, 2009; Moyo, 2012; Ngubane & Thabethe, 2013); and contemporary naming practices, specifically in Machame-Chagga society (Lusekelo & Muro, 2018). There is scarce research dedicated to tracing the change in personal naming practices from traditional African to Western names. The current study bridges this gap by collecting and evaluating Chasu personal names across five generations to determine the amount of Chasu personal names lost and that are still surviving to date. The study findings are crucial in preserving and redefining cultural identity among Chasu speakers.

2. Theoretical framework

The current study used Linguistic Imperialism, a theory developed by Robert Phillipson (1992). The theory examines how dominant languages, mostly English, are imposed on other cultures and languages as a tool of political, economic, and cultural supremacy. The theory postulates that the spread of a dominant language, usually at the expense of minority or indigenous languages, is a form of imperialism that reinforces power structures and global inequalities. The theory further hypothesises that the imposition of a dominant language is a means for powerful countries to dominate others politically, culturally, and ideologically, making that language a channel for spreading the dominant group's ideologies, policies, and cultural values. The domination of one language over others usually leads to the downgrading of local languages. Such languages might be devalued, resulting to the loss of linguistic diversity and identity and cultural erosion among the people speaking such languages. The theory is closely knotted to colonialism, where, in most instances, the colonial masters imposed their language on the territories they controlled, using it as a unifying means for diverse populations and conducting administrative affairs with claims of cultural superiority. Nonetheless, this theory has been criticized for overgeneralising some sociolinguistic realities (Canagarajah, 1999). For instance, in the personal naming context, it may not amply capture situations where people deliberately choose to use the colonial names as they want to change their identity. Despite the critiques, this theory is relevant to the current study, as the shift of naming practices from indigenous to modern practices was, to a great extent, triggered by the presence of colonialism, which set conditions for Africans to use colonial names.

3. Research methodology

The current study employed a quantitative approach. The data for the study were collected using a questionnaire that required respondents to supply their names (or names of their relatives who had passed on who lived during colonialism), their age, and sex. The information on names and age was crucial in determining personal naming dynamics across generations in the studied community. Information on one's sex was needed to compare males and females in their adaptation to the acquisition of new names across generations. The collection of data was done ethically, particularly regarding the inclusion of names of the deceased. This involved informing respondents about the purpose of the study and obtaining their consent for the use of any personal or family information, particularly for those who had passed away. The study was conducted in the Same District, specifically in Kirangare and Bwambo wards, one of the areas where colonial influence significantly impacted naming practices. The study's data were collected from 380 subjects. This

number was determined based on the formula proposed by Almeda, Capistrano, and Sarte (2010) for an unknown population, with a margin of error of 5%, which yields a sample size of 384. However, since the study required an equal number of males and females that could be divided by ten (the number of male and female groups in five generations), the study adjusted 384 to 380. These subjects were chosen randomly. The study involved five generations from the time when colonialism was at its peak in Tanzania (then Tanganyika). The study used the age gap of 25 years, the average age found in different sources, to demarcate one generation and another. Thus, the study used the first names of Chasu speakers from 1900 to 2024 (1900–1924, 1925–1949, 1950–1974, 1975–1999, and 2000–2024). The indigenous Chasu names and colonial names (primarily Christian and Arabic) were collected from residents of the two wards (Kirangare and Bwambo) who were born and raised in this area. The author analysed and grouped the collected names as indigenous Chasu or colonial as he is a native speaker of the language. This grouping was verified through expert consultation with six native Chasu speakers who are familiar with naming practices in Chasu.The names collected in each generation were analysed quantitatively to determine the number of indigenous Chasu names that have been lost and the sex group highly impacted by this loss.

4. Findings

The findings of the current study are presented in Table 1 and summarised in Table 2.

Table 1: Male and Female Chasu Names across Five Generations (1900-2024)

Age (Generation)	Sex		
		Indigenous Chasu names	**Colonial-influenced names**
1900-1924	Male	Fue, Ibwe, Irigo, Kadio, Kahungo, Kajiru, Kakoshi, Kanyempwe, kanzoke, Karisha, Kateri, Kazoka, Kianda, Kidika, Kihara, Kihoko, Kimako, Kisaka, Lukungu, Lusingu, Madafa, Mashika, Mbazi, Mlangwa, Mlavwasi, Mnandi, Mntambo, Mpeho, Mshigwa, Mshitu, Msoka, Msovu, Ngasu, Nkima, Nkondo, Nkungu, Nzota, Vuri	-
	Female	Kodawa, Kompeho, Ludao, Mshigwa, Mshinwa, Mshinwa, Nabera, Nacharo, Naendwa, Nafue, Nakadori, Nakimo, Nakio, Nakižwa, Nakižwa, Nakundwa, Nambike, Namdori, Nampombe, Nampombe, Namshamba, Namshitu, Namsi, Namvua, Namwai, Namwai, Namwasi, Nangasu, Nanguma, Nankondo, Nankondo, Nanyika, Nanza, Nanzano, Nanzia, Nasero, Navuri, Navwasi	-
1925-1949	Male	Chauka, Irira, Kakiva, Kakuruvi, Kasio, Kiruguntwa, Lukwaro, Mavura, Mbonea, Mbonea, Mndima, Mnkeni, Mrinde, Msese, Mshigwa, Mweta, Mweta, Mweteni, Nguve, Nisagurwe, Ntogolo, Rindeni, Sefue, Sekianda, Sekiete, Sempombe, Semvua, Sengasu, Senkondo, Senkuku, Senzia, Senzige, Togolani	Abrahamu, Aloisi, Dickson, Emmanuel, Herman
	Female	Avonahedi, Kidonga, Kokianda, Kokiangi, Kokiangi, Kokiondo, Konasero, Mshinwa, Nacharo, Naetwe, Najenjwa, Nakadori, Nakiete, Nakiete, Nakimo, Namkunda, Namshamba, Namsi, Namvua, Namwai, Namweta, Nangasu, Nangasu, Nanzige, Narindwa, Nasemba, Nasembiwa, Navoneiwa, Navoneiwa, Nazahedi, Nazahedi, Nazihirwa, Niendiwe, Niendiwe, Niendiwe, Nzie	Dora, Ludia
1950-1974	Male	Kabasi, Kahandwi, Karigo, Kariro, Kazuva, Kianda, Kihara, Kikwesha, Kilalo, Kilango, Kilonzo, Kimbute, Kivatiro, Langeni, Mlangwa, Mshigeni, Mweta, Ndimangwa, Shangweli, Teendwa, Togolani, Twazihirwa, Zihirwani	Alex, Athumani, Charles, Ezekiel, Godson, Grayson, Jackson, John, Julius, Leonard, Peter, Reuben, Shabani, Wilson, Yafeti
	Female	Kokiondo, Mavoo, Naanjela, Naeližwa, Naeližwa, Naenda, Naetwe, Nafarijiwa, Nafikahedi, Najenjwa, Nakiete, Nakijwa, Naomba, Nasero, Natujwa, atujwa, Niendiwe, Nietiwe, Niwaeli, Ntegenjwa	Anjela, Anna, Bahati, Debora, Elizabeth, Hanna, Happy, Joina, Margreth, Mariam, Mary, Mwajuma, Penuel, Ruth, Yael, Yunes, Yusta, Yustina
1975-1999	Male	Charo, Chikira, Gwirisha, Kakuruvi, Kilango, Kiondo, Kitururu, Kitururu, Lukwaro, Madafa, Mbonea, Nimzihirwa, Ntunda, Nzota, Ombeni, Sangiwa, Sempombe, Sengasu, Senkuku, Togolani, Tuvako, Twazihirwa, Yosefu	Charles, Dickson, Filipo, Grayson, Hamis; Janson, Peter, Prosper, Reward, Samweli, Selemani, Shedrack, Stephano, Yoel, Yohana
	Female	Mavoo, Mriwa, Naelijwa, Naeližwa, Naetwe, Nafikahedi, Nakimo, Namkunda, Namsemba, Naojwa, Narindwa, Nasemba, Natujwa, Navoneiwa, Nazihirwa	Clines, Damari, Debora, Destina, Dorcas, Ester, Felister, Fromena, Getruda, Grace, Josephina, Krisensia, Leah, Lesta, Madgalena, Mwanaidi, Raheli, Rebecca, Rozina, Sara, Yael, Yasinta, Yuel

2000-2024	Male	Karisha, Kazeni, Kiangi, Kiariro, Manongi, Mbonea, Mvara, Shedura, Togolani	Abraham, Alex, Alfaxad, Amoni, Amoni, Charles, Charles, Elia, Emmanuel, Gadi, James, John, Jonas, Jonathan, Julius, Labani, Lazaro, Meshack, Nestory, Paulo, Peter, Rajab, Sadick, Samwel, Saul, Simon, Solomon, Yohana, Zefania
	Female	Naetwe, Nakadori, Nakundwa, Namweli, Nanguma, Nanzia, Navoneiwa	Amina, Anastazia, Anna, Christina, Doreen, Edina, Elizabeth, Esther, Eunice, Eva, Felister, Gloria, Glory, Halima, Hanna, Happiness, Hellen, Herieth, Janeth, Jeneth, Josephine, Juliana, Loveness, Mary, Oliver, Rachel, Rahel, Ruth, Safiness, Theresia, Veronica

Table 1: Summary of Chasu Personal Names Given to Males and Females across Five Generations (1900–2024)

Generation	Male vs Female Names	Nature of the names bestowed	Number of Names	(%)
Generation 1 (1900-1924)	Male names	Indigenous Chasu names	38	100%
		Colonial names	**0**	**0%**
	Female names	Indigenous Chasu names	38	100
		Colonial names	**0**	**0%**
Generation 2 (1925-1949)	Male names	Indigenous Chasu names	33	87%
		Colonial names	**5**	**13%**
	Female names	Indigenous Chasu names	35	92%
		Colonial names	**3**	**8%**
Generation 3 (1950-1974)	Male names	Indigenous Chasu names	23	61%
		Colonial names	**15**	**39%**
	Female names	Indigenous Chasu names	20	53%
		Colonial names	**18**	**47%**
Generation 4 (1975-1999)	Male names	Indigenous Chasu names	22	58%
		Colonial names	**16**	**42%**
	Female names	Indigenous Chasu names	15	39%
		Colonial names	**23**	**61%**
Generation 5 (2000-2024)	Male names	Indigenous Chasu names	9	24%
		Colonial names	**29**	**76%**
	Female names	Indigenous Chasu names	7	18%
		Colonial names	**31**	**82%**

5. Discussion

The present study aimed to trace the influence of colonialism on the bestowal of personal names among Chasu speakers. The study examined the shift in personal naming practices among Chasu speakers across five generations (during colonialism and after independence). This section discusses the findings as illustrated in Tables 1 and 2 of this study. The section is organised into five subsections, representing the five generations.

5.1. The first generation (1900-1924)

As the findings reveal, colonialism influenced how the Chasu community assigns names to their children, except in the first generation, where this community was resistant to assigning colonial names to their children. During this time, all the names collected were purely of Chasu origin. In the very early stages of colonisation, colonisers faced resistance from many communities across the African continent. One notable resistance in Tanzania (then Tanganyika) was the Maji Maji Rebellion, the rebellion staged by the indigenous people (the Ngoni) to resist the colonial rule (Malekela, 2023), and it is said to be fought by different Tanganyika's ethnic groups organised by charismatic leaders (Gregory, 2020). This indicates that many communities were unhappy with foreigners' domination. These resistances in different corners of Africa also seemed to involve rejecting colonial cultures, including the practice of naming people. This could be one of the reasons why the Chasu community was adamant about adopting colonial names until the mid–1920s. It is likely that the Chasu community was determined to protect its cultural identity in the early stages of colonial rule. As is well known, names hold great cultural significance; thus, the community may have viewed colonial names as a threat to erasing their identity. This led them to persist in preserving their cultural traditions in the aspect of personal naming. Another reason could be aligned with resistance against colonial authority. In this sense, the acceptance of colonial names could have created the impression that colonial rule was accepted. Chasu speakers, like many African communities, had strong social systems and traditions associated with the giving of indigenous names. The bestowing of colonial names would go against the respect for their ancestors and their family heritage since names carry the identity of any community (Baobeid & Equity, 2019; Watzlawik et al., 2016). The fear of losing their identity, having adopted and used colonial names during that period, was probably among the reasons that made them resist colonial names. Also, the use of colonial names could affect their position in society, as indigenous names were associated with family, ancestry, and several special matters that held significant meaning in their communities. The struggles against colonial rule during this time are the possible reason the newly born babies in the Chasu community were assigned the war-names (e.g., Nkondo (male), Nankondo (female) 'war') to inspire people to fight the enemy (colonisers) aggressively.

5.2. The second generation (1925-1949)

In the second generation, a small influence of colonial names is witnessed, with males leading at 13% and females at 8%. However, indigenous Chasu names continued to dominate by far. The dwindling of active resistance against the colonisers could be the possible reason for this rise, although many communities continued with passive resistance. There were also some Africans who collaborated with the colonisers during this time. For example, Hyden (2013) notes that while a majority of the African elites helped to maintain African culture, this effort was cut short as the number of African elites grew. This may have contributed to some Africans starting to assign colonial names to their children, a trend that started to affect African communities, including the Chasu. The infusion of colonial names among Africans was used strategically by the colonialists to alienate Africans from their cultures. This is supported by Mungwini (2011), who argues that the colonisers used naming as a tool of control and a means of denigrating certain cultural and political ideologies among Africans. In order to show certain cultural and political ideologies as superior, colonialists undermined other cultures, one of them being personal naming. Fitzpatrick (2012) posits that the colonisers bestowed new names to the Africans or even left them unnamed as a way of subjugating and making them to perpetual servitude. During this period, it is possible that the Chasu community gradually began to accept certain aspects of colonial rule, such as adopting their own naming practices. However, the colonial influence was not enough to completely change their traditions, making them use colonial names only to a small extent. The other likely reason was the introduction of the colonial education system in the colonised areas, which required the enrolled students to use the colonial names for "ease" of official recognition (Mart, 2011). During the colonial era, the colonisers made the colonised believe that their indigenous names and other traditions were unworthy. This validation of names affected men more, as they were often more involved in governmental and economic activities during the colonial era (Sunseri, 1996). Similarly, the changes and growth in employment opportunities within the colonial system may have forced some individuals, especially men, to accept colonial names to get access to employment and administrative positions from the colonisers.

During this period (second generation), Western religions continued to spread across many parts of Africa. The Chasu community is mentioned as one of the early communities where Christianity took root (Höschele, 2007a; Höschele, 2007b; Mwashinga, 2020). One of the ways the colonisers used to give people their (colonial) names was through baptism (Clasberry, 2012; Mbaya, 2013; Muchiri, 2004; Njagi et al., 2023). Those who accepted baptism took on colonial names to signify the beginning of the new faith they had embraced. There is also a possibility that there was pressure to accept colonial names from some individuals, especially religious and community leaders who had close ties with the colonisers. This is fueled by the fact that, during this period, some Africans were betraying their fellow Africans in the fight against colonialism by collaborating with colonialists (Albert, 2013). Another possible reason for this transformation in the naming system among the Chasu people could be associated with gradual adaptation to the impacts of colonisation, one of which was naming. The introduction of colonial names could have been the result of social and cultural changes that came over time, as people tried to connect with the colonial world without completely abandoning their original heritage. Although the use of colonial names began to emerge in this community, indigenous Chasu names still dominated, indicating that the community still strongly valued their identity through the use of their indigenous names. These (indigenous) names remained central to their identity despite colonial pressure to use their names.

5.3. The third generation (1950-1974)

The third generation was marked by a significant shift in personal naming practices where colonial names make up a large portion of the names given, almost equalling the indigenous names bestowed on both males and females. The possible reason for this drastic shift was likely attributed to the widespread of various social activities, such as religion and education, most of which were conducted from a colonial perspective (Mart & Toker, 2010; Shizha & Kariwo, 2011). In religious settings, children were often bestowed baptismal names, many of which were colonial. Indigenous names were not entertained by the colonisers, and they were termed primitive (Dickens, 1985; Machaba, 2005; Moyo, 1996). This led many Africans, including the Chasu people, to adopt colonial names and abandon the names that carried their identity. Also, the expansion of healthcare services in Chasu area likely contributed to the increase in the giving of colonial names among Chasu speakers. Like in other places, hospital staff, many of whom were colonisers, would give newborns their own names. Africans saw this as a sign of care from the colonisers, but for them (colonisers), it was a way to perpetuate and infiltrate colonialism into the minds of the colonised people. The same situation happened in schools, where students who enrolled in school were given colonial names and led to believe that these were superior names. Although this time was marked by the independence struggles that many countries succeeded in gaining, these countries continued to grapple with the legacy of colonialism, including the naming practices. This caused people to continue embracing colonial cultural elements, including names. This period also saw the development of colonial education and Christianity in all corners of Africa. The colonisers used religious organisations, such as churches, to continue dominating Africans mentally and culturally.

The majority of Africans who received primary and secondary education under the colonial education system were forced to use colonial, particularly Christian, names (Moyo, 2012; Ohihon, 2014). This education policy made parents choose to assign colonial names to their children to be aligned with this new environment to enable their children to benefit from the colonial systems. This is also noted by Dube (1999), Lubisi (2002), along with Neethling (2008) who report the happening of the same situation in South Africa, where the coercive power of Christianity and colonialism forced black Africans to adopt English names. The spread of religious activities paralleled baptism, which involved assigning Christian names to the baptised Africans to show their commitment to their new faith. This propelled the

expansion of the use of colonial names, especially among the followers of these religions. This period can also be reported as a time when many societies, including the Chasu community, were experiencing moral changes, and many people believed that using colonial names was a sign of modernity or civilisation. Thus, colonial names became associated with entering the modern globalised world and avoiding the perceived outdated traditions. This fueled the use of Western names over indigenous ones, even in Chasu society.

5.4. The fourth generation (1975-1999)

The use of colonial names continued in the fourth generation, during which colonial names exceeded indigenous names among females and approached parity for males, marking a great turning point in naming practices within the Chasu community. This shift occurred during the post-independence period. During this time, as Africans entered the era of neocolonialism, the legacy and effects of colonialism became apparent. The transition towards globalisation saw many African communities, including the Chasu, emulating the former colonisers as modernity, making many people strongly struggle to resemble the colonisers. It is thus not surprising to witness this significant turning point in the naming practices in the Chasu community, which was a common trend across most African societies. As the findings reveal, women led the adoption of these colonial names, probably due to the new opportunities they gained, such as access to education. This made many of them desire for modernity by giving their children modern names. This is due to the fact that, in many societies, women play a pivotal role in naming their children (Alia, 1989; Chauke, 2015). During this time, Christianity and education had become deeply rooted in many African societies, including Tanzania, especially among the Chasu. More people, particularly women, were baptised and given Christian names, which became part of their religious and educational identity. Many church-run schools in different parts of Africa encouraged the use of colonial names (Neethling, 2008; Snodia et al., 2014), and it is likely that the Chasu community was not left behind. After independence, many African communities, including the Chasu people, began building new relationships with the global community (Kileng'a, 2020). These societies started viewing colonial names as a way to align themselves with a worldview identity, compared to indigenous names, which were more associated with tradtional cultures. This led to women, in particular, adopting more colonial names due to their new roles in the changing society through education, employment, and social transformations. Women were more closely associated with social change and thus saw having colonial names as a way to adapt to their new social and economic roles. Overall, these changes hugely shaped naming practices, a trend that continues to be observed today.

5.5. The fifth generation (2000-2024)

In the present generation, colonial names dominate, especially among females, accounting for 82% of names bestowed to Chasu speakers. Among males, colonial names also represent the majority, at 76%, signalling a strong shift away from traditional Chasu naming norms. These findings indicate a significant decline in assigning indigenous names in this community, especially in the fifth generation. The reasons that may explain these results include the fact that this period has seen a significant expansion of interaction between people from different cultures (Kileng'a, 2020; Mandende, 2009). Many Africans, including Chasu people, are inclined to use colonial names as they are perceived as modern, thinking they align with the global context. This creates the view that colonial names simplify international identification, a notion found in other countries outside Africa, like China (Duthie, 2007; Tan, 2001). This period also witnesses the strengthening of education systems, which to a large extent, follow the old colonial education systems that promoted the use of Christian or foreign names. Additionally, the influence of religions such as Christianity has remained strong, and some religious denominations continue to embrace baptism, which is associated with the changing of indigenous names to Christian names. This has greatly affected women, who represent a large number of those attending church, as observed by Jensen (2019) and Trzebiatowska and Bruce (2012).

The use of names is believed to have several advantages in social and economic activities (Aldrin, 2022). Parents choosing colonial names for their children are probably led by the belief that those names will offer their children better social, educational, and economic opportunities, such as employment and international recognition. This is also influenced by findings that suggest names can influence employment and salary prospects for the name bearer (Fei et al., 2023). This leads parents to give their children Western names, believing that these are better names that will open the world for their children. Another likely reason is the rise of pop culture, films, music, and international media, particularly through the English language. For instance, Clark (2023) observes that, in Tanzania, hip hop and Bongo Flava musicians are often known by their stage names, which they ultimately incorporate into their personal identities. Furthermore, Vandebosch's (1998) study indicates that mass media, particularly television, shapes naming practices by popularizing certain names, linking them to desirable behaviours. With the growing influence of globalization and exposure to international media, it is plausible that naming practices in Tanzania are also involving giving children names inspired by celebrities. The names featured in these artists' identities and mass media characters are often foreign or colonial in origin. The period from 2000 to 2024 has also witnessed a digital revolution and an increase in the use of social media and online communication. This has further sparked the use of colonial names, believing that these names will enable communication and interaction with the world more easily. The study by Mensah et al. (2020) indicates that young people adopt foreign (first) names to challenge their stereotyped ethnic identities and to contest existing indigenous norms about naming, the situation that is triggered by additional social, personal, and religious factors, including style, personal taste, creativity, religious conversion, and the flow of other social capital. Globalisation has destroyed most of the indigenous

names, including among Chasu speakers, making the people embrace colonial names that do not reflect their culture and tradition with the perception that such names will help them to keep abreast with modern times.

6. Conclusion

The current study shows the dominance of colonial names among Chasu females over males, a thing that reflects major societal changes in gender roles, where females are given opportunities they were previously denied, such as economic and educational activities. However, as this study indicates, the expansion of these opportunities for women has brought negative effects, especially in the context of naming practices among the Chasu community. As the findings reveal, only a handful of indigenous Chasu names remain to date for both sexes. Given the observed trend, it is possible that indigenous Chasu names may become increasingly dwindling, but it is uncertain whether they will completely disappear. This entails the need for quick intervention to retain this community's cultural heritage and identity through naming practices. One of the actions that can be taken is providing cultural education that emphasises the importance of using indigenous names in Chasu and other African communities which are victims of this phenomenon. Such initiatives could involve community events and workshops to raise awareness of the significance of bestowing indigenous names. Besides this, various discussions on the importance of giving indigenous names could be held. These might involve storytelling sessions with elders who still bear indigenous names, where they could explain to their children the significance of their names, personally and to the community as a whole. Moreover, policy changes can be initiated to ensure that indigenous names from various communities, including those of the Chasu, are protected. In each community (as this affects many communities), databases could be developed where families can explore indigenous names in their societies, their meanings, and their historical significance. This could guide parents in making informed decisions about naming their children.

To show the seriousness of decolonising the personal naming system, the Chasu people could follow the example set by some Africans who chose to abandon the colonial names they were given and embrace their indigenous ones. To name a few, Chinua Achebe, who was originally named Albert Chinualumoga, later abandoned his baptismal name, "Albert," to embrace the name, which identified Africanicity. Similarly, Ngugi wa Thiong'o, originally named James Ngugi, abandoned his Christian name and retained his father's name, Ngugi wa Thiong'o, which carried African identity. Kenya's founding father, President Johnstone Kamau, changed his name to Jomo Kenyatta; Malawian founding President Hastings Kamuzu Banda to Kamuzu Banda. Malawian political activist John Lupenga Mpande is also remembered for changing his name to Lupenga Mphande. Chasu speakers can follow the example set by Zambian President Kaunda, who assigned all his children indigenous Zambian names. The example is followed by many of his colleagues, with some even changing their own names after independence (Penda, 2020). The efforts of Africans to redefine themselves have started taking shape in different parts of the globe. Mphande (2006) notes the efforts observed among Americans descended from Africa to establish their African identity. These efforts aim to ensure that people of African-American descent reclaim their roots as part of the ongoing process of redefining themselves and dismantling the paradigm that has kept them mentally bound for centuries. If those outside our continent are doing this, we who are within should do even more.

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