

**SOME ASPECTS OF ECONOMIC CHANGE
IN KANO, KENYA, 1850-1963 //**

BY

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A thesis submitted in partial fulfilment for the degree of Master
of Arts in the University of Nairobi

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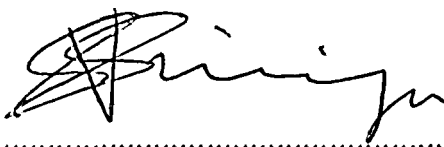
DECLARATION

This is my original work and has not been submitted for a degree in any other University

Signed.....
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This thesis has been submitted for examination with our knowledge as University supervisors

Signed.....
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ABSTRACT

This M.A. Thesis is a study of economic change in Kano between 1850 and 1963. The integration of the colonial economy with the indigenous economy is used as the theoretical framework. During the colonial period, there was a shift from the pre-capitalist to the capitalist mode of production. This transition did not occur due to the internal dynamics of the society, but was imposed by the colonial government. The colonial state used its political machinery to integrate the indigenous economy into the world economy.

Economic change in Kano occurred not only during the colonial period, but also during the pre-colonial period. By the middle of the 19th century, crop production had replaced cattle-keeping as the primary economic activity of Jo-Kano. This shift was brought about by environmental factors such as population increase, droughts and cattle epidemics. Apart from cattle-keeping and crop production, the people of Kano were involved in other economic activities such as trade, fishing, hunting, food gathering and manufacturing skills. The imposition of British colonial rule on the Kano people accentuated economic change. In an attempt to integrate the pre-colonial economy of Jo-Kano into the world economy, the colonial state introduced a number of changes in commodity production. For example, the colonial government introduced new crops into Kano. In order to increase the production of

these crops, the colonial government introduced new agricultural tools such as jembes and ox-drawn ploughs. The colonial government emphasized the production of cash crops to boost export. Before the local people incorporated these new crops into their economy, they considered a number of factors. They considered the labour requirements involved in the production of these crops. They also considered whether they were edible.

Due to the low cash returns from most of the cash crops which Jo-Kano were producing, a number of them shifted to wage labour as an alternative financial source. The withdrawal of labour from rural areas to towns and European owned plantations made agriculture marginal to wage labour for a majority of Jo-Kano. Furthermore, the shift from agricultural production to wage labour did not solve the financial needs and obligations of the local people. There was the problem of low wages which made the wage earners unable to live with their families at their places of employment.

In order to increase commodity production, the colonial government established markets and trading centres as buying and selling points of produce. The establishment of markets and trading centres boosted trade in the reserves. After 1930, Africans were increasingly involved in trade. This soon made them replace the Asian traders who previously dominated trade. But the local people did not fair well in trade because of the exploitation by the Indian wholesalers.

Economic change that occurred in Kano during the colonial period did not improve the peoples' income. Even though agricultural production increased during the colonial period, most of the produce was sold by the local people to meet colonial needs and obligations such as paying taxes and school fees. The people of Kano who were engaged on wage labour did not also benefit because of the low wages. All these features explain the nature of colonial economy that aimed at appropriating the resources and labour of the colonised societies.

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

The issue of economic change has become a major concern for contemporary scholarship. Economic change is brought about by many factors. For instance, environmental factors such as droughts, population increase and cattle-epidemics usually bring about economic change. A change in the mode of production also causes economic change. This occurs when new developments in the technology take place. For example, new changes in iron working may bring economic change. Economic change can also take place when two cultures come into contact. Cultural contact can occur through trade or political domination.

In pre-colonial Kano, cattle-keeping was the primary economic activity before the middle of the 19th century. But from the middle of the 19th century, there was a shift from cattle keeping to crop production as the dominant economic activity. We have already glanced at the factors which bring about change. The imposition of British colonial rule in Kano caused further changes in the economy of the people. The colonial government introduced changes in agricultural technology, introduced new crops in Kano and integrated the economy of the people of Kano into the world economic system. The people adopted to these changes since the colonial government had political control.

This study analyses economic change which took place in Kano during the pre-colonial and the colonial periods. The

study examines how these changes came about, the effects they had on the the people's economy and the reactions of the people to these changes. The study is organized into six chapters analysing various themes. Chapter one which is mainly introductory contains a description of the study area, statement of the problem, theoretical framework, research methodology, justification of the study and literature review. Chapter two will analyse the pre-colonial economic activities of the people of Kano. The chapter provides a background for analysing economic change during the colonial period. Chapter three will focus on changes in commodity production during the colonial period. Chapter four will analyse migrant labour. Chapter five will focus on the developments in marketing and trade. Finally, chapter six will provide a conclusion of the study.

The study Area

Kano is in Nyando Division, Kisumu District. The Division occupies an area of 942 square kilometres¹. The Division has four locations; South East Kano, East Kano, North West Kano and South West Kano. There are seventeen sub-locations in the Division. Currently, the population of Nyando Division is estimated at 126,732¹.

By the time British colonial government imposed its rule in Central Nyanza District (now Kisumu and Siaya Districts) between 1895 and 1900, the Location of Kano was

being ruled by an influential Ruoth (chief) called Kitoto¹. He welcomed the British colonial government in Kano and was appointed the first colonial Headman (later called chief) of Kano. Headmen were first appointed in 1902 under the village Headmen Ordinance. They helped the colonial government in administering the Locations.

Up to 1924, the Location of Kano was ruled by one chief. But due to rivalry of sub-clans, the location was split into two in 1924, East Kano and West Kano. East Kano was ruled by chief Owili while West Kano was ruled by chief Amimo. In 1938, the two Locations were once again combined following the retirement of chief Onunga and was ruled by chief Owili. But clan rivalries persisted and the Location was once again split into two, each with its own chief. When Kisumu District was established in 1967 following the split of the old Central Nyanza District into the present Kisumu and Siaya Districts, the Division of Nyando was consequently established.

Statement of the problem

Jo-Kano presently practice a mixed economy, that is crop production, cattle-keeping, fishing, trade and manufacturing of basketry and pottery. There are also a number of Jo-Kano who are involved on wage labour both within and outside the location.

The problem with which this study is concerned is the

issue of underdevelopment of the area inspite of the integration of the indigenious and colonial economies. Even though Jo-Kano incorporated new agricultural tools such as jembes and ox-drawn ploughs which were more effective in agricultural production, the peoples' income did not improve. This was because most of the produce was sold by the people of Kano to meet colonial needs and obligations such as paying taxes, school fees and buying imported goods. In addition, the people of Kano were faced with the problem of low prices of the agricultural produce. This forced some of Jo-Kano to seek wage labour in the private and public sector. But this did not solve their economic problem due to the low wages.

The study also focuses on the issue of the continuous practice of pre-colonial agricultural production, for instance the production of traditional crops such as sorghum and finger-millet. Some scholars have emphasized that within the colonial situation, the pre-capitalist relations of production were deliberately maintained with an aim of appropriating surplus from the existing pre-colonial system of production¹. The study also analyses why some of Jo-Kano preferred wage labour to agricultural production. Considerable attention is paid to economic changes during the colonial period, the reaction of Jo-Kano to these changes and the consenquences of these changes on the local people.

Research objectives

The following are the research objectives which this study focuses on : First, the study examines economic change in Kano during the pre-colonial period. The study analyses how this change came about and how it affected the economy of the people of Kano.

Secondly, the study examines at length economic change in Kano during the colonial period. The study analyses how these changes were introduced in Kano by the colonial administration, the response of the people of Kano to these changes and the consequences of these changes on the people of Kano.

Finally, the study examines whether these changes improved the economy of the people of Kano or not.

Theoretical Framework

This study employs the integration of the colonial economy with the indigenous economy as its theoretical framework. In order to analyse how the integration of the two economies brought about economic change in Kano, the study focuses on the modes of production of the two economies.

A mode of production has been defined as 'a determinate articulated combination of relations and forces of production'. Modes of production or processes of production contain two crucial aspects- the forces of production and the relations of production. In terms of Marxian political

economy, the forces of production are generally assumed to be the total sum of production - raw materials, tools, machines, as well as the human beings themselves, with their knowledge and experience. The relations of production are the relations between human beings during the process of production, exchange and distribution of the material utilities of a society⁶. The forces of production and the production relations together form the mode of production. This mode of production constitutes the society's economic structure.

The forces of production develop and are renewed continuously, along with human knowledge of nature and technological development. However, a given state of productive forces require appropriate relations of production, for instance appropriate social relations which govern the use of productive forces. This implies that the social relations must be changed and adjusted to the state of the forces of production.

Berman⁷ and Lonsdale have rightly argued that the integration of the colonial mode of production with the African modes of production during the colonial period involved extracting surplus products from the African areas and or forcing labour into capitalist formation. Consequently, the African modes of production were partially transformed and making their self-reproduction increasingly impossible. All these features explain the underdeveloped

economy.

The integration of the colonial economy with the pre-colonial economy of Jo-Kano partially transformed the economy of Jo-Kano. The transformation of the economy was as a result of the introduction of new agricultural implements such as jembes and ox-drawn ploughs as well as new crops in Kano by the colonial government. Although agricultural production increased during the colonial period, the people of Kano did not benefit from this, but the colonial government. Whatever surplus the people of Kano produced was channeled into meeting colonial obligations such as taxes, school fees and buying imported goods. Similar studies carried out in Kowe, Karachuonyo/Kanyamkago and in Kasipul and Kabondo concur that the integration of the colonial economy with the indigenous economy did not improve the economy of the local people⁸. The main beneficiary was the colonial government. The integration generally caused underdevelopment of the indigenous economies.

Hypotheses

The following are some of the hypotheses arrived at which explain economic change which occurred in Kano between 1850-1963:

1. The population increase of Jo-Kano by the middle of the 19th century caused economic change. The increase in population meant that the people of Kano could not

- wholly depend on cattle-keeping, but had to shift to a mixed economy of crop production and cattle-keeping.
2. The frequent occurrence of environmental calamities such as droughts and cattle-epidemics which threatened to decimate cattle forced the people of Kano to shift to crop production as a primary economic activity.
 3. The acquisition of new agricultural tools such as nyar-imbo and jembes before and during the colonial periods caused economic change.
 4. The incorporation of the economy of Jo-Kano into the colonial economy partially made the former export oriented.

Research methodology

Research methods employed in this study involved analysis of books, theses/dissertations and journals which were relevant to the area of study. It also involved archival research as well as field oral interviews.

Archival research was conducted at the Kenya National Archives. The main documents which were scrutinized at the Archives included Provincial (Nyanza) and District (Central Kavirondo District) Annual and Quarterly Reports. During Archival research, special attention was paid to the integration of the colonial economy with the economy of Jo-Kano. Archival research was done from August, 1989 to December, 1989.

Field oral interviews were conducted based on questionnaires which were prepared before going to the field. The interviews were not strictly based on questionnaires; there was room for asking some informal questions arising in the process of the interviews. A total of 50 respondents were interviewed in various sub-locations in the Division. Being familiar with the area, I was to identify some respondents. Friends from the area also helped me in identifying other respondents.

Respondents were chosen on the basis of age . The average age was approximately sixty. Respondents included retired workers, ex-chiefs, ex-traders, traders and respected elders. Many of them tended to recall the past perfectly well. Before I could start interviewing a respondent, I introduced myself and explained the purpose of the interview. Respondents were mainly interviewed on areas in which they commanded knowledge. For instance, a respondent who used to be a shopkeeper during the colonial period was mainly interviewed on aspects relating to shop-keeping during the period. An ex-chief who worked during the colonial period was interviewed on matters relating to colonial economy. Questionnaires embraced information on economy from the pre-colonial to the colonial period. The interview was conducted in dho-Luo and tape recorded, but later translated into English. Field research was conducted from December, 1989 to March, 1990.

Justification of the Study

One of the most interesting but least explored area of Kenya's history during the colonial period has been economic change in rural areas. Economic historians have tended to focus their studies on the economic change of larger units, the province, or, in most cases, the country as a whole. Yet it is the rural areas where the real effects of colonialism must finally be assessed. It is in the light of this that this micro-study becomes relevant.

It is also important to note that no study had been undertaken on economic change in Kano either before or during the colonial period. Thus, this study becomes the first of its kind in analysing the economic change which occurred in the area between 1850 and 1963. But it is essential to point out that similar studies have been done in Kenya, particularly in Kowe, Karachuonyo/Kanyamkago and Kasipul and Kabondo. Findings from these areas are very useful in providing a basis of comparison in examining economic change in Kano.

Literature Review

Quite a good amount of literature has been produced by historians and social anthropologists on pre-colonial and colonial African economies. Those who have written on the pre-colonial economies have analyzed the modes of production and some of the economic changes that occurred during the

period. Those who have written on the colonial economies have focused attention on the interaction of the indigenous economy and the colonial economy and the effects of the interaction on the local people.

Fearn in his book, An African Economy: A Study of Economic Development of the Nyanza Province of Kenya (1961) has observed that in Nyanza, as in other parts of Africa, the traditional system of mutual kinship obligations was a significant factor that had minimized the need for a market. He notes that if an individual family was affected by a disaster, it would rely upon the members of its own kinship group for assistance, and this provided a sense of security. He points out that the pre-colonial economy of most ethnic groups from Nyanza was a mixed economy. Fearn observes that the possession of cattle and other livestock was a symbol of wealth¹⁰. This book offers useful information on the pre-colonial and colonial economy of Nyanza.

According to Ehret in his 'Aspects of Social and Economic Change in Western Kenya, c. A.D. 1500 - 1800', Kenya Before 1900, (1976), the initial Luo immigrants into the lake region were predominantly pastoralists. Ehret argues that due to population increase, the Luo shifted from cattle-keeping to crop production as the primary economic activity. The high population required more food supply which livestock products alone could not meet¹¹. This also applied to Kano. But in addition, factors such as drought

and cattle epidemics were also responsible for the shift from cattle-keeping to crop production as the dominant economic activity.

Hopkins in his An Economic History of West Africa, (1973), has noted that trade was wide spread in most West African communities during the pre-colonial period. He argues that trade was an integral component of domestic economic activities. Local exchange needs contributed to the creation of markets where exchange took place. He notes that in West Africa, trade was not restricted to markets; it also took place at homes. The domestic economy in most West African communities was not only geared towards subsistence needs, but also to trade¹². His study shows that markets existed in West Africa during the pre-colonial period. The same applied to Kano.

Uzoigwe carried out a similar study of the pre-colonial markets in Bunyoro-Kitara¹³. He found out that markets existed in Bunyoro-Kitara in the pre-colonial period. He observes that markets were in several categories; some markets served a number of communities (''frontier'' markets). These could be referred to as inter-communal markets. In pre-colonial Bunyoro-Kitara, the mode of exchange at the markets was barter. Uzoigwe emphasizes that in pre-colonial Bunyoro-Kitara, markets not only served economic needs, but also socio-political needs. Socially, markets brought people together and served as news and

information centres.

The introduction of Western technology in African communities caused changes in the modes of production. This point is argued by Van Zwanenberg and King in the book, An Economic History of Kenya and Uganda 1800 -1970 (1975). They argue that in the 19th century, the main form of production in African communities was small scale 'subsistence' production which was more concerned with the supply of daily needs. They note further that closely associated and integrated with this mode of production was small scale itinerant trade. Van Zwanenberg and King emphasize that during the colonial era many of the pre-colonial old craft and trade skills were marginalized as new imported goods supplanted those produced locally and new patterns of distribution replaced the old trade network¹⁴.

In his analytical study of How Europe Under developed Africa, (1976), Rodney has argued that the introduction of capitalistic mode of production was geared towards expatriation of African surplus. He points out that colonialism was not only a system of exploitation, but one whose essential purpose was to repatriate the profit to the mother country¹⁵. This macro study equally applies to Kano in which the colonial government encouraged the production of commodities for export purposes.

The imposition of taxation by the British colonial government on the Africans was the major force that made

Africans seek wage labour¹⁶. This point is emphasized by Van Zwanenberg in his book, Colonial Capitalism and Labour in Kenya 1919-1939, (1975). While this observation equally applied to Kano, however, there were other factors which also forced some of Jo-Kano to seek wage labour. These factors included the need by the local people to acquire western imported goods such as clothes and utensils. The low prices of cash crops which the local people were producing forced them to turn to wage labour as an alternative financial source.

On her work, Migrant Labour in Kenya: Capitalism and African Responses 1895-1975, (1982), Stichter has observed that despite the combination of coercion, taxation and land shortages that fell upon the Africans before the First World War, the migrant labour supply could not meet the enormous European demand. Stichter analyses the development of migrant labour in Kenya from the beginning of the colonial period to the first decade of independence. She points out that from the 1930s, the problem of labour shortage which had been common during the first decades of colonial rule no longer existed. She notes that Africans were increasingly seeking wage labour to meet their daily needs and obligations¹⁷.

Arrighi, writing on labour supply in Rhodesia, Essays on the Political Economy of Africa (1973) has observed that during the initial stages of the colonial rule, Africans

were reluctant to be engaged in wage labour because they were able to meet their financial needs and obligations from agricultural produce. Arrighi observes that the colonial government, faced with the problem of labour supply, had to take measures which forced Africans to leave their reserves to seek wage labour. Such measures included forced labour, taxation and expropriation of land. Apart from these measures, Arrighi notes that there were also other factors such as increasing dependence on cash payments in marriage transactions and school fees which made Africans seek wage labour¹⁸. The same factors applied to Jo-Kano.

The economic development supported by British officials led to the rapid transformation of the African population into a wage labour force. This has been observed by Wolff in his book, Britain and Kenya 1870-1930: The Economics of Colonialism (1974). Wolff points out that the counter part of that process was the systematic suppression of African peasant agriculture. This was done in various ways, for instance, the European settlers acquired prime agricultural land from the Africans and also attracted labour from the reserves to produce the export crops the colonial administration needed. Wolff emphasizes that the modern labour force that was created by the colonial government withdrew from the African population the possibility of earning enough income in any way other than providing labour to the European settlers¹⁹.

In an article, 'The Establishment of Colonial Rule, 1905-1920' in A Modern History of Kenya 1895-1980 (1989), Zeleza has argued that colonization altered pre-colonial patterns of trade and marketing and introduced new ones. He notes that old caravan routes were replaced by rail and road networks. According to Zeleza, the colonial government either expanded old market places or established new ones. Imported goods soon changed the composition of goods at the various markets and trading centres. Consequently, local trade developed into an extension of international trade²⁰. In Kano, as elsewhere in the country, the colonial government constructed roads which linked various markets and trading centres. The colonial government established a transport network, markets and trading centres primarily to facilitate the transfer of produce to the metropolitan centre.

The central point of any colonial relationship is the transfer of surplus to strengthen the capitalist class and the capitalist mode of production in the imperialist country. This point is emphasized by Onimode in his work, Imperialism and Underdevelopment in Nigeria (1982). He emphasizes that the surplus transfer constituted the umbilical cord that linked the colonial state to the world capitalist system. According to him, this was achieved first through military aggression and later by systematic capitalist penetration into the local economy. In the

process, there was the destruction of traditional land tenure, use of forced labour and imposition of taxation to be paid in money. All these factors forced the peasant commodity producers into wage labour, imperialist unequal exchange and the introduction of cash crop production¹¹. These experiences in Nigeria also applied to some communities in Kenya.

In his analysis of difficulties which peasant farmers faced during colonial period, Clayton in his book, Agrarian Development in Peasant Economies (1963) has observed that unsatisfactory arrangements for the marketing of produce was one of the factors which hindered the peasant farmer. He notes that the monopolistic action of middlemen, which could be attributed either to greed or institutional arrangement, placed the peasant farmer at a disadvantage. Consequently, the peasant farmer was forced by circumstances to accept low prices for his produce. The other market related problems which the peasant farmer encountered were poor communications and the costs of transport which were generally high. These problems hampered the growth of agriculture in peasant communities¹².

In his study of Agricultural History of Kenya to 1939 (1972), Van Zwanenberg has emphasized that the most important economic result of colonial penetration into Kenya was that the economies of the various communities were brought into unequal relationship with the international

economy. He argues that colonization was essentially a process which involved the incorporation of the indigenous economy into the world economic system. The incorporation tied segments of the continent to the most powerful European states. Kenya for instance was tied to Britain; this automatically meant that Kenyan economic development was determined by the needs of the British economy. This implied that Kenya was to support the economic requirements of Britain²³.

In analysing the consequences of commodity production as a cause for peasant differentiation in Northern Nigeria, Shenton and Lennihand in an article, 'Capital and Class: Peasant Differentiation in Northern Nigeria', The Journal of Peasant Studies (1981), have observed that the large cotton producer uses his cash as protective capital in increasing the size of his farm and employing wage labour. They argue that the small producer on the other hand is forced by financial needs to provide labour on the large producer's farm at the expense of his own farm. In the long run, as the vicious cycle continues during each season, the small farmer becomes more impoverished through the consequent neglect of his own farm. This situation therefore forces the small farmer to hire himself out every year. The trend makes it impossible for him to disengage himself from impoverishment²⁴. This situation also applies to Kenya as well.

On his work, 'The Rise of the Kenya Peasants 1888 - 1922', Historical Association of Kenya: Annual Conference, (1972), Atieno-Odhiambo has noted that the imposition of colonial rule everywhere in Africa exposed the local people to new goods and services. He argues that colonialism subjected the local people to alien economic and labour demands. This resulted in new needs and obligations which the local people could only meet by participating in the colonial economy. The local people participated in the colonial economy in two ways; either as wage labourers or as commodity producers²⁵.

Berman and Lonsdale have observed that the colonial state straddled two levels of articulation, the colony and the metropole. They argue further that within the colony, the colonial state straddled between introduced forms of capitalist production and the various indigenous modes of production. They note that the colonial state was therefore involved in a complex process of social engineering in which the use of force was unavoidable in order to achieve the original objectives; one of such objective was extraction of labour from the reserves for colonial production in the various sectors such as settler farms, administration and industry. The second objective was to promote peasant commodity production for export²⁶. In Kano as elsewhere, the local people produced cash crops such as cotton, rice and maize which were export products.

Apart from the general literature mentioned above, more detailed micro-studies on economic change have been undertaken by Hay, Butterman and Ndege. They have analysed changes during the pre-colonial and the colonial period. Below is a brief review of their works.

In her detailed study of 'Economic Change in Luo-land: Kowe' (1972), Hay has emphasized that the proliferation of opportunities for wage labour, together with the failure of cotton as a high value cash crop, produced the conviction among Jo-Kowe that wage labour was the most reliable financial source. Hay argues that by 1945, the people of Kowe had realised that crop production was no longer a feasible means of acquiring cash to meet their financial needs and obligations. This was because the low prices of cash crops. Some of Jo-Kowe therefore sought wage employment outside the location²⁷.

Butterman in her work, 'Social Formation in Karachuonyo and Kanyamkago' (1979), has observed that the primary purpose of the colonial state was to effect a transfer of surplus from the indigenous economies to the metropolitan sector. She notes that since the transfer took place through bending the institutions and roles of the existing social organisation, it resulted in strain, accommodation, and contradictions. The first step that the colonial government took to incorporate the colonial economy into the indigenous economy was to establish a strong political

monopoly in the colony. Butterman points out that the next step the colonial government took was to establish agricultural production for export. Chiefs were appointed by the colonial government to make sure that the local people carried out government directives. In order to facilitate transfer of produce from the reserves, the colonial government introduced infrastructures such as transport networks and markets²⁸.

In a more recent study of 'Economic Change in Kasipul and Kabondo' (1987), Ndege has emphasized that economic changes which took place in Kasipul and Kabondo during colonial rule were due to the incorporation of the two locations into the capitalist economy. The colonial government used its political machinery to secure control of the colonial state to ensure that the local people participated in the colonial economy. Ndege notes that the economies of the local people were now determined by the needs of the colonial state which was dictated from Britain. Consequently, the local people were compelled to be involved in the production of commodities for export and in wage labour²⁹.

Conclusion

A micro-study such as this has its own limitations. For instance, being a new area of study, very few works have been produced on it. Most works on economic history have

tended to study wider areas such as province, country or continent as a whole. In Kenya, only three micro-economic studies on Kowe, Karachuonyo/Kanyamkago and Kasipul/Kabondo have been produced. The limitation of relevant literature made me depend very much on field information and archival materials as basic sources of information. The general works on economic history also provided useful information in analysing economic change in Kano.

The other limitation is lack of statistical figures of agricultural produce and labour returns for the study area. Statistical figures for these which were available in the archives were for the district, Central Kavirondo District or Province, Nyanza. The same apply to the books. Where necessary, I have used these figures to provide a rough picture of what was happening in the location. The lack of statistical figures is a major problem in such a study.

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CHAPTER 2

THE PRE-COLONIAL STRUCTURE OF KANO

Geographical Background

Nyando Division forms part of the Kano plains. The plains are bounded on the north by the Nandi escarpment¹. To the east are the foothills of the Tinderet Highlands; to the west, Lake Victoria, and to the south, the Nyabondo Plateau. The altitude of the plateau is less than 1,120 metres near the lake shore, but inland, it is more than 1,120 metres.

The climate of the Kano plains is sub-humid tropical. The plains have a mean annual rainfall of about 1,145 millimetres, and a mean annual temperature of about 23⁰ centigrade. There are two rainy seasons; the long rains usually fall from March to May, while the short rains occur from the end of October to the middle of December. January and February are usually dry months. The Jo-Kano therefore divide the year into three seasons; chwiri (the long rains), opon (the short rains) and oro (the dry season).

The type of vegetation found in the area is scattered tree grass-land. The vegetation consists of tall grasses, patches of thorny thickets and acacia. There are two major types of soil in the Kano plains, black cotton and clay. The black cotton is mainly found in the western parts of the

plains. It is associated with swamps. Clay soils are found on the slightly elevated grounds and are of moderate fertility compared to the black cotton soil. Although fertile, these soils are susceptible to water-logging. In spite of the floods, the fertility of the soil makes the place an ideal habitat for crop production.

According to the Central Bureau of Statistics 1987 Population Projection, the population of Nyando Division as at 1991 is 126,732. The relative high population density in the area coupled with the problem of inadequate agricultural has emmigration from the area². Land is fragmented into small farms of an average size of 3 hectares. The extreme fragmentation is due to the high population density. All the farms are individually owned, and are in most cases acquired through the traditional system of inheritance. This system causes further fragmentation. It is the sons who inherit land from the parents, daughters are excluded from the inheritance³.

Two rivers flow through the area; the Nyando and Awach rivers. During high intensity rainfall, low water permeability of the black cotton soil in the area, and soil erosion which causes siltation in a river channel near the lake (Victoria) resulting in the rise of water level in the lake are the main causes of flooding in the area. The perennial floods cause a lot of production losses. During floods, the local people who are extremely affected usually

vacate their homes to put up with relatives or friends living in relatively higher grounds. Some take refuge at trading centres. Floods usually last 3 to 5 days, then life returns to normal. There are frequent outbreaks of water-borne diseases during floods. This annual flooding problem can only be solved through the construction of catchment conservation, flood control measures, land reclamation and drainage⁴.

The climatic condition of the area has greatly influenced the economic activities of the people of Kano in the past and at present. Before the middle of the 19th century, livestock keeping was the primary economic activity. This was because of the availability of pastures. but this has changed over time due to population increase which forced the people of Kano to put more emphasis on agricultural production due to lack of adequate pastures. Presently, pastures are in individual forms, but the most extensive pastures are found in lands liable to temporary flooding which are usually uncropped. The people of Kano mainly rear African Zebu and Boran because they are suitable to the climatic conditions of the area. In addition, they keep goats and sheep. The most common cattle diseases both in the past and at present are rinderpest and foot and mouth diseases⁵. The people of Kano had various traditional medicines which they used in treating such cattle diseases. Although these diseases are still prevalent in the area,

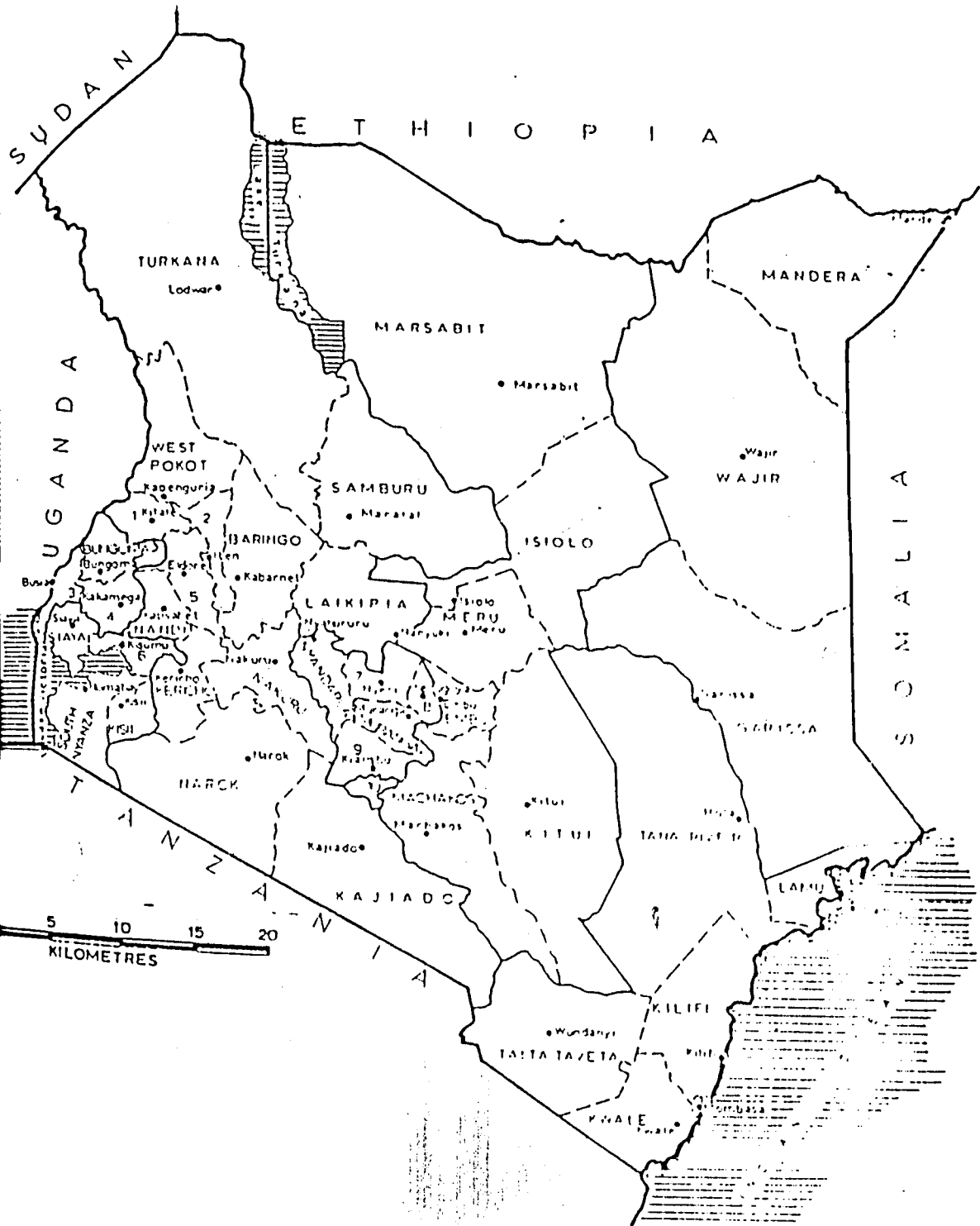
they are constantly checked and controlled by the District Veterinary Department through vaccination and quarantine ⁶.

The fertility of the soil makes the place an ideal habitat for crop production. The main traditional food crops which were grown before the colonial rule and are still grown include sorghum, finger-millet, sweet potatoes, pumpkins and various vegetables. The main cash crops produced include cotton, rice and sugar-cane. Rice is the main cash crop. There two rice irrigation schemes; Ahero Rice Irrigation Scheme and West Kano Irrigation Scheme. The former was established in 1969. It covers 840 hectares; the scheme is located on the right bank of the Nyando River near Ahero market. West Kano Irrigation scheme was established in 1974. It is located along the Winam Gulf of the lake. The scheme covers 970 hectares. About 60% of the West Kano Irrigation Scheme is under rice and 40% under sugar-cane. The common food crops grown are maize, sorghum, beans and sweet potatoes⁷.

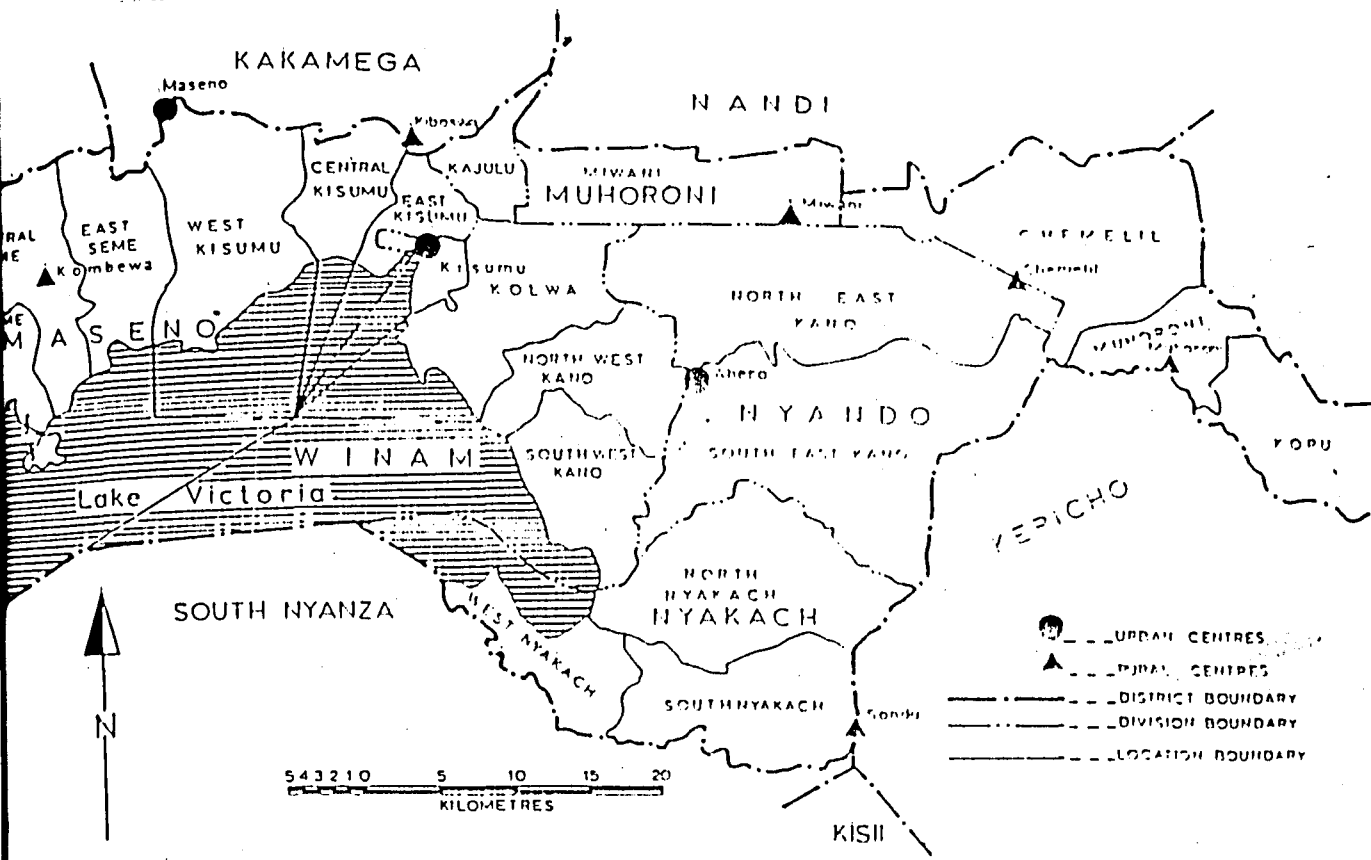
The main constraints for agricultural development in Kano the drainage deficiencies and seasonal floods which normally reduce the cultivated areas and sometimes cause damage to agricultural production⁸. The rainfall is not sufficient for rainfed crops during the short rains season and does not permit a high production of rainfed crops during the long rains season. There is also the problem of the low prices of agricultural produce which do not cover

the production cost. Finally, the area suffers from excessive stocking rates in pasture lands and this is coupled with the problem of breeds with low productivity⁹.

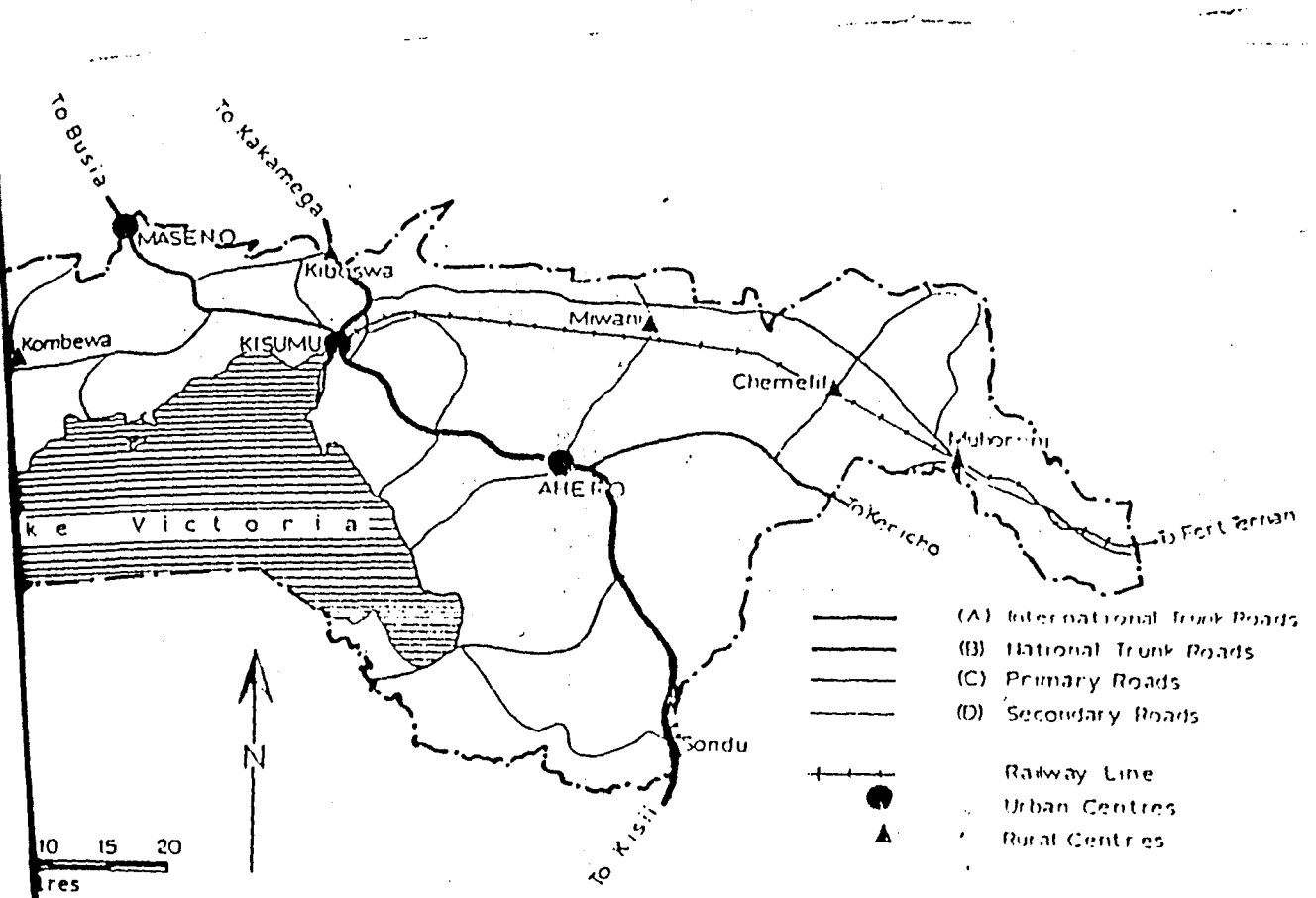
Map 1: Kisumu District in relation to other districts in Kenya



Map 2: Nyando Division in relation to other divisions the district



Map 3: The main Kisumu-Muhoroni Road and Feeder Roads in the District



The Pre-colonial organisation of Jo-Kano c. 1850 - 1900

The primary economic activity of Jo-Kano up to about the middle of the nineteenth-century was cattle-keeping¹⁰. Apart from cattle-keeping, other economic activities included crop production, fishing, hunting, gathering, craft and trade. In Kano, as in other areas of Luo-land, crop production had become more important than cattle-keeping from the middle of the nineteenth century. This change came about as a result of the rapid increase in population, which basically meant that areas which were previously used for herding were now taken over by human habitation¹¹. In addition to population increase, the shift was also brought about by apamo (rinderpest epidemic) which decimated cattle in the 1890's¹². As Hay rightly points out, the impact of this cattle epidemic demanded adjustment in the balance between pastoralism and agriculture in Kowe¹³.

Thus in Kano, just as was the case in Kowe, the cattle-epidemic which claimed large herds of cattle in the early 1890's contributed to economic change. Jo-Kano had to put more emphasis on crop production than cattle keeping as a primary economic activity. In the following section, we are going to analyse some of the economic activities of Jo-Kano before the colonial period.

Agriculture

As we have noted above, by the middle of the nineteenth

century, agriculture had replaced cattle-keeping as the primary economic activity among Jo-Kano. According to Jo-Kano, the seasons of the year were determined by the economic activities of the season¹⁴. Basically, the year was divided into four seasons; chiri or chwiri - which was from February to July; it was planting and weeding season. The second season, keyo, was harvesting period. It occurred in August. The third season was opon. This season occurred about September to October. Crops such as maize and finger-millet which usually ripen faster than sorghum were planted during opon. Potatoes were also planted. Finally, oro, which occurred from November to February was a season for clearing bushes and digging.

Various crops were cultivated to meet daily domestic food needs. The most popular crop was bel (sorghum millet)¹⁵. This was cultivated in varieties; andiwo (brown sorghum) ochuti (red sorghum), were the most widely cultivated of all the varieties. Other varieties included; nyalando, nyabande, olieko and orando. Sorghum was popular because the main dish, kuon (stiff porridge) was mainly made from it. Sorghum was also important because it was used for preparing nyuka (porridge) which was a daily diet. It was also used for brewing traditional beer.

The second most popular crop was kal (finger millet). It was popular because it provided a daily domestic dish like sorghum, and because it ripened faster than other

crops. This meant that it become handy before other food crops were ready for harvest. Just like sorghum, finger millet was cultivated in varieties for instance, ndere, which used to ripen faster, dongo or nyapusi, which had bigger grains than ndere. Other varieties were nyakundi and odhuya.

Oduma or bando (speckled maize) was also cultivated. There were two main varieties; ndere and nyamula or ramula. Most field informants agreed that maize was not a popular traditional crop. Most informants agreed that maize was not a popular traditional crop because grinding it into flour was very difficult, unlike finger millet or sorghum millet. In spite of its unpopularity, maize became a handy food during harvesting seasons. It was the first crop to be harvested. Its unpopularity made Jo-Kano cultivate it in small quantity, usually intercropped with sorghum millet and never cultivated in a seperate garden.

Rabuon (sweet potatoes) were widely cultivated in Kano. Potatoes were popular because they provided a relief during famine periods. They had no particular season, but were cultivated throughout the year. Several varieties were cultivated; omito, which was sweet with the inside of the tuber reddish; ongili, which was rather tasteless with a whitish tuber. Other varieties included nyar-komolo and nyar-lango (which had been acquired from the neighbouring Kipsigis). Jo-Kano consumed potatoes raw, roasted or boiled.

Budho (pumpkin) was also a popular food crop in Kano. Apart from providing meals, pumpkins were popular because they were used for various purposes; for instance, a variety such as, aguata or keno, was not edible, but was used for making aguetini (calabashes) and pugni (gourds). Calabashes as containers were used for water, milk, gruel, traditional beer and medicine. Gourds were used for separating ghee from fresh milk and also for storing grain. The other varieties which were cultivated included; okebe, obirwa and minuku. Pumpkins provided two types of meals, the tubers were simply boiled then eaten while its leaves were boiled and eaten with kuon.

Various types of alote (vegetable) were cultivated by Jo-Kano. The only type which was sown was bo. Others such as dek (*Gynandropis gynandra*) and osuga (*solanum nigrum*) grew wild in the gardens. There were also other several greens which used to grow wild in gardens and fields. But these we will consider later, under the section, gathering. Greens were a popular meal; once prepared, they were eaten with ugali. Most greens which grew wild in the fields were mainly eaten during famine. Greens were equally popular in Kano because they supplemented common dishes such as fish, potato and meat.

Nyim (sesame) was widely cultivated in Kano; sesame grains were usually dried then consumed. It was popular not only because it was consumed, but also because it was used

in ritual practices. Alayo (green gram) was also cultivated; but was not very popular. Rabolo (bananas) were not indigenous in Kano and Luo-land at large. Hay has rightly observed that the Luo might have acquired bananas from the neighbouring Luyia community²⁰. One informant recalled that Jo-Kano used to get bananas from the Banyore²¹.

Traditional Agricultural Implements

The very first agricultural tool which informants recalled being used in pre-colonial Kano was a carved wooden structure, rahaya²². It was used for tilling land, sowing as well as weeding. Rahaya was widely used in Luo-land during the greater part of the nineteenth century. A new imported hoe, nyar-imbo, gradually replaced rahaya. Although it is generally believed that nyar-imbo was manufactured in Yimbo, one informant recalled that nyar-imbo was actually produced in Samia. Jo-Yimbo were just the middle men in iron-hoe trade between the Samia and the rest of the Luo. Jo-Kano showed preference to nyar-imbo because it turned soil better than rahaya. Apart from nyar-imbo, there was also another type of iron-hoe, kasiri, which was also acquired from Jo-Yimbo. It was mainly used for weeding finger-millet. These hoes were bartered for goats or foodstuff.

The introduction of nyar-imbo in Kano before the colonial rule boosted agricultural production in the area. A number of informants agreed that nyar-imbo being made of

iron turned soil faster and better than the former agricultural tool rahaya that was carved out of wood. Nyar-imbo enabled the people of Kano till more land which increased harvest²⁴. It can therefore be argued that the introduction of nyar-imbo was an important aspect of economic change prior to the colonial period.

Organization of crop production

In pre-colonial Kano, there was a well organized system of crop production. It aimed at providing food both at the homestead and communal levels. Each head of the homestead had his own special garden, mondo²⁵. All the family members were supposed to cultivate, weed and harvest crops from this garden. mondo. Products from mondo were stored in the special granary of the head of the homestead. This special granary was also referred to as mondo. Mondo products were utilized in three main ways; they met family needs during famine period, they could be bartered to acquire domestic livestock and were also used to help a woman whose harvest was poor either because of ill luck or laziness²⁶.

In Kano, just as in other parts of Luoland, communal work, saga, was very popular. It was organized during occasions such as tilling land, weeding, or putting up a new home. There was no payment for those who participated in saga. The only thing which was provided after the work was food. No particular type of food was to be provided, any

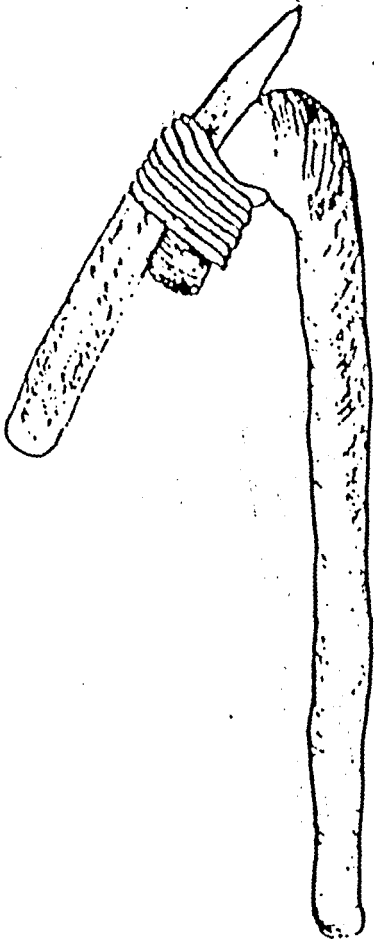
food could be prepared²⁷. To show how saga was valued, one informant recalled that even passers by who noticed that some-body organized saga would call at the place and lend a hand²⁸. It was unusual for someone to refuse to participate on saga work without a genuine reason. People known to be uncorporative about others' saga found themselves without adequate support for their own saga. Thus saga operated on the principles of reciprocity.

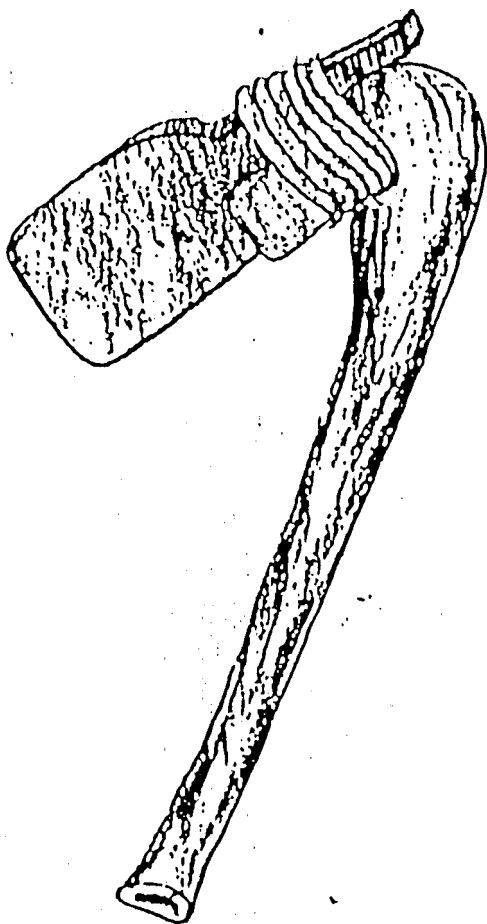
There were some agricultural rituals which were strictly observed. The garden that was to be tilled first during planting season was mondo²⁹, that is, the garden of the family head. The next person who was supposed to till her garden was the first wife mikayi. The remaining wives followed in order of seniority. The same procedure was strictly observed during sowing, weeding and harvesting. It was generally believed that if one failed to observe any of these procedures, ill lack would befall him or her. In most cases, a member of family would fall sick, and if not treated by a traditional doctor, it could result indeath. It could also lead to poor harvest.

The other type of ritual which was observed was that, the head of the homestead was supposed to spend the night in the first wife's house before work began for anew crop. Such work included first tilling the land then sowing, weeding and harvesting. The head of the homestead was to observe these rules as required. Jo-Kano never applied manure owuoyo

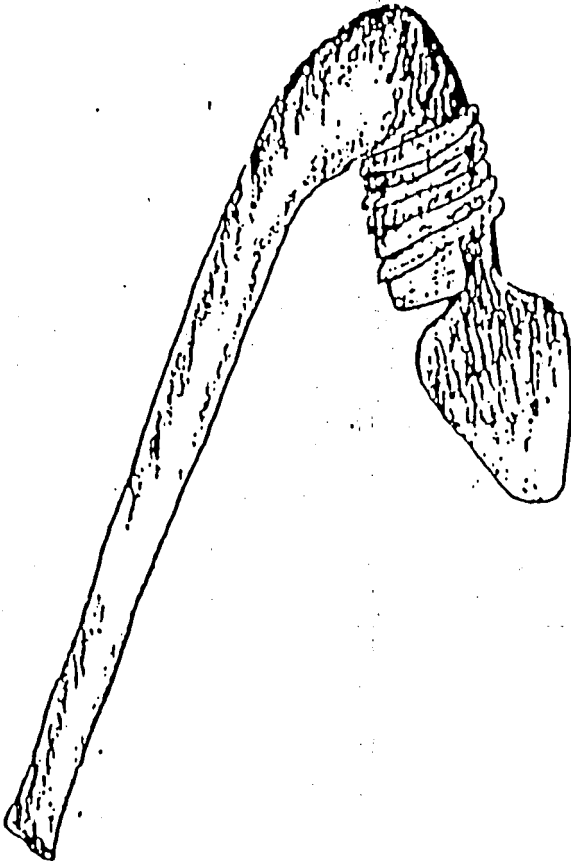
in the garden³⁰. The fertility of the soil was maintained through the use of crop rotation. Where by a garden was cultivated until its fertility was exhausted and was then left fallow to recover its fertility³¹. In Kano, fallow cropping usually took place after four to five years. Availability of land made the use of manure unnecessary.

Implement 1: Rahaya





Implement: 3 Kasiri



Planting Seasons

Informants gave conflicting information about planting seasons. The majority of informants suggested that there was only one planting season, chiri or chwiri, while some claimed that there were two planting seasons, chiri (primary planting season) and opon (secondary planting season)³². During chiri, gardens were usually prepared between December and January. Planting was done around February and weeding during the months of March and April. Harvesting took place around the month of August. All crops were planted during chiri.

The second planting season, opon followed immediately the harvesting of chiri products. As we had noted, during opon, Jo-Kano planted crops which usually mature quickly crops such as finger-millet, speckled maize, sweet potatoes and vegetables. The only crop which was not planted during this season was sorghum-millet, which was only planted during the primary planting season.

Thus there were two planting seasons in Kano, chiri and opon. We noted earlier that sorghum millet was the primary crop in Kano. To some informants, the fact that sorghum millet was not being planted during the secondary planting season implied that there was only one planting season. This shows the importance that was attached to sorghum millet. But the fact remains that there were two planting seasons in

a year irrespective of the crops which were cultivated in a particular season.

Livestock - keeping

By 1900, livestock - keeping had declined as the dominant economic activity among Jo-Kano and had been replaced by agriculture (p. ³²). It was argued that this change was brought about by two factors; the outbreak of cattle-epidemics which decimated large herds of cattle in 1890's and population increase which demanded more food supply also necessitated the change. In spite of the change, livestock - keeping skill continued to play a significant role in the economy of Jo-Kano.

The domesticated animals which were reared included dhok (cattle), diek, (goats) and rombe (sheep)³³. Punda (donkies) were not indigenous, but were introduced in Kano by the Arab and Swahili traders from the Coast³⁴.

Cattle provided essential products including foodstuffs such as meat, milk and blood which were highly valued. Livestock products such as skins and hides were used for clothing, bedding and also for making shields and sandals. Dry dung was used as fuel for cooking. Urine from cows was used for preserving milk. In Kano, the primary use of cattle was for paying bride wealth to enable a man to acquire a wife or wives. Livestock was so valued that it became unusual to find an animal being slaughtered without a

specific reason. One could only slaughter to observe a particular ritual³⁵. Apart from rituals, the only occasion when an animal could be slaughtered was if the animal was sick or too old to walk.

Livestock-keeping symbolised wealth and status³⁶. This was mainly manifested in the large herds one possessed. A person who had no livestock was seen as a poor, not worthy of respect. Although wealth could also be judged on the basis of agricultural produce, livestock was more recognised as a sign of wealth and status. This was because livestock was considered longer lasting than agricultural products which were usually cleared within less than one year.

All the livestock in the homestead belonged to the head of the homestead wuon dala³⁷. In a case in which the head of the homestead was a polygamous, then all the livestock were distributed equally among the wives. Before a son built his own home, he could not possess livestock in his father's home. After he had put up his own home, then his father gave him a calf or some few livestock to start off with.

There were various ways by which one could acquire livestock; these included bridewealth, raiding neighbouring communities and through the traditional practice which was referred to as singo (loaning a heifer to someone)³⁸. It operated on this principle:

A takes a heifer to B receiving one bull in exchange on the understanding that the first heifer's calf born

shall become the property of B and the original cow and any other calves shall be returned to A ³⁹.

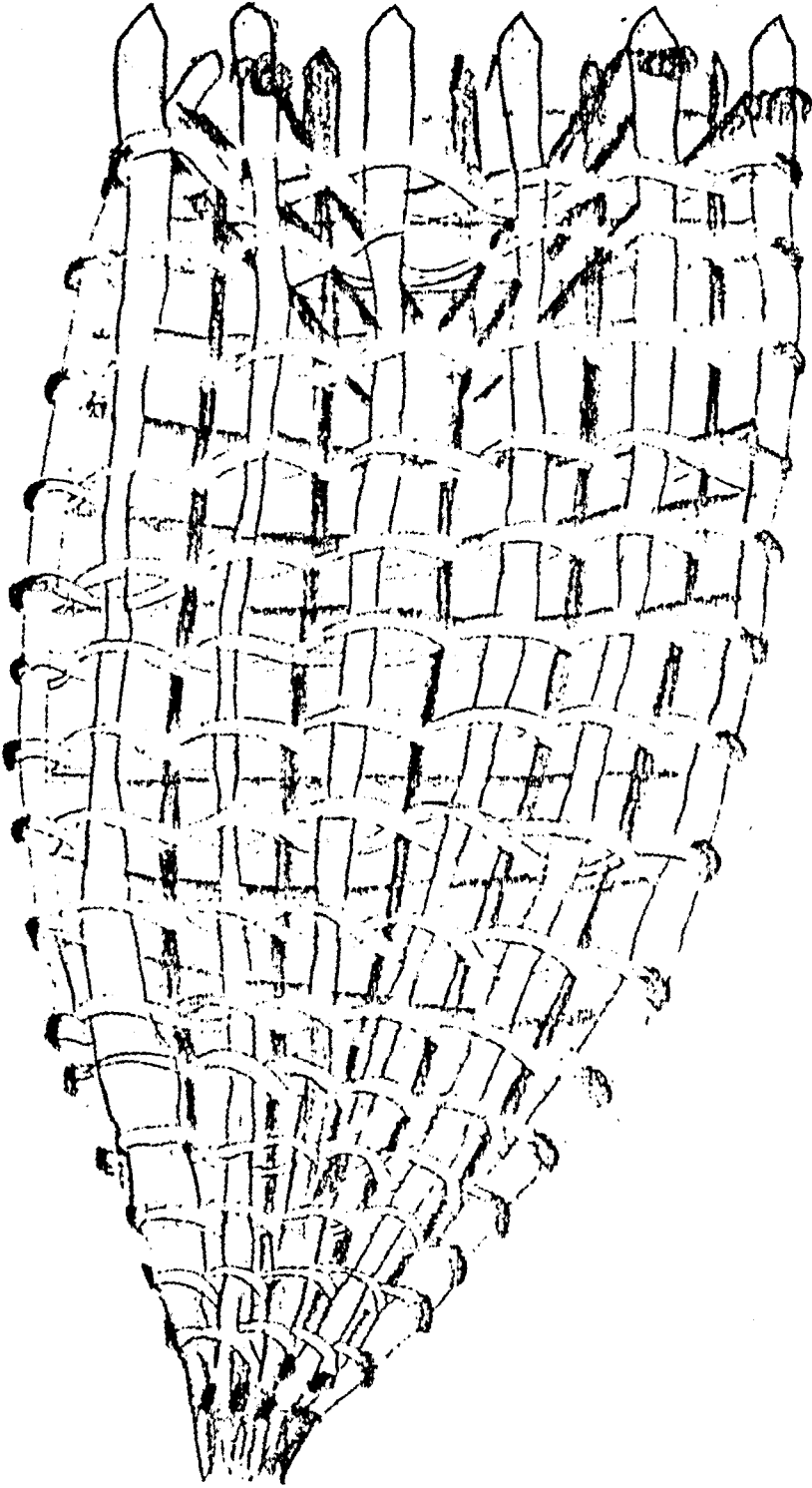
Of these methods, the most common was the bridewealth.

Cattle-epidemics

Cattle keeping was not an easy economic activity; there were occasions when natural calamities threatened its survival. The outbreak of cattle epidemics almost decimated livestock in Kano, forcing the people to put more emphasis on agricultural production. The main cattle epidemics which broke out in Kano in the 1890s were ajur (rinderpest), ndinya (pleuro-pneumonia) and abach (a leech which attacks cattle)⁴⁰. One informant recalled the outbreak of cattle disease, ndusue, which occurred before the colonial rule and almost decimated cattle in Kano⁴¹. This was probably pleuro-pneumonia which broke out between 1880 and 1885⁴². Jo-Kano knew various traditional medicines which they used in treating such cattle diseases. Opere was the most dreaded cattle disease because the local people did not know its cure. Even today Jo-Kano are still using traditional medicine in curing some cattle epidemics. Apart from cattle epidemics, drought was also a natural calamity which not only threatened livestock in Kano but agriculture as well. In case of severe drought, the people could take their livestock to relatives and friends who were not affected by drought.

Fishing

Most informants agreed that fishing was one of the most important economic activities among Jo-Kano⁴³. Fish was in plenty in the rivers, ponds and also in the lake. Jo-Kano used various methods in catching fish; ounga, (a fish basket), was mainly used by women while fishing in rivers; osadhi (a small weir made from papyrus) was also used in rivers. Other methods involved the use of gogo (a large communal papyrus structure) was used in the lake, soyo (using sharp fishing spears) was used in rivers in trapping a particular fish such as kamongo (mudfish) and mumi (catfish). Canoes were mainly used in the lake for fishing. During the dry season, catfish and mudfish were dug up from dry riverbeds and also from swampy places. Fish was a very popular dish in Kano. Smoked and sun-dried fish were usually stored to be used during shortage of food or when a visitor came.



Trade

Trade was an important economic activity among Jo-Kano through out pre-colonial period. It enabled people to acquire properties such as livestock, agricultural implements and it supplemented the daily domestic food provision. There were two categories of trade, internal and external⁴⁴. The former was conducted among Jo-Kano themselves, while the latter was between Jo-Kano and neighbouring communities. From Jo-Kajulu, Jo-Kano received mainly bananas. From the Kipsigis, Jo-Kano got finger millet; in return, Jo-Kano offered these people fish and livestock. Jo-Kano also traded with the Gusii from whom they received finger millet and sorghum. Jo-Kano gave them cattle milk and fish.

Pre-colonial trade was barter trade. Although Butterman⁴⁵ has observed that the Gusii, Kipsigis and the Luo had one common unit of measurement, atonga (a large basket), which when filled twice with grain, was equivalent to a young goat. This field research found out that there was another type of bigger basket, rum which was also used as a measuring unit⁴⁶. Atonga could go into it twice. A rum filled with sorghum millet was enough for a bull. Atonga was mainly used as a measuring unit against goats and sheep, while as used against cattle. The value of these measurement units varied depending on availability of foodstuffs. The trade took place either at homes or at specific market places. A

number of field informants confirmed that there were pre-colonial markets in Kano and neighbouring communities⁴⁷. These markets were more active during periods of famine when there was shortage of food. At the border between Jo-Kano and Jo-Kajulu there was a market called Alango⁴⁸. Between Jo-Kano and the Nandi, there was a market called Ramula; while at the border between Jo-Kano and the Kipsigis, there was Onguo market. Within Kano, there was a market at the present site of the Rabuor trading centre. The border markets were mostly attended by the neighbouring communities.

According to informants, there were three categories of markets in pre-colonial Kano; individual markets which were located near homes of influential personalities; communal markets and inter-communal markets. At the individual market the owner collected dues from market goers. The dues were small portions of products taken to the market. He also made sure that peace prevailed at the market. Communal markets belonged to a particular community by virtue of being located within that community; while inter-communal markets belonged to more than one community. Unlike individual markets, at the communal and inter-communal markets there were some elders jodongo who collected market dues. They also maintained peace and order at such markets. Some of the pre-colonial markets operated on specific days; some operated during famine periods. During inter-communal

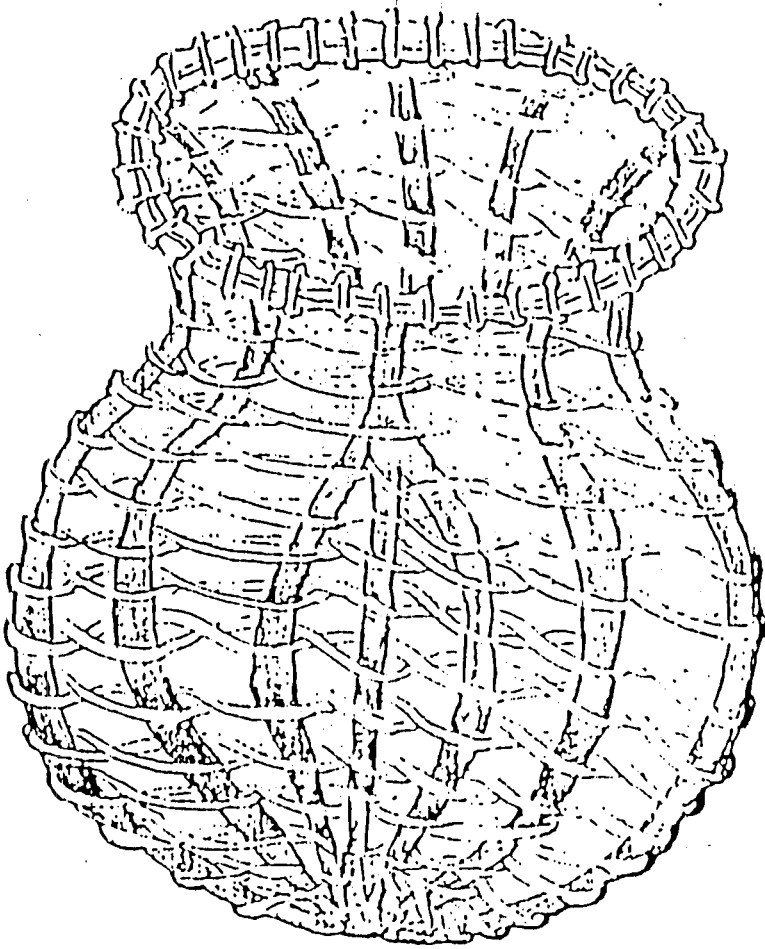
or ethnic wars, women were the only people who went to the markets because they could not be attacked⁴⁹.

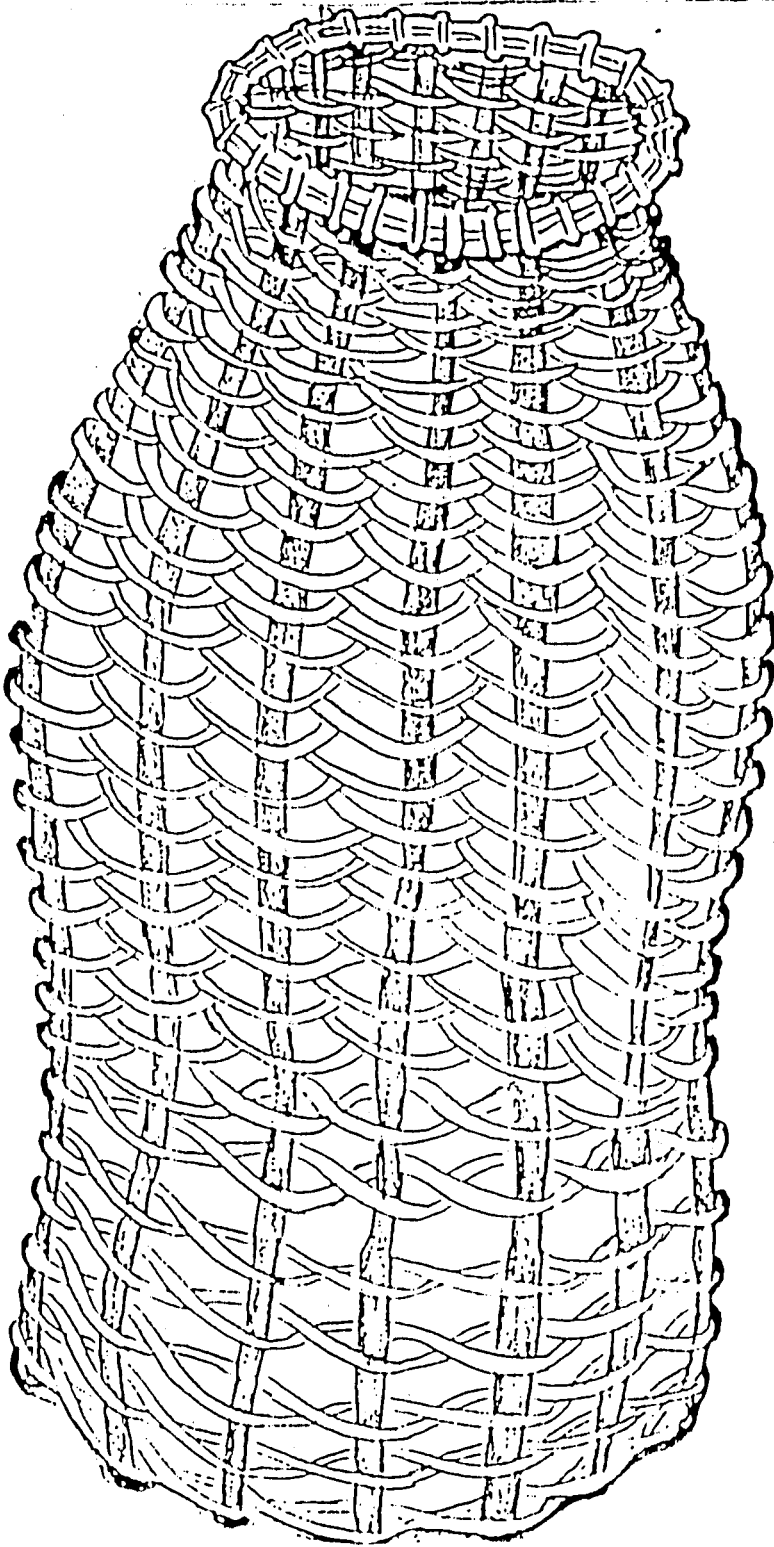
The establishment of trade relations between Jo-Kano and other communities brought about some changes on their economy. Jo-Kano acquired nyar-imbo from Jo-Yimbo through trade⁵⁰. Nyar-imbo improved crop production because it turned soil better than rahaya. The introduction of nyar-imbo in Kano by the mid 19th century meant that Jo-Kano could now cultivate larger fields than before. Jo-Kano acquired some new crops through trade. For example, bananas reached Kano by the mid 19th century from the Banyore⁵¹. From the Kipsigis, Jo-Kano acquired a type of sweet potato, nyar-Lango. Further more, trade led to the development and accumulation of wealth⁵². Those who could produce surplus agricultural products, exchanged the surplus in trade. This trade was referred to locally as rundo. The products acquired in this trade were used in various ways. For example, agricultural products catered for domestic needs. Livestock acquired in the trade could either be kept or used in paying bridewealth. The acquisition of more wives and children meant more commodity production, hence further accumulation.

One of the effects of this accumulation was the development of economic differentiation. In pre-colonial Kano, there were those who were referred to as Jomoko (the rich) and Jochan (the poor). Even though such economic

differentiation existed in Kano throughout pre-colonial periods, the less fortunate members of the community such as the poor, were taken care of by the well placed members of the community. This could be demonstrated in a case in which if a man was poor and unable to raise enough cattle for bridewealth, it became the responsibility of his kinfolk to contribute bridewealth for him in order to get a wife⁵³. Those who were poor could live with their relatives who were able to take care of them. To reciprocate the good gesture, such people were expected to provide labour for domestic use when needed. They were generally regarded as family members.

Atonga





Land Tenure

In Kano, land was the property of the whole community. No one therefore, could claim any parcel of land as his personal property⁵⁴. The only piece of land over which an individual could claim to be his, was a garden. One was free to cultivate land within his location so long as that land had not been previously cultivated by any other person. The person who cleared virgin land claimed ownership over that parcel of land. As far as grazing was concerned a person could graze on any pasture area. No individual had the right to reserve any pasture land for his exclusive use. In each clan, there was an area which was set aside for communal grazing, thim⁵⁵. It was only meant for that particular clan.

Land could be acquired in various ways; but the most common way was inheritance. Male relations could also acquire land from a relative or friend, but such a person was derogatorily referred to as jadak (tenant)⁵⁶. Land could also be acquired through wars. The victor(s) possessed the conquered land.

Traditional industries

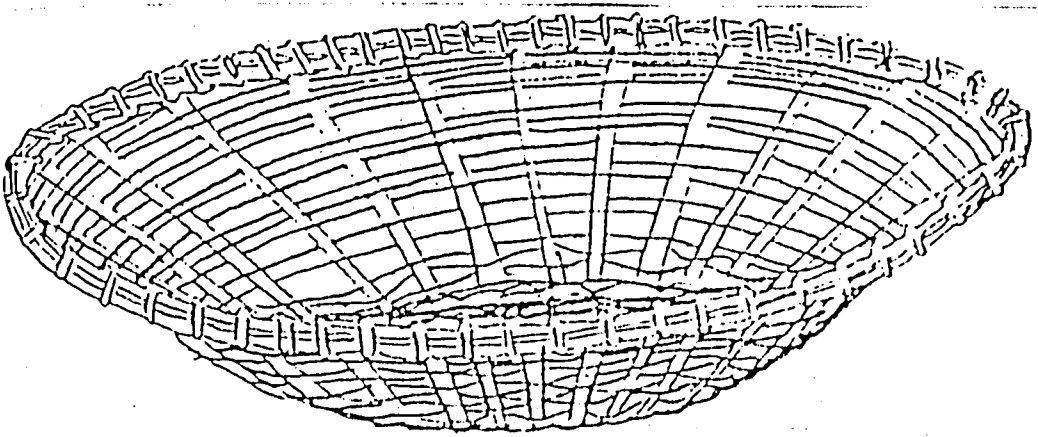
A number of people were involved in various manufacturing skills⁵⁷. Before Jo-Kano established trade relations with Jo-Yimbo, they used to go to Samia to acquire unfinished iron products and manufactured iron implements such as spears, knives and arrows. But after establishing

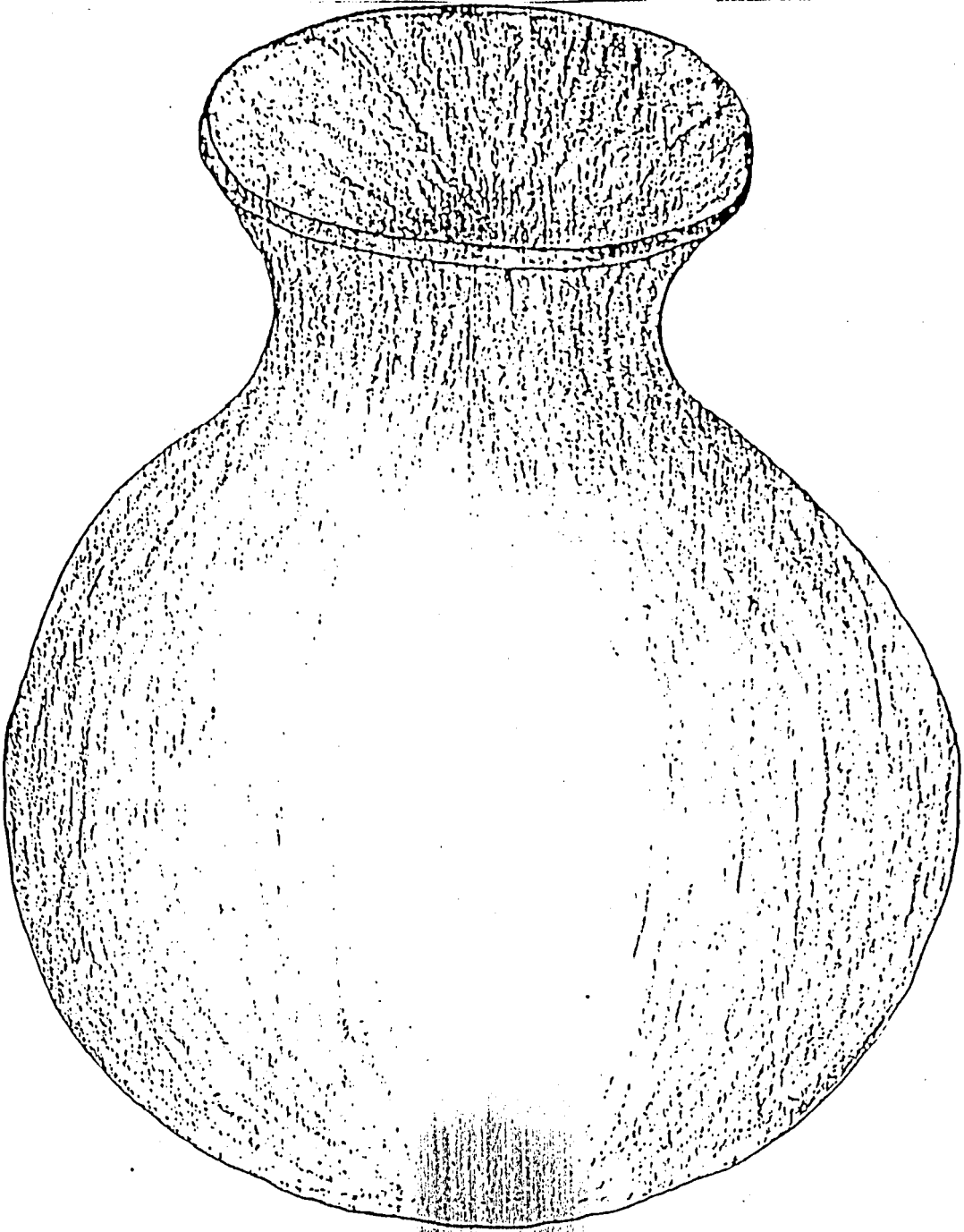
trade relations with Jo-Yimbo, Jo-Yimbo sold nyar-imbo and unfinished iron products to Jo-Kano. Iron smithing was the exclusive job of men.

Other specialists were involved in basketry. They produced various types of baskets. These included rum, atonga, adita, (used for serving ugali, atonga-rego (a small basket) and odheru (an open basket like a tray). Baskets were made from a particular type of grass mothno, papyrus reeds, or small twigs. The kind of grass or reed depended on the kind of basket to be made. Baskets were used for carrying grain after harvest and also for storing grain. Basketry was the work of men.

Pottery was an equally important craft, but was solely reserved for women. But not all women could make pots. There were women who specialised in pottery. Pots were made from a particular type of clay soil which was extracted from river beds. Pots were made in various sizes and shapes, depending on the use. Dapi (for storing drinking water), dak (for storing grains) and ohigla (a small pot for cooking fish or one for meat). Apart from cooking and storage, pots were also used for fetching water.

Odheru





Hunting

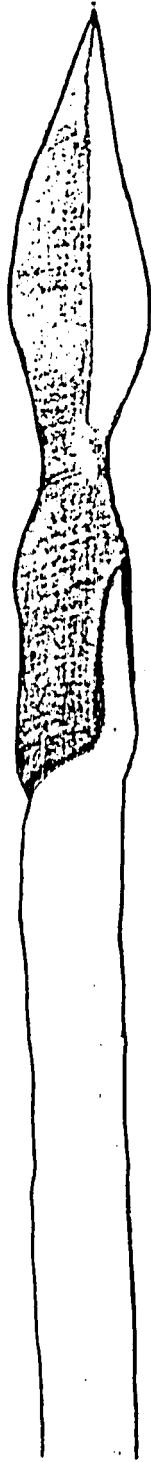
In Kano, hunting was an economic activity which was used to supplement domestic meat supply⁵⁸. It was a well organized activity , with a leader, Jago-dwar. There were two main forms of hunting; communal and small group. The latter was an informal activity involving a few people. They hunted small animals such as rabbits. But the former involved a large group of people. In Kano, communal hunting took place at a particular hunting ground, waradho⁵⁹.

Hunters carried spears, arrows, knives and clubs. They were usually accompanied by specially trained hunting dogs. The kill was divided according to well laid down rules. For instance, the person who killed the game took the two hind limbs, the group leader to took the head while the remaining parts were shared by the rest. Jo-Kano hunted various types of game, these included antelopes, zebras, warthogs, rabbits, buffaloes, gazelles and ant-bears. The game killed provided meat for domestic consumption. Hides and skins were used for bedding and clothing.

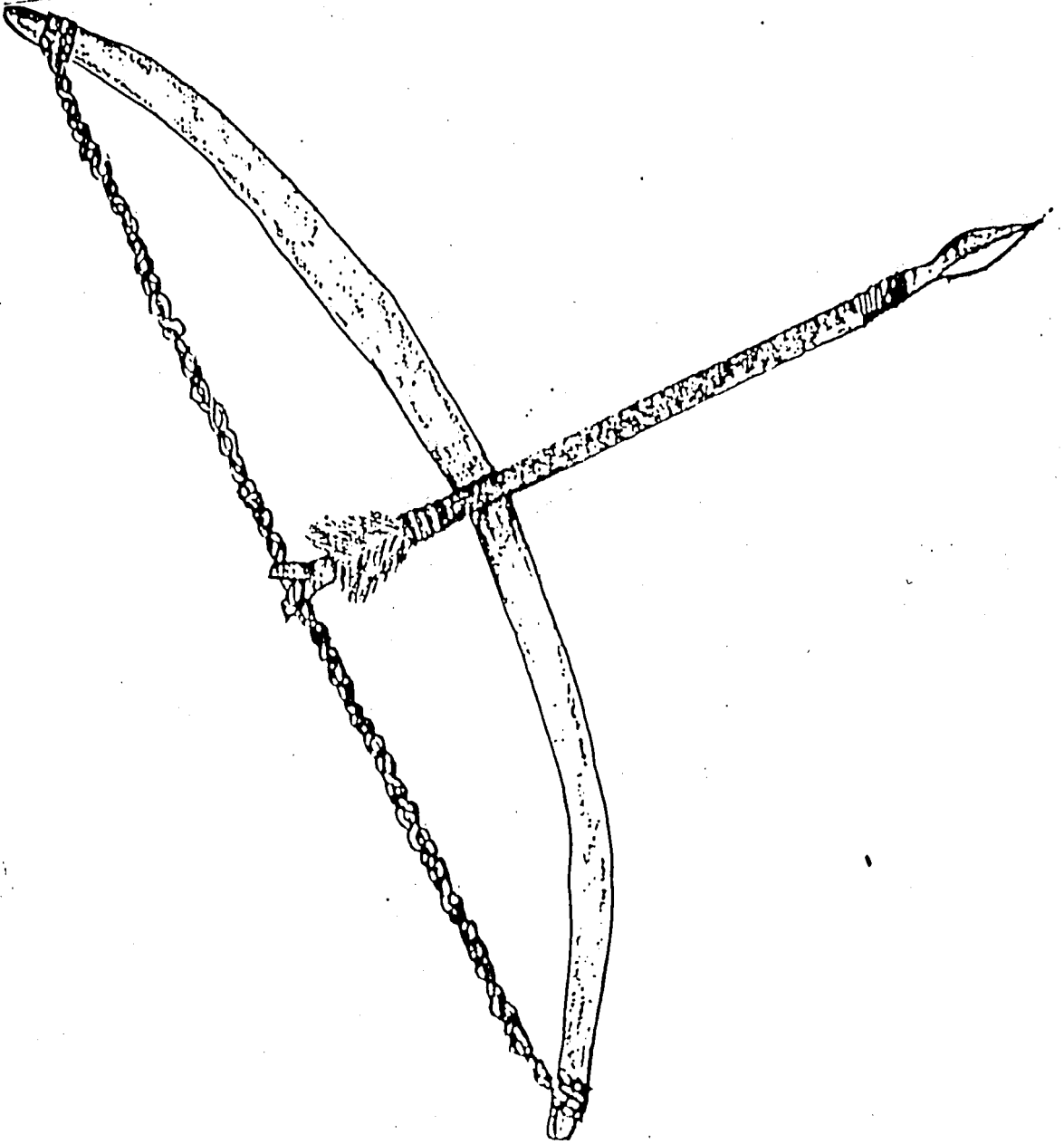
Jo-Kano applied special techniques to kill fierce game such as buffaloes. This involved constructing pits at strategic places where such game grazed, or places they usually passed through. Once they fell into such traps, then it was easy to kill them. Birds were also hunted. The birds which were hunted included guinea fowls, ducks and doves.

The small ones were usually roasted and eaten by children, while the big ones such as guinea fowls were cooked and eaten by both adults and children.

Spear



Arrow and Bow



Gathering

Food gathering was a common practice in Kano⁶⁰. There were numerous edible greens which were gathered. These included osuga (*Solanum nigrum*), atipa (*Asystrasia schimperil*) and dek (*Gynandopis gynandra*)⁶¹. Other greens which were gathered were locally known as apoth, ododo, odielo, ombok-alika and awayo. The people of Kano also gathered roots, fruits herbs and medicines. Mushrooms were also gathered; two common ones were known locally as oruka and olando. There were also some insects which were gathered; sisi, agoro, onyoso and nguen. These could be eaten raw or fried.

Division of labour

Arrighi in his 'The Political Economy of Rhodesia' found out that some division and specialization of labour existed⁶². Data from the field research supports Arrighi's finding⁶³. Women and men had different duties to perform. Men performed difficult tasks such as clearing bush in preparation for cultivation, hunting, building houses, going to war and looking after cattle. Women on the other hand looked after children, prepared food, cultivated and harvested food crops. In spite of the fact that both men and women worked on the farms, women worked more hours than men⁶⁴. Although this was attributed to the fact that men had to attend to other duties such as milking cows and herding,

The main reason was within the system of production. In Kano, the main unit of production was dala (a Luo word meaning homestead). But within the homestead, the primary unit of production was the household, which comprised of the wife and her children. It was therefore an obligation for each wife to work hard on her garden to provide enough food for her household. This was reinforced by the traditional practice of polygamy in which it was difficult for the man to provide food for all his wives. He only made sure that each wife had a parcel of land to cultivate.

The division of labour was not only based on sex, but also on age⁶⁵. Young boys and girls were usually trained to perform men's and women's duties. For instance, girls were trained by their mothers in food preparation, child care, cultivation, fetching firewood and water. Boys on the other hand were trained by their fathers on duties such as herding, milking cows, building houses, hunting and warfare. This aimed at preparing them adequately for their future responsibilities.

Conclusion

In conclusion, we have seen that up to the mid nineteenth century, the dominant economic activity among Jo-Kano was cattle keeping. But, by the late nineteenth century, this was no longer the case. Crop production had bypassed cattle keeping as the dominant economic activity.

Two main factors brought about the change. The occasional outbreak of cattle-epidemics which threatened to decimate cattle. The other factor was population increase. Although cattle keeping was no longer the primary economic activity, it still continued to play a significant role in the economy of Jo-Kano. This was because livestock provided foodstuffs such as meat, milk and blood. Livestock products such as skins and hides were used in making clothing, bedding, shields and sandals. Livestock was the only commodity used in paying bridewealth.

The introduction of a new kind of agricultural hoe, nyar-imbo brought about a change in crop production. The new hoe turned soil faster and better than the previous hoe, rahaya. This boosted agricultural output in Kano because Jo-Kano were now able to cultivate larger fields. Jo-Kano acquired nyar-imbo through trade with Jo-Yimbo. We also noted that some new crops were also introduced in Kano through trade. For instance, bananas were acquired from the Banyore, while a type of potato, nyar-Lango was acquired from the Kipsigis. Trade could take place either at home or at the various pre-colonial market places.

Apart from crop production, livestock - keeping and fishing, there were other economic activities such as hunting, gathering and manufacturing skills. All these economic activities were to meet domestic food provision in one way or another. We argued that surplus production was

bartered for accumulation purposes which resulted in economic differentiation. But we observed that the poor members of the society were not abandoned, but were well taken care of by their relatives. Such poor people provided labour for domestic use as reciprocal gesture.

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CHAPTER 3

CHANGES IN COMMODITY PRODUCTION, 1900-1963

Introduction

Commodity production is used here to refer to an organization of social economics in which goods are produced by separate isolated producers to meet the needs of the society¹. The incorporation of the new crops into the economy of Jo-Kano during the colonial period was determined by a number of factors; the people had to consider whether the crop had a high cash value. Consideration was also made on the labour requirement for the production of the crop. The local people were reluctant to accept crops that required too much labour. Crops which were edible, for instance maize, groundnuts and rice were easily adopted into the economy because they supplemented domestic food production.

This chapter is divided into four sections. First, it looks at the introduction of new crops in Kano by the colonial government and the responses of the local people to the introduction of these new crops. Section two focuses on livestock keeping, particularly changes on the extraction of animal products such as ghee, hides and skins. Section three examines colonial policies on fishing. Finally, section four

analyses the impact of commodity production on the people of Kano.

Colonial Agricultural Policy

The British foreign office allowed settler agricultural production in Kenya in order to make both the protectorate and the railway to generate their own funds. By the turn of the century, the foreign office, then in charge of the protectorate, was already complaining about the financial burdens in the form of grant-in-aid being sent to Kenya for maintaining the government². The foreign office therefore recommended that the protectorate should be self-sufficient financially without depending on the foreign office. It was in this line that the foreign office supported Sir Charles Elliot's policy of encouraging settler immigration to boost agricultural production. The policy aimed at attracting private capital for development and investment in the protectorate. The colonial state encouraged settler agricultural production in various ways; for instance the colonial state alienated lands for settlers. The lands alienated was mainly carved out of the most productive areas and located within the reach of the railway. This was because the colonial state wanted to boost settler agriculture by providing it with good network of infrastructure.

In 1903, the colonial government assumed responsibility

of developing commercial agriculture in the country. To achieve this, the Department of Agriculture was established. During this early years, the department was mainly concerned with the agricultural problems faced by European farmers. The colonial government encouraged agricultural development in Kenya because agriculture was meant to be the major sector of the economy³.

During the first two decades of the colonial rule, the government used various methods to promote agricultural production in the country⁴. Generally, the local people were encouraged to continue growing indigenous crops. Other methods included giving free seeds of new crops. To encourage people further incrop production, new agricultural implements such as jembes and ox-drawn ploughs were introduced. The colonial administrators such as chiefs and headmen urged the people of Kano to purchase these agricultural implements in order to boost crop production.

The years between 1900 and 1920, the colonial government was concerned with intergrating the new crops and agricultural implements into the economy of Jo-Kano⁵. Thus the first two decades of the colonal rule in Kano was a period of experimentation with new crops and agricultural implements.

By 1920s, the colonial government had realised that in order to have substantial improvement in African agricultural production to serve the local market, the

training of African agricultural instructors was necessary⁶. The colonial government argued that 'native' instructors were likely to succeed where Europeans had failed. These African instructors were trained for two years at Bukura Agricultural Training Institute in North Kavirondo District -presently Kakamega District. After training, the Agricultural instructors were then posted to the 'reserves' to manage demonstration holdings. The local people were shown how to cultivate maize in straight lines and to avoid intercropping for better yields. Seeds were also distributed freely to the local people at the demonstration plots⁷.

The colonial government placed emphasis on crops suitable for export such as cotton⁸. In the following sections, we will look at some of the new crops which were introduced in Kano and consider peoples' reaction to the introduction of these crops.

Cotton

The introduction of cotton growing in Nyanza was closely linked to the introduction of the Hut Tax Regulations of 1900, and the completion of the Uganda Railway line in 1901. The British colonial administration in Nyanza wanted to promote the cultivation of cotton as a cash crop in Nyanza to enable the local people to pay taxes in cash rather than in kind. In addition, the colonial

administrators wanted some cash revenue to maintain roads, and to pay the administrative costs of government. These factors therefore made John Ainsworth, Provincial Commissioner of Nyanza from 1906 to 1914 introduce cotton cultivation in the areas bordering Kisumu in 1906 and 1907⁹.

In Kano, cotton cultivation was first introduced in 1910. It was also introduced in other locations such as Nyakach, Kisumu and Seme in the same year¹⁰. Cotton ginnery was established in Kisumu in the same year. It was owned by a private company, The British East African Corporation. In 1913, the colonial administrators abandoned the idea of introducing and supporting cotton growing in Nyanza because the production was low. But in spite of this, cotton growing still continued because the local people earned some income from it.

In 1923 there was substantial increase of cotton cultivation in Kano and the surrounding locations. This was attributed to the installation of four gins in the Kibos Flour Mills. There was also increased production in the 1930s. Fearn has attributed the increase in production to the cotton planting campaigns in 1934 and 1935¹¹. He notes that these campaigns increased production irrespective of the low prices the growers were receiving. But Fearn does not tell us what sparked off the campaigns.

During the initial years when cotton cultivation was being introduced in Kano, it was planted in communal plots

along the roads¹². This was to allow easy inspection by the colonial administrators as they toured the locations. The communal cotton fields served as demonstration farms from which the local people were shown how to cultivate cotton. Each sub-location had its own communal cotton field and it was the responsibility of each respective mlango (headman) to make sure that his people worked on their cotton field as was required by the government.

In an article, 'Peasants and Rural Social Protest in Africa', Isaacman has observed that the imposition of cotton production in British colonies produced similar set of grievances and widespread covert opposition¹³. Apart from its low prices, delay in payment and the intensive labour it required, Jo-Kano were opposed to cotton cultivation because its planting season often coincided with the principal food crops. Jo-Kano realised that if they actively engaged in cotton cultivation, then it would beat the detriment of their principal food supplies. In an attempt to deceive the colonial administrators that the land was not suitable for cotton cultivation, the local people often planted less than the required amounts, planted after the designated dates, weeded fewer times and illegally intercropped cotton with food crops. Although Jo-Kano were reluctant to cultivate cotton, many of them continued cultivating it and even up to the present day, cotton is being cultivated in Kano. Those who cultivated it in a large scale normally earned income

from it irrespective of the delay in payment.

The table on page 63 shows the price of cotton in relation to that of maize¹⁴ .

Table 1

Year	Maize Income Per Acre		Cotton Income Per Acre	
	Shs.	Cts.	Shs.	Cts
1943	60	00	45	00
1944	65	00	40	00
1945	65	00	46	00
1946	67	00	51	00
1947	87	50	57	00
1948	113	75	63	00
1949	115	50	87	00
1950	122	50	96	00
1951	136	50	132	00
1952	228	20	147	00
1953	283	50	147	00

As can be observed from the above table, the price of cotton was generally low compared to that of maize. It can also be observed that the price increase was very gradual as compared to that of maize.

Table 2.

Ginneries and dates of their establishment in Central and South Nyanza Districts.

No.	Place	Date of Opening	Date of Closure (Where Applicable)	Lease
1.	Kisumu	1910	1923-1924	
2.	Sio	1923	Working	99 years
3.	Kibos	1923	1925 reopened 1935	99 years
4.	Asembo	1924	1926	-years
5.	Nambare	1925	Working	99 years
6.	Malakasi	1925	Working	33 years

Source : Central Kavirondo District Political Records,
DC/CN. 3/2,1909, p. 2

Hickory-King (White Maize)

White maize was first introduced in Kano during the famine of Ongere (Ke-opande)¹⁵. This famine occurred during the 1918-1919. The people of Kano received the first white maize seeds from an Indian, H. H. Holder, known locally as "Aora". He was an agricultural instructor for the Department of Agriculture based at Kibos¹⁶. According to a report by S.H. La Fontaine, then District Commissioner for Central Nyanza, the local people were initially reluctant to accept it because they were used to the native variety¹⁷. One informant recalls that when white maize flour was being

given out for relief during the famine of Ongere, people did not like its taste when cooked as kuon¹⁸. But later, the people of Kano developed interest in cultivating white maize for various reasons; foremost, among the reasons was that maize is edible. It could also be used as a cash crop. It takes a short period to rippen compared to sorghum. This meant that it supplemented domestic food provision before bel (sorghum) was ready to be harvested.

Sugar Cane

Sugar cane growing was introduced in Kano by the colonial administration as cash crop in the 1920s¹⁹. By 1930, two factories had been established in Nyanza, one at Miwani (the Victoria Sugar Company) and another at Muhoroni (the Muhoroni Sugar Company). Both factories were in Kano. When sugar cane growing was initially being introduced, it was not popular with the people of Kano because the people argued that it required a large acreage²⁰. The local people argued that if large acreage is put under sugar cane, there would be no land for other food crops and livestock. In addition, sugar cane growing needed too much labour and it took more than a year to be ready for harvest. In spite of all these, by 1930, sugar cane had become the chief cash crop in Kano²¹. Its cash value motivated the people of Kano to increase its production. In contrast with cotton, sugar cane had a

comparatively higher price and regular payment.

Rice

Rice cultivation was introduced in Kano by the British colonial government in 1934²². Earlier in the same year, it had been introduced in the neighbouring locations of Nyakach and Kisumu. Following the introduction of rice cultivation in these locations, in December 1936, a large rice hulling plant was erected at Kibos by Rahim Jivraj and Company. The introduction of rice in Kano was not initially received with enthusiasm by the local people²³. The practice of cultivating rice in water was strange and new to the people of Kano. Secondly, the people of Kano were reluctant to grow rice because it was considered too insubstantial as food. Even at present, rice is popular in Kano not as a food, but as a cash crop. According to the Central Kavirondo District Annual Report, by 1937, the area under rice cultivation in Kano had increased considerably²⁴. This was attributed to its cash value rather than as a food crop.

The diagram below¹ shows how rice had become popular in the locations of Kano during the 1937 - 1938 season as compared to other locations²⁵.

Table 3

Location	Acreage
Nyakach	90 Acres
West Kano	300 Acres
East Kano	250 "
Kajulu	25 "
Kisumu	25 "

Changes in agricultural technology

The introduction of new agricultural implements in Kano by the colonial government brought about increased crop production. This can be seen in the table below which shows indigenous products exported from Nyanza Province¹⁶.

Table 4

African grown produce exported from various stations and lake ports in the Nyanza Province, 1909 to 1918 (tons)

Crops	1909	1910	1911	1912	1913	1914	1915	1916	1917	1918
Beans	47	182	327	268	471	?	109	242	1366	187
Groundnuts	42	77	59	254	590	368	118	94	167	169
Maize and maize-flour	469	2024	3254	8510	8954	11882	7165	12108	14192	?
Mtama and mtama-flour	1770	997	1039	1210	1457	462	986	772	99	19
Sweet potatoes	26	52	58	30	26	7	10	14	34	3
Sim-sim	394	1447	1661	3951	3991	3155	1085	2981	3224	983

Source: Adapted from figures in Fearn, H., An African Economy, Table 7, p. 84.

The new implements included jembes and ox-drawn ploughs. The colonial government introduced these agricultural implements in order to increase crop production. The new implements were more effective in cultivation than the traditional ones such as rahaya and nyar-imbo, a fired clay blade hoe which had been imported from Yimbo, but which had not spread widely by 1900. Hay has noted that nyar-imbo were mainly a preserve of the few rich cattle keepers who were able to purchase them²⁷.

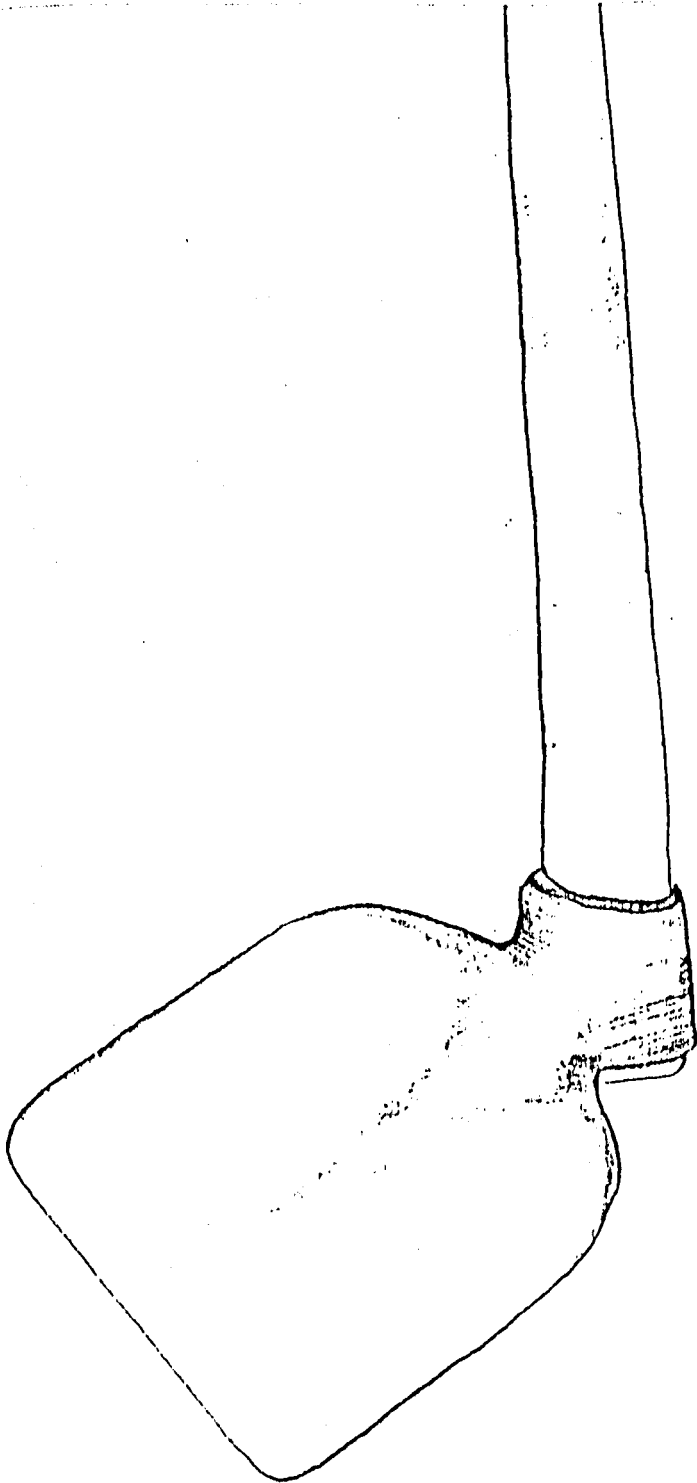
Ox-drawn ploughs were introduced in Nyanza Province around 1911. When initially introduced, some influential people in the community such as chiefs were invited to a government farm at Kibos to be shown how the ploughs were used²⁸. Ox-drawn ploughs were too expensive for the great majority of the peasant farmers in Kano. In most cases, a group of people or clan could purchase one collectively²⁹. A few rich cattle owners, chiefs, traders and a few substantial wage earners were able to purchase ox-drawn ploughs³⁰. By the end of the Second World War, ox-drawn ploughs were already widely used by Jo-Kano. This was because a number of Jo-Kano had learnt that it was effective in ploughing than jembe. They were purchased from Indian traders who settled at various trading centres such as Ahero, Kibos, Rabuor and Kisumu town.

Jembes were introduced in the 1920s. The people of Kano showed preference to jembes because they were more effective for turning the soil and for cultivation than the traditional nyar-imbo³¹. Further more, a majority of the Kano people preferred jembe to the ox-drawn plough because the price of jembe was cheaper.

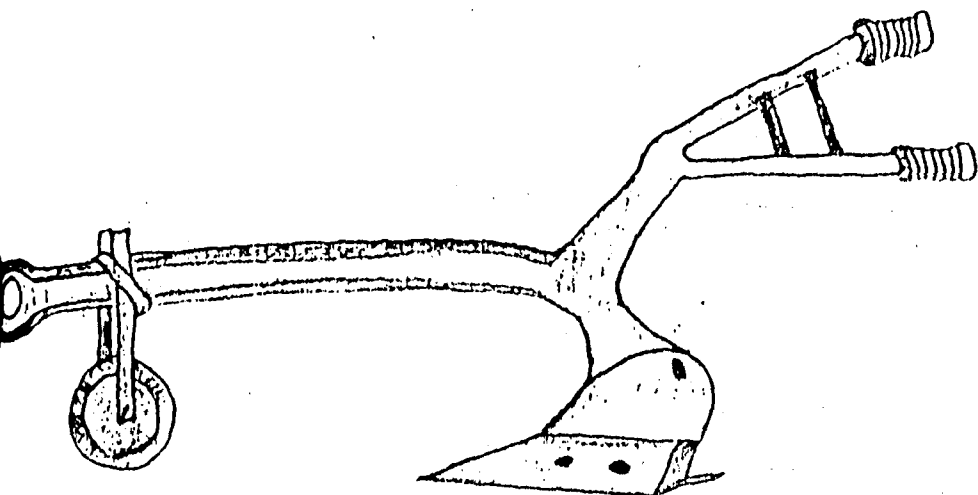
The introduction of the new agricultural implements boosted agricultural production. But at the same time, their introduction had some negative effects. For instance, the few people in Kano who owned ox-drawn ploughs had the habit of encroaching on the neighbours in extending the area of cultivation³². The blacksmiths who used to manufacture traditional hoes gradually became redundant since the local people were now buying the imported agricultural tools. Former blacksmiths turned to new occupation of repairing the new agricultural tools³³. The introduction of ox-drawn ploughs also brought about economic differences. Butterman argues that those who owned ox-drawn ploughs were able to cultivate larger acres. This enabled them to accumulate wealth, thus creating economic differentiation³⁴. The fact that some people were able to obtain ox-drawn ploughs while some others were not is in itself an indication of economic differentiation even before the effect of the plough could be felt.

In pre-colonial Kano, economic differentiation was already in existence³⁵. Wealth was mainly determined by the

livestock, agricultural products and wivesone had. The introduction of new agricultural implements by the colonial government did not therefore create economic differentiation among Jo-Kano, but actually accentuated it.



Implement 5: ox-drawn plough



The agents of change

In Kano, two groups of people brought about economic change during the colonial period; the first to bring about change were the colonial administrators such as District Commissioners, District Officers, chiefs and the Agricultural Officials. The second group were the local people of Kano who had adapted western culture. In the following sessions, we are going to consider each group and analyse how they brought about economic change in Kano.

(i) Colonial administrators

The colonial administrators were the first agents of change in Kano³⁶. They introduced new crops and agricultural tools in Kano. The chiefs in Kano acted as instruments of change. The chiefs were to take orders from their superiors, namely, District Officers and District Commissioners. During the initial years when new crops were being introduced in Kano, the colonial administrators established demonstration farms in almost each sub-location³⁷. There was a specific day set aside, a field day, on which the local people were to go to the demonstration farms to be shown how to cultivate the new crops and the use of new agricultural tools. According to the colonial administrators, these demonstration farms were established to improve African agricultural produce³⁸. But in reality, the colonial administrators wanted to improve the production of the new cash crops for export.

The colonial administrators realised that for the type of economic change they had in mind to be effectively introduced in Kano, chiefs were indispensable in bringing about these changes. This was demonstrated when the first two ox-drawn ploughs to be used in Central Kavirondo District were given to chief Owili of Kano and Ondiek of Sakwa³⁹. The aim was to allow the local people to see the advantage of using ox-drawn ploughs. At the same time, whenever a new crop was being introduced, the seeds were given to the chiefs and headmen to distribute to the local people and instructed them on how the crop was cultivated⁴⁰. Initially, the seeds were given free, but later, the local people were to buy from the Indian shops. The chiefs were in a position to urge the people to purchase such new agricultural tools and seeds. In most cases, chiefs overstepped their powers by even administering corporal punishment on those who refused to abide by the colonial administration's instructions. This shows how chiefs co-operated with the colonial administration. The colonial administration introduced new agricultural tools in order to maximise production for their own economic benefit.

From the beginning of the colonial rule to the 1920s when agricultural instructors were first posted in the African reserves, chiefs and District Officers were the ones who instructed the people of Kano on new methods of crop production. By 1922, there was only one agricultural officer

who was serving the whole district, Central Kavirondo District⁴¹. Apart from supervising agricultural work in the district, he was at the same time expected to monitor agricultural activities in both South Kavirondo and North Kavirondo Districts. He was therefore in charge of the entire province, a large area which was difficult to supervise effectively. Nyanza therefore faced shortage of agricultural officers until 1933 when more agricultural officials were posted to the province⁴².

The colonial administrators argued that, for effective agricultural production, Africans had to be trained as agricultural instructors. This led to the establishment of Bukura as an Agricultural Training Centre. It offered a two year course. One informant who happened to have been trained at Bukura recalled that he was trained on the use of ox-drawn ploughs and new methods of cultivation⁴³.

The duties of agricultural instructors included visiting individual farmers to advise them on new methods of crop production. They advised farmers to plant crops in lines and also single cropping. The agricultural instructors were also supposed to attend and address chiefs' barazas (meetings) to give advice to the public on crop production. Although the colonial government had presumed that by training Africans as agricultural instructors, it could improve crop production, but the people of Kano found it difficult to adopt the new methods of agricultural

production for various reasons. For instance, the people of Kano complained that they were expected to plant crops in lines, a method that was tedious⁴⁴. The agricultural officers were against intercropping, a traditional mode of production that reserved parcels of land to be kept for livestock. The agricultural officers argued that intercropping resulted in poor yield. But the people of Kano argued that single cropping would take too much land at the expense of livestock keeping.

Hay has observed that while the colonial administrators played an important role in introducing crops and tools which were completely new to the Africans, their influence was often marginal in the actual decision-making process of acceptance or rejection⁴⁵. The limited influence was due to two factors; the limited resources in funds and lack of personnel available to them. This was why the British colonial administrators did not make any substantial change in agricultural production of the local people of Central Kavirondo between 1900 -1930. Other related factors which limited their ability to bring about improved agricultural production included; lack of knowledge about the area itself, the climate, types of soil and patterns of rainfall which are vital in effective agricultural production.

(ii). The western influenced

In Kano, some people had been influenced by the western

culture. This group included those who worked in towns jopango, those who had acquired western education josomo and Jo-Kristo (christian converts)⁴⁶. These people purchased newly introduced agricultural implements such as ox-drawn ploughs and jembes. At the same time, they cultivated new food and cash crops. The presence of such people in the villages directly influenced other people to adopt the western mode of crop production⁴⁷. For instance, josomo who had known new methods of production were at a position to show the people in the villages how to adopt new methods of production. A good example of this group of people were the teachers who interacted with the local people most of the time. They were instrumental in bringing about economic change in Kano.

Apart from the western influenced, there were other categories of people in Kano who were also instrumental in bringing about economic change. Ehret has correctly noted the important role the African entrepreneurs played as agents of change⁴⁸. He argues that as buyers of crops, these entrepreneurs established shops in remote areas which spread cash into the economy. He contends further that, as retail traders, the entrepreneurs sold new items (agricultural tools) such as jembes, ox-drawn ploughs and even cash crops to the people in remote areas. In Kano, a large number of local people who took to entrepreneurship established shops at trading centres such as Ahero, Rabuor and Nyangande⁴⁹. The

fact that the local people had access to these new items acted as an incentive to purchase them.

African produce for domestic market

From the dawn of the colonial period up to about 1914, African produce had dominated the export market (Table 4, p. ⁸⁴66). The produce included maize, sim-sim, groundnuts and cotton⁵⁰. But after 1918, there was a shift. European produce such as coffee, tea and maize started dominating the export market. There was marginal development of African export. instead Africans faced hindrances in cash crop production, for instance, Africans were unable to get loans from the government in the production of cash crops such as coffee and tea. The result was that the African production was to meet domestic demands. The colonial sector provided domestic market for African produce to sell commodities such as vegetables, chickens and eggs which the Europeans needed. At the same time, African peasant farmers provided food stuffs for local needs. In Kano, the most popular food crop produced for the local market from the 1940s was maize. It was also popular in other locations. Most Africans employed in various sectors preferred maize as a staple food.

African peasant farmers were not allowed by the colonial government to grow cash crops such as coffee during the early years of the colonial period because Africans were considered incapable of producing high quality produce⁵¹. The

colonial administrators argued that there was danger that inferior African products would spoil the export market. The real reason why the colonial administrators discouraged Africans from growing cash crops was that the European farmers feared competition from the Africans. They realised that if Africans were allowed to grow major cash crops such as coffee and tea, then Africans would dominate the export market. Needless to say, colonial domination equally implied economic domination.

The Depression - 1929

The Great Depression of 1929 sent shock waves through all the capitalistic market systems in the world⁵². Even though the centre of the economic crisis was in New York where the world market system tumbled, the peasant farmers in Kano were affected by the depression having been incorporated into the world capitalistic system. The Central Kavirondo District Annual Report of 1929 had this to report about the effect of the depression on the District:

about the end of october following the sudden fall in prices in Europe, a general slump occurred in the district, the commodities principally affected being maize, hides, groundnuts and sim-sim. This has resulted in an acute trade depression⁵³.

The depression affected the peasant farmers in Kano in

various ways⁵⁴. By 1931, maize price had fallen by 50 per cent of its 1929 value, a decline from Shs. 11.30 to Shs. 5.06, and eventually falling as low as Shs. 3.30 in 1933. The price fall affected all the African peasant produce which included sim-sim, beans, ghee, hides and skins. The price fall in Kenya was more drastic on African produced commodities than on those produced by the Europeans⁵⁵. This was because the government over reduced prices of African produce than those of the Europeans.

While the depression was taking a toll, the economy of Jo-Kano was further affected by the locust invasion in 1931. The locusts destroyed everything that was green. This resulted in famine which was known locally as Ke-Otuma. In some parts of Luo-land, this famine was referred to as Ke-nyangweso. In local Luo-Language, nyangweso refers to newly hatched hoppers which have not grown wings. Otuoma was a Luo harpist who moved from place to place entertaining people at the time of this famine, and thus gave his name to the famine⁵⁶.

The impact of the depression on commodity production by Africans was that the colonial government had to intervene in African peasant production by trying to develop the African agriculture on the same line as those of the European. The colonial government realised that for a stable economic development of the colony, African agricultural production was to be developed⁵⁷. The other effects has been

observed by Arrighi was that the African peasantry participation in the labour market ceased to be largely 'discretionary', that is a way of transforming surplus labour-time which could not be absorbed economically in agricultural production into a surplus of commodities (discretionary consumption, productive and unproductive accumulation), and became the normal and only way in which a growing section of the peasantry could obtain a significant proportion of their means subsistence⁵⁸.

The Second World War

Before the shock waves of the depression subsided, the people of Kano were once again plunged into another world catastrophe, the outbreak of the Second World War, 1939 - 1945. The war had economic effects on the African communities. A large number of African men were conscripted which drained labour from the communities. The colonial government ordered compulsory sale of cattle to the Military Supply Board. In Central Kavirondo District, the local people preferred conscription to their cattle being taken⁵⁹. In addition to providing men and livestock, the Africans were at the same time required to grow and sell agricultural products such as maize and sorghum to the military. They also provided free labour for the construction of roads and bridges⁶⁰.

The war caused the price of goods to rise⁶¹. Sales of

agricultural implements were equally affected, sales went down substantially as compared with the previous year. This is illustrated in the table below⁶².

Table 5

Sale of agricultural implements

	<u>1938</u>	<u>1939</u>
Ploughs	632	564
Separators	73	60
Trek Chains	170	132

→ As can be observed from the figures, one notices that the rise of prices of commodities during the war affected the purchasing power of the Luo of Central Kavirondo District. The result was that the sale of the above goods to the local people decreased. This was attributed to lack of money in the area⁶³.

Statistics on Kano is not available, but the table below shows the casualties suffered by the people from Central Kavirondo District in the Second World War⁶⁴.

Table 6.

From 3 - 9 - 1939 to 30 - 9 - 1946 were

Killed in action	77
died of wounds received in action	11
Died of other war conditions	3
Death Accidental	80
Deaths Other causes	310
Suicide	2
Excutions	-
Deserters	7 ¹
<hr/>	
Total	490
<hr/>	

As the people of Kano faced economic difficulties brought about by the out break of the Second World War,

their economy was further affected by the floods which occurred in 1942. It did not only occur in Kano, but in most parts of Luo-land and destroyed food crops⁶⁵. Floods resulted in a poor harvest the following year and caused famine. In Kano, this famine came to be known as ke-otonglo⁶⁶. In the local language, otonglo is a ten cent coin. According to one informant, during this famine, people could only buy foodstuffs if they had ten cent coins and that was why the famine was named ke-otonglo⁶⁷. This meant that the five cent coins which were previously being used had lost value during the famine. The present Otonglo market in the outskirts of Kisumu town started during the famine of otonglo.

→ By 1945, a remarkable change had taken place in Kano on the forces of production. The use of the traditional wooden hoe rahaya had been replaced by jembes, and those who were able to hire ox-drawn ploughs used them to plough their farms⁶⁸. Although the fifteen years after the Second World War saw a substantial growth of agriculture in the European settler estates, in Kano as else where in the African areas, agriculture was still underdeveloped⁶⁹. The European settlers improved their agricultural growth as a result of the financial benefits they received from overseas. This was due to the high demand abroad for Kenya's agricultural products.

The need for greater capitalisation of African farmers came towards the end of 1950s⁷⁰. This was as a result of the recommendations by Frank Swynnerton in 1954. But this was

mainly undertaken in Central Province where land consolidation had been effectively introduced and individual farm owners granted security of land tenure. In Kano the local people could not secure capital to improve their agricultural output because land consolidation was still at its initial stage.

Land consolidation

In 1955, the colonial government made a drastic change of the land tenure system in Nyanza by introducing land consolidation system. The aim was to pursue an agrarian ideal of one-family holding. The Central Kavirondo District Annual Report had this to say in support of the introduction of land consolidation:

it is obviously unnecessarily arduous for a man and his family to have to walk miles in one direction on one day and miles on another day. It is also quite impossible to manure land miles from the cattle shed¹¹.

The new approach to agricultural development was contained in the Swynnerton Plan which was supported by the substantial sum of 5 million pounds to effect reforms such as land consolidation¹². Africans were to be allowed to grow cash crops such as coffee and tea which had been the preserve of the Europeans because agriculture was the mainstay of the Kenya economy.

The introduction of land consolidation in Kano greatly affected livestock keeping. Before land consolidation was introduced, one could herd in any open grazing land⁷³. Afterwards, herding became restricted to each person's land and trespassing was not allowed. The former open spaces which were meant for herding were now divided into individual holdings. Consolidation therefore created individualism; that is, there was no longer communal grazing, but individual grazing. Consolidation also limited the number of cattle one could keep depending on the amount of land one had. In addition, land consolidation made necessary the transformation of the traditional system of cultivation from shifting to continuous cultivation⁷⁴. The move from shifting cultivation to continuous cultivation caused a decline of the productivity of land.

In order to motivate the African peasant farmer, the colonial government introduced a title to be competed for by the African peasant farmers 'better farmer'. One field informant who had been an agricultural instructor recalled that whoever was declared a 'better farmer' was given prizes such as ox-drawn plough in appreciation of his good agricultural work⁷⁵.

Livestock Keeping

Just like crop production, livestock keeping in Kano did not escape exploitation during the colonial period. The

people of Kano who were unable to pay taxes in cash had their livestock confiscated by the colonial administration. For instance, if someone failed to pay hut tax which was Shs. 8 in 1920s, his cow would be confiscated and sold. The animal could fetch about Shs. 20. In most cases, the owner of the animal would not be given the balance⁷⁶. The people of Kano bitterly resented this colonial manner of exploitation. This exploitation was also extended to livestock products such as ghee, milk, hides and skins. The Indian traders were the ones who took an active role in the exploitation of ghee trade. The Indian traders were based at various trading centres such as Kibos, Kilgoris, Ahero and Kisumu. The Central Kavirondo District Annual Report of 1931 noted that the Indians were buying ghee cheaply from the local people and thereby making huge profits from the trade⁷⁷.

The other livestock products which were also appropriated were hides and skins. The main trade dealers were the Arabs who acted as the middle men between the local people and the government.

The Arab traders moved from one trading centre to another buying hides and skins from the people of Kano. In the 1930s, the Arabs were paying about Shs. 2 for a hide and sold to the Italian Trading Company in Kisumu at Shs. 10. The company exported hides and skins to countries such as United States, Spain and England⁷⁸. In order to earn more profit in the world market, the colonial administration

enforced shade drying of hides and skins and discouraged sun-drying methods.

Colonial policies on fishing

The British colonial administration introduced new fishing methods and policies which greatly affected the traditional fishing industry in Kano. Although the colonial government introduced the use of the gill-net in Nyanza in about 1900, it was not until about 1930 that the use of gill-net became widespread⁷⁹. It greatly stimulated and altered the nature of fishing in Kano. Up to around 1930, Jo-Kano mainly fished for subsistence needs and also bartered fish for other foodstuffs⁸⁰. But this changed drastically from 1931 up to the time of independence when fishing in Kano became completely commercialized. This was as a result of improved communications, namely, the use of lorries and motor vehicles.

The economic exploitation of the people of Kano by the colonial government was not only limited to agriculture and livestock, but was also inclusive of fish. The Lake Fish Distribution Limited was the sole firm that distributed fish in towns such as Nairobi, Mombasa and in places as far away as Kampala⁸¹. The company was owned by a group of Indian traders. It was based in Kisumu and monopolised the fish trade in the lake region. The fish trade was mainly dominated by the Indians who owned a fleet of fishing boats.

The colonial government introduced new fishing policies which displaced some Africans from the industry which had been their preserve. All those who wanted to fish in the lake were required to obtain a licence⁸².

The commercialization of the fishing industry as from 1930s caused the decline of fish in the lake. The use of small-gauge nets, and taking every catch regardless of the size caused the decline of fish in the lake⁸³.

Commercialization of the fishing industry also made fish become so expensive that few people in Kano could afford to buy it. The main beneficiaries of the commercialization of the fishing industry were the Indian fish traders⁸⁴. This was because they owned a large number of fishing boats and lorries for transporting fish to various towns. But there were also a few of Jo-Kano who owned fishing boats and therefore benefited from the trade.

The table provided on page 83 shows the number of tilapia exported from Kisumu by rail⁸⁵. The figures do not include exports by buses or bicycles.

Table 7

Fish exported from Kisumu by rail

<u>Year</u>	<u>No.</u>
1949	1,828,766
1950	1,974,837
1951	2,200,946
1952	? figure missing
1953	2,342,175

Source : Adapted from figures in Fearn, H, An African Economy, Table 12, p. 220.

The consequences of commodity production on Jo-Kano

The development of commodity production made the colonial government control African peasant agriculture⁸⁶. For example, Africans were not allowed to grow money generating cash crops such as coffee and tea which were regarded as the preserve of European farmers. But after 1950, changes were made to this effect⁸⁷. To make sure that African farmers were completely controlled in the commodity production, the colonial government did not provide the African farmer with qualified personnel or marketing facilities to promote crop production. In Kano, as well as other locations within Central Kavirondo District, qualified agricultural officers were first posted to the district from 1930. The aim was to have improved agricultural production in the African areas⁸⁸. But the agricultural officers were few and could not serve effectively.

The restrictions which the colonial government placed on African peasant farmers together with the low prices of cash crops, forced some Africans to resort to wage labour as an alternative⁸⁹. Such restrictions could not allow peasant farmers to get enough cash from commodity production to meet colonial financial demands. Some of Jo-Kano moved to towns, settler farms and gold mines seeking wage employment. The cash earned was used in paying taxes, school fees, domestic food provision and also in purchasing modern western imported goods such as clothes, knives and other kitchen utensils.

The pre-colonial traditional agricultural economy was transformed into production for export as a result of being incorporated into the capitalistic economy⁹⁰. Even though in pre-colonial Kano the people were producing surplus agricultural products to be bartered for other foodstuffs and domestic animals, this changed during the colonial period. The surplus was now being sold for cash exchange. The main cash crops which Jo-Kano produced included cotton, maize, rice, sugar-cane, sim-sim, sisal and groundnuts. Jo-Kano who were involved in cash crop production and wage labour wanted cash to pay taxes and to buy western imported goods.

The table below shows some of the cash crops which were produced in Central Kavirondo District⁹¹.

Table 8

Sales of produce with 1957 figures for comparison

Crop	Sale 1957	Cash return 1957	Sale 1958	Cash return 1958
Bananas	?	£11,000	?	£13,000
Cassava	-	-	-	-
Cotton	£3,963,470	£102,350	£4,250,231	£86,967
Ground-nuts	2,685 bags	£10,240	2,634 bags	£10,009
Green-grams	270 bags	£922	90 bags	£279
Onions	-	-	-	-
Maize	7,042 bags	£9,827	2,634 bags	£2,746
Sorgum	21 bags	£18	1,045	£888
Wimbi	-	-	-	-
Pulses	4,866 bags	10,267	-	-
Rice	36,325 bags	£57,848	59,107	£99,299
Sim sim	40 bags	£160	9	£33

Source : Annual Report, Agricultural Department, Central

The development of commodity production resulted into land alienation from the Africans. Although land alienation was not as pronounced in Nyanza as in Central Province and Rift Valley, in Kano, land alienation occurred at places such as Kibos. Jo-Kano whose lands were alienated became squatters on European and Asian farms⁹².

The introduction of western agricultural tools such as Jembes and ox-drawn ploughs caused the decline of traditional industries⁹³. The blacksmiths who were previously involved in the manufacture of traditional hoes lost much of their market because the local people were buying newly introduced agricultural tools. The main reasons for this were that the new agricultural tools were of superior quality and cheaper, particularly jembes. But the blacksmiths were not completely put out of business; they took to repairing the new agricultural tools as a new occupation.

In Kano, the introduction of land consolidation caused the decline of livestock keeping⁹⁴. The colonial government urged the local people to keep less cattle in order to have more land for crop production. Agricultural production was therefore being promoted at the expense of livestock keeping. But the main aim of the colonial government in encouraging crop production had exploitative strings

attached to it. Colonial capitalism therefore led to the marginalization of livestock keeping and the expansion of agriculture⁹⁵.

The pre-colonial division of labour which was well defined was altered during the colonial period⁹⁶. As men went out on wage labour, women had to take up their duties; women and children had to assume agricultural production more than they had done before. Even though women had been playing a more active role in agricultural production even before the colonial rule, but as men went on wage labour outside the location, the magnitude of the work fell more on the women.

Hay has observed that in Kowe, men realised that economic security was more guaranteed in wage employment than in crop production. This was a result of the failure of cotton as a high value cash crop⁹⁷. The same applied to the people of Kano. Cotton was the main cash crop that was cultivated in Kano, but its low prices discouraged the people from growing it. This forced the local people to seek wage employment in the government sector, on European farms, or for one to start his own private business. Such businesses included tailoring, running inns, cattle trade and shopkeeping.

In Kano, women just like men were equally involved in commodity production. In addition to domestic food provision, they produced surplus agricultural products which they sold⁹⁸. The cash earned from these agricultural products

met daily domestic financial needs. The women of Kano were at the same time involved in other cash earning activities such as pottery, basketry and making ropes. These were taken to the markets and sold. The cash earned was to supplement cash from the agricultural and livestock products.

Commodity production had direct effects on the social organisation of the local people. For instance, in pre-colonial Kano, there existed a strong social bond among the people. The unmarried young men depended on the elders who provided bridewealth for them. But the development of commodity production meant that the young unmarried men were capable of getting their own cash either from agricultural production or wage labour. The result was that they no longer depended on the elders for the provision of bridewealth. They were capable of raising bridewealth. The result was that they no longer held the elders in high esteem. This weakened the hierarchical social structure of the people⁹⁹.

Rhoda Howard has observed that with the development of exchange and the rise of the market economy, kinship, as the main expression of peasant social organisation loses its actuality¹⁰⁰. Land becomes a matter of business transaction, and kin dependents give way to wage earners. Equally, in Kano, kinship was strong during pre-colonial period and was demonstrated during occasions such as saga¹⁰¹. But by 1945 saga had declined as a result of the

introduction of cash economy¹⁰². Saga now operated on cash basis. No one could avail his/her labour freely without being paid in cash or kind. It is important to point out that this was more pronounced in places near Kisumu and trading centres such as Kibos and Ahero where cash influence had taken root. But in the villages faraway in the interior, saga operated throughout the greater part of the colonial period.

The introduction of commodity production caused a decrease of food production. According to a study by Judith Heyer, 'The origins of Regional Inequalities in Small Holder Agriculture in Kenya, 1920 - 1973'', she found out that despite some gradual increase in marketed output per head from £0.3 to £ 0.7 in 1962 and £1.69 in 1969 in Western Province, the food production had declined¹⁰³. Although figure are not available, the same applied to Kano. The local people participated more in the growing of cash oriented crops such as maize, sugar, rice and even cotton although not in a large scale. There was a decline in the production of the indigenous food products such as millet and sorghum because they were not fetching cash at the local markets. They were mainly produced for domestic consumption.

Conclusion

This chapter has tried to show that the introduction of commodity production in Kano by the colonial government,

made the economy of Jo-Kano partially linked with the world economic system. Initially, the colonial government gave out seeds freely to the local people to encourage them participate in commodity production. To encourage people further, new agricultural implements such as jembes and ox-drawn ploughs were introduced. Emphasis by the colonial government was mainly placed on crops which were suitable for export. In Kano, the chief cash crop which the colonial government tried to promote was cotton. But its production was below the government's expectation because apart from its low prices, its agricultural cycle coincided with the principal food crops.

The incorporation of the new crops into the local economy was influenced by a number of factors. The two major factors were the cash and food values of the crops. For example, white maize which had the two values was easily accepted by the local people. On the other side, cotton which was not a food crop and had low cash value was not a popular crop in Kano. Because of the low prices Jo-Kano received from the cash crops, most of them migrated out of the location to seek wage labour in towns, settler farms and gold-mines. The consequence of this was a drain of labour from the location.

Until 1930, the colonial government did not encourage African indigenous cash crop production. Then the need arose to increase production for export. It was argued that the

need was necessitated by the colonial government's desire to overcome a negative balance of payments. But the government only encouraged production for non-competitive products, and not lucrative cash crops such as coffee and tea which the European farmers were producing . This was to prevent Africans posing any competitive threat to the European producers. The colonial government wanted the European farmers to dominate the export market, while the African farmers to produce for the domestic market.

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CHAPTER 4

MIGRANT LABOUR ,1900-1963

Introduction

Migrant labour refers to a condition in which the worker moved temporarily to the site of production and sold his labour for a period of time, then returned to his homeland for rest or agricultural work before migrating again¹. The worker's family remained in the rural home engaged in crop production and livestock keeping.

This chapter is divided into five sections. First we are going to look at the period from 1900 to 1929. We shall consider changes in the labour pattern during the period, and factors which forced Jo-Kano to leave their villages in search of wage employment. The impact of the First World War on labour will also be discussed. The second section discusses the depression period and its effects on labour. Section three analyses how the outbreak of the Second World War brought about a high demand for labour. Section four looks at the period from 1945 to 1963, when wage labour had become away of life to most of Jo-Kano. Lastly, section five analyses in detail the consequences of migratory labour on the people of Kano.

Changes in labour patterns, 1900 - 1929

The colonial administration operated on the assumption that the European Sector was to provide the initiative for economic growth of the colony, while the African population was to provide a steady flow of cheap labour from the reserves². The main problem that the colonial government faced during the first decade of colonial period was how to make Africans come out of their villages to provide labour. According to one informant, life was generally cheap in the villages so that the people saw no need of going out to provide wage labour as the colonial government demanded³. The first step that the colonial government took in order to make Africans provide wage labour was to introduce taxation⁴. In his study of Economic and Social Change in Kitui, O'Leary also found out that the colonial policy of taxation was linked with the aim of extracting labour from the District⁵.

The British colonial administration introduced the Hut Tax in the East Africa Protectorate in 1900⁶. It was in the same year that Hut Tax was collected for the first time in Kano and other locations in Nyanza⁷. During its initial stages, tax was paid in kind; but later paid in cash, (rupees)⁸. Jo-Kano sold agricultural products such as sesame, maize and sorghum, and livestock products such as hides and skins to pay taxes. By introducing taxation, the colonial government aimed at achieving two objectives; to

raise revenue and to coerce labour⁹.

According to one informant, when taxation was first introduced, it was 2 rupees per year, then it was raised to 6 rupees. In 1918, it was increased to 8 rupees¹⁰. The burden of paying taxes was so heavy on the people of Kano that selling livestock and agricultural products alone could not meet tax expenses. The only option that was open to some of Jo-Kano was to seek wage labour to supplement the expenses¹¹.

The coming of white settlers to Kenya from the first decade of the 20th century necessitated increased demand for labour¹². Initially, Chiefs and Headmen were empowered under the village Headmen Ordinance of 1902 to use forced labour for the construction and maintainance of roads, bridges and government stations¹³. But with Settlement, Chiefs and Headmen were looked upon by the Settlers as the key both to labour recruitment and discipline. This had to change as from 1906 with emergence of professional labour recruiters¹⁴. These labour recruiters went into the villages and obtained African labourers, by either bullying, or bribing Chiefs. In 1903, apart from domestic servants, all labourers were governed by the Servants section of the Native Porters and Labour Regulations of 1902. According to these regulations, a labourer was to be hired on a contract of more than two months, and the employer to return him to the place of engagement at the expiry of the contract.

One informant recalled that Jo-Kano who were hired on

compulsory labour usually went to work on European and Indian maize plantations at Muhoroni, Chemelil and Koru¹⁵. In trying to justify the colonial government's demand for compulsory labour, the Governor Belfield, had this to say:

it follows also that Africans must and should be forced to work if necessary, but solely for the benefit of the Settlers, of course, but for their own good as well, since it would teach them the virtues of honest toil and the superiority of the European methods¹⁶.

Thus the extraction of labour from the African reserves, was to develop the European sector.

The years between 1906 and 1909 witnessed labour crises in the Protectorate. Stichter, in her Migrant Labour in Kenya, has argued that coercive measures and taxation were adequate to force out an sufficient labour supply from African reserves¹⁷. Low wages discouraged Africans who were able to sale agricultural products to pay taxes not to go on wage labour. Apart from these, the other factor which contributed to the labour crises was the problem of desertion¹⁸. The issue of desertion was attributed to a number of related working conditions. According to John Ainsworth, the one time Provincial Commissioner of Nyanza, most of the Kavirondo deserted work due to lack of proper food, bad accommodation, and uncongenial work¹⁹. But oral information obtained from the field shows that two main factors contributed to desertion. Some people deserted once

they earned sufficient cash to purchase a particular item (a target); others deserted to return to the villages because life was expensive in towns²⁰.

In the pre-war years, Kenya's main labour supply came from the most densely populated Districts. These areas included Lower Kikuyu, Central and North Kavirondo Districts. John Ainsworth observed that those societies which supplied the most produce also supplied the most labour²¹. But the other less-populous Districts such as Nyeri, Meru, Kamba, Giriama and South Kavirondo had not entered the labour market in large numbers because they were able to expand sales of agricultural and livestock produce to meet their daily obligations. In his Economic Change in Kasipul and Kabondo, Ndege has observed that the fertility of land and availability of livestock made possible the payment of taxes by means other than wage labour²².

In order to solve the labour crises, the colonial government increased taxation to force more Africans to seek wage labour, and labour recruiters were encouraged to go into the reserves to extract more labour²³. These measures eased the labour crises and as a result, the years 1909 to 1911 were free of labour shortage. However, towards the end of the pre-war decade, particularly 1912, the problem of labour shortage re-appeared. Clayton and Savage have identifies six main factors as the cause of this labour

shortage; the extension of the railway line to Thika and Magadi; the Mombasa harbour construction work; the Mombasa piped water delivery system was in progress; and near Nairobi, Muthaiga was being built. Finally the outbreak of a very severe epidemic of cerebro-spinal fever in Kikuyuland greatly reduced the labour supply from the area²⁴. The labour shortage led to the appointment of the 1912 - 1913 Native Labour Commission, chaired by Judge J. W. Barth. The Barth Commission Report found six major reasons as the causes of the labour shortage; the wealth of certain 'tribes' arising from their large quantity of land and stock and from the profit of trade. The poor conditions of work, poor diet, bad housing and ill-treatment²⁵.

The Commission's report suggested four recommendations; first, District Officers be given specific instructions to ensure the maximum possible number of men came out to work for European but they rejected any form of direct government recruiting as amounting to compulsion. Second, the Commission judged the African population could afford to pay a higher tax but that the imposition of a higher rate purely to coerce labour would not be justifiable, though increased taxation could be justified to pay for a system of identification and the other recommendations of the Commission. Third, for purposes of identifying deserters, the commission recommended that a document was to be signed bearing a man's personal particulars. Lastly, the Commission

recommended the abolition of the recruiters and that properly supervised labour camps should be built to which District Officers might direct work seekers²⁶.

Before the outbreak of the First World War, quite a large number of Africans had worked for both the private sector and the government. The majority of these were only working for a short period (target labour) then returning to their homes. The government employed about 7,000. The private sector had the largest figure, approximately 110,000 at peak seasons²⁷. Before 1923, the people of Kano and Nyakach Locations were specifically meant to provide labourers for the European farmers of Songhor and Koru²⁸. This meant that the people from the two locations up to 1923 were not granted the option of choosing their employers.

The pre-war labour shortages led to the enactment of the 1912 Native Authority Ordinance which legalised compulsory labour²⁹. This ordinance vested powers on District Officers and chiefs to compel people offer their labour for public works as well as for private sector. One informant recalled:

chiefs gave orders to headmen to recruit labour from villages. It was done on rotational basis; when it reached the turn of a particular home, then young men from that home had to go and offer their labour³⁰.

Between 1912 and 1922, the colonial government enacted

five Native Authority Ordinances³¹. Under these Ordinances, provisions were made for the use of compulsory labour in the African reserves. These regulations empowered headmen to require six days' work each quarter from all able-bodied men in their sub-locations. They were to carry out compulsory labour on water courses, soil conservation, road and bridge construction. The use of compulsory labour was unpopular with the people of Kano because it sometimes interfered with the economic activities of the local people; for instance, crop production³².

The outbreak of the First World War, 1914 -1918, created high demand for labour from the African reserves. The people of Nyanza participated in the war more than any other province in Kenya³³. Carrier Corps was estimated at between 92,00 to 165,000, a half was recruited from Nyanza. Africans were recruited into the Carrier Corps, civilian and some were employed on the European Settler farms. During the war period, about 3,000 men were needed per month to serve in the war³⁴. The increasing high demand for labour during the war led to the enactment of the Native Followers Recruitment Ordinance in September, 1915. This ordinance empowered District Commissioners to instruct chiefs and headmen to recruit men under thirty five years³⁵.

The European Settlers faced serious labour shortage during the outbreak of the First World War³⁶. In order to get greater labour supply from the reserves, the Native

Regulation Ordinance was passed in 1915. This Ordinance had been recommended by the Native Labour Commission, 1912 - 1913, (pp. ¹³⁶⁻¹³⁷). The ordinance brought into force the use of the infamous pass Kipande. The ordinance became a law in 1920.

The introduction of kipande in 1920 strictly controlled the labour system³⁷. The kipande system aimed at achieving three main objectives; it was designed as an instrument to keep track of labour supply from the African locations; it was also aimed at tracing those who deserted work. Finally, it restricted workers freedom to change employment. This was because the salary one earned was recorded on his kipande; the same salary was to be offered by the next employer. The kipande system put an African worker at a disadvantage because he was not in a position to bargain for a higher wage at his next place of employment. The system was exploitative since it promoted the standardization of low wages to be earned by the Africans.

The hatred which the Africans showed towards the pass system made the colonial government pass ordinance in 1920 and 1921 which outlawed vagrancy³⁸. According to the ordinances, the police were empowered to arrest any African found in a town without any means of support. According to informants, there were some people who went to towns to seek employment but failed to secure employment; such people were repatriated to their locations³⁹. They recalled that quite a

number of Jo-Kano who were declared vagrants were repatriated. Some vagrants who were against repatriation hid from the police. Such people went to live with their friends or relatives in the outskirts of towns or farms once they realised they were to be repatriated. There were cases in which some vagrants who were repatriated acquired new passes under a different name and returned to towns.

When the colonial government realised that Africans were not willing to go out on voluntary labour, it issued the labour circular of 1919. According to this circular, the colonial government took upon itself the responsibility of requisition of compulsory labour from African reserves⁴⁰. This circular compelled Africans to undertake public works, and also to be engaged pottering for a maximum of sixty days in a year. The District Commissioners were to give instructions to Chiefs and headmen to supply specified number (quotas) of labourers. According to one informant, when the District Commissioner was touring the locations, the Chief was to provide porters to accompany the District Commissioner's entourage⁴¹.

Apart from migrant labour that most European Settlers relied on, the other form of labour they equally depended on in the earlier years was squatter labour⁴². Squatting was a practice which involved Europeans in the Highlands giving Africans the right to settle on their (European) land in exchange for a specified number of paid labour for the

European land owners⁴³. European Settlers had experimented with squatting as early as 1903. But squatting was granted legal status in 1918 with the Resident Natives Ordinance⁴⁴. The labour crises of 1907 and 1910 made the European Settlers suggest to the colonial government that the use of squatting would avert the labour crises. In order to achieve these effectively, the Settlers demanded that land available for African farming be limited. This resulted in the development of squatting. From as early as 1911, Settler farms and corporate plantations relied heavily on squatter labour⁴⁵.

The Settlers' argument for the use of squatter labour was that squatters offered the most certain form of labour. The Settlers argued that an African squatting for one to three years tended to become detached from the tribal life⁴⁶. But in reality, the European Settlers preferred squatting because it offered them readily available cheap labour.

At first, squatters were being paid in labour, but later many demanded to be paid in cash. But this made the squatters be a threat to Settler production. To avoid this competition, the colonial government passed the Resident Native Ordinance in 1918 which required future payments to be made in kind and not in cash. Zeleza has rightly observed that this created serfdom relationship between European Settlers and African squatters⁴⁷.

By 1919, some of the people of Kano had been reduced to

squatters on the European and Indian farms at Muhoroni, Songhor and Koru. According to Kisumu District Annual Report, 1919;

the Muhoroni, Songhor and Koru farms depend on squatters for a lot of their labour but employ about 500 on regular contracts and these are obtained from Kano location which has been reserved for supply of labour for District farms⁴⁸.

By 1919, some of the people of Kano had not only been affected by the problem of squatting, the locations of Kano and Nyakach had also been designated to provide labour for the European farmers of Songhor and Koru. (pp ¹²⁴⁻¹²⁵ 134-135). This therefore meant that by 1920s, the people of Kano had already been well established in the wage labour system. Even though the problem of squatting was more pronounced in the Rift Valley and Central Provinces, squatters were also in a large number in Central Kavirondo District. The Kisumu-Londiani Annual Report, 1928 observed:

accurate figures are not available, as has been explained before, but from the returns received it appears that about a half the labour employed in the District is squatter labour. Roughly about 2,000 men are employed in Kisumu, and about 10,000 outside - of the population recorded not including casual labour for harvesting. And these (sic) about 5,000 appear to be squatters and with their families possibly account for

about 20,000 of the native population⁴⁹.

The squatter system operated on an unequal exploitation, argues Van Zwanenberg⁵⁰. He notes that the squatters wanted land which the settlers could provide because they were unable to farm all their own land. The settlers on the other hand wanted labour which the squatters with all their family members provided cheaply. The period after the First World war up to about 1930, saw an increasing demand for labour. This high demand for labour was brought about by the economic expansion resulting from increased European and Asian immigration⁵¹. The other factors which accentuated the high demand for labour during the post-war era, were the Ex-soldiers' Settlement Scheme and the extension of the railway lines from Nakuru through the Uasin-Gishu to Uganda; further extension of the Thika -Nyeri line was also begun. Later, further extensions were undertaken with the railway line to Nanyuki, Solai and Thomson's Falls. All these expansions caused a high demand for labourers. The colonial government therefore resorted to renewed encouragement and compulsion. Taxes were equally increased to force Africans to seek wage labour. It was during the post-war (The First World War)labour shortages that the Registration Ordinance of 1920 and 1921 were enacted and also the use of resident labour system(squatting) was encouraged.

Although the colonial government legislation required

that only able-bodied men over the age of sixteen were to perform compulsory labour, this was not the case in practice. During the greater part of 1920s, the Archdeacon Owen bitterly complained to the colonial administration that old men, women and children were forced to perform compulsory labour in Central Kavirondo District⁵². According to Archdeacon Owen, the able-bodied men who were supposed to carry out compulsory labour were not available in the villages since they were out on wage labour. One informant recalled that it was Archdeacon Owen who strongly opposed the use of compulsory labour and condemned the mistreatment of Africans by the colonial administration.⁵³

Clayton and Savage have observed that real labour shortage and the prospect of obtaining cheap labour contributed to the increasing use of juveniles and children in the 1920s⁵⁴. They further note that the use of women in wage labour was equally in the increase. The labour shortage throughout the 1920s, caused an influx of African labourers into Kenya from neighbouring countries such as Uganda and Tanganyika. At the same time, Kenyan men, from Nyanza went to Uganda seeking wage labour on sugar estates, building industries or for the railway.⁵⁵ Thus by the 1920s, the labour market had expanded and became increasingly mobile. Some of Jo-Kano were already seeking wage employment in Uganda and Tanganyika.⁵⁶ This was because Africans were already becoming familiar with the labour market. At the

same time, by the 1920s, Jo-Kano were no longer restricted to providing labour within the farms in the district, but were now free to seek wage labour outside the district. Jo-Kano found it easy to seek wage labour in Uganda and Tanganyika because some of their relatives or friends were employed in those countries by the East African Railways and Harbours. Secondly, in the two countries, it was not mandatory that one was to have a kipande as was the case in Kenya.

In explaining how the people of Nyanza had become familiar with the labour market by the 1920s, John Riddoch, one of the labour recruiters in Nyanza, wrote to the Provincial Commissioner in Kisumu in 1925:

Some three years ago we perceived that natives from Nyanza Province had learnt to distinguish between different localities and conditions of work between different employers. This meant that they wanted to work for employers whom they liked or of whom they had heard good reports, and it became increasingly difficult to persuade them to work in locations and with employers disliked by or unknown to them⁵⁷.

The other noticeable change in the labour market in the 1920s, was the decline of labour recruiters. This was due to the fact that a large number of Africans were seeking wage labour independently⁵⁸. As economic pressures to seek wage labour increased, the labour recruiters had little role to

play. Before the 1920s, the main economic factor which forced the people of Kano to seek wage labour was taxation. But the 1920s witnessed the development of other economic demands which led some of Jo-Kano to seek wage labour. These included the desire for Western goods, for instance clothes, blankets and utensils. Some young unmarried men went on wage labour in order to get cash for dowry. The problem of low prices of agricultural produce also made Jo-Kano show preference to wage labour⁵⁹.

Economic Depression and Labour Unrest, 1930 - 1939

Two events took place between 1929 and 1930 which greatly affected the market forces. First was the depression of the 1930s which grew worse after the American stock market crashed in 1929. The depression caused constraints worldwide. Second was the discovery of gold in Nyanza which created employment for thousands of people from the province.

In the 1920s, before the depression, the problem for the settlers had been to get enough labourers from the African reserves. But from 1929, the reverse was true. The decline of export crops forced the settlers to disemploy labour since they were not able to pay labourers⁶⁰. The onset of the depression caused serious economic constraints to the Africans who had become dependent on wage labour. The number of Africans in employment declined drastically from

160,435 in 1927 to 132,000 in 1932. Clayton and Savage have observed that even though by 1933 the number in employment had begun to rise to 141,000 and thereafter annual increases brought the total up to a monthly average of 182,964 in 1938, this could not cope up with the increased population. They note that throughout the decade supply exceeded demand⁶¹.

As thousands of African employees were declared redundant, they returned to the villages. They embarked on crop production and as Stichter has rightly observed, actual production of most crops increased sharply with the return of labour⁶². The problem that now developed was how to sell what could easily be produced. For those Africans who remained in employment, the problem was even worse. The depression made wages be slashed by 50 per cent from the 1929 levels⁶³. Thus declining wages, unemployment and the price decline of some agricultural commodities were the main features of the depression. This resulted in the increase of small bands of labour seekers in towns which accentuated vagrancy and burglary. A large number of of Jo-Kano who were declared vagrants were repatriated (pp. ^{132 - 133}).

The second event which greatly altered the labour market in Nyanza, and indeed Kano, was the discovery of gold in Kakamega in 1931 which ushered in the beginning of the gold-mining industry in Nyanza⁶⁴. But the first period of gold-mining industry in Nyanza began from 1934. The main

gold-mining areas in Nyanza Province included Macalder Mines in South Nyanza District, Seme, Asembo, Uyoma and Sakwa all in Central Nyanza District and Kakamega in North Kavirondo District.

The discovery of gold in the above areas provided job opportunities to some of Jo-Kano. About 13,000 people in Nyanza Province were employed in the various mining industry within the province⁶⁵. We can therefore say that while some parts of the country were facing unemployment during the 1930s as a result of the depression, the people of Nyanza were lucky to secure new opportunities in the gold-mines. Although statistics are not available on the number of Jo-Kano who were employed in the gold-mines, many who were previously employed on European farms at Koru, Muhoroni and Songhor moved to the gold-mines where wages were higher by three shillings⁶⁶. This is illustrated in the table below.

Table 9

Table of wages earned in the province

Nature of work	No. of Employed		Average Wages		Total wages 1939
	Adults	Juveniles	Adults	Juveniles	
Mining	8,870	1,700	12/=	8/=	72,000
Tea	7,000	5,250	10/=	6/=	60,000
Sisal	1,100	-	9/=	-	5,900
Sugar	2,400	700	10/=	5/=	16,500
Mixed farming	5,300	-	9/=	0	28,000
Business and Industry	1,370	-	16/=	-	13,800
Domestic	980	140	22/=	7/=	12,900
Total non-Government	27,810	7,790			210,000

Source: Central Nyanza District Annual Report, DC/CN. 1/1/3, 1939, p.41.

From the table above, we can see that by 1939 the mining sector, the business industry and the domestic sector were paying the highest wages in Nyanza Province. The sisal and mixed farming where most of Jo-Kano were employed, were paying the lowest wages. This explains why the European Settlers at Koru, Songhor and Muhoroni had to raise their wages to attract many of their employees who were deserting to seek employment at the various gold-mines.⁶⁷

The 1930s was not affected by labour shortage in some

parts of Kenya which had been a common feature from the beginning of colonial period.⁶⁸ . The two contributory factors which made labour shortage not to reappear were the increasing population pressure on limited reserves and the second was the increasing economic competition in the reserves which made wage labour necessary for the very poor and for most others.⁶⁹ All these factors brought to an end to labour shortage from the 1930s to the end of colonial rule. The 1927 Labour Commission was the last ever to consider the issue of labour problem.

The Second World War, 1939 - 1945

The outbreak of the Second World War created new demands for the supply of labour; Africans, as during the First World War, were compelled to serve both in the military as well as the private sector. Even though compulsory service was only applied to the Europeans at the outbreak of the war, in 1940, the Defence Regulations gave the Governor power to order Provincial Commissioners to conscript Africans to serve in the war in countries such as Ceylon and Burma.⁷⁰ Those who were not conscripted were involved in compulsory labour for the construction of roads and bridges.⁷¹

Between 1939 and 1941, the total registered workers and squatters rose to 232,904 from 183,068. By 1945, the figure was 259,211.⁷² The large number of Africans recruited into

the war, and large number employed in the private sector during the war, dratically affected the economic output in the African reserves. In 1943, as the war was in progress, there was failure of maize crop which caused the greatest economic crisis of the war. According to the Chief Native Commissioner, the failure of maize was brought about by the large number of Africans who were withdrawn from the reserves during the war; the percentages of men who were away from home in Nyanza and Kikuyuland rose to 50 and 55 per cent⁷³. The Chief Native Commissioner was, therefore, right to attribute the low production of maize in 1943 to the large number of African men withdrawn from the reserves. But the East African Production and Supply Council together with the Labour Department, alleged that the reduction was due to lack of rains in 1943.

In her analysis of Economic Change in Kowe, Hay has rightly observed that by 1945, labour had become a way of life for Jo-Kowe. She attributed this to the effects of famine, depression, gold-mining (in Seme) and to the conscription during the war.⁷⁴ The same can also be said to have been taking place to Jo-Kano. One informant remembers:

by the 1940s, many of Jo-Kano who were working in towns and on European farms were no longer working for short contracts (target) as used to be the case previously, but they were now working for long contracts and only returning home when on leave. This was because

jobs which used to be in plenty were becoming scarce because job seekers were many⁷⁵.

From the above, we can learn that by the 1940s, most of Jo-Kano who previously went out to work for a short period of three to four months then deserted, had already changed their habits. This type of labour in which one went to work for a short period and then deserted, was commonly referred as target labour because it was believed that a migrant would leave home to earn a fixed amount and then return home.⁷⁶

Structural Changes in the Labour Force 1945 - 1963

The post-war period up to the time of independence was characterised by a number of structural changes in the labour force.⁷⁷ From the post-war period to the mid-1950s, there was a significant expansion of the economy, particularly in the private sector. This caused an increasing number of Africans to leave their locations in search of employment. The Labour Department Report of 1947 noted:

in fact, neither secondary industry, nor agriculture outside the Native Land Units could absorb a very much larger proportion of African labour than they do today.⁷⁸

The table on the next page illustrated the increase in employment from 1947 to 1952.

Table 10

Employment in certain trade and total employment figures

Year	Agriculture	Government	Domestic	Building and Construction
1947	106,551	81,261	24,184	9,920
1948	110,754	85,779	22,896	11,163
1949	189,168	92,657	38,762	16,171
1950	201,941	95,054	38,528	16,287
1951	203,158	93,361	34,575	12,696
1952	202,688	101,568	39,914	15,582

Hereafter described as others including domestic services

Table 11

1947	281,857
1948	296,454
1949	394,917
1950	420,783
1951	412,416
1952	434,539

Source: Clayton, A., and Savage, D.C. p. 337

The expansion of the economy from the post-war period until the mid-1950s has been attributed to the wartime price supports the government extended to the settlers in agricultural production.⁷⁹ The post-war price increases also

made possible the expansion of settler production and the fuller use of land. During the war, the government gave more assistance to the settlers than the Africans in order to meet their agricultural demands. The assistance was given in the form of credit and provision of compulsory labour.

The post-war expansion boom which created more job opportunities caused a rural -urban imbalance as more and more Africans left the reserves seeking employment in towns and on settlers' farms. This resulted in an increasing number of unemployed Africans in towns. Stichter has observed that by 1941, of perhaps 50,000 Africans in Nairobi, at least two to three thousand or 4-6 percent were estimated to be unemployed, excluding dependants, petty traders and workers on their own account.⁸⁰ As the number of unemployed Africans in towns increased, colonial government passed the 1949 Unemployed Persons Ordinance. This ordinance gave the police powers to arrest any unemployed African found in town. Such a person was to be repatriated to the reserves or he was to be found employment, but the programme could not be put in practice.⁸¹ According to one informant, those who were found roaming in towns without employment were usually repatriated to their homes.⁸² Although figures are not available, many of Jo-Kano were repatriated from various towns.

The period between 1945 to the time of independence witnessed one major breakdown in the migrant labour pattern.

Most workers who were employed in the various towns and farms, spent most of their lives in employment and only returned home during holidays or on retirement.⁸³ As we have already seen, by the 1940s, most of Jo-Kano were now going out to work for long contrasts and not short contracts (target labour). We saw that this shift was brought about by scarcity of jobs and also other related economic pressures.

Apart from the problem of unemployment which started from the 1940s, changes were equally taking place in the structures of industries which now required skilled manpower.⁸⁴ The establishment of many International Corporations in the country as early as the 1930s demanded skilled personnel, for instance, accountants and factory semi-skilled workers rather than large numbers of unskilled workers. After 1945 a number of foreign owned industries which were established in Kenya included Bamburi Portland Cement in 1952, Allsopps Breweries (Kenya Breweries) in 1951, East African Oxygen and Acetylene Company in 1948 and Kenya Overseas Ltd. (Pharmaceuticals) in 1947. Others which had been established in the 1930s were Shell, Texaco, and Bata Shoe.⁸⁵ These industries needed qualified manpower, but since few Africans had been trained to acquire the needed skills, it meant that there was persistent shortage of qualified manpower.

The 1950s witnessed the abolition of the use of compulsory labour. Van Zwanenberg has observed that a number

of history books have assumed that forced labour ended in 1921 with Churchill's rejection of Northey's proposed labour legislation. He notes that compulsory labour was widely practised up to 1939.⁸⁶ But according to the Central Kavirondo District Annual Report, 1958, the use of compulsory labour continued in the District until 1957 when it was finally dropped because of political pressure.⁸⁷

The period between 1955 and 1964 was characterised by a significant decrease in employment.⁸⁸ While output expansion and Gross Domestic Product rose by 6 per cent a year, employment in the core or 'Modern' Sector of the economy decreased, from 615,000 in 1955 to 547,300 in 1964.⁸⁹ Employment did not keep pace with population growth at an estimated 3 per cent per annum. In private industry and commerce, the decline in employment fell from 191,600 in 1955 to 168,100 in 1963. The fall in employment was in stark contrast to the growth of employment in this sector between 1948 and 1955. Stichter has attributed this decline partly to the uncertain political climate just prior to independence.

Stichter observes further that the employment decline of the 1950s re-emerged after independence. This was because employment failed to grow in accordance with output, despite the pre-independence optimistic projections. The increased rural-urban migration accentuated urban unemployment and under-employment in the informal sector. The number of male

job seekers increased by 50 per cent between 1955 and 1962.⁹⁰

The Exploitation of the African Worker

It goes without saying that throughout the colonial period, Africans received inadequate wages. One informant recalled that Africans earned inadequate salaries that sometimes one was forced to get foodstuffs from his relatives in the reserves to subsidise his income.⁹¹

The colonial administration and the European settlers subscribed to two racially influenced arguments in justifying the inadequate wages offered to Africans.⁹² The first argument suggested that the financial reward the African workers received on working on a settler's farm was not as significant as the moral benefits he gained from living in a better atmosphere than present in an African reserve. The second argument maintained that since Africans were not used to cash, they only needed it for paying taxes.

Rodney has identified three factors which made the colonial government and the White settlers pay Africans low wages.⁹³ Firstly, the colonial state had a monopoly of political power. This enabled the government to decide on wages to pay Africans. Secondly, the African working class was small, very dispersed and very unstable owing to the migratory practices. Lastly, European capitalists in Africa believed that the black man was inferior and therefore deserved low wages.

The low wages which were given to the African urban workers made them unable to purchase some basic commodities. The 1954 Carpenter Committee Report found out that the urban minimum wage provided only a minimum of living essentials for the single man. The low wages could not enable one to support his family. The Report argued that the low output and inefficiency of the African workers, long cited by the colonial administration as the reason for paying African low wages, were actually due to the low wages themselves, which affected the acquisition of skills.⁹⁴ The low wages which the African workers were earning made it impossible for workers in towns and on settlers' farms to live with their families. A wife could visit her husband in a town for only some few days or a week, then she returned home. The low wages made some people of Kano unable to live with their families in towns and on settlers' farms.⁹⁵

The Effects of Migratory Wage Labour on Jo-Kano

① ⇒ Migratory wage labour contributed to the decline of lineage hierarchical authority which was highly respected in pre-colonial Kano.⁹⁶ As more and more of the young men of Kano went out on wage labour, their pre-colonial dependence on elders for the provision of the bridewealth declined. They were now capable of raising their own bridewealth from the wages earned. Although statistics is lacking, the ever increasing migratory wage labour from Kano to the European

~~farmers~~ ^{farms} as well as public sector drained Kano of its able-bodied labour force (p. ¹³⁷). As a large number of some of Jo-Kano went out on migratory wage labour, the people left behind could not effectively engage themselves in commodity production because they were mainly women, children and the aged. The greater burden of commodity production was now left to the women. This affected production due to the shortage of labour force. Children were unable to help in commodity production because they were in schools.⁹⁷

① ⇒ In Kano, migratory wage labour caused changes in sexual division of labour. As men went out on migratory wage labour, women were now forced by circumstances to perform duties which were formerly done by men.⁹⁸ Such duties included herding, clearing gardens and other related home duties. This meant that women now shouldered domestic burden than ever before.

Hay has rightly observed that significant changes occurred in the social concepts of agriculture. She notes that the proliferation of opportunities for wage labour, coupled with the failure of cotton as the chief cash crop, produced the conviction among Jo-Kowe that wage labour was the only secure financial source.⁹⁹ She notes that by 1945, a large number of Jo-Kowe believed that the only real economic security lay in the wage labour. Agricultural production had been marginal to migratory wage labour. In Kano, like Kowe,

the main cash crop was cotton, but its low prices made many of Jo-Kano reluctant to grow it. Some Jo-Kano had therefore to depend on migratory wage labour as the main financial source.¹⁰⁰ We have already seen (p.107) that by the 1920s, quite a large number of men from Central Kavirondo District had been absorbed on wage labour; old men, women and children were the only ones available to carry out the much hated compulsory labour.

③ ⇒ Statistics are not available for Kano, but suffice to note that migratory wage labour caused the spread of venereal diseases in the African communities by Africans who had gone out on migratory wage labour. According to the Hon. A. C. Hollis, C. M. G. Secretary for Native Affairs, he noted:

a large number of Kavirondo had contracted syphilis and other venereal diseases when at work, and the Chiefs are averse to the young men leaving their reserves and inflicting the women also on their return.¹⁰¹

The poor working conditions which the African labourers were subjected to, caused poor health and death among the African labourers. In 1911 and 1912, among plantation workers at Mombasa, 140 per 1000 were seriously ill and had never been treated.¹⁰² Many of the workers were living on a poor diet, under poor housing and sanitary conditions. The death of Africans at their places of work, coupled with the large number of Africans killed during the First World War, caused

a remarkable population decline of Africans.¹⁰³ The first thirty years of the British colonial rule in Kenya witnessed a significant population decline of Africans. Between 1902 and 1903, the total population of the colony (population of Africans) was estimated at 4 million, but by 1912, the population had fallen to below 2.5 million. It was not until 1923 - 1924 that population increase started taking place. This was attributed to the relative social stability of the post-war period, vis-a-vis pre-war period.¹⁰⁴

④ ⇒ Although economic differentiation existed among Jo-Kano in pre-colonial Kano, wealth was assessed by the large number of livestock one had, good harvest and many wives.¹⁰⁵ But the development of migratory wage labour introduced cash as a new factor for determining wealth. Those who went out on wage labour were now being seen as a special group of people. They were being referred to as Jopango. Some of these people were generally respected because they were living a better life compared to those who were only involved in crop production and livestock keeping at home. Many of them managed to put up decent homes and also to educate their children.

⑤ ⇒ Cliffe has observed that migratory wage labour brought about changes in relations between men and women.¹⁰⁶ The absence of men in villages, meant that women and children were the only ones who now stayed at home. Women therefore took the social responsibility of running the homes. In

pre-colonial Kano, the man was the one who made sure that all was going on well in the home. The development of migratory wage labour shifted this responsibility to the women.¹⁰⁷ This social change took place because it was the woman who was at home all the time.

① => Wage labour caused the gradual decline of the once valued traditional communal work, saga.¹⁰⁸ As Jo-Kano attached more importance to cash as an exchange value, it meant that there was no longer free labour, but labour was now to be exchanged with cash. What should be noted is that saga is still in existence, but at a marginal level. It can still be organized, but not as popular as it was in pre-colonial period.

② => Migratory wage labour affected the development of agricultural production. The large number of able-bodied men who went on wage labour drained the location of its labour force. The 1955 Central Nyanza District Annual Report noted:
mention must once more be made on the chronic shortage of adult male manpower in the district. This grave shortage jeopardises not only the future development and intensification of agricultural production in the district, but also the maintainance of the present fertility of the district. So long as this district is treated as a reservoir of able-bodied males for works throughout the East African territories it is feared that agricultural production will deteriorate than develop.¹⁰⁹

⇒ In 1957, the District Commissioner for Central Nyanza, Mr. Entee, P. D. had the following to report:

the chronic lack of male labour in the district due to the fact that so many go out to work, has proved to be a major problem, as all betterment schemes are immediately faced with the problem of man-power. It is fair to say that the ordinary average inhabitant of Central Nyanza does not regard farming of the land as anything more than modest support for his wife and family. He therefore goes out to find work. This attitude is one of the main stumbling blocks to instituting a better system of agriculture.¹¹⁰

Conclusion

In conclusion, we have seen that the colonial government introduced taxation not only to raise revenue, but also to force Africans to go out on wage labour. During its initial stages, taxes were paid in kind, but later in cash. Jo-Kano sold agricultural products such as sesame, maize and sorghum as well as livestock products such as hides and skins to pay taxes. Some of Jo-Kano who found it difficult to meet the expenses from agricultural and livestock products turned to wage labour. Taxation was not the only factor which made Jo-Kano to seek wage labour. From the 1920s, the other factor which led Jo-Kano to seek wage labour included; the urge to acquire Western imported goods such as clothes, shoes and domestic utensils. The unmarried young men went on wage labour to get cash for dowry.

The influx of White Settlers in Kenya necessitated increased demand for labour. Initially, Chiefs and headmen recruited labour from the reserves for the construction and maintenance of roads, bridges and government stations. But the coming of Settlers saw the emergence of professional labour recruiters from 1906. The labour regulations of 1902 stipulated that one was to be hired on a contract of more than two months (locally referred to as ogirimiti). We saw that the two locations of Nyakach and Kano up to 1923 were specifically reserved to supply labour to the European and

Indian farms at Koru, Songhor and Muhoroni.

The years between 1906 and 1909 witnessed a labour crisis in the Protectorate. It was argued that coercive measures and taxation alone were not sufficient to force out adequate labour from the reserves. The people of Kano as well as other communities were able to sell agricultural products to meet colonial expenses. This made some Africans not avail themselves for wage labour. In order to force more Africans to provide wage labour, the colonial government increased taxation, and more professional labour recruiters were encouraged to go into the reserves to extract more labour. The pre-war (First World War) labour crises led to the appointment of the 1912 - 13 Native Labour Commission. We saw that the Commission identified six main reasons of the causes of the labour shortage and gave its recommendations. The pre-war labour shortages forced the colonial government to enact the 1912 Native Authority Ordinance which legalised compulsory labour. The people of Kano strongly detested the policy of compulsory labour because it interfered with their economic activities such as crop production.

The period between 1945 to 1963 saw drastic changes in the labour structure. By 1945, many of Jo-Kano who were on wage labour were on long-term contracts, and only coming home during holidays. Previously, many of the wage earners from Kano used to go out on short contracts (target labour),

but the 1940s, the shortage of jobs made wage labourers abandon this practice. This period was characterised by rural urban migration as more and more wage seekers went to urban centres, towns and Settlers' farms in search of employment.

Finally, we have looked at the effects of migratory wage labour on Jo-Kano. We saw among other effects that migratory wage labour contributed to the decline of lineage hierarchical order. The extraction of able-bodied men from Kano drained the area of its man-power. The preference that Jo-Kano showed for wage labour over agricultural production, made agriculture become marginal. It was argued that wage labour was more profitable than crop production; that was why many of Jo-Kano preferred it. We also saw that migratory wage labour altered sexual division of labour.

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CHAPTER 5

DEVELOPMENT IN MARKETING AND TRADE

Introduction

Traditional markets existed in pre-colonial Kano (Chap. 2, pp. ⁴⁹⁻⁵²). These markets were managed by a council of elders who made sure that law and order were maintained. The council of elders received levy from the market attendants. The mode of exchange was bartering of goods. Trade was organised at communal and inter-communal levels. The establishment of British colonial rule in Kano ushered in changes in the marketing system. Cash became the new mode of exchange. The development of colonial trading centres made some of Jo-Kano turn to entrepreneurship as a means of getting cash to meet domestic provision.

This chapter examines some aspects of colonial policy towards trade and the consequences of this policy on Jo-Kano. It is divided into four sections. First, it considers the establishment of the transport system which was essential for the colonial government in facilitating extraction of produce from the area. Secondly, an analysis will be carried out on some of the changes the colonial government introduced in relation to the establishment of

were not successful. Lastly, the consequences of marketing and entrepreneurship on Jo-Kano will be considered.

The Development of Transport System

Before the introduction of western methods of transport such as railway, motor vehicles and motor boats, the chief means of transport among the people of Kano was portage¹. Apart from portage, the other method of transport used by the people of Kano was canoes. These were very popular in pre-colonial Kano for fishing. They were also useful for transport and trade (p.47 .). The use of donkeys for transporting goods is a recent introduction in Kano. Donkeys were introduced in Kano towards the end of the 19th century by the Swahili and Arab traders from the coast². The Arab and Swahili traders used to move with their donkeys from village to village bartering beads and clothes for hides and skins from Jo-Kano.

Rodney has observed that colonial governments did not establish the communication network (transport system) to make Africans visit their friends, or to facilitate the internal trade of African communities. He notes that roads and railways were built to enable the colonial government to appropriate raw materials³. This explains why all the colonial roads and railways in Africa led to the coast from where the produce was exported to European countries. In

Kenya for example, the principal effect of the construction of the Uganda Railway was to link East Africa with the international economy⁴.

Once the railway line reached Kisumu in 1901, the colonial state embarked on the construction of roads in the various African areas to link them with the railway line. The construction of these roads allowed the colonial government to transport African produce from the interior to the coast for export.

By 1909, noticeable changes in the transport system had begun taking place in Kano. Although the principal means of transport was still portage, new transport systems such as bullock carts and waggons were already in use⁵. But the use of these new forms of transport were not widespread. Dhows which were also new forms of transport were carrying goods between Kisumu and Uganda ports. They were also carrying local produce from the piers in South Kavirondo to Kisumu. The colonial administrators hired Africans as porters. They were usually engaged by the month for which they were paid Rs. 4/= to Rs. 5/= and were provided with food. Those who were hired for a single journey were paid two cents a mile without food⁶.

In Kano as elsewhere in other African locations, whenever the District Commissioner or District Officer was on a tour of the locations, the chief of the location was required to provide porters to the District Commissioner or

the District Officer⁷. One informant recalled that whenever the District Commissioner was touring the locations collecting taxes, chiefs recruited able-bodied men as porters for the District Commissioner⁸.

The table below shows the type of transport systems which were available in Kisumu District as at December 31st, 1909.

Table 12 II

Number of bullock carts, waggons, donkeys and dhows available for transport in Kisumu District by 1909.

	Government	Private
No. of bullock carts	25	140
No. of bullock waggons	Nil	1
No. of transport bullocks	63	352
No. of transport donkeys		

Source: Kisumu District Quarterly Report ending 31st December, 1909, p. 35.

Ndege observed that the colonial administration established a transport system for political and military control as well as for the extraction of local resources⁹. While these factors applied to Kano, other factors such as the necessity to get access to schools, hospitals and chiefs' camps also contributed to the establishment of the transport system (roads) in Kano. Chiefs and headmen in

collaboration with the colonial administrators forced men and women to construct roads leading to schools and Health Centres. This type of work was done without any payment¹⁰.

While it is important to note that socio-economic and political factors influenced the establishment of a transport network in Kano, the primary reason was economic. Areas which the colonial government realised had no economic potentiality were neglected as far as the development of the transport system was concerned. Exceptions were found in places leading to schools and hospitals. Butterman has noted that the first requirement in colonial accumulation was the establishment of an institutional infrastructure within the local societies through which the transfer of surplus would take place. She argues that the construction of the Uganda railway for instance, made Kenya become the exporter of raw materials and importer of manufactured goods¹¹. For effective extraction of produce in Kano, the colonial government embarked on the construction of roads. These roads were finally connected to the main road(s) which linked Kano to the railway line at Kisumu.

The map on the next page shows the main Kisumu - Muhoroni road, feeder roads linking various trading centres and also the railway line¹².

In 1910, the government passed the Roads in Reserves Ordinances. According to these Ordinances the men of a locality could be called upon at any time to provide labour in the construction of roads. They were to work for not more than six days per quarter¹³. One informant recalled that not only men were involved in the construction of roads that passed through their location, but also women¹⁴. Once such roads were constructed by the local people, then it was the duty of the chiefs and headmen to maintain them by using the same local labour¹⁵.

As early as 1911, a road was constructed from Kisumu to Nyakach traversing Kano Plains¹⁶. In Nyakach, it branched off in two directions, one to the upper crossing of the Sondu, joining the Kisii road and the other crossed river . Sondu(Miriu) and then went downstream to South Kavirondo District. The colonial government constructed this road specifically to connect South Kavirondo District with Central Kavirondo (Kisumu) District. South Kavirondo was at the same time linked to Kisumu by lake transport. A pier had been constructed at Kendu in 1909 and Homa-Bay in 1910¹⁷. Boats were plying between the two piers and the port at Kisumu.

The construction work of a motor road from Kibos to Nyando (Ahero) via Rabuor(Chief Amimo's Camp) was completed in 1921¹⁸. The construction of this road meant that the

Indian traders who settled at Kibos were now able to reach the centre of Kano. Kibos was an important trading centre because a number of Indians and Europeans had settled there. This road became vital for Jo-Kano who wanted to take cotton to the Kibos ginnery. Two factors made Kibos a popular trading centre; the presence of Indian settlers and the presence of cotton ginneries. By 1920, there was only one motor lorry in Kisumu District. The major means of transport were by carts and waggons. But for Jo-Kano, the major means of transport was portage.

Indians had 343 carts. This made them dominate trade in the district¹⁹. The large number of carts the Indians owned were used for transporting produce from the African reserves to be sold at the various trading centres, towns and some produce were exported.

The building of the suspension bridge over the Nyando river near Ahero in 1924 improved road communication across Kano²⁰. The construction work on this bridge was freely provided by Jo-Kano under the prompting of their chief; but the colonial administration did the supervisory work. The construction of this bridge gave the colonial administrators and Indian traders access to the locations across the Nyando river such as Nyakach which had been difficult to reach when the river flooded. The local traders who wanted to cross to Ahero Market also benefitted from the construction of the bridge. It therefore encouraged trade at Ahero Market.

Before the bridge was constructed, those who wanted to cross the river had to pay the canoe owners to be transported across the river.

The Kisumu - Muhoroni road which was part of the main road to Nairobi was completed in 1925²¹. It was constructed to get access to the trading centres such as Chemelil, Koru, Songhor and Muhoroni. The colonial administrators realised the importance of this road because it passed through the most productive area in Kano. The area was mostly occupied by the European and Indian settlers who were growing maize for export. A road connecting Ahero and Kibigori was constructed by 1938. A new road was constructed connecting Ahero and Muhoroni in 1939. The construction work on this road was undertaken by the pioneer corps²².

By 1940, the colonial government had constructed a good network of roads throughout Kano. But then, the major means of transport system that was plying these roads were carts owned by the Indian traders. For the African traders, the main form of transportation was portage. Very few Africans used donkeys and carts for transporting goods. Few Africans had also managed to buy bicycles which had been in use in the province since the First World War²³.

Two features come out clearly on the construction of roads in Kano; one is that these roads linked trading centres and markets. Secondly, the roads passed through the productive agricultural areas. For instance, the potential

agricultural area in Kano namely the sugar-belt was criss-crossed by roads.

Changes in Marketing Systems

Traditional markets existed in pre-colonial Kano (see Chap. 2). Some of the present modern markets in Kano, for instance, Rabuor, were built at the site of pre-colonial markets. The establishment of new markets and trading centres by the colonial administration was therefore not a new phenomenon in Kano and other locations. In order to stimulate production of saleable crops in the reserves, the colonial administration established markets and trading centres²⁴. The colonial administrators encouraged trade by every available means. For instance, whenever a new market was started, the local people were informed during a baraza. At the same time, the local people were instructed during such baraza about the type of produce to take to such markets. To promote the development of new markets and trading centres, roads were constructed leading to such markets and trading centres.

Before the colonial administrators set up markets in Kano, the Indian traders who settled in trading centres such as Kisumu, Kibos and Kibigori used to move from home to home hawking the imported goods which they bartered for agricultural goods. The Asian traders at the same time had some African agents in the villages who collected produce

from the local people and took to the Asian traders at the trading centres. The Arab traders were known specifically for trading in hides and skins. The main produce the Asian traders bought from Jo-Kano were sim-sim, maize, sorghum and ghee. Jo-Kano in turn received items such as utensils, clothes, hoes and knives from the Asian traders²⁵.

During the early decades of colonial rule, Asian traders played a significant role in the creation of new markets in the African reserves²⁶. In places where there were Indian settlements, markets developed because of the trade relationships between the Asians and Africans. In Kano, market centres such as Kibos and Kibigori developed because of the presence of the Indian traders who settled there²⁷. Before these markets were gazetted by the colonial government, Jo-Kano used to take produce to sell to the Indians who had settled there. Apart from the Indian traders who were involved in the creation of markets in Kano, chiefs were also involved in the same task in their respective locations.

The 1920s witnessed a significant change in the mode of trade. Cash transactions replaced the barter system. This point has been noted by Hay in her study of Kowe²⁸. In Kano, after the First World War, cash was the main medium of exchange²⁹. The use of cash had become well spread in Kano. Jo-Kano needed cash to pay taxes, school fees and also to purchase western imported goods. The circulation of money

increased in the African reserves after the First World War because of the war returnees who had been paid benefits. Another factor which caused the increasing circulation of money in the villages was that Africans employed in the private and public sectors were being paid in cash. The developments of markets in several remote places in Kano also necessitated the widespread use of cash in Kano after the First World War. Those who wanted to purchase items from a shop were required to use cash in buying such items. The selling of agricultural and animal produce also caused the spread of cash in the villages.

The development of the use of cash as a medium of exchange changed the activity of the market places and trading centres such as Kibos, Kibigori and Chemelil. Indian traders set up shops from which Jo-Kano and other neighbouring communities bought various items such as salt, sugar, paraffin, clothes and blankets³⁰. The table on the next page shows the number and names of markets and trading centres in Kano as per 1949.

Table 2 13 12

List of Markets by Location (1949)

<u>East Kano</u>	<u>West Kano</u>
1. Awasi	1. Chiga
2. Awach	2. Kibos
3. Ahero	3. Kowino
4. Chemelil	4. Manyata
5. Kibigori	5. Nanga
6. Kango	6. Nyangande
7. Mariwa	7. Nduru
8. Masogo	8. Nyamasaria
9. Miwani	9. Nyamware
10. Onjiko	10. Ogenya
11. Ramula	11. Rabuor
	12. Obumba
	13. Masawa
	14. Ofuny
	15. Odhore
	16. Kaluore
	17. Nyandiwa
	18. Obange
	19. Omungi
	20. Kodongo

Source: Central Kavirondo District DC/KSM 1/32/1, 1949, p. 619.

Table 13^b 14Trading centers and grading of shops

<u>Trading centres</u>	<u>Grading of shops</u>			
	Permanent	Semi-Permanent	Temporary	Detached
Nyamasaria Market	10	5	18	23
Rabuor Market	45	37	6	20
Nyangande Market	4	5	9	17
Kibos Market	7	6	7	12
Nduru Market	-	3	4	7

Source: Central Ka ironondo District, DC/KSM 1/32/1,1949,pp.1

- 37.

Table 14-15

List of Markets as per 1949

<u>East Kano</u>	<u>Category</u>	<u>Meeting days</u>
Ahero	A	Daily
Awasi	A	Thursday
Masogo	A	Friday
Ramula	B	Saturday
Chemelil	C	Saturday

West Kano

Rabuor	A	Daily
Kibos	A	Monday
Nyamasaria	B	Thursday
Nyangande	B	Daily

Source: Central Kavirondo District, DC/KSM 1/32/1,1949,

p.606 A.

Before 1930 the participation of Jo-Kano in trade and the people of Nyanza at large was very limited. According to Fearn, most Africans during the pre-1930 period were mainly agents of trade for the Asian traders³¹. He notes that some

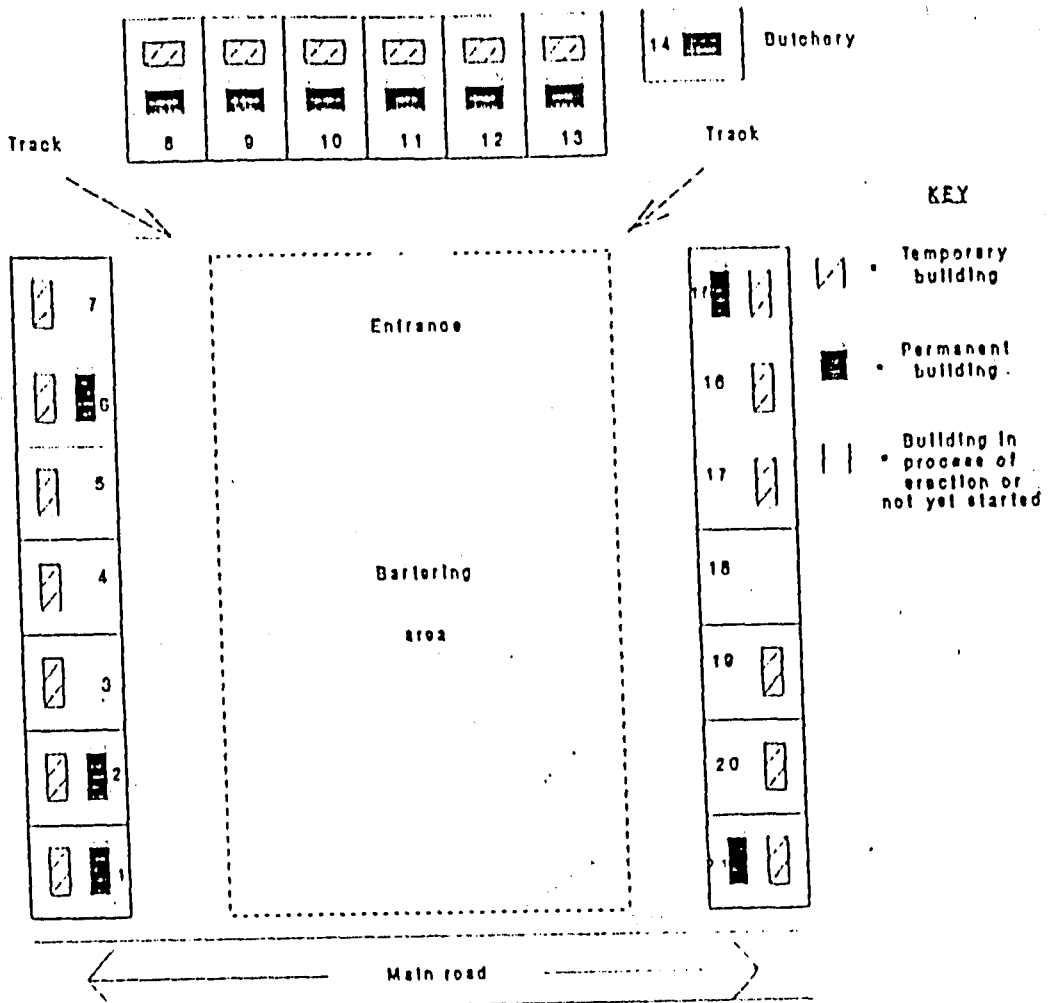
of these African agents gained experience which later encouraged them to be involved in trade from the 1930s onwards after the markets were brought under the control of the Local Native Councils. Fearn identifies factors such as cattle keeping and polygamy which were highly valued in Nyanza in the pre-1930. These factors made money have a limited value. Fearn's observation concurs with Hay's analysis of economic change in Kowe. Hay notes that it was not until 1945 that Jo-Kowe began to be actively involved in wage labour.³² Information obtained from the field agrees with Fearn's and Hay's observations. Jo-Kano started taking active role in trade, as indeed in wage labour in the post 1930s. This was because of the increasing financial demands such as paying school fees, taxes and buying western imported goods.

The 1930s were characterised by a number of related changes in the marketing patterns. For instance, the Native Produce Marketing Ordinance of 1935 provided for the creation of fixed markets in place and in time³³. The ordinance prohibited the sale of specified agricultural produce outside the fixed market centres. This ordinance also prohibited the sale and slaughter of livestock at the unspecified market centres. In order to streamline the selling and buying of produce, a rule was enacted in 1937 which made a provision for the use of units of weights and the measures to be used in the sale of produce.

Ndege has observed that the 1937 ordinance and rules, aimed at establishing complete control over the markets by the colonial government to ascertain that the produce African peasants sold at markets was of high quality fit for export. By introducing units of weights and measures, the colonial government wanted to eliminate swindling by some traders.

In Kano, the fixing of market days was not a new practice because it had been in existence from the pre-colonial period. Before the 1930s, the markets were under the control of chiefs and elders. But from the mid-thirties, the control of these markets was taken over by the African District Councils or Local Native Councils. By 1949, there were 31 markets in Kano³⁵. Some of these markets were operating daily while others on specific market days.

Table ¹⁵~~15~~ on the next page shows the plan of markets during the colonial period.



Source Fern, H., P. 178

The period from the 1930s saw remarkable events which caused changes in trade in Central Kavirondo District and Nyanza at large. Reference has been made to the general slump which occurred in the district following the outbreak of the depression. The outbreak of the depression caused the price of commodities to decline by almost half³⁶. A further factor which handicapped trade in the thirties was the locust invasion which occurred between 1930 and 1932. This resulted in low output of agricultural crops. The table on page 79 Chapter Three, shows how the purchasing power of the Africans in the Central Kavirondo District was lowered by

the depression.

Although the outbreak of the depression affected trade in Kano and Central Kavirondo District at large, the discovery of gold in the thirties acted as a relief to the strained trade in the province. It was noted in Chapter Three that about 13,000 people within Nyanza got employment in the gold-mines. The money earned from the mines boosted trade in the province³⁷.

Before 1930, trade in the African reserve was dominated by the Asians. But from the 1930s, African traders began to compete effectively with Asian traders, particularly in the small trading centres and markets where Asians had established shops³⁸. This can be attributed to several factors; for instance, many Africans who had acquired trading skills began to open shops at the various market places. In Kano, Jo-Kano shopkeepers opened shops at such market places as Ahero, Awasi, Rabuor and Nyangande³⁹. Jo-Kano who owned shops bought goods from the wholesale shops belonging to Indians in Kisumu to stock their retail shops.

The increased number of shops at the market places from the 1930s contributed to the expansion of trade in Kano. The increased expansion of trade from the 1930s can be attributed to the fact that cash was increasingly in circulation. The availability of cash meant that the local people were able to buy imported goods such as sugar,

cooking fat, clothes, paraffin, matches and salt which they had developed a taste for⁴⁰. Trade developed further in Kano as a large number of shops were started in remote areas such as Nduru to make goods be within the reach of many people. Those who were unable to put up shop buildings sold goods at home. On market days, such people went to sell their goods at the bartering area of the market. Those who wanted to evade market fees at the bartering area usually sold goods behind the shops.

In Kano, the period after the 1930s witnessed further expansion in trade because of the rapid increase in the number of markets. It has been noted that by 1949, there were 31 markets and trading centres in Kano. The large number of markets in Kano boosted trading activities because many traders were able to set up trade business at the new market places. At the same time, those who had agricultural and livestock produce to sell took advantage of the existing trading centres and markets. The other contributory factor in the expansion of trade after the 1930s was the construction of roads which passed through Kano linking various trading centres and markets. The establishment of these roads meant that the accessibility to market places by the traders was made easier.

Although figures are not available, it is important to note that the introduction of bicycles in Kano as elsewhere in the district greatly improved the trading system. Many

Africans were able to purchase bicycles for trade purposes. Bicycles were introduced into the province before the First World War⁴¹. In a letter to the Provincial Commissioner, Nyanza, the District Commissioner, Central Kavirondo District reported that bicycles were increasingly in high demand in the district. Many traders in Kano bought bicycles which they used in their trading ventures. Those who owned shops in remote areas found bicycles essential for going to big towns such as Kisumu and other trading centres to purchase shop items⁴². Even today, bicycles are handy for small time traders.

The role of women in trade

Kongstad and Monsted have observed that men tend to dominate among the group of bussiness people in the shops of trading centres. However, in the open marketor bartering area, women make up approximately 90 per cent of the traders, and thus dominate the food distribution⁴³. Field data gathered in Kano corroborates this information. A number of informants asserted that women dominated and still dominate trade in the open market because women are the ones who buy food for the family⁴⁴. Even in pre-colonial Kano, it was a woman's duty to provide food for her children⁴⁵. This practice has not changed much although at present it is not strictly a woman who must buy food, but the majority of food purchasers are still women.

The trade in a particular item being sold at the bartering area was in most cases done by one who was involved in its production. For instance, the selling of produce such as livestock, metal ware, tobacco and twine was dominated almost entirely by men because they were the producers of these items. The cattle trade was also meant for men because it was men who were directly involved in the rearing of livestock. Livestock belonged to the head of the family⁴⁶. Women on the other hand were involved in the selling of items such as pots and agricultural produce.

Women in Kano were more involved in agricultural production than men⁴⁷. Women therefore controlled the agricultural produce and could exchange the produce in trade to meet family expenses such as school fees, clothing and food provision. This would explain why in Kano women dominated trade at the bartering area.

The Development of Entrepreneurship

Entrepreneurship has been defined as a practical creativeness, which combines resources and opportunities in new ways. It is not necessarily invention. Entrepreneurship turns invention into profit, but need not originate it. The originality may lie in the techniques of production, the market served, the labour used, the organisation of the firm and, the raw materials. Entrepreneurship may exploit what was previously neglected or wasted resources from

established, less productive uses⁴⁸. In trying to analyse the origin of entrepreneurship in Kenya, Marris and Somerset have observed that between the two World Wars, African shopkeepers had begun to establish business in the rural markets. The businesses which they operated included butcheries and tearooms which served market goers. But as time went by, grass shelters which housed such business were built in brick or stone and business extended from market days throughout the week⁴⁹.

Various producers existed in pre-colonial Kano and therefore, the development of entrepreneurship was not a new economic activity for Jo-Kano. The major difference was that in pre-colonial Kano, trade was barter centred, while in colonial Kano, money became the new mode of exchange. The development of entrepreneurship in Kano during the colonial period was necessitated by the desire to get cash to meet obligations and needs⁵⁰. Some of Jo-Kano who were unable to secure wage employment turned to entrepreneurship as a source of income. Jo-Kano were involved in various kinds of entrepreneurship such as tailoring, shopkeeping, cattle trade, carpentry and bicycle repairs. Other activities included basket and mat making, pottery, and the running of posho-mills and running eating rooms⁵¹.

According to one informant, the above petty trade was mainly done by people who had some elementary education⁵². He observed that all that was necessary for a cattle trader was

knowledge of how to count money. This information may not be wholly true because trade such as fish trade, and the running of eating rooms did not necessarily demand that one had to be literate to manage them. But some types of business, for instance shop-keeping required one to be literate to run them effectively. This is because a shopkeeper should know wholesale and retail prices of items in order not to be swindled by the sellers and buyers.

Fearn in his article, 'The problem of the African Traders' has identified three problems which kept African traders from making a profit⁵³. He identifies factors such as absence of daily bartering market, stocking shop with items such as kerosene, matches and cigarettes that have a low profit margin, and finally the lack of capital with which to start off business after spending a substantial amount in putting up a permanent shop building. Field research has revealed that lack of trade skills, excessive generosity and exploitation by the Indian wholesalers contributed a great deal to the failure of Jo-Kano traders. Field informants attributed the failure of Jo-Kano traders to various factors:

... A good number of shopkeepers were not able to keep their shops in operation because they constantly gave out goods on credit. These items were mainly given to relatives who eventually never paid⁵⁴.

Some shopkeepers after making good profit suddenly

changed their life styles. They were now eating expensive meals and also giving out goods on credit⁵⁵.

People had not acquired the knowledge about western mode of trade which was profit oriented. This was coupled with the problem of stock taking and returning the correct balance to a buyer. At the same time, Indian traders who owned wholesale shops used to swindle African retail traders who went to purchase items from them. The Indian wholesalers sold items to the African shopkeepers at exorbitant prices which made African shopkeepers incur heavy losses⁵⁶.

In most shops, the items stocked earned only marginal returns. These items included soap, salt, paraffin, matches and sugar. Some shop owners after realising that the shop was making substantial profit married more wives. In most cases, the younger wife was the one now empowered to sell at the shop. Most of them gave out items to their relatives free of charge⁵⁷.

Some entrepreneurs failed in their business ventures as a result of giving out items on credit, through lack of knowledge about trade, through polygamy and exploitation by the Indians who owned wholesale shops. It should also be noted that most would be entrepreneurs did not take trade as a full time occupation⁵⁸. Shopkeeping for instance remained subsidiary to agricultural production. It was a common practice to find a shop closed because the owner was away working on his farm. Most shops were opened after lunch

hours when the owners had completed garden work.

The consequences of the developments in marketing and entrepreneurship on Jo-Kano

The increasing demand for foodstuffs for domestic consumption and export contributed to the development of markets and entrepreneurship. The migrant wage labourers needed foodstuffs such as maize and beans for consumption. Cash crops such as cotton, coffee and maize were exported mainly to European countries. The increasing demands to meet both the internal and external needs necessitated the growth of markets and entrepreneurship.

The growth of markets forced the colonial government to improve communication system in the area. A number of roads were constructed in Kano which linked various trading centres and markets. The construction of these roads allowed the colonial government and Indian traders access to the trading centres. The African traders who visited these trading centres also found these roads useful either on foot or bicycles.

The development of various markets in Kano promoted trade within Kano and with the neighbouring communities⁵⁹. Big markets such as Ahero and Awasi were not only visited by Jo-Kano alone, but also by the people from the neighbouring locations such as Nyakach, Kisumu and Kajulu. Some of the

markets operated daily, while others operated on particular market days.

The development of numerous markets and trading centres accentuated the growth of entrepreneurship. At any market, however remote it was, one was to find entrepreneurs operating at such market places. The most common type of entrepreneurs who were likely to be found at such places included shopkeepers, tailors, tea room owners and hawkers.

Although economic differences existed among Jo-Kano even during pre-colonial period, the development of entrepreneurship accentuated such economic differences. According to some informants, some entrepreneurs such as shopkeepers, posho-millers and cattle traders were so successful in their businesses that they were the envy of the community⁶⁰. These economic differences could be noticed in the manner in which they built descent homes and the high standard of living they were enjoying.

Some of Jo-Kano entrepreneurs went to towns like Nakuru, Nairobi and Mombasa and settled there as tailors, shoe repairers and fish traders. Others went to neighbouring countries, for instance Uganda and Tanzania⁶¹. Those who went to set up business in towns and neighbouring countries were in most cases invited by their friends or relatives who had set up businesses in such places.

Conclusion

From the foregoing sections, the following conclusions can be arrived at; while the general contention is true that roads which were constructed in the African reserves mainly benefitted the colonial masters, it must also be accepted that Africans also benefitted. In Kano, we saw that the construction of roads which linked various trading centres boosted trade within Kano and with the neighbouring locations. While it is a fact that a negligible number of ofJo-Kano bought vehicles to ply these roads, those who had bicycles found these roads useful.

In order for the colonial government to stimulate production for saleable crops in the African locations through development of trade, the colonial government established trading centres and markets which now became centres of collection of African produce. These trading centres and markets were established to exploit produce from the reserves. But it is also true that the development of trading centres and markets benefitted Africans. They benefitted in three mainways; Africans were able to sell produce at such markets to meet financial obligations and needs, the local people were able also to purchase foodstuffs and agricultural implements at such centres and lastly, those who took to entrepreneurship found trading centres and markets as their centre of operation.

The role of women in trade in Kano during the colonial period did not change much from what it had been in pre-colonial period. In pre-colonial Kano, women dominated and controlled food crop production. This role persisted in the colonial period particularly in relation to trade in the bartering area. Men on the other hand dominated trade at the shops. This was because shopkeeping demanded opening the shop early and closing in the night. A woman would find such a role difficult because shops were in most cases far from homes and also a woman was to provide food for the family. On the other hand, trade in the bartering area only required that once a woman had sold her produce or purchased foodstuff, she would then return home.

The development of entrepreneurship by the Africans during the colonial period aimed at meeting financial obligations and needs which were introduced by the colonial government. In Kano, entrepreneurship was not a new economic activity. In pre-colonial Kano, petty trade existed, the only difference was that it was barter oriented, but in colonial Kano, cash became a new mode of exchange. There was a lot of continuity in items which were being sold, for instance, pots, agricultural produce and livestock products.

END NOTES

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61. Oral interview: Walter Odeny.

CHAPTER 6

CONCLUSION

The Patterns of Economic Change in Kano, 1850 - 1963

The purpose of this study was to analyse the patterns of economic change in Kano between 1850 and 1963. The pre-colonial period was included in the study to provide a background of analyses for economic change during colonial period. The integration of the pre-colonial economy with the colonial economy was used as the theoretical framework. The study has shown that economic change was a continuous process both during the pre-colonial and colonial period. The changes which occurred during the pre-colonial period were brought about by environmental factors such as, population increase, interaction with the neighbouring communities and the occurrence of natural calamities such as cattle - epidemics and drought. Economic change during colonial period was accentuated by the interaction between the colonial mode of production and the pre-colonial mode of production.

The major economic change which took place in Kano by the middle of the 19th century was the pre-dominance of crop production over cattle - keeping. This was brought about by

two developments; first, the high increase in population required a greater food supply than livestock products alone could meet. Throughout the remainder of the 19th century, Jo-Kano steadily became more involved in crop production to meet the food requirements of their ever growing population. Secondly, cattle - epidemics such as rinderpest which occasionally occurred in the area made Jo-Kano take crop production more seriously than cattle - keeping. They could no longer depend on livestock keeping as their primary economic activity since there were times when such cattle - epidemics decimated livestock in the area.

Towards the end of the 19th century, agriculture had emerged as the primary economic activity of Jo-Kano. But a number of changes affected production. Trade relations and inter-marriage between Jo-Kano and neighbouring communities led to the introduction of new crops in Kano. For example, Jo-Kano acquired a new type of sweet potato, nyar-Lango from the Kipsigis. From the Banyore, Jo-Kano acquired banana plants.

Changes were also taking place in agricultural technology. The traditional agricultural tool which Jo-Kano used up to the end of the 19th century was rahaya. But this was gradually replaced by an imported iron-hoe, nyar-imbo which was acquired through trade relations between Jo-Kano and Jo-Yimbo. Jo-Kano showed a preference for nyar-imbo because it was more efficient for cultivation than rahaya.

Nyar-imbo greatly improved agricultural production in Kano.

The establishment of the British colonial rule in Kano brought further economic change. The colonial government aimed at integrating the pre-colonial economy of Jo-Kano into the world economy. To achieve this, the colonial government introduced a number of changes in commodity production. For instance, the colonial government introduced new crops in Kano. A number of considerations influenced Jo-Kano attitudes towards these newly introduced crops. The local people had to consider whether the new crop was edible and the labour involved in the production. Jo-Kano readily accepted the cultivation of white maize because maize is edible, ripens quickly and requires little labour. On the other hand, they were at first reluctant to incorporate rice into their economy because it is labour intensive.

The other change in crop production introduced by the colonial government was in agricultural technology. New agricultural tools such as jembes and ox-drawn ploughs were introduced in Kano by the colonial government. The aim of introducing these new agricultural tools was to increase production for export. The incorporation of these new tools was determined by various factors. For example, Jo-Kano considered the utility and the cost value of these new tools before accepting them. Jo-Kano showed preference for the jembe because it was a more efficient tool than nyar-imbo. Its cost value was also relatively low which meant

that many local farmers could afford it. Although ox-drawn plough was far superior to the jembe for cultivation, its high cost allowed only a small percentage of people to buy it.

During the early decades of the colonial rule in Kano, the colonial administrators tried to promote agricultural production in the location to provide financial source for the local people. Jo-Kano needed cash to pay taxes, school fees and to buy imported goods. But the low prices of cash crops discouraged farmers from cash crop production. This consequently forced some of Jo-Kano to seek wage labour as an alternative financial source. This caused a gradual shift of labour from the rural sector to the wage labour sector. This shift, which was taking place from the 1920s, made agriculture marginal to wage labour for a majority of young unmarried men of Kano.

One major change in migratory labour breakdown that comes out clearly from the 1920s was that most of Jo-Kano were now on long term employment. The decade marked the gradual decline of target labour which characterized the early decades of the colonial rule. The shift was brought about by three main factors; the ever increasing number of African job seekers which made jobs become scarce, the local people needed cash to meet their financial needs and obligations, lastly, Jo-Kano could no longer depend on agricultural production as a financial source because of the

low prices.

In Kano, three groups of people played a significant role as agents of change. They included jopango, josomo and jokristo. These three groups of people had embraced various aspects of western culture. Some of them introduced new seed crops in Kano which they had acquired from the various places they had been to. They were also able to purchase newly introduced agricultural tools such as jembes and ox-drawn ploughs. The presence of such agricultural tools and new seed crops in particular homes influenced neighbouring people and friends to acquire them. The other category of local people who had an impact in bringing about change were the entrepreneurs. These people established shops in remote market places from where the local people were able to purchase new agricultural tools, seed crops and other imported goods.

Remarkable changes took place in marketing systems during the colonial period. For example, in pre-colonial Kano, the mode of trade was barter. But after the First World War, cash transactions replaced barter trade in most parts of Kano. The factor which brought about this change was the increasing circulation of money in Kano. The large number of Jo-Kano who were employed earned cash. The farmers also earned cash from their produce.

Although the colonial administration initially created markets and trading centers to transfer produce from the

African areas to the mother country, they soon acquired a different development. These markets and trading centers accentuated trade among Jo-Kano and also with the neighbouring locations. During the first decades of colonial rule, trade had been dominated by the Indians and Arabs under colonial administrative protection. But from the 1930s, a large number of Jo-Kano started dominating trade at the markets and trading centres. Apart from the trading skills the local people started acquiring from the 1930s, the dominance in trade was made possible once the Local Native Councils started issuing trading licences in 1930.

Jo-Kano suffered major dislocations during the colonial rule. The issue of taxation made a number of them move to towns to seek wage labour. But once employed, they faced the problem of underpayment. This forced a majority of wage earners to get subsidies in a form of flour, beans and maize from their rural homes. Some of Jo-Kano who were involved in agricultural production faced the problem of low prices of agricultural produce, while those who opened shops were being exploited by the Indian wholesalers. There was the problem of land alienation in some parts of Kano. Those whose lands were alienated became squatters on Asian and European farms.

Although the integration of the colonial mode of production and the indigenous mode of production accentuated economic changes in Kano, it is important to point out that

some pre-colonial modes of production persisted throughout the colonial period and up to today are still being practised. For instance, the people of Kano continued to cultivate some of the pre-colonial crops such as sorghum, sweet potatoes and pumpkins. The other element of the pre-colonial mode of production which also resisted change is the practice of inter-cropping. The pre-colonial communal work, saga has also persisted to certain extent.

Economic change that occurred in Kano during the colonial period did not benefit the people of Kano. Although agricultural production increased during the colonial period, most of the produce was sold by the people of Kano to meet colonial obligations and needs such as paying taxes, school fees and buying imported goods. The people of Kano who were engaged on wage labour also did not benefit because of the low wages. This was the essence of the colonial economy that aimed at appropriating the resources and labour of the colonised societies. Thus explains the underdevelopment of such societies.

This thesis has shown that economic change has been a continuous process during the pre-colonial and colonial period. An attempt has been made to show the pattern of change from the pre-colonial through colonial period. Kano was a small area in a larger colonial set up. Similar studies could also be carried out in other areas for the purpose of comparison.

GLOSSARY

1. Abach - a leech which attack cattle.
2. Adita - a small basket like used for serving kuon.
3. Agoro - a variety of insect which is edible.
4. Aguata - a calabash- plural(aguetini)
5. Alayo - green gram.
6. Alika - a variety of green vegetable.
7. Alote - vegetables.
8. Ajur - rinderpest.
9. Andiwo - brown sorghum.
10. Apamo - rinderpest. ✓
11. Apoth - a kind of of green vegetable.(corchorus ✓
olitorius)
12. Atipa - a variety of green vegetable ✓
(Asystasia schimperia).
13. Atonga - a large basket.
14. Awayo - a kind of green vegetable.(rhus vulgaris)
15. Baraza - a public meeting.
16. Bo - a kind of green vegetable.(phaseolus multiflorus)
17. Chiri(chwiri) - the long rains season. ✓
18. Dak - a large pot for storing grain.
19. Dala - a homestead. ✓
20. Dapi - a pot for storing drinking water.
21. Dek - a variety of green vegetable ✓
(gynandropis gynandra).

22. Gogo - a large communal papyrus used for fishing.
23. Jadak - a tenant. ✓
24. Jago-dwar - a leader of a hunting group. ✓
25. Jembe - Western imported iron hoe. ✓
26. Jochan - the poor.
27. Jo-Kristo - christian converts.
28. Jomoko - the rich.
29. Jonanga - those who went out on wage labour ✓
(town dweller).
30. Jopango - same as Jonanga. ✓
31. Josomo - those who acquired Western education.
32. Kamongo - (mudfish)
33. Kasiri - traditional iron hoe which had narrow blade
than nyar-imbo. ✓
34. Ke-nyangweso - the famine which occurred in 1931. It was
named after newly hatched hoppers (nyangweso) which
invaded most parts of Luo-land.
35. Ke-ongere - the famine of yellow maize which occurred
during 1918 - 19. Ongere means yellow maize.
36. Ke- opande - same name of the famine of Ke-ongere.
37. Ke-Otonglo - the famine which occurred in 1942. ✓
38. Ke-otuoma - the other name for Ke-nyangweso.
39. Keyo - harvesting.
40. Kipande - identification card. ✓
41. Kuon - a type of stiff porridge made by mixing corn meal
with boiling water. ✓

42. Minuku - a variety of pumpkin.
43. Mlango - a Headman.
44. Mondo - a special garden for the head of the homestead, or products from that garden. ✓
45. Mothno - a kind of grass.(cynodon dactylon)
46. Mumi - catfish.
47. Ndara - a road.
48. Ndere - a variety of maize or finger millet.
49. Ndinya - pleuro-pneumonia.
50. Ndusue - a cattle epidemics.
51. Ngwen - a type of edible insect.
52. Nyabande - (or nyalando) a kind of sorghum.
53. Nyamula (ramula) - a kind of speckled maize.
54. Nyakundi - a kind of finger millet.
55. Nyapusi - a kind of finger millet also call dongo.
56. Nyar-imbo - traditional iron hoe which was acquired from the Jo-Yimbo.
57. Nyar-Lango - a variety of potato which was acquired from the Kipsigis(Locally known as Jo-Lango).
58. Nyar-Komolo - a variety of potato.
59. Nyim - sesame.
60. Nyuka - gruel.
61. Obirwa - a variety of pumpkin.
62. Ochuti - red sorghum.
63. Odheru - an open large basket like a tray.

64. Odhuya - a variety of finger millet.
65. Odielo - a variety of wild green vegetable.
(*aneilema pedunculosum*)
66. Ododo - a variety of wild green vegetable. (*amaranthus*)
67. Oduma - speckled maize.
68. Ohigla - a small pot for cooking fish or meat.
69. Ogirimiti - a corrupted word for agreement.
70. Okebe - a variety of pumpkin.
71. Olando - a variety of mushroom. (*tinnea aethiopica*)
72. Olieko - a variety of wild green vegetable.
73. Omito - a variety of sweet potato which had a reddish
inside tuber.
74. Ongili - a variety of sweet potato which had a whitish
tuber but was rather tasteless.
75. Opande - Identification card.
76. Opere - a cattle epidemics.
77. Opon - the short rains season. ✓
78. Orando - a variety of sorghum.
79. Oro - dry season. ✓
80. Oruka - a variety of mushroom. ✓
81. Osadhi - a small weir made from papyrus.
82. Osuga - a variety of wild green vegetable ✓
(*solanum nigrum*).
83. Otonglo - a ten cent coin. ✓
84. Ounga - a fishing basket.
85. Owuoyo - cow-dung.

86. Rahaya - traditional curved wooden hoe. ✓
87. Ramula - a variety of speckled maize.
88. Rombe(pl.) - sheep.
89. Rum - a very large basket used as a measuring unit.
90. Rundo - trade exchange.
91. Ruoth - a traditional chief.
92. Sisi - a type of edible insect.
93. Singo - loaning a heifer, cow, goat or sheep to someone.
94. Soyo - a method of fishing using a sharp spear.
95. Sumo - giving grain to a needy relative of friend.
96. Waradho - an area in Kano which was used as a hunting ground.
97. Wuon dala - the head of a homestead. ✓

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Elijah Nam	Katolo	11-11-1989
John Rawich	Katolo	8-1-1990
Cillion Ogonda	Katolo	15-1-1990
Paulus Muga	Wawidhi A	19-11-1989
Charles Dienya	Wawidhi A	20-12-1989
Matunus Hongo	Boda	23-12-1989
Enure Matete	Boda	24-12-1989
Isaac Bala	South Kochogo	20-1-1990

Noah Arodi	South Kochogo	26-1-1990
Francis Aloo	South Kochogo	15-3-1990
Jacob Mita	Katho	7-12-1989
Leonadus Nyakeno	Katho	10-12-1989
Ellena Ngoya	Katho	23-2-1990
Pisila Ouko	Katho	21-2-1990
Abisalom Kayi	Kochieng	1-3-1990
Bernard Ogawo	Kochieng	2-3-1990
Shem Dienya	Kakola	13-11-1989
Peter Migan	Kakola	5-3-1990
Ex. Asst. Chief		
Ismael Guda	Wawidhi B	2-1-1990
Celistine Gek	Wawidhi B	26-11-1989
Roslida Kibira	Kawino	12-12-1989
Maseliana Opiyo	Kawino	10-2-1990
Roda Nyateng	Kawino	13-2-1990
Silper Achieng	North Kochogo	8-2-1990
Margret Akello	North Kochogo	27-2-1990
Alseba Wangira	North Kochogo	27-2-1990
Masliana Nyagweno	Upper Bwanda	15-2-1989
Malaki Ouko	Upper Bwanda	16-12-1990
Jashon Ingweti	Lower Bwanda	15-12 -1989
Silvanus Oyo Adhier	Lower Bwanda	15-12-1989
Walter Odeny	Kombura	18-2-1990
Esau Moguti	Kombura	19-2-1990
Elseba Wangira	Kombura	27-2-1990

Matthews Mola Ooi	Kombura	27-2-1990
Domicus Obondo	North Nyamware	8-2-1990
Alexus Ogonda	Kadhiambo	27-2-1990
Walter Odeng	Kadhiambo	28-2-1990
Gaudensia Auma	Kadhiambo	12-3-1990
Ex. Asst. Chief Abungu	South Nyamware	8-2-1990
Justus Ndege	South Nyamware	11-3-1990
Zakariah Osawa	Irrigation	14-3-1990
Ex. Chief		
James Adhiambo Owili	Irrigation	14-3-1990
Lawi Odudo	Irrigation	14-3-1990

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Diagram 1

The patterns of economic change in Kano, 1850-1900

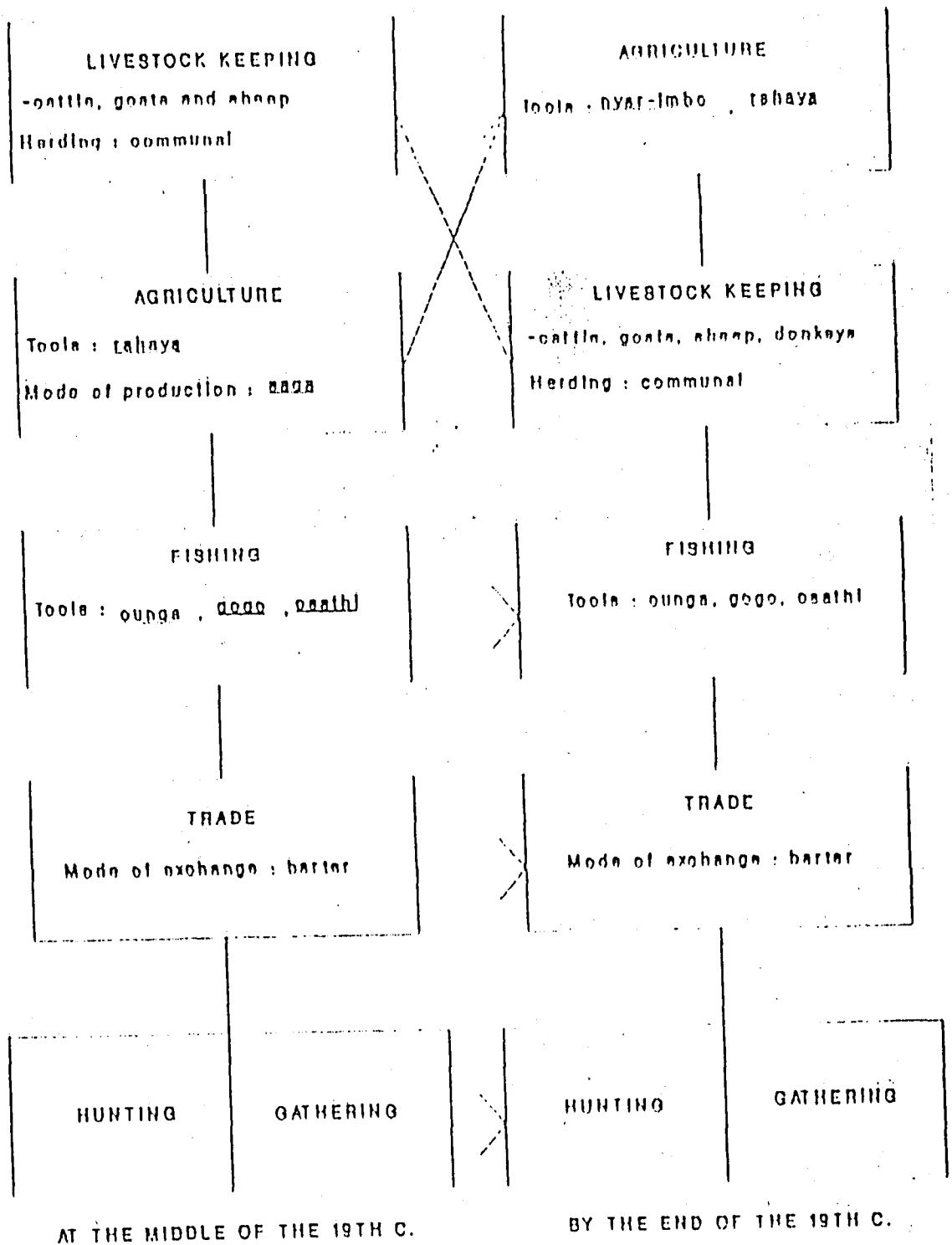


Diagram 2

The patterns of economic change in Kano, 1900-1963

