THE COLONIAL TRANSFORMATION OF AGRICULTURE IN SIAYA, c.1894-1945

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DECLARATION

This thesis is my original work and has not been presented for a degree in any other university.

COKUMU, PIUS OUMA

This thesis has been submitted for examination with our approval as the University Supervisors.

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ABSTRACT

This study focuses on agricultural change in Siaya between 1894 and 1945. The study contends that the people of Siaya had an efficient, self-sustaining and dynamic agricultural system prior to the advent of and establishment of the British colonial rule and its attendant institutions. It demonstrates that Luo agricultural organisation was sound and rational and based on Siaya people's knowledge of their own environment.

It further argues that during the colonial epoch, the colonial state played a major role in incorporating the agriculture of Siaya into colonial capitalist economy. It did this through political conquest and the establishment of a repressive regime. This led to the loss of political independence by the people of Siaya. It also defined the political parameters within which the colonial capitalist economy was established and influenced the responses of the local people. The colonial state also established a system of taxation which was aimed at the collection of revenue for financing general administration and also for drawing the local people into the capitalist economy.

A more direct assault on the indigenous agriculture by the colonial regime was the introduction and development of commodity production, wage labour, and the extension of market. To achieve these and to serve the needs of capitalism the colonial regime partially dissolved and restructured the indigenous agriculture. For instance, Luo households in Siaya suffered from insufficient labour, resulting in food shortages. Extensive cultivation of crops such as maize for export led to soil degradation and erosion.

While colonial capitalism provided new opportunities for some people in Siaya to accumulate wealth and expand agricultural output, it also pauperised part of the population. In addition, the new mode of production modified, marginalised and subordinated the Luo indigenous agriculture. However, it is contended that Luo agricultural organisation was not totally destroyed; it kept readjusting, was articulated and co-existed with the colonial capitalist sector to serve the interest of capitalism. And the introduction of cash crops severely affected food production.

DEDICATION

To my Mother, Margaret Apondi Okumu

My Wife, Margaret Akoth Cokumu

Our Son, Pius Ouma Cokumu Jr.

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Many people and institutions contributed to the success of this work, but to only mentions a few. I would like to thank Kenyatta University for admitting me to the graduate programme and offering me a scholarship and a job.

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Over and above, I give glory to my LORD Jesus Christ for this multitude of blessings and spiritual support from the start to the end; I was never alone!

LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

ALDEV	African Land Development Programme
BEA	British East Africa
CK	Central Kavirondo
CMS	Church Missionary Society
CN	Central Nyanza
CNC	Chief Native Commissioner
DC	District Commissioner
EALB	East African Literature Bureau
EAPH	East African Publishing House
Ed.	Editor
IBEACO	Imperial British East African Company
KAR	Kenya African Rifles
KLB	Kenya Literature Bureau
KNA	Kenya National Archives
KSM	Kisumu
LNC	Local Native Council
NZA	Nyanza
O.I.	Oral Interview
OUP	Oxford University Press
PC	Provincial Commissioner
PWD	Public Works Department

DEFINITION OF TERMS

AGRICULTURE: Refers to both crop and animal husbandry in general. But in certain instances pastoral farming is distinguished from agriculture which in its narrow sense now refers to crop cultivation. This study adopts the latter meaning (Omwoyo, 2000).

BOURGEOISIE: Refers to a capitalist class that owns and controls the means of production.

CAPITAL: Can be defined at three levels:

(i) As the store of means of production, tools, machines, houses, factories, mines, productive land, raw materials, semi-finished and finished goods etc. Capital encompasses all the various assets that help to further the production of what the community needs.

(ii) As a substantial sum of money that may be used to buy tools of production, to pay wages, or to buy raw materials etc. i.e. all that is necessary to establish business.

(iii) And as state securities, stocks and shares in companies etc. which may or may not represent real instruments of production, or money subscribed as shares or loans.

CAPITALISM: There are four main features to capitalism as an economic system:-

(i) Wealth is concentrated in the hands of a few people (the capitalist class) who own the means of production, that is factories, raw materials, estates, machinery, trading syndicates etc. as well as wealth in money form.

(ii) Wide masses of the people who have no means of getting a living except by selling their labour power for wages. This is the class of property less workers that Marx calls the proletariat.

(iii) Actually all production is not for the personal use of the producers, but for exchange i.e. for sale on the market. Goods produced for exchange are termed as commodities. Under capitalism, commodity production prevails.

(iv) Under capitalism, labour power itself becomes a commodity (Eaton, 1981).

CHANGE: Refers to the transitional process of alternation, modification, transformation and variation from one form, composition or state to another.

CLASS: This refers to a categorisation among people according to such aspects as wealth, power occupation and so on. This can be conceptualized at two levels:

(i) Objective basis: class in itself: this refers to the position the class occupies in the production process, for instance anyone who sells his labour as the only means of earning a livelihood is a proletarian.

(ii) Class of itself: This deals with consciousness – the people forming a class develop consciousness identifying them with one another. This is manifested through various actions by the members e.g. fighting for better terms of employment, higher wages and so on.

DEVELOPMENT: ⇒ The realisation of substantial economic growth with a corresponding increase in the realisation of human needs and potentials.

⇒ The opposite of which is underdevelopment, that is, an impoverishing process of a country/community through external expropriation of its labour, raw materials and surplus value through the mechanisms of unequal exchange.

⇒ Unequal exchange is the unremedying payment for commodities (trade, goods, labour etc.) in terms that do not reflect their actual values. The underdeveloped country dialectically becomes dependent on the external income leading to further exploitation.

⇒ This state of exploitation is sometimes referred to as dependent development, which means, a process of development which is not autonomous as it depends on foreign capital and technology, the result of which is distorted economic development. (Bundy, 1966; Frank, 1967; Hindess and Hirst, 1975; Shivji, 1976).

FAMINE: Widespread deaths of people, including adults, from starvation and associated diseases (Ochieng', 1987).

MODE OF PRODUCTION: Can be defined as the economic foundation encompassing the interaction of the forces of production and their corresponding social relations of production. It constitutes the superstructure elements of life in various aspects such as the social, economic, political and educational structures.

RELATIONS OF PRODUCTION: Constitute the relations that producers enter with one another in the process of production. The relations can be changed or get changed in the mode of production.

PEASANT: Used here to refer to what Shanin (1971) defines as a group of people who are small agricultural producers and who, with the help of simple equipment and labour of their families produce mainly for their own consumption. They produce goods for immediate consumption and consume the proceedings from the sale of their produce. They are under the control of a wider economic system which they do not control.

SOCIAL FORMATION: Taken to mean the determined mode of production and its specific conditions of existence, which includes also ideological and political factors (Swainson, 1980:3). That is, it is a structured articulation or combination of modes of production in which one mode of production is dominant.

CHAPTER ONE

1.0. INTRODUCTION AND CONTEXT OF THE PROBLEM

Agricultural change, has become a major concern for contemporary scholarship because Africa has been experiencing a state of agricultural crisis. The genesis of this crisis in Africa`s agricultural performance can be traced back to the colonial epoch and is, therefore, a legacy inherited by the continent from the alien colonial regime (World Bank, 1983; Adedeji, 1985; Zeleza, 1986; Omwoyo, 1990).

This state of agricultural crisis is, to a large extent, an outcome of processes and changes imposed on African agriculture by colonial economic policies. Evidently, the pre-colonial economy of the continent was harshly integrated into the colonial economic system. This integration led to a process that ushered in the modification, destruction and marginalisation of agriculture in Africa (Esese, 1990; Omwoyo, 1990). There were of course regional variations in the specific effects of these colonial policies on the African continent. While some areas were significant as sources of labour others were outstanding in agricultural production, mineral extraction or both.

However, even prior to colonial domination, economic change did occur in the African continent. This was mainly as a result of environmental change and population movements. A people`s mode of economic survival was transformed as they adapted themselves and their institutions to the changed environment – both physical and social. This was because environmental factors such as droughts, population boom and livestock epidemics did bring about change in mode of

production. A change in mode of production automatically led to economic transformation. This occurred when new developments in technology took place.

A considerable number of scholars have investigated the economic history of Africa with a special bias towards agriculture (Harris, 1975; Berry, 1984; Adedeji, 1985; Barker, 1986). These scholars have been influenced by the existing agricultural decay in Africa and as such their works have focused on the root cause of this decay. These studies focus on the entire continent and consequently most of the proposed solutions are general, meant to cover the entire continent. The assumption of these scholars is that changes in agricultural economy were more or less uniform in the continent. Consequently, they have come up with holistic titles such as "The African Husbandman", "The Food Crisis and Agrarian Change in Africa" and "Economic Crisis in Africa" (Allan, 1965; Berry, 1984; Adedeji, 1985 respectively).

The above mentioned scholars have concentrated on issues crucial for interpreting and understanding agricultural development specifically on agricultural change in Africa. These issues revolve around the themes of land use, land policy and food sufficiency among others. However, the conclusions of the above mentioned scholars are at most tenable at regional level and hence cannot explain specificities of Africa (Hopkins, 1973; Brett, 1979; and Cowen, 1982). This limitation is due to the fact that agricultural systems are regional specific and, therefore, their analysis needs systematic local examination. This explains why agricultural change can only be clearly understood in the light of the historical background of a specific region.

In the light of the foregoing, there are numerous studies undertaken on agricultural history of different parts of Africa. In Kenya, for example, a number of studies have been conducted on agricultural capitalism (Kitchings, 1980; Swainson, 1980 etc.). They have tackled the issue from various perspectives. These approaches have some inherent limitations on the ground that the conclusions of such local level studies on sections of the country should be tested in other parts and even at lower levels to ascertain their national applicability.

Cognisant of the above discrepancy studies have emerged on the Agikuyu (Muchoki, 1988), Gusii (Omwoyo, 1990), Wanga (Esese, 1990), Abanyole (Omasaba, 1997) among others. A survey of available literature on Nyanza Province indicates that there have been studies on agricultural change in Luo Nyanza during the colonial period (Fearn, 1965, and Whisson, 1964). There are also specific local level, historical studies, for example, Hay, (1972); Bookman, (1973); Butterman, (1979); Ndege, (1987) and Onduru, (1992). However, no specific study has been done on the transformation of agriculture in Siaya.

1.1. Statement of the Problem

In the light of the lack of any specific study on agricultural change in Siaya District during the colonial period this study focuses on agricultural change in Siaya between 1894 and 1945. The study highlights the dynamism and productiveness of the pre-colonial agriculture of Siaya. It demonstrates how land ownership, methods of agricultural production, exchange and the division of labour was transformed by colonial capitalism.

This study addresses the following pertinent questions: What system of land ownership and usage existed in pre-colonial Siaya? What was the impact of colonial agricultural , land and labour policies on the people of Siaya? How did the people of Siaya respond to these changes? What was the nature of interaction between pre-capitalist and capitalist modes of production?

1.2. Objectives of the Study

The study

1. gives an account of the type of agricultural economy found in Siaya on the eve of colonial rule;
2. assesses the impact of colonial agricultural, land and labour policies, and the introduction of new crops, ideas and technology on crop production in Siaya.
3. identifies and evaluates the responses of the people of Siaya to colonial agricultural economy;
4. evaluates the relationship between the indigenous pre-capitalist economy and the colonial capitalist economy.

1.3 Research Assumptions

1. The pre-colonial economy of Siaya was dynamic, diverse, efficient, productive and largely self-sufficient.
2. Colonial administration played a primary role in the incorporation of the indigenous economy into western capitalist system.

3. The people of Siaya who embraced the new crops, ideas and technology brought by the colonizers modified their traditional perceptions and practices of agricultural production.

4. The colonial capitalist system disturbed, partially destroyed and then restructured local production to suit its ends by encouraging commodity production, wage labour and trade.

1.4. Geographical Setting

Siaya District is in present Nyanza province of Kenya. The district was part of Eastern Province of Uganda between 1894 and 1902. From 1902 to 1921 part of Siaya was under Kisumu District (Gem, Alego, Uholo and Ugenya). Between 1921 to 1968, Siaya (Gem, Alego, Uholo and Ugenya) was included in Central Nyanza District (referred to as Central Kavirondo District upto 1968). From 1968 to 1997, Siaya became one of the districts of Nyanza Province. In 1998, part of Siaya (Bondo, Usigu, Madiany and Rarieda) was scurved to form Bondo District. However, in this study, both Siaya and Bondo Districts will be referred to as district (Siaya) for the period 1894 to 1945.

Siaya District (now Siaya and Bondo) covers an area of approximately 3,523 square kilometres and by 1989 had a population of 639,439. According to District Development Plan of 1996, it was projected to increase to 814,840; 865,746 and 919,832 in 1997, 1999 and 2001 respectively, assuming a growth rate of 3.1% per annum. The area is densely populated in the northern and eastern areas and apart

from the Luo clans there are many clans of Bantu origin who have been assimilated into Luo language and culture, for example, Jo-saka and Wahenye.

The divisions of the area lie in different environmental zones. This has led to disparity in the amount of rainfall and soil fertility which has direct effect on the population and hence the relative dependence on agriculture. There exist different types of soils in the area. In the south there are sandy soils and to the north the soils are red friable loam easily workable by plough and hand. Rainfall varies from an average of 1225 mm. In the south to 1500 mm. In the North. The wetter high zones are covered by tropical forests (District Development Plan, 1996:21).

Siaya is a mixed farming area. However, farming is done mainly for subsistence. The level and scale of crop production is geared towards meeting the household requirements. Most of the cultivated land is under food crops such as maize, sorghum, beans, cassava, finger millet, sweet potatoes, peas, vegetables and a variety of fruits. A total area of 62, 122 ha. Of cultivated land was under these crops in 1991 as compared to 63,061 ha. In 1995. Maize is the main food crop in the area. Siaya experiences a general deficit in maize production as it is only able to meet about 65% of its requirement.

The major cash crops in the area are sugarcane, cotton, coffee and groundnuts. Sugarcane is grown in the high potential zone of Yala Division, eastern and central parts of Ukwala and Ugunja Divisions. They are mainly grown as raw materials for the white sugar industry, jaggeries and for production of molasses. Main cotton areas include Sakwa, Asembo, Yimbo, Usonga and West Alego.

However, cotton production has declined in the recent past because of marketing problems.

Coffee production has also greatly declined due to poor husbandry practices and lack of processing plant. The area has a potential for robusta coffee, which has not been fully exploited. Arabica coffee is grown in Yala Division (District Development Plan, 1996). Groundnuts, beans, simsim and soya beans, are dual purpose crops which serve as cash and food crops. The main groundnut producing area is Uyoma.

In addition to crop cultivation, the people of this area also keep cattle, sheep and poultry. However, this practice is declining since land consolidation has either left some people landless or with very little land (see figure 1.2.3).

Fig: 1

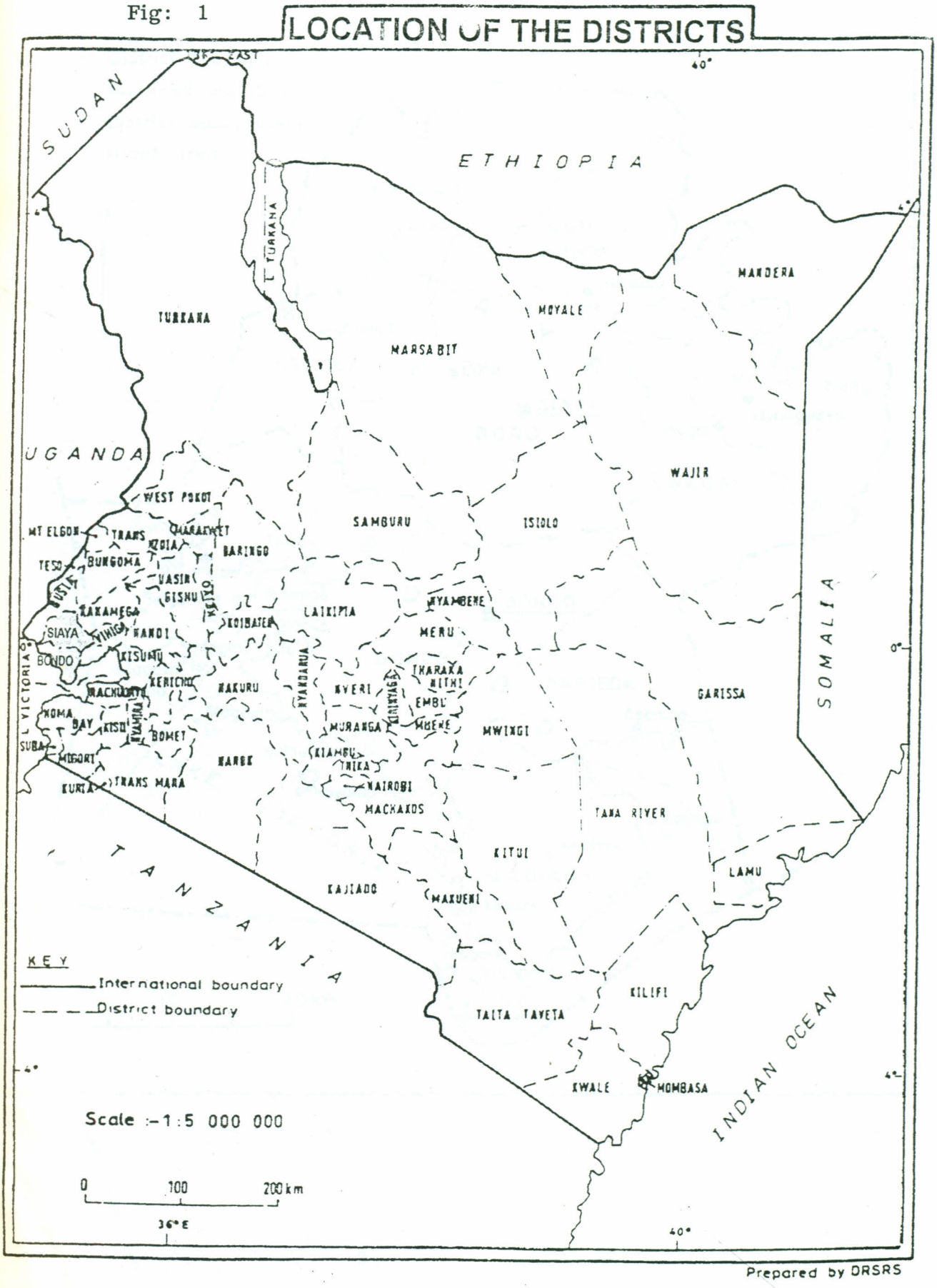
LOCATION OF THE DISTRICTS
SUDAN
ETHIOPIA
UGANDA
TANZANIA
SOMALIA
INDIAN OCEAN
L. TURKANA
L. VICTORIA
TURKANA
MARSABIT
MOYALE
MANDERA
WAJIR
SAMBURU
ISIOLO
WEST POKOT
MT ELGON
TRANS NZOIA
UASIN GISHU
BARINGO
TESO
BUNGOMA
KAKAMEGA
SIAYA
VIHIGA
BUSIA
KERICHO
NANDI
KISUMU
BONDO
NAKURU
LAIKIPIA
KOIBATEK
NYANDARUA
NYERI
MURANGA
KIAMBU
NAIROBI
MACHAKOS
KITUI
MWINGI
MERU
THARAKA NITHI
EMBU
NYAMBENE
GARISSA
TANA RIVER
LAMU
KAJIADO
MAKUENI
TAITA TAVETA
KILIFI
KWALE
MOMBASA
NANDI
KISII
HOMA BAY
SUBA
MIGORI
KURIA
TRANS MARA
BOMET
NAROK
KEY
International boundary
District boundary
Scale :-1:5 000 000
0
100
200 km
36° E
40°
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Fig: 2 THE STUDY AREA (BONDO AND SIAYA DISTRICTS

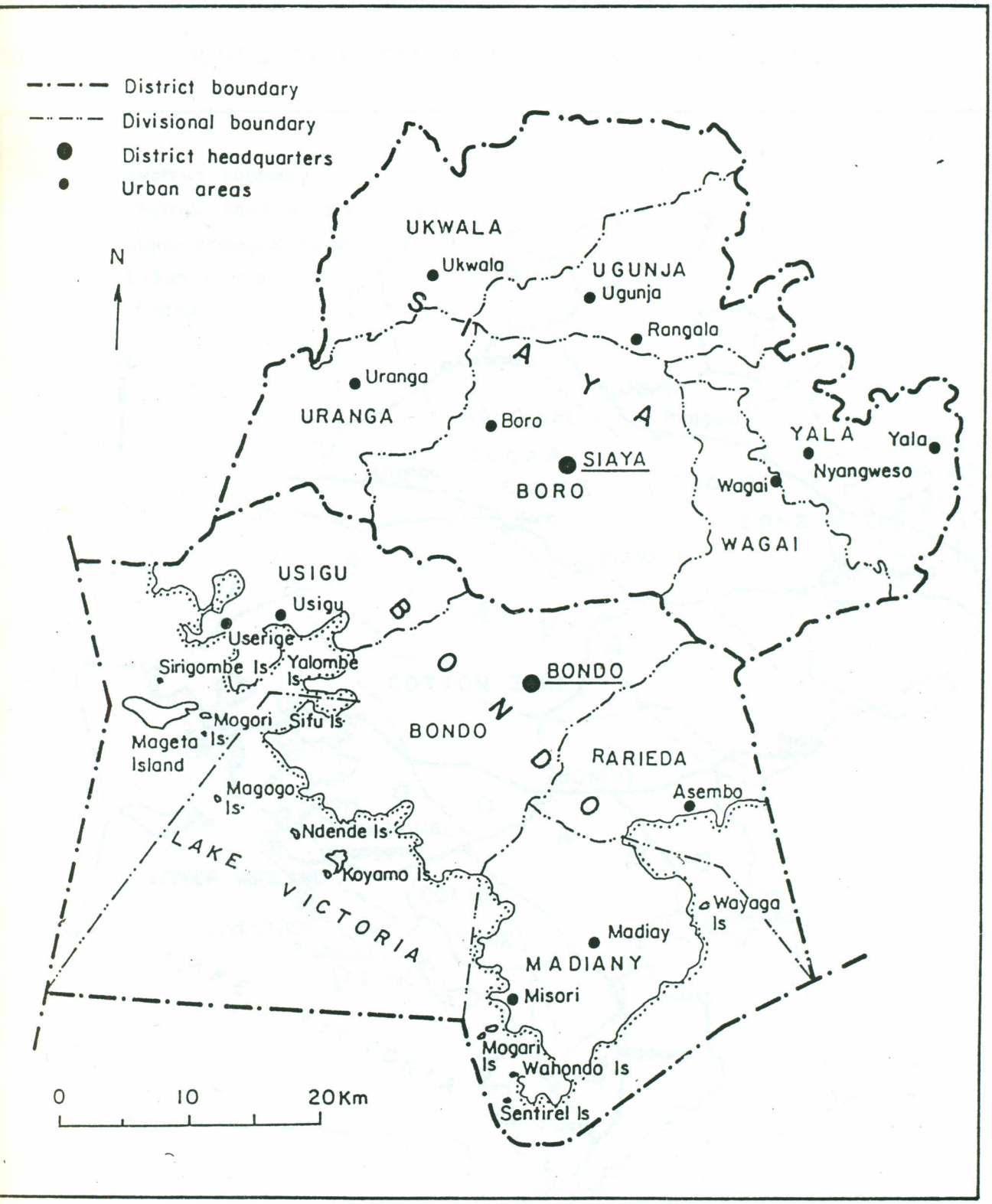
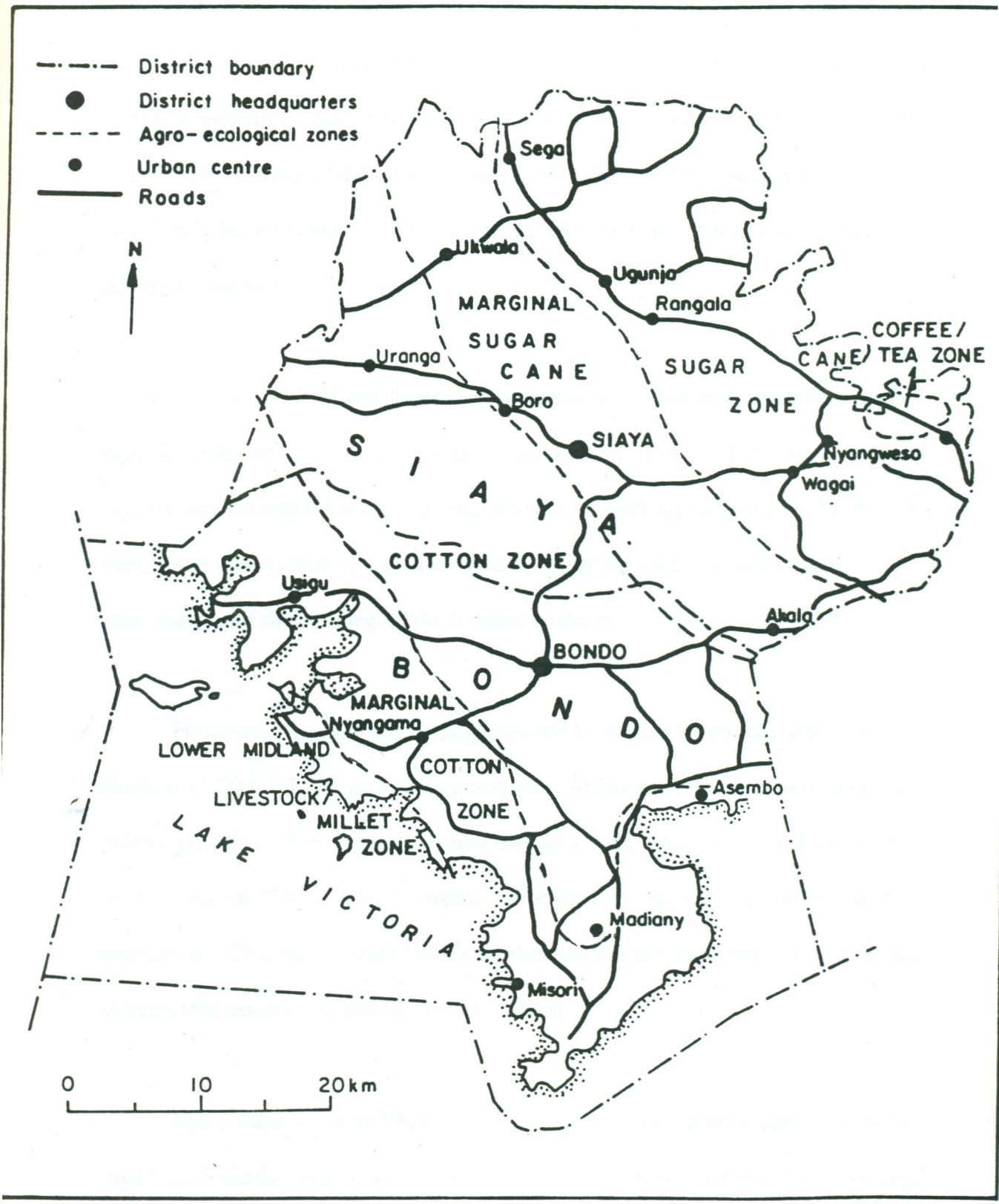


Fig: 3

SIAYA AND BONDO DISTRICTS AGRO-ECOLOGICAL ZONES



1.5. Review of Related Literature

The state of agricultural crisis in Africa has made the economic history of the continent a subject of great concern. Savants from different disciplines have studied different aspects of the continent's economy from the pre-colonial period to the present, for instance, Allan (1965), Berg (1965); Berry (1985) and Adedeji (1985). Similarly, the economic history of Kenya has attracted many studies given the attention paid to it.

Tempany (1958) and Jones (1984) dismiss any sense of dynamism in the pre-colonial economy of Africa. Tempany argues that agriculture in Africa prior to colonialism consisted mainly of primitive forms of 'shifting cultivation'. In the same vein, Jones asserts that agricultural systems in Africa were not only 'backward' but also 'static' and showed negligible dynamic qualities.

However, this view has been questioned by numerous studies. Zeleza (1986) Hopkins (1973) and Brett (1973) contend that Africa's pre-colonial agriculture was indeed dynamic. They argue that there existed a wide range of agricultural systems in pre-colonial Africa that it would be biased to sum it up under 'shifting cultivation'. This micro-study takes a similar position and highlights the agricultural systems that existed in Siaya before colonialism.

Van Zwanenberg and King (1975) argue that Kenya developed at a higher pace than Uganda because it encouraged a flow of capital. Kenya also developed predominantly through settler production and plantation export crops. They contend

that as plantation economy took root in Kenya, the colonialists accumulated wealth while Africans provided labour and other services. They conclude that while the colonialists accumulated wealth the colonized did not. While this study concurs with them it further argues that there was also a group of the colonized who managed to accumulate wealth.

Leys (1974) analyzed the colonial economic transformation in Kenya and concluded that local capital was fully dependent on foreign capital. The implication here is that the African capitalist class was just but an agent of foreign capitalists who remained a conspicuous class. However, after new evidence on the form and structure of capitalist development in Kenya had been provided by researchers like Cowen (1982), Leys later admitted that there did exist a group of African capitalists who were detached from and competing with foreign capitalists (Leys, 1982(a)). This group was actively involved in various sectors of the economy, for example, agriculture, banking, commerce and manufacturing. According to Leys (1982(b)) this African capitalist class was heavily concentrated in Kikuyu land and their immediate neighbours. Similarly, Kitching (1980), Swainson (1980) and Cowen (1982) have shown that the African did accumulate wealth during colonial rule.

Kitching's work in particular focuses on the rise of petit-bourgeoisie class in Kenya during the colonial and post-colonial periods. He draws most of his illustrations from Central and Western Kenya. The work covers successful retail traders, civil servants, primary school teachers, clerks and superintendents, mostly from the low income group. This class saved their income from other sectors to invest in land, agricultural production and other off-farm enterprises. Since their savings were limited, this class took long to achieve successful enterprise through

accumulation of capital and wealth. This study attempts to show that accumulation of wealth by Africans did take place in Siaya.

Njonjo (1981) argues that African farmers in Kenya were turned into workers rather than reproduced as peasants and that majority of them were no longer living in households that were largely self-sufficient as they were, but had become labourers with patches of land. He asserts that the transformation of the majority of farmers into the proletariat class went hand in glove with the emergence of landed bourgeoisie who owned relatively big portions of land. This was especially the case with Rift Valley Province where Njonjo concentrated his attention and drew illustrations from. His work offers a great insight to this study.

Alila (1977) lays great emphasis on the formulation of agricultural policy and the provision of extension services against a background of economic, political, social and administrative crises. The major points of reference are the two World Wars, the Mau Mau Uprising and the question of labour extraction from the African reserves. Alila posits that it was not until the late colonial period that the government formulated agricultural policy and began providing services for the small holder agricultural areas of Kenya, espeically the `Native Reserves`. This, he asserts, emerged largely out of the crises mentioned above. Alila also looks at other aspects of agricultural production including crop production, transport facilities, land fragmentation, demonstration plots, agricultural labour and livestock production in Nyanza. The work has enriched this study with useful information on some aspects of African agricultural production in the `Reserves` during the colonial period.

Fearn (1961) argues that the slow and gradual development of African agriculture emanated from the lack of initiative on the part of African farmers and the socio-economic and cultural characteristics of the African communities. However, he notes that the discriminative colonial policies in agriculture and commerce were part of the major factors behind the stunted economic growth of the African in Nyanza, but the African producer lacked the initiative to break through the limitations. Thus, the impression he gives is that economic development in Nyanza should be accredited to non-Africans, i.e. the Asians and Europeans.

Further, Fearn looks at the dynamics of labour and concludes that it is difficult to obtain any overall picture as to what degree Nyanza Africans were in wage labour before the end of World War II (Fearn, 1961:54). The centrality of labour in agricultural production is presented against a background of colonial labour policies and the creation of a labour reserve in Nyanza. In addition, the introduction of new marketable crops and the factors boosting or hindering increased productivity of the crops, for instance, cotton are also analysed. Though Fearn's perception of the African economy is partly misleading by underplaying the importance of colonial policies in hindering expanded African agricultural productivity, his study has a wealth of factual and quantitative data on agriculture in the Nyanza Province during the colonial period which is very useful to this study.

Whisson (1964) says that labour migrancy impacted severely on the whole system of Luo society and especially women. He asserts that the first step in the establishment of the colonial economy was provided by the imposition of tax, which became effective by 1900 and forced people either to sell their surplus food and cattle or produce cash crops or to go out of their localities to seek employment. The

choice was an economic one, but the response had important social and political implications for the community. Whisson, however, only mentions the significance of this problem but does not deal with it in any detail..

Butterman (1979) observed that the primary purpose of the colonial state was to effect a transfer of surplus from the local economies to the metropolitan sector. She contends that since the transfer occurred through bending the institutions and roles of the then existing social organization, it led to strain, accommodation, and contradictions. The British incorporated the pre-colonial economy into the colonial economy in steps. First, they established a strong political monopoly in the colony. Second, agricultural production for export was established. Third, chiefs were appointed whose function was to ensure that local people obeyed government orders. Finally, infrastructure like transport network and markets were introduced to facilitate the transfer of produce from the 'Reserves'. Butterman's work gives insight into the situation in the colonial 'Reserves' in Nyanza especially the fate of women.

Omwoyo (1990) focuses on the organization and transformation of agriculture among the Gusii of Nyanza province during the colonial period. He argues that Gusii agricultural organization was sound and rational and based on the Gusii knowledge of their own environment. Colonial penetration, he contends, modified, marginalised and subordinated Gusii agriculture. The Gusii were peasantised and their role as commodity producers enhanced. In the same vein, Esese (1990) argues that the Wanga of Western Kenya had an efficient, self-sufficient and dynamic agricultural system prior to the establishment of colonial rule. He concludes that colonial capitalist system led to the peasantisation and partial

proletarianisation of the Wanga producers; capitalist accumulation by a few individuals in crop production and commerce led to further socio-economic differentiation among the peasantry. Both works are useful as this study takes a similar position as regards transformation of agriculture in Siaya.

Omasaba (1997) examines economic change in Bunyore during the colonial period. She argues that colonial rule had a significant revolutionary impact on the pre-colonial agricultural systems of the Abanyole. The introduction of new crops, new farming methods, settler domination, new land ownership system, taxation, the introduction of wage labour, western type of education, new crafts and industry and the growth of trade and commerce exposed the pre-colonial economy to strong external influences that led to the modification, marginalisation and subordination of the Abanyole agricultural economy. Her study has a wealth of information about the Kavirondo region, which Siaya formed a part during the colonial period.

Ndege (1987) observes that economic changes which occurred in Kasipul and Kabondo during colonialism were a result of incorporating the constituency into the capitalist economy. The colonial government used its political machinery to secure control of the colonial state to ensure that the indigenous people participated in the colonial economy. He notes that the indigenous economies were now dictated by the needs of the colonial state, which was in turn dictated from Britain. Consequently, the inhabitants were involved through coercion in the production of commodities for export and in wage employment. His study gives an insight into the effects of commodity production and wage labour on Nyanza people and particularly the effects of colonial labour policies on agriculture in Siaya.

Reed (1975) observes that in the period between 1901-1923, it was clear that the people of Central Nyanza had not enthusiastically embraced cotton growing and that it could not emerge as the major cash crop in the area. He argues that both archival and oral data revealed that the Luo of Central Nyanza were more interested in maintaining the integrity of their society than responding to the dictates of the colonial government. He holds, therefore, that the failure to achieve startling results must rest squarely on the shoulders of the British Government since they lacked a rational plan for developing the industry and economy among the Luo. This study attempts to explicate the responses of the people of Siaya to the imposition of colonial agricultural policies.

Hay (1972) argues that production, innovation and tools were part and parcel of African agriculture before the establishment of colonial rule. She asserts that experimentation with new implements and new crops was a regular feature of African agricultural system. The presence of the colonialists with their conscious attempts to 'modernize' this agricultural system simply intensified the speed of change (Hay, 1972: 129-130). She also notes that the British forced the Luo to produce new crops employing new forms of technology without considering the productivity and impact of the same on the social, political and economic institutions of the affected people. Hay contends that by 1945, Jo-Kowe had realized that crop production was no longer a viable project for getting cash to meet their financial requirements and obligations. This was due to the low prices of cash crops. Some inhabitants of Kowe, therefore, sought wage labour outside the location. Hay's work is useful as it explains some aspects of economic activities and change in the Nyanza region.

Onduru (1992) analyses economic change in Kano during colonial rule. He argues that the Jo-Kano agricultural organization was sound and rational and based on the Jo-Kano knowledge of their own environment. The colonial capitalist system, disturbed, partially destroyed and then modified and subordinated Jo-Kano agriculture. This micro-study establishes that similar thing happened to agriculture in Siaya.

Cohen and Atieno-Odhiambo (1989) in their book Siaya have given a very interesting historical and anthropological analysis of Siaya from the arrival of Luo in Siaya up to present days. It is the vastness of the information in the book that makes it inexhaustive. The authors extensively discuss the issue of male labour migration but some of the conclusions reveal lack of raw data on Siaya labour migration and its impact on agriculture. If anything this meagre information is obtained from Liganua, a small sub-location in Siaya. The lack of data is also evident in the effect that they stress the valuable presence of migration to Liganua, that led to many people migrating to Uganda because of the wealth brought back by them. The truth should be that with more information perhaps the negative effects of the picture would have been revealed and not just the wider presence of Luo all over East Africa.

Atieno-Odhiambo (1972) argues that what existed in pre-colonial Kenya were wealthy, successful and independent farmers who had enough food supply including surplus to exchange in order to satisfy the basic needs of their households. According to him, the peasants as an analytical category was the creation of colonialism and that the peasants in Kenya emerged at the same time as the African worker. Historically, therefore, the creation of the peasantry is synonymous with the

transition from a cultivating and herding non-capitalist, domestic economy to colonial, racial and capitalist economic system. This study tests his thesis to prove its national applicability.

Jalang'o-Ndeda (1991) presents an analysis of the position and role of women in the political economy of the people of Siaya. The study focuses on the importance of women in economic and social production and reproduction during the pre-colonial and colonial periods. Her position is that the role of women in food and commodity production in the community should not be overlooked. Her study has crucial information about the political economy of the people of Siaya. However, it puts more emphasis on highlighting the role of women during this epoch. This study critically analyses the transformation of agriculture in Siaya during colonial rule while maintaining as much as is humanly possible a position of gender parity.

In the light of the above literature review, no specific study has been done on the transformation of agriculture in Siaya.

1.6. Rationale of the Study

Many works on agriculture have been done at the continental, regional and even national levels where generalizations are allowed. This study narrows down the unit of focus to Siaya and approaches the subject historically to verify the validity of some of the generalizations tenable at broader levels. Though the study ends at the end of World War II, it is hoped that a strong base will have been laid upon which the study of post-war developments may be done.

Further, because Kenya's rural setting vis-a-vis agricultural production is changing at a fast rate, it becomes imperative that a strong foundation be laid upon which these changes can be carefully analyzed and documented. Moreover, the study of the colonial transformation of agriculture among the people of Siaya is crucial for the understanding of the new patterns of economic organization that did develop. Indeed, from the review of related literature, it is evident that a lot still need to be done on the agricultural history of Luoland. This micro-study is certainly an effort to fill a gap in this area.

Siaya District manifests various features to justify the study. In the first instance, no such study has been undertaken in the area. Secondly, Siaya served the colonial government as a labour reservoir and, thirdly, colonial famines had tremendous impact on the people of Siaya. Finally, it is hoped that this historical study will help the relevant specialists (agriculturists, economists, ecologists and other policy planners) in understanding the root causes of agricultural changes and crises in the district in time perspective.

The study begins at about 1894 when Sir Colville, the first commissioner of the newly established government of the Uganda Protectorate, established an administration station at Mumias with his Valet, Frederick Spire, in charge. From then on the pre-colonial institutions in Siaya began changing in the face of colonial rule and the new capitalist production system. This year 1894, hence, is an appropriate date to begin the analysis of agricultural change in the colonial period.

The end of World War II in 1945 marked a watershed in Kenya's agricultural history and development. The post-war era was characterized by long-term plans to

improve agricultural production in both European and African sectors. For instance, Besides the reconstitution of this Board to the African land Utilization and Settlement Board in 1947, the government also reconstituted the Board's membership and administrative roles between 1946 and 1954 to the African Land Development Board (ALDEV). The Swynerton Plan of 1954 and its successive plans saw rapid development in African agricultural production (Leys 1974). It was obvious, therefore, that by 1945 Kenya had already been plunged into agricultural crisis. The year 1945 is thus an appropriate point to end the analysis of this agricultural crisis in Siaya.

1.7. Theoretical Framework

Several theoretical perspectives such as the Modernization, the Dependency and Under-development and the Articulation of Modes of Production have been employed in the study of economic history of Africa.

The modernization theory advances the idea that nothing like development existed in Africa before the advent of European capitalism. On the arrival of capitalism, sectors like transport, commerce and industry believed to have been either 'backward' or absent, received impetus for growth and utility. Hence economic development is viewed as coming in the wings of capitalism (Duignan and Gann, 1978). Basically, this theory assumes that the so-called Third World countries can only be transformed in the image of developed countries of the western capitalist world. According to it, it is colonialism that sparked off the process of economic development in Africa; African societies before the advent of colonialism were, therefore, 'static', 'unprogressive' and 'underdeveloped'.

Modernization theory has been criticized on the ground that it is hopelessly racialistic and based on unilinear conception of development. Development in Africa is viewed as a process of change towards the economic, social and political institutions that are a feature of the developed capitalist countries of Western Europe. It's yardstick of measuring development and its categorization of African economies as 'backward', 'static' and 'unprogressive' have long been proved wrong. Africanist scholars have shown that commodity production together with commerce and industry had long developed before the arrival of colonial capitalism (Adam, 1965; Hopkins, 1973).

Dependency and underdevelopment perspective asserts that underdevelopment is the result of the Third World's subordinate role in the capitalist system and the contribution it has made and continues to make to the development of the advanced capitalist societies. The net result has been a diffusion of the badly needed surplus for development from the underdeveloped to advanced countries. Thus, the development of the Third world will not take place as a result of the diffusion of institutions and values, rather, its development can now occur only independently of these relations of diffusion. In short, development and underdevelopment are two sides of the same coin (Rodney, 1972; Arrighi and Saul, 1973 and Shivji, 1976).

In the agricultural realm, dependency and underdevelopment theory holds that Africa has been made poor by unrealistic prices paid for her agricultural products as well as the absence of price stabilization facilities for her countries. Instead of African countries determining the prices of their own agricultural products, it is the developed countries, which do this, as they are the ones who

control the world markets. Further, they set the prices of the manufactured agricultural machinery, inputs etc. required by Africa to maintain agricultural production. This exploitation leads to dependence and underdevelopment in Africa. The foregoing seems to sacrifice production itself on the altar of trade and commerce and, therefore, disregards classes which emerge from the production process, the ensuing class struggle and the complex and contradictory effects of the struggles on social formations of the so-called peripheral capitalist societies (Zeleza, 1985).

In other words, dependency and underdevelopment theory concentrates on the role of external forces, especially colonialism, imperialism and international terms of trade, in changing and weakening Africa's indigenous socio-economic and political institutions. It therefore becomes idealistic; idealistic in the sense that it overlooks any local forces that could be contributing to the same.

This study employs articulation of modes of production. A mode of production involves two components: first, the forces of production, which include technology, labour and raw materials. It is defined as 'the mode of appropriation of nature' (Hindess and Hurst, 1975:10). The second component is relation of production, the way in which surplus is extracted and distributed (Banaji 1973; Taylor 1979). The main argument of this perspective is that, when the capitalist mode of production is introduced in a non-capitalist mode of production or pre-capitalist social formation, it does not immediately and automatically displace the existing modes of production. Instead, the capitalist mode of production will gradually align with the non-capitalist mode of production and use them for its own advantage. When the capitalist mode of production has been gradually established, it begins a process of modification, destruction, marginalization and, finally,

subordinating the non-capitalist modes of production by utilizing them. The continuous process of subordination culminates in the domination of the capitalist mode of production over the non-capitalist mode (Berman 1984; Klein, 1985).

The articulation of modes of production theory is relevant to the understanding of the dynamics of change. It is also an effort to grasp the way in which capitalism preserves and exploits the preceding modes of production particularly within its reach. The tension in the articulation situation lies in the fact that while trying to preserve the preceding modes of production, the capitalist sector cannot help but introduce new relations of production. The articulation of modes of production raises instructive questions related to varied ways in which different patterns of production (and their reinforcing political institutions and ideologies) combine in real setting. In this view, the history of Siaya can be characterized as a process during which the dominance of the capitalist mode of production did not bring automatic demolition of the old mode of production.

On the contrary, the old relations of production were used, as it were, for further expansion of capitalism. It is precisely due to continuing coercion of the producing community that specific form of capitalist exploitation was possible, notably, the withdrawal of cheap labour which was both desirable and essential. Migrant labour was cheap as labourer's families in the rural areas enabled the employers to pay inadequate wages that could not sustain the entire family of a worker (Ndege, 1987; Esese, 1990; Omwoyo, 1990). Further still, the cost of maintaining a retired worker rested on the rural economy. If the system was to be entrenched, then the idea of rural homes had to be perpetuated so that families could proceed with food production (Ndege, Ibid.).

Rey (1977) uses the concept of articulation of modes of production dwelling on the process of transformation of the agricultural sphere, and offers a useful analysis of the process of integration of the Third World social formations and especially their agricultural branches into the capitalist mode of production. Rey attempts to explain the rise of capitalism both as a world system and within specific social formations through the articulation of contradictory modes of production. He contends that pre-capitalist and capitalist modes of production co-existed for a long time (Rey, 1977:122). Rey gives three sequential steps in the articulation of capitalist and pre-capitalist modes of production: In the initial stage, local agriculture and handcrafts production exist side by side with commercial farming and manufacture. In this stage, the destruction of the former is only partial; non-capitalist modes remain dominant, with capitalism generating transitional forms.

The second stage includes the development of large-scale industry, which demolishes most of the vestiges of the domestic mode of production while restructuring the local farmers as full time commodity producers. However, the social relations of production in the agricultural branch remain essentially non-capitalist. Both wage labour and technical composition of capital remain underdeveloped. Non-capitalist work force is preserved and by the use of coercion by the elite class, a reserve army of workers is created without significant expenses for its reproduction. Political link between the rural elite and the urban bourgeoisie allow for the establishment of low wages by lowering prices or by direct methods like taxation, tribute and tariffs.

The final stage entails massive entry of capital into agriculture. Through economic antagonism, local agriculture is demolished creating rural proletariat displaced from ownership of the means of production. Commodity production is the only remaining form; nothing but capitalism prevails. This approach makes the concept of Articulation of modes of production approach fairly applicable in this study given that the initial break in the self-sufficiency of Siaya people's pre-capitalist production, like elsewhere in Africa, was achieved, to a considerable extent, by the impact of colonial capitalism with its demands for labour, taxes, and marketable crops. Siaya farmers were not totally destroyed; there was a need to maintain their role in the production process. It should be noted, however, that this concept is used only as a tool of analysis and never as a body of revealed truth.

1.8. Research Methodology and Limitations

This study employs both primary and secondary sources. Primary sources include archival research and oral interviews. Archival research was conducted at the Kenya National Archives from July to December, 1997. The main documents which were scrutinized included Provincial (Nyanza) and District (Central and North Kavirondo Districts) Annual and Quarterly Reports, Intelligence Reports and Political Records, Safari Diaries by district officers, Minutes of the Local Native Councils and correspondences on matters such as agriculture, labour, transport and marketing. This source yielded information on native agriculture and the integration of the colonial agriculture with the local agriculture. Information obtained from archival materials enhanced the later discussion with the respondents during oral interviews and helped in delineating the chronology of events.

Oral interviews were conducted between January, 1998 and December, 1998. A total of 66 respondents were interviewed. The researcher relied mostly on the information gotten from each of the people interviewed about who next was an 'expert' on what he was researching. In this way he built up list of informants which included all gender, wage labourers and traders during the colonial period; agricultural instructors, teachers, church elders, ex-chiefs and respected elders. Respondents were extensively interviewed on areas in which they commanded knowledge. A question guideline which embraced information on agriculture from the pre-colonial to the Post World War II was used.

The interviews were, to a large extent, informal as the researcher was not bound to follow strictly the question guideline neither did he make his respondents aware that he had a question guideline. The discussions were based on themes such as origins, migration and settlement of the people of Siaya, pre-colonial production and exchange, the establishment of colonial rule, and agricultural production, wage labour and trade during the colonial period. This approach gave the researcher room for posing searching questions as the discussions progressed. It also allowed the informants to delve issues which he did not anticipate, but which turned out to be very important. The researcher occasionally intervened to ensure that the respondents did not digress from major themes of discussion. The respondents were questioned about their own activities and experiences in production, wage labour and trade during the colonial period. Oral interviews were used to counter-check and corroborate the information gleaned from the archival material.

The interviews were conducted in dho-luo and tape-recorded, but later translated into English. Before the researcher started interviewing a respondent, he

introduced himself and explained the purpose of the interview and relied on friends and relatives who knew his respondents to allay their fears that he might be a 'government spy'.

Secondary sources include books, journals, theses, dissertations; seminar, conference and symposium papers; government and non-governmental reports, magazines as well as newspapers. Information contained in the above documents were scrutinized and relevant items extracted for assimilation in the work. This marked the end of a major data collection.

Subsequently, the researcher analysed the contents for validity and reliability. For instance, if a respondent gave information that was odd, several interviews were requested from him or her for clarification. On each occasion, questions raised aimed at assessing confidence of the respondent. If he or she competently answered questions, his or her information was taken as valid and reliable. But if on the second, third or even fourth interviews, the respondent contradicted earlier information, the information was not automatically considered as valid and reliable. Where need arose further inquiry was carried out to eliminated any doubts from both primary and secondary sources.

One major limitation of archival sources was that sometimes the researcher failed to access certain important materials (for example, some handing over reports were scanty while others were totally missing) that appear in the catalogue due to either poor storage or carelessness in filing or documentation procedures. There is also a major problem of quantitative data, in particular statistics on agricultural production or population during the pre-colonial period. Further, there are no

statistics covering agricultural production, land sizes, acreage per household, livestock population or amount of exchange within the district during the colonial period. However, on a few occasions there are figures of produce sold at Kisumu or a general reflection of the stock population around Siaya but with no clear-cut specification as to the real area covered. This has made it difficult to quantify production and exchange among the people of Siaya. Where statistical figures are given for quantities of marketed produce and labour returns, these mostly cover the former colonial district (for example, Central Kavirondo District). This study, nevertheless, uses them in the hope that they will give a clue of what happened in Siaya.

Further, the respondents could not recall nor provide figures on production during the pre-colonial period, though it is clear that production was high from their accounts and demonstrations. This makes a quantitative comparison and analysis of data between pre-colonial and colonial agricultural production very difficult.

The researcher encountered in the field the problem of travelling costs and the task of transcribing oral information. Money and time were very rare resources. Another limitation, as often happens with researchers of this nature, was the likelihood of the researcher having overlooked certain issues which may have been important.

The study lacks detailed ethnological accounts as this is beyond the scope and purpose of the study. Finally, perhaps it would have been necessary to study in detail how livestock keeping was transformed but due to lack of time and being that it is beyond the scope of this study we have left it out. The study looks at the Luo

CHAPTER TWO

2.0. THE LUO SOCIETY AND ECONOMY ON THE EVE OF COLONIAL RULE

2.1 Migration and Settlement

The people that currently live in Siaya have been referred to as 'hybrid population' (Ogot, 1967:8). Hybrid because the Luo absorbed and integrated other peoples as they moved from the north before they settled in the area. Nevertheless, there is a dominant culture and language, dholuo, which has been acquired and adopted by the diverse people inhabiting the area. This study gives only a brief account of migration and settlement of the Luo-speaking peoples.

Sometimes during the sixteenth century, the first Luo settlers moved into the Nyanza area of Western Kenya. Ogot (1967) divides the Luo migration into Nyanza in four successive waves: the Joka-Jok, the Jok-Owiny, the Jok-Omolo, and a miscellaneous group comprising the Suba, Sakwa, Asembo, Uyoma, and Kano. From an original homeland somewhere near the eastern sections of Bahr-el-Ghazal and Equitorial provinces in the Republic of Sudan, the Luo speaking peoples gradually moved Southward to Uganda, parts of Congo and Ethiopia, and eventually into Western Kenya (Herring, 1974; Cohen and Atieno-Odhiambo, 1989) Joka-Jok groups comprising Alego, Nyinek and Seje were the first to arrive and settle in Western Kenya at Ligala in Samia. They later expanded to Got Ramogi in Yimbo. At a later stage because of disagreements Joka-Chuanya sojourned to

South Nyanza while other groups moved to inhabit Gem, Sakwa and Asembo (Ochieng`, 1974:23-35; Jalang`o-Ndeda, 1991:51).

The Jok-Owiny groups settled in Busoga for some generations before moving across Samia, where some of them remained, and finally settling in Alego. They constitute the founders of present day Kowil, Wanyenjra in Yimbo, Kadimo, Karuoth, Karapul, Kogelo, Kanyabol and Agoro in Alego; Kanyakwar in Kisumu and Kamot and Konya in Kano (Ochieng` 1974:61). After settling in Samia, Jok-Molo migrated to Yimbo before moving to West Alego. However, a number of Jok-Omolo groups moved to occupy present day Gem in Siaya and Uyoma due to pressure from other incoming Luo groups. Others crossed the lake and established new homes in South Nyanza due to over-population (Ochieng` 1974: 27-28). Those who composed Jok-Omolo were Jo-Ugenya, Jo-Uholo, Jo-Gem, Joka-Gan (South Nyanza) and Jo-Unami (Samia) (Jalang`o-Ndeda, 1991:52).

When the Luo arrived and settled in Western Kenya their new homesteads, ligala, were normally fortified for the purposes of security. As soon as ligala became over-populated, their offsprings were forced to move and build a new home, dala (singular), which was not as fortified as ligala. The end result of ligala and mier (plural) is referred to as gweng`. Alliances developed among gwenge (gweng`-Singular) for strategic purposes. Long distance diplomacy were also necessary (for example, Luo-Samia relations). This ensured survival in the hostile world of seventeenth and eighteenth centuries.

By 1900 the settlement of the people of Siaya was almost complete. The different clans had an economic organisation, the normative system, the political constitution, the

mechanisms and agencies and other derived requirements which affect all societies alike (Anderson, 1970:101).

2.2 Politico-Religious Organisation

By the nineteeth century the Luo of Siaya had already evolved a way of life, a culture, and, of course, a system of government. The largest political unit to which a Luo person could belong was oganda (sub-ethnic division) made up of semi-autonomous political units called gwenge. The territory of the oganda was called piny. Each oganda was a gathering of many clans. It was composed of a powerful clan to which others attached themselves for security and protection against neighbouring alliances (Whisson, 1964:22; Odinga, 1968:12; Jalang'o-Ndeda, 1991:55).

The elders of the oganda, (jodong-piny), were usually the leaders of gwenge. Oganda (singular) was mandated to arbitrate in internal disputes between gwenge, pronounce war or negotiate peace with other sub-ethnic divisions and mobilise gwenge for external war. The Luo were divided into 12 or 13 ogendini (plural) varying in size from about 10,000 to 70,000 persons. Each oganda was an independent economic, political and ritual unit. Each had its own ruoth (leader). The ruoth was the Jural-political leader of the oganda. The power of ruoth depended on his ability to settle disputes and to direct his people in war. In some ogendini he was also a prophet and a medicineman (jabilo) (Ogot, 1963:252; Whisson, 1964:23-24). Each ruoth had a council (buch piny), consisting of clan elders (jodong dhoot), the peace maker (ogaye), and the 'tribal' war leader (osumba mirwayi). The council dealt with matters affecting the whole 'tribe', such as famine, rain, war, 'tribal' sacrifices and prayers, and peace. It also acted as the final court of appeal for the whole oganda.

Within the oganda, a hierarchy of ruodhi (plural) had developed. Each gweng (country, or what Southall has called 'settlement') had an assistant ruoth appointed by the ruoth. Such assistant ruodhi had their own councils (doho), and their own peace makers. The doho dealt with local matters and also acted as local courts. All cases, both civil and criminal, were brought first before the doho. This included such cases as those of robbery, homicide, witchcraft, land, arson and adultery. Appeals could then be made to buch piny. Doho was composed of jodong-gweng (country elders) and the local ogaye (Southall, 1952; Odinga, 1968:23-25; Ochieng', 1974:49).

Although few of the Ogendini were exogamous, most marriages were with Luo women from ogendini other than one's own. This was found desirable for strategic reasons in that one was not allowed to fight relatives or one could seek asylum from relatives. Also a man who sought political power would first consolidate his position within the oganda by marrying women from as many clans as he could afford (Whisson, 1964:24-25; Jalang'o-Ndeda, 1991:56).

Within the oganda there were several gwenge. The inhabitants of a gweng' were the dominant clan which initially annexed the territory. It also leased out its territory to stranger lineages and clans (jodak) – such were usually of Luo origin. Thus within each gweng' there was usually a dominant clan which claimed to possess all the land in the gweng' through conquest or initial occupation or annexation. All other people who were not members of the dominant clan were considered as tenants or jodak (jadak – singular). The highest political organ in a gweng' was jodong gweng'. Membership to this council was open to all heads of lineages of the dominant clan – elders of the jodak communities who had shown special

talents were incorporated into the council. The jodong-gweng` was led by the head of the most senior lineage of the dominant clan.

The above jodong-gweng` was the custodian of clan land. They determined the boundaries of gweng`, clan and lineage holdings. They leased out land to all jodak and acted as the final court of appeal in all land cases within gweng`. The jodong-gweng` was responsible for internal administration of gweng` and for carrying out ritual ceremonies. Decision by the people was binding on all subjects. Those who broke the regulations of jodongo (elders) were cursed. An effective curse from jodongo caused the culprit to suffer from chira. Persistent criminals could be expelled by jodongo.

Clan lineages were called libamba (libembini-plural), each tracing descent from the house of a wife of the eponymous founder of the clan. Libamba was further sub-divided into segments called keyo which was made up of compound poligamous families which traced descent from a common great-grandfather. The point of division being descent from the house of one of his wives (Jalang`o-Ndeda, 1991:58). The members of each of these groups shared a common grandfather and were therefore referred to as jokakwaro. Jokakwaro was made up of groups each having descended from a hut of one of the wives of kwaro (grandfather). Jokakwaro was further divided into jokawuoro, people of one father literally (Wilson, 1952:2). In the village the entire group was referred to as jokawuoro but within jokawuoro one siblings of each woman identified themselves as jokamiyo – a group of full brothers.

Dala, served as the basic political, productive, reproductive and socialization unit. It constituted a man, his wife (or wives) and children. Most political decisions were made and

executed by the lineage segment most immediately affected by whatever problem may be at hand. On the basic level this was done by wuon dala (homestead head). This wuon dala was the primary authority in his compound and made all the major decisions in the homestead. These included settlement of disputes, relations between his dala and other mier distribution of crops and land (Schiller, 1982: 64-68).

The political systems of the people of Siaya, were based on the principles of kinship, seniority and territoriality. These principles were of long standing and did not suddenly develop in the ninetieth century. They were constantly adjusted to meet new challenges and were duplicated at all the levels of socio-political organisation.

The basic level at which the principles operated was the dala. It's members were bound together by feelings of affection, respect and fear for the father and older brothers and co-operation in economic activities (Herring, 1977; Ogot, 1984). The respect and fear felt for the father was based on his judicial, distributive and ritual functions. He possessed the powers to bless an obedient son or daughter and to curse recalcitrant ones. After his death, his eldest son took over these responsibilities. The family homestead was demarcated with euphorbia trees.

Jokakwaro was led by a senior elder, jaduong' gweng', from the core lineage. He performed judicial functions, distributed land among the constituent families and represented them in their relations with other lineages. He also possessed ritual powers.

The need to cope with the problems of gaining adequate economic resources and exploiting them to the maximum, and also defending these resources from natural disaster

and external raids led to the emergence (and political and ritual importance) of at least four types of leaders (Obudho, O.I., 1998). These included healers or seers, magicians, and rainmakers, jobilo, who were consulted to avert both natural and human calamity; the war leader, osumba mirwayi, who sanctioned war for offensive and defensive purposes; the peace maker, ogaye, who was conversant with the laws of the community and was responsible for dispensation of justice, and the okebe, whose leadership emanated from his wealth (Mboya, 1983:9-12).

These leaders discharged their functions in consultation with each other and other elders in different councils, such as buch piny, in which general territorial matters were discussed; buch lweny which discussed war matters and buch doho where cases of indebtedness and other infractions of the law were judged (Mboya, 1983: 9-10). There was a police force, ogulmama, which enforced the law. Throughout the nineteeth century Siaya remained highly acephalous.

Religion played a very significant role in the day to day life of the Luo. It was generally practised at the dala level. The Luo belief in life after death gave rise to the idea that though a man might die physically he would all the same continue to protect and care for his family, relatives and friends. The dead guarded the living as they were invoked to keep evil forces away and their wrath was held accountable for misfortunes. The dead manifested themselves in dreams and used diviners as their intermediaries. Sacrifices could be offered to him or his name given to a baby. The dead were buried in shallow graves or in houses for communication (Olag, 1978:63; Jalang'o-Ndeda, 1991:61).

The Luo also recognized the supreme God Nyasaye as the only dispenser of life, health and wealth to them that were obedient to custom. God was believed to manifest himself in all extra-ordinary things, for example, the moon, the sun, the great serpents, the huge rocks and all the miracles of nature. These things were not worshipped at all but were seen as supreme expressions of the all mightiness and majesty of God. Traditionally all could worship God at any time and without any form of sacrifices. Daily prayer was offered to the rising sun; a short supplication which was reinforced by spitting in that direction. Evil was not his domain. Besides the supreme God the Luo contended that each individual had his or her own God, (Nyasache, who in collaboration with the ancestors of the particular person was responsible for his or her well being (Odaga, 1980:23).

2.3.0 Socio-Economic Organisation

2.3.1 Social Structure

The Luo had an economic system which was inextricable from the social system and, therefore, cannot be analysed independently from the society as a whole. The Luo lived in homesteads housing several families who were connected by kinship ties. Each homestead formed the basic religious, social and economic unit. Generally, a homestead consisted of father, his wife or wives, unmarried daughters and sons and sometimes servants (Wasumbini). In most cases wuon dala, invited his brothers and cousins to stay with him. This was for strategic reasons. Among the Luo the size of the family depended on the number of wives a husband had. In certain cases the wealth of an individual had also swelled the size of his family. It is rare, for example, to find a wealthy man in Luo society with one wife (Ogutu, 1975:18; Ondanda, O.I. 1998).

In a polygamous homestead the husband was the head of many households (udi). In order to manage these udi effectively he erected his own private hut (abila) at the centre of the homestead to act as the administrative headquarters. His wives lived in separate huts located along the homestead fence according to their seniority in terms of marriage order (Ocholla-Ayayo, 1980:34).

In a polygamous setting each co-wife was referred to as wuon ot meaning that she was the head of her household and the leader of domestic and economic activities there-in. Her sons and daughters were under her and the children of each household, ot, grew up with the idea of odwa (our house) thus instilling in them the concept of collective ownership which in turn led to collective responsibility. This led to competition among various udi who strove for recognition and independence. The co-wives eventually became antagonistic in the control of property. Moreover, there was competition for the household favour from the wuon dala. This rivalry referred to as nyiego was practised as a means of enhancing self-pride and unity. The children of one wife were united against another (Ochieng', 1974:29; Obudho, O.I, 1998).

Each ot was in-charge of the activities required to sustain the needs of its members, for example, production, deployment and application of labour power. Ot also determined the economic objectives, for example, what to produce, where and how. Whatever co-operation, for example, lineage co-operative, saga (which involved lineage coming together to assist in farming and other crucial activities), the basic aims of the household were kept supreme. Saga, for instance, did not set up its own goals but simply carried out the desires of the household that summoned its services.

Puoth min (the land of one's mother) was shared by the sons as they married. Wuon ot gave her son a part of her land at that time. This portion of the land was given to the son's wife and was henceforth called puoth nyar kuma nyio, meaning the garden of the daughter of the stranger village (Ndege, 1987:54; Onyalo, O.I. 1998). Unmarried sons inherited those farms remaining in the event of the death of their mother. The farms given to a wife by her husband were permanent properties of her sons. It was only they (a mother and sons) who had the right to exchange them with those agnatic kin or allocate them to jadak (tenants), kimirwa (born out of wedlock), misumba (servant) or their own wives when they married. However, the farms of a wife who deserted the husband before bearing him a son were repossessed by him (Wilson, 1953:12). If she had a son prior to her departure, then her farms were the son's future inheritance regardless of how long he remained with his mother elsewhere (Suda, O.I. 1998). All land disputes within the dala were the province of wuon dala. Each wife had scattered strips of land which helped to prevent the loss of all crops in the event of a localised crop failure (Ndege, 1987:56).

2.3.2 Division of Labour

The Luo division of labour was determined by gender and age. Men were required to build houses, granaries and fences and to guard the homestead in the event of an attack from enemies. This is why, simba (sleeping house for older boys) was situated by the gate. Men also spent their time in fishing, hunting and gathering, specialised crafts and exchange. For example, they produced hoe and matchets, clothes, shields and ropes.

Women, on the other hand, were responsible for the housework and child care, storing and caring for food supply, most of the planting, weeding and harvesting and for

plastering and repairing the walls and surfaces of the house. In the case of planting and harvesting, the eldest wife was always the first as it was considered a bad omen and a breach of house protocol if she did not do it first. In a community of jopiny (owners) and jodak jopiny took the lead, followed by jodak because, as tenants, the latter could not signal the former to begin farm work (Ndege, 1987:59).

Every Luo wife basically controlled the crops grown on her land (puothe) so as to feed the people in her household (ode). She was also allowed to exchange grain for livestock and other varieties of foods or donate it to needy relatives. Wuon ot also dealt with the processing of her crops into food, cleaned and dried the beans, pounded and ground sorghum and millet and in later years cassava and maize. In Luo society, therefore, hard work in the field was one of the major qualities for a marriageable woman. The training of a girl was in preparation for the role of a prospective wife and mother in future married life (Johnson, 1980:180; Jalang'o-Ndeda, 1991:74).

Generally, the males served as the leaders of homesteads and sometimes households depending on how many wives one had. In the realm of decision making some exerted control over many aspects of household undertakings while others tended to delegate their authority to wives and sons. For example, in homesteads with few members their head would take part in most of the household operations, while in homesteads with more members, delegation was conspicuous. Although women were not supposed to give their views openly on any pertinent issue, privately they were consulted. Before a man took an important decision which could affect the family he had to consult, in most cases, the first wife, mikayi (Odaga, 1980:22). Men had to consult particularly with mikayi because all

important rituals which affected the homestead were performed by her. She was considered the co-owner of the homestead with the husband (Jalang'o-Ndeda, 1991:75).

The foregoing indicate that women were in control of domestic economy. Production know-how of Luo women covered a plethora of domestic work, agricultural operations and limited livestock care. Women were also involved in traditional industries such as poetry and weaving of mats, some kinds of baskets as well as transportation and storage of some of their wares (Jalang'o-Ndeda, 1991:76). In more recent periods in Luo development, digging became the most important agricultural task for women. The women had also to know how to keep cattle, sheep and goats because in time of war women assumed these responsibilities (Johnson, 1980:182).

2.3.3 Agriculture

Before and during the nineteenth century the Luo clans that arrived in Siaya were mainly pastoralists who kept large herds of cattle and small flock of sheep and goats; they practised crop cultivation in small scale. However, due to climatic changes and the occurrence of natural calamities affecting their livestock, the Luo had to change the balance between animal husbandry and crop cultivation. Famines like apamo, the great rinderpest epidemic of about 1890 and 1891, killed and trimmed their large herds of cattle into smaller size, thus leading to gradual transition from animal rearing to agriculture as the basis of the local or domestic economy (Ehret, 1976:14). The migration from the lake region to relatively higher areas like Kisumu, Gem, Uholo and North Ugenya also contributed to the transformation of Luo economy. By the arrival of the British in Kenya crop cultivation was playing the leading role in the sector of food production.

In agricultural production, the Luo cultivated a variety of crops. The basic crops were sorghum, a drought resistant crop, pearl millet, finger millet, simsim and various legumes. Sorghum and eleusine appeared to have been the chief and only crops for which special rituals were performed – an indication of their long association with them. They adopted some bananas, types of beans and peas, variety of sweet potatoes and yams from their neighbours. These crops provided starch, minerals, protein and oil, thus providing a balanced nutritional value.

The implements which were employed in clearing land were matchets – ofuadho or ojalo – while those for cultivation were wooden hoes (lihaya or kasir) which were made from a type of strong wood (ruga or odar) and iron hoes which were imported from either Yimbo or their Luyia neighbours, and later also made and repaired locally by iron smiths (Ondanda, O.I. 1998).

Land was occupied on clan basis. Clan elders divided land among individual families. Within each family, the family head allotted land to individual households. The family head had his own land – mondo – which he cultivated with the help of his family members. Members of individual households also cultivated their own land. Wealthy people also possessed wasumbuni who worked for them. As payment, the wealthy men provided them with food and also helped them pay dowry to secure wives. A wealthy man possessed two such servants or more (Othwila, O.I. 1998). Since there was plenty of land, the size of the fields brought under cultivation depended on the size of labour a family was able to mobilize and also on its members' subsistence requirements. Acquiring the labour of many wives, children and servants was the chief means of increasing production. There were also occasions where wuon dala drew the labour of his extended family and friends. The

members of jokakwaro or jokawuoro would often pool their labour for certain agricultural undertakings such as ploughing, sowing, weeding and harvesting. Each person contributed his or her labour voluntarily being aware that he or she could also call others for assistance when he or she was in need. Such group work – saga – was also employed in establishing new homes (especially the building of new houses) and in other large cooperative projects. This arrangement helped various households to fulfill their economic targets and at the same time helping in cementing socio-political ties. Everyone who was old enough possessed a hoe and the youth were not allowed to wonder about without work.

The type of crop cultivation that existed can be described as shifting cultivation and rotation of crops since land was in plenty. A household shifted their field every few years. This practice of shifting cultivation allowed used land to regain fertility. It was believed that every person had a permanent right to a piece of land in order to till and plant crops. It is the land of one`s grandfather – lop kwaro – and jokakwaro, which were the key units in Luo society. Land was mainly inherited through patrilineage although in certain circumstances it could be inherited through persons other than agnatic kin. A sole survivor of jokakwaro would inherit all of the lop kwaro. Father`s land –lop wuoro – was inherited by the sons. If there was only one son then he would inherit all the lop wuoro in its entirety (Wilson, 1953:11).

Although both gender cultivated, men`s duty was to clear the bushes and break the soil. They went out to the fields first. Women then brought them food and took over. Men were then free to attend to other duties, such as building of houses, granaries and fences, fishing, hunting, herding, discussing clan affairs and guarding the homestead in the event of an attack from enemies. Women also did the harvesting together with young boys and girls.

Since the other tasks, such as being ready for war and discussing clan affairs, were not performed all the time, it was obvious that women worked longer in the fields. This would suggest that their labour was exploited.

The elders, in conjunction with medicine men, decided when the tilling of land should commence and organised ceremonies in which sacrifices were offered to the ancestors to ensure high yields (Omollo, O.I. 1998). The oldest man in the clan was the first to cultivate and sow crops. He was then followed by the rest of the members of the clan. Within individual families, the senior wives were the first to cultivate, to be followed by the younger wives. This arrangement was also observed during harvests (Ndege, 1987:52; Otweyo, O.I., 1998). The nature of farm work was determined by the different seasons of the Luo calendar year. There were basically four seasons in a cultivation year:

> Chwiri, the long rains which occurred from March to June when the planting and weeding was done; oro, the dry season which fell in part of July and August when harvesting took place; opon the short rains in October and November; oro again from December to February... (Jalang'o-Ndeda, 1991:70).

Both Gem and Alego planted in the two rainy seasons since the eighteenth century (Schiller, 1982:34; Ogutu, 1975:16). These activities were also determined by the period the various crops took to get ready for weeding and to get ripe.

Production was primarily for subsistence. This was partly due to the limitations of technology which made farm work laborious, and partly, because people produced mainly to satisfy their food requirements. The harvesting of finger millet, for example, required between 50 and 75 man-days per acre since it was done manually (Dunbar, 1969:6). Then it

had to be threshed and winnowed before being ground by hand. Each woman in the homestead possessed her own granaries in which produce was stored. She was required to guard against wastage of produce under her care. She did not exchange or use it in any other way without the knowledge of wuon dala (Ondanda, O.I. 1998).

Problems in crop cultivation included drought, pests and diseases. As rainfall was not completely reliable, drought sometimes hit Siaya resulting in very small amounts of harvested crops and therefore famine. The people still remember the famines of ongonga and abwao which were caused by droughts which occurred in 1875 and 1888 respectively (Otweyo, O.I. 1998). A number of famines also occurred in the course of the twentieth century occasioned by drought and worsened by colonial economic policies. Pests like army worms, grasshoppers and locusts were a menace to crops. Stalk borers and shoot flies were common sorghum and maize pests. Diseases like rust, tar spot and blast attacked finger millet (Dunbar, 1969:8-9). Birds and wild game also destroyed crops. Although charms were used to protect crops from pests and diseases (Odawa, O.I. 1998), the surest measures against such menace were crop rotation, shifting cultivation and burning as a way of clearing land. Shelters were erected near the fields for use in guarding crops against the depredations of birds and wild game (Mang'ong'o, O.I. 1998). The growing of root crops like sweet potatoes and yams was another measure against attacks by locusts and droughts (Ndege, 1987:54).

However, it should be emphasized that famines in pre-colonial Luo society were not as frequent as they were during the colonial period. This was because of a number of factors. First, their mixed economy of seed culture and pastoral activities shielded them from the whims of nature. When crops failed they fell back on animal and fish products. It

was seldom that animal and crop diseases struck at the same time. Second, land and human power were there in plenty. During, for example, digging, planting and harvesting everybody was involved. In those days there were no people participating in wage employment outside ancestral land. Third, apart from cultivating drought resistant millets, such as ochut, andiwo and kal and a drought resistant traditional maize, the Luo also relied a lot on wild vegetables such as susa and odielo, which they fell back onto when food shortages persisted. The Luo also ate a variety of wild fruits such as sangla and ochuoga. Apart from livestock, fish and birds, wild animals meat also constituted a regular source of protein for the Luo. Fourth, seldom were livestock and crop surpluses sold. Every married man was required to have his mondo which was only used when the general family stores – dere – were depleted. Finally, the elastic kinship system of the extended family guaranteed redistribution of food during periods of midenyo (starvation). Thus, unless there was a terrible natural calamity the Luo economy and social institutions guaranteed sufficient food for everybody.

2.3.4 Livestock Keeping

Although agriculture gradually gained importance among the Luo of Siaya after their settlement at the present homeland, livestock keeping continued to play an important role in their economy. People kept cattle, goats and sheep. They also kept chicken.

Livestock was acquired in at least six ways. One was through bride wealth payment. This was the easiest means of possessing many cattle. One who had many daughters received many cattle when his daughters were married. Another way was by raiding enemies' cattle. One did not raid cattle which belonged to members of his own clan but

those of rival clans and other ethnic groups. Livestock was also captured through victory in war against other clans and ethnic groups (Ocholla-Ayayo, 1980:38-39).

Further, the system of stock-lending (Moso or riembo) also enabled those who did not have cattle to build their own stock. One who was loaned cattle by a wealthy friend later permanently retained a bull and a cow from which he started to build his own stock (Othwila, O.I. 1998). What he retained was a form of payment by the lender for having looked after his cattle well. For the stock-lender, the system was a safeguard against the disappearance of his cattle in the event of disease or raids (Ndege, 1987:55). Exchange of surplus grain was yet another way of having livestock. One started by producing surplus grain that he bartered for goats or sheep which reproduced and were exchanged for cattle. If one had large quantities of grain one would also exchange these directly for a cow which one would carefully look after until it reproduced (Onduru, 1992:37). It took one many years to get cattle by this method. Those who were blessed inherited their parents' cattle.

In the Luo society, livestock keeping was of subsistence value as it was a source of milk, meat and blood which supplemented the Luo vegetable diet. It was also a way of accumulating and conserving wealth (Herring, 1978:12). Cattle also provided other products like manure, for fertilizing land, urine for adding a sour taste to and preserving milk, and hides and skins used for bedding, for making shields, sandals and clothing, all of which were useful in the domestic economy (Hay, 1972:92; Schiller, 1982:36). Livestock was both a use-value determining material and social conditions of production and reproduction, and a religious value. Livestock was a source of prestige and power and people who kept large herds of cattle commanded a lot of respect in the society and often married many wives. Cattle were indispensable in marriage transactions, as consideration

for wealth, in ties between owners and tenants, in kinship relations and in payments for homicide (Schiller, 1982:39; Jalang'o-Ndeda, 1991:72).

Livestock played a significant role in the sacrificial life of the traditional Luo. Cattle being part and parcel of social life were given names of people with respect in the community by the herdsboys; names, for example, of reknown wrestlers of fame. Small animals were important destined mainly for sacrifice (Ogutu, 1978:13). A man's cattle were sometimes taken a long when he went to war. The sight of his most precious possession was thought to give him additional courage. Cattle also accompanied mourners to funerals because as part of the community they had to pay their last respects to the dead (Jalang'o-Ndeda, 1991:72).

All the livestock in the homestead belonged to wuon dala. He distributed them to the different households, those of his wives and his sons' wives. He decided the use to which the livestock in the homestead were put. This was either for the payment of dowry for any of his sons' wives, exchange for grain and agricultural implements, or for slaughter (Ochiel, O.I. 1998). Wuon dala also organised a ceremony – dolo – once in every year. In this ceremony, a cow was slaughtered and plenty of beer brewed. Lineage members were invited and came together to feast. After the great rinderpest epidemic of about 1890-1891, the custom changed and it was goats or sheep that were slaughtered rather than a cows. This was due to shortage of cattle. Religiously, the Luo believed that dolo safeguarded their livestock against raids and diseases. Socio-politically, it strengthened relations among lineage members since it brought people together. It bound them together and cemented kinship relations (Ndege, 1987:57). More practically, the ceremony was a redistributive system. Both the fortunate and the unfortunate members of the community feasted together.

The ceremony was a result of the uncertainty which characterised cattle keeping. Diseases such as rinderpest, anthrase and Bovin pleuropneumonia occasionally broke out in epidemic proportions and killed large number of stock as did happen in the 1880s and a number of times in the twentieth century. Cattle raids were also frequent. Wild animals such as hyenas (otoyo) and leopards (kwach) were another menace. Among different clans in Siaya there were veterinarians who prepared herbs for the treatment of diseases which attacked livestock. These experts were paid in kind for their services (Okelo, O.I. 1998).

Livestock, particularly cattle, were herded by young men on communal grazing land. Younger boys looked after sheep and goats. Herding was done on a rotational basis by members of the family or communally by members of the minimal lineage (Onduru, 1992:40).

2.3.5 Hunting and Gathering

Hunting and gathering were supplementary economic activities done on a part time basis in Luo society. Kokwaro's (1972) studies among the Luo reveal that several years of experience with plants of various species in the area, has made the Luo to know and appreciate the herbal, nutritional and technological values of these plants. Among the food gathered, usually by women and girls, were different types of vegetables such as Gynandropis gynandra (locally known as dek), Solanum nigrum (osuga), Asystasia schimperi (Atipa) and others locally known as mboga, apoth, onyulo, muto and akeyo. The Luo also ate a variety of wild fruits, such as sangla, budho, ochuoga, olago, ochok and onjak (Musewe, Ongira, Abonyo, O.I. 1998). Apart from fruits there existed edible mashrooms (obuolo) like obuoch oruka (Termitomyces microcarpas) and obuoch alando (Termitomyces

rabuori). The Luo medicine men gathered medicine inform of herbs (stems, roots and leaves) for treating both human and livestock diseases. The forests also supplied most of the raw-materials needed for building granaries and houses and for making implements such as knife and hoe handles, stools and mortars, not to mention the production of traps for both fishing and ensnaring small animals. This great occupation of gathering continued as late as the mid twentieth century in Luoland. However, obuolo collection continues even today especially among the people of Alego, Sakwa, Gem and Uholo (Ondanda, O.I, 1998).

Hunting was mainly done by young energetic men and boys. The wet climate with forests and savanna vegetations in Siaya which acted as a splendid shelter and grazing land for many species of game encouraged the occupation of hunting. Some of the game included, antelopes, ant bears, rabbits, warthogs, buffaloes, porcupines – among others. Small animals like rabbits were ensnared. Bigger animals were hunted by men with clubs, matchets, spears, bows and arrows and with the assistance of well-trained dogs.

Generally, hunting was most prevalent during the dry season, oro, when there was little or no crop cultivation, especially after harvest. Jatend dwar (leader of the hunting group) was the think-tank and the chief organizer of hunting expeditions. He was an expert hunter and organised a hunting team ranging from 60 to 80 people. A team constituted people from various clans. Young boys and older men trailed behind the hunters, to carry meat, a lot of which was obtained in a single expedition.

There was large-scale hunting, dwar and a small-scale one, apedha. Most animals were hunted for meat since livestock such as cattle were only butchered during important occassions. Meat was stored in form of aliya (smoked meat) for future use. Buffalo skin was

highly valued for making shields which could also be bartered for grains to the neighbouring Luyia. Ferocious animals like lion and leopard were not hunted but could be killed due to self-defence. Their skins were used for making ceremonial attire. Everyone had a share of the spoils of the hunt; those who struck the animal dead received their hind legs. Hunting as a sport had social functions of linking groups beyond the minimal lineage, thus creating a sense of affiliation to a large group like the clan (Ogowo, Ong'or, Arum, O.I.1998)

Birds were either killed with sling shots (ambururu) or trapped. Young boys trapped smaller birds such as aluru and oyuer while bigger birds like ogungo and awendo were trapped by men. Birds were important as a source of meat as well as for ritual purposes. The youth were prohibited from eating birds like akuru (dove) and it was only grandmothers who ate them. It was a taboo for a married woman to eat chicken which was a reserve for men. The feathers of certain birds formed part of ceremonial attire especially during traditional dance (Ndege, 1987:48).

2.3.6. Trade and Exchange

Trade and exchange catered for important goods that could not be obtained in an area. For instance chieno (tassel for married women) came from Sakwa where it could be purchased for a goat, or iron goods (hoes, bangles, matchets, etc.). Iron goods came mainly from Samia and Yimbo. In the nineteenth century there was an increase in this trade with almost set market places. The people from near the lake (Asembo, Yimbo, etc.) brought various types of fish, reed mats and salts in exchange for sorghum and finger millet. There were periodic market places situated along the borders. Markets were highly respected

places and mostly active during famine. Since wives came from different clans and lineages, they became the common trade links between these groups (Butterman, 1975:74).

Within a community there were individuals who specialised in various skills and regularly exchanged their goods with other members of the community. These skills were often inherited and were secrets of the family members. The chief specialists were blacksmiths, leather workers, harpists, singers, basket makers, potters and teeth extractors. Most of these services were exchanged locally often in response to a request.

Trade established links between communities beyond their clans and ethnicity. This gave rise to acculturation due to intermarriages between the people of Siaya and their neighbours. It provided an impetus for mass production of grains and industrial products as well as transfer of technological know-how. It led to socio-economic differentiation since it provided an impetus for the process of accumulation of wealth. Accumulation of wealth was in turn an important stepping stone to political influence and leadership. A wealthy man had the means to feast with elders, host meetings and in the final analysis attracted supporters and clients (Onyalo, O.I. 1998).

Conclusion

It is clear that the social, political and economic organization of the people of Siaya evolved over many years as a result of the people's interactions with different environments and other groups of people. The result of these was the emergence of economic and social systems, which operated at the household, family and lineage levels. We have argued that the principal change, which occurred in the late nineteenth century, was the shift from

pastoralism to active crop production. This was brought about by the great rinderpest epidemic together with a chain of other epidemics from around 1889 to 1894. There was also ecological change, which led to lack of enough pasture for livestock.

Production was mainly for subsistence because it was constrained by simple technology, low population and limited market. Surplus produce that did occur was exchanged for industrial products such as iron hoes and also cattle. It was at the level of exchange that people accumulated wealth in the form of wives, stores of grain and cattle. The basis of agricultural organization was the kinship system, which, together with the principles of seniority and territoriality operated at the level of domestic units within individual families, and at the level of minimal and maximal lineage. This determined the allocation and ownership of land, division of labour, and the distribution of products. This local mode of production that had evolved on the eve of colonialism was dynamic, diverse, sound and rational.

CHAPTER THREE

3.0. THE ESTABLISHMENT OF COLONIAL RULE AND POLICIES

3.1. The Establishment of Colonial Rule

In about 1894 Colonel Henry Colville, the first Commissioner of the new government of the Uganda protectorate established an administrative sub-station at Mumias, and Sir Frederick Spire was the first officer to be posted there (Dealing, 1974:308). The Europeans believed then that Kenya was not as important to their interests as Uganda (Ogot, 1963:249; Mungeam, 1966:7; Ochieng', 1985:88). Consequently, Mumias served merely as a calling station for the Europeans as they travelled between the coast and Uganda.

In 1883, Joseph Thomson made a momentous journey across Maasailand (PC/NZA.1/4;1908-9, KNA; Mungeam, 1966:2). He reached Mumias in December 1883 and stayed for only two days despite the extravagant reception he was accorded by Mumia to win his comradeship (Thomson, 1962:160; Osogo, 1962:77). Two years later, in 1885, Bishop James Hannington passed by Mumias to take charge of the Church Missionary Society station that had been established in Uganda eight years earlier (Osogo, 1975:11). He hurriedly left for Uganda despite entreaties from Mumia that he would be killed if he entered Buganda from the east. The Bishop subsequently met his death for defying rules that governed entry into Buganda.

The two journeys, nevertheless, encouraged more European ventures across Kenya into Uganda as they coincided with the period when European Scramble for Africa was in its most earnest and critical phase. In accordance with the "sphere of influence" doctrine of the

Berlin agreement of 1884-85, the British government was forced to increase and concretize its presence in the region before it was too late (Hobley, 1970:68; Salim, 1973:54; Van Zwanenberg, 1976:124).

The situation saw a change of British official opinion and the granting of a royal charter to William Mackinnon's company, the British East Africa Association (Van Zwanenberg, 1976:115). The British government had only one year earlier, in 1887, refused to grant the charter. Mackinnon's company henceforth became the Imperial British East Africa Company (IBEACo.).

The company, essentially commercial in its orientation, was expected to administer and preserve the British presence in the interland of East Africa (Ochieng', 1985:85; Owino, 1993:144). It began its mission by sending two officials, Fredrick Jackson and Ernest Gedge, to plan the safest and most economically viable route that could be used between the Coast and Uganda (Dealing, 1974:301). The duo's assignment included the identification and establishment of cheap and secure stations on the route. In 1889, they arrived in Mumias and found that it met their requirements (Were, 1967a:161-162).

It was, through Mumias that the influence of the British-hitherto confined largely to Uganda – slowly began to radiate into western Kenya. This influence amplified with the signing in 1890 of the Heligoland Treaty when the Germans formally recognized Uganda and Kenya as part of the British "sphere of influence". Thus, it was from Uganda that the British occupation spread into Kenya. As a result of the treaty, the people of Siaya unknowingly came under British jurisdiction.

But the treaty notwithstanding, the British government did not assume immediate control of their "sphere of influence" from the IBEACo. Yet the company was experiencing dire financial, management, transport and military problems (Mungeam, 1966: 9-10; Salim, 1973:69; Ochieng`, 1974:72 and 1985:86); In short, the company lacked the ability to administer the territory (PC/NZA.1/4, 1908-9, KNA). In 1894 it went bankrupt and withdrew (Salim, 1973:72; arap Ng`eny, 1970:112; Low, 1982:5; Nangulu, 1986:143), and the British government assumed control of the region (Salim, 1973:72). In June of that year the British declared a protectorate over Uganda whose Eastern Province also included the present day Nyanza and Western Provinces of Kenya. Subsequently they began to increase their presence and tighten control over Uganda and Kenya.

In the beginning, however, even the government was no better prepared for the task of administration than had been the IBEACo. since it lacked its own administrators (Mungeam, 1966:20; Low, 1982:5). This is what compelled Colonel Colville, to send his Valet, Fredrick Spire, to represent him and establish a British administration post in Mumias (Lonsdale, 1964:98; Ogot, 1967:232; Dealing, 1974:308; Esese, 1990:191; Owino, 1993:147). Though only a Valet, his presence began the consolidation of British rule in Western Kenya with Mumias as its official administrative station.

Spire`s administration lasted for only half a year within which he had not established any meaningful contact with the Luo except for Kitoto of Kano (Schiller, 1983:270-271; Jalang`o-Ndeda, 1991:84). In February 1895, he was replaced by C.W. Hobley who remained there until 1903. Hobley`s arrival in Mumias considerably increased the administrative presence of the British in the area. It was only a matter of time before effective colonial control was imposed on the Luo of Siaya.

It should be noted, however, that the British efforts in Nyanza up to about 1897 were largely limited to protecting communication links. The actual labour demands were light. Even the political aims were limited by the military resources. But with the mutiny of Sudanese troops in 1897, and rebellion in Uganda, the British position was first threatened and then strongly reinforced. New troops and supplies were rushed to the scene and this marked the beginning of a period of active domination of Nyanza. The result was increased need for porters (to supply the increased military establishment in Uganda) from a population that was unwilling to provide such labour. Indeed, the expedition against Alego (Siaya) in September, 1898 was one of the first ones to be carried out by Hobley's administration in specific response to a refusal to provide labour (Jalang'o-Ndeda, 1991:87). And on this and most subsequent expeditions Hobley began to demand labour as a proof of submission (Stictcher, 1985:12; Jalang'o-Ndeda, 1991:87).

The view that the Luo of Central Kavirondo, offered no armed resistance to the European intruders (Ogot, 1964) is accurate only if applied to figures such as Odera Ulalo and Adhola of Asembo. Other Luo south of Lake Victoria and the vicinity, could have welcomed them because of the threat of the Nandi, Kipsigis and Gusii who raided them constantly. But Luo to the north of Lake Victoria who were strategically placed like Uyoma took to attacking all the European boats passing between Kisumu and Uganda in 1899. Further, the demand for labour (porters) from these groups met with forcible rejection.

Between 1898 and 1903 military expeditions were organised by Hobley together with his allies-Wanga, Maasai, Gem and Asembo – against a number of Luo peoples, such as, Ugenya, Sakwa, Uyoma, Seme, Yimbo and Alego. Peace was ultimately concluded and the groups paid heavily in terms of livestock. They were also commanded to allow traders and travellers free passage through their territories and generally to obey the orders of the

administration. Their (colonialists) allies were rewarded with some of the captured livestock. For example, Odera Ulalo was a beneficiary and used some of the spoils to strengthen his ties with Adhola of Asembo (Jalang'o-Ndeda, 1991:89). In short, the entry of colonial rule into Central Kavirondo, and Kenya in general, was achieved through military conquest and numerous 'pacification' expeditions that were directed against resisting groups. It was force in the main that persuaded the Luo to submit to colonial rule.

The building of Uganda Railway also took place during Hobley's administration in Nyanza. It started in Mombasa in 1895 and reached Kisumu in December 1901. And in the same year Mumias was already declining in importance. It remained an official station but the administrative headquarters was moved to the lake side railway centre at Port Ugowe, shortly renamed Kisumu, whose influence was rapidly increasing. In 1902 Kisumu and Naivasha provinces were transferred from Uganda to the East African Protectorate, as Kenya was then called.

As the British colonialists were extending their tentacles into the Kavirondo another group of Europeans, the Christian missionaries were also expanding into the area. They built schools and began to convert people to Christianity. Thus Siaya had become a part of a large world, a colonial world based on political and economic system entirely different from that to which the local people were accustomed.

3.2 Colonial Administration and Imposition of Taxes

In 1910, the new Governor, Sir Percy Girouard issued an official memorandum outlining his own directions of policy, based on Lugardian theory of indirect rule. The

memorandum, which was sent to all provincial and District Commissioners in Kenya, contained the following statements:

> The fundamental principle and the only humane policy to be followed in dealing with peoples who have not reached a high stage of civilization is to develop on their own lines and in accordance with their own ideas and customs, purified in so far as is necessary.
>
> ... Not only is it my wish, but it is the direct order of the secretary for the colonies, that we should support the authority of the chiefs, council of elders and Headmen in Native Reserves, and the prestige and influence of the chiefs can be held by letting the peasantry see that the Government itself treats them as an integral part of the machinery of administration.
>
> By upholding the authority of Chiefs and Elders, I do not wish to imply that officers are to sit and enforce blindly all orders issued by these men who, after all, are only savages. The main object of administering the people through their chiefs is to prevent disintegration amongst the tribe; but active interests, supervision and guidance on the part of the officers of the administration are all necessary for the prevention of abuses...
>
> (KNA DC/CN/5/5).

From the foregoing, it is explicit that the colonial state was essentially concerned with security, for the maintenance of which, the administration would bank on colonial chiefs whose powers were to be subordinated to those of British administrative officers. It was certainly politically expedient and financially affordable for the colonial state to rely on African chiefs for the maintenance of order, collection of taxes, mobilisation of labour and enforcing commodity production than importing 'chiefs' from Britain to perform these duties. Inherent in Girouard's policy was the ideology of paternalism since the colonial chiefs had to carry out their duties under the direction of British officers. It should also be noted that there would soon be disjunctions between the new and the old systems. For both

territorially and qualitatively the positions and functions of the established local authorities were ultimately radically transformed (Tosh, 1973:479).

Even prior to Girouard's memorandum of 1910, the pre-colonial political structures were already subjected to transformation by the legal promulgations of the colonial state. In 1902 the East African Protectorate Village Headman Ordinance which sought to help in the appointment of administrative headmen (Ogot, 1963:253; Low, 1965:479) in every part of the protectorate and to grant such headmen powers to collect taxes and recruit labourers was enacted (Ogot, 1963; Low, 1965:479; Ndege, 1987:93) These headmen (later called chiefs) were charged with the duty of keeping law and order, collecting taxes and supplying labour for public works. It should be emphasized that unlike the ruodhi who were custodians of "tribal" laws and customs, the chiefs were civil servants, appointed by the Provincial Commissioners, and paid by the Central Government. Freed from the traditional beliefs on which traditional authority rested, and ruling in a society within which the Luo belief in Fate – a belief which had restrained the old rulers from any excesses – was gradually being undermined by Christianity, the new chiefs were prone to abuse power (Ogot, 1963:253).

Between 1907 and 1912 the powers of colonial chiefs were increased by further legal promulgations. The 1907 Courts Ordinance created Native Courts and recognized tribunals under the direct authority of the chief (Ogot, 1963:254; Middleton, 1968:351). Later, in 1911, the Native Tribunal Rules recognized the constitution of the council of elders in accordance with traditional custom (Middleton, 1968:352). The Native Authority Ordinance enlarged the formerly relatively minor powers of chiefs and laid down that they were to be appointed over specific areas (later to be called locations) whose boundaries were supposed

to coincide with pre-existing clan boundaries. In Siaya, chiefs were empowered to administer justice with the help of their council of elders.

Together, all these ordinances transformed the pre-colonial political structures. The Government, in introducing an indirect system of ruling, decided somewhat unwittingly to base it on indigenous institutions. A social and political set-up that had suited a migrating, semi-pastoral, community had now to be converted into an administrative machine for a settled, agricultural population. A centralized system had to be superimposed on a segmentary system with all the weaknesses inherent in the latter. Consequently, problems such as clan jealousies and rivalries, perpetual sub-divisions of lineages and therefore of land (all of which were soon intensified by a new struggle for political and economic power), which the Luo were accustomed to solving through secession or migration, had now to be tackled within fixed political and administrative entities (Ogot, 1963:253). It is not surprising, therefore, that these problems, endemic in acephalous society, have for decades bedevilled the administration of Siaya. As Mr. T.A. Watts, a former District Commissioner of Central Kavirondo (Siaya and Kisumu) has said:

> The administration has had a long experience of Luo segmentary units within the Native Authority... successive generations of Administrative Officers from the earliest days have complained bitterly of the 'clan-jealousies' of the tribe and their disruptive effects on the social life (Ogot, 1963:254).

One of the ways in which the people of Siaya immediately experienced the oppressiveness of colonialism was through taxation by which the colonial chiefs were instrumental in the appropriation of surplus for capitalisation of the settler sector. The earliest legislation imposing a tax on huts in Kenya was contained in the Hut Tax Regulations of 1901 which empowered the Native Commissioner to impose a tax on all huts

used as dwelling places, to be paid by all occupants (KNA DC/CN/3/5). These Regulations were repealed by the East African Hut Tax Ordinance of 1903 which specified that the Hut Tax should not exceed three Rupees per annum for each hut. This ordinance remained in force until 1910 when it was replaced by the Native Hut Tax and Poll Tax Ordinance. The Hut Tax remained at three Rupees but an additional Poll Tax of six shillings was imposed.

The ordinance mandated the Governor to increase the tax to twenty shillings. Except for a short period in 1921 when the tax was raised to sixteen shillings, most communities in Kenya, including those in Siaya paid twelve shillings. Section 10 of the Ordinance allowed District Officers "to remit taxes for those without sufficient means to pay the whole amount of such tax and those unable to obtain employment by reason of age or infirmity and to issue certificate to this effect" (Memo.DC/CN/3/5-KNA). Section 12 empowered the Governor to grant exemptions from the tax to those who were completely unable to pay. These exemptions were in practice very seldomly and grudgingly granted.

The intention of the 1910 Ordinance was to tax a man in proportion to his wealth which was estimated by the number of wives he had. The argument was that although a man would be less well off after paying cattle for his wives, he was a potential producer of wealth in terms of the number of acreage he was able to put under cultivation and in the number of daughters, who in their turn, would be married off (K.N.A. – Memo. DC/CN./3/5). Even widows were compelled to pay tax for the huts they resided in.

Taxation imposed a very heavy financial burden on the people. Although the Hut Tax first stood at three Rupees, absence of money in Siaya in the years before 1914 meant that tax payments were made in kind. Shortly before the First World War, the Hut Tax had

been increased to six shillings and to ten shillings at the beginning of the war. The depression of 1920s led to its reduction to 12 shillings. Later, when the Poll Tax was introduced to be followed by the Local Native Council and Locational rates in 1926 and 1946, respectively, the tax burden became heavier. The Poll Tax and the rates were paid equally by the rich and the poor. The table below represents the number of huts paid for in the locations as they existed in December 1915, starting with the financial year 1908-09. Before that year it is difficult to divide the money collected between the various locations.

Table 1: Hut Tax Collection in Five Locations in Siaya as at December, 1915

	Huts 1908-09	Huts 1909-10	Huts 1910-11	Huts 1911-12	Huts 1912-13	Huts 1913-14	Huts 1914-15	Huts 1915-16
Alego	8,861	9,173	10,329	12,082	17,275	17,932	18,728	19,411
East Gem	4,793	5,447	6,133	6,764	With W. Gem	With W. Gem	4,800	4,806
West Gem	4,604	5,934	6,274	6,291	9,617	9,858	5,880	6,240
North Ugenya	1,949	2,012	2,518	3,279	7,872	8,059	8,545	8,606
South Ugenya	1,568	1,988	2,332	3,112	4,523	4,807	5,250	5,465

Source: KNA DC/N.K./1/3/5 - 1915

The unfeeling manner in which the taxes were collected was notable as defaulters were dealt with brutally. Colonial administrative officials accompanied by their tax and revenue clerks and Tribal Police made frequent safaris to the locations of Siaya to take taxes already collected by chiefs, or to oversee such collections. Prior to the District Officers safaris to the tax collection centres, within the locations, Chiefs and Headmen, also accompanied by their clerks and askaris hurried their sub-locations for tax, often taking away for sale livestock belonging to those who were unable to raise tax money. This exercise sometimes took place at night when the majority of tax-payers were at home, as they often hid in the bush during the day (Ondanda, O.I., 1998).

The District Officers did not hesitate to deploy the Tribal Police for purposes of tax collection. On 22nd of June 1928, for example, H.R. Montgomery, D.C. Central Nyanza, dispatched ten such policemen to North Ugenya, which according to him was notoriously bad in tax payment. He recorded in his diary that the policemen did a good job since over 1200 shillings were collected during the week. On this occasion seventeen defaulters were imprisoned and a few cattle sold. (Safari Diary 1925-28 PC/NZA/3/1/233). On their safaris the District Officers kept records of those exempted from tax payments, those who had died, those working outside their locations, those in prison and taxes that were due. The table below show such records for two sub-locations in Uholo and is fairly representative of what is obtained elsewhere.

Table 2: Record of Taxation in Two Sub-locations in Siaya (12th May, 1930)

Sub-location	Exempted	Deceased	At work outside	Prison	Paid	Outstanding	Tax Due
Magoya	14	7	50	6	Sh.641	Sh.12	Sh.494
Rambula	22	2	30	8	Sh.334	Sh.10	Sh.310

Source: KNA Safari Diary 1925-29 PC/NZA/3/1/233.

On the whole, taxation transformed the pre-capitalist social formations of Siaya in a number of ways. First, it changed the pre-colonial political system into a colonial institutional infrastructure, the Local Native Authority System headed by chiefs, which rechannelled surplus produce from the people for the purposes of accumulation by the colonial state mainly for the capitalization of the settler sector of the economy (Butterman, 1979:140). Second, it made wage labour, commodity production, and sale of livestock

necessary thereby influencing the monetization of the pre-capitalist economy (Central Kavirondo Annual Reports 1908-1913; Hay, 1972:161; Ndege 1987:7). It also led to socio-economic differentiation since it was a means by which colonial chiefs and headmen appropriated their subjects' surplus to accumulate wealth. Furthermore, it led to a greater burdens for women and young men (Butterman, 1979:124). Women were the heads of households (ot) on which tax was levied. They were the people who indirectly paid taxes through production and sale of crops although in the event of default, their husbands who were the heads of the homestead, -dala- were held responsible by the colonial administration. Widows, however, paid their own taxes and were held responsible in case of default. Young men, on the other hand, were forced to go out and work to pay their own taxes and those of their helpless fathers or their widowed mothers (Ondanda, O.I., 1998).

3.3. The Development of Migrant Labour in Siaya

The study of labour during the colonial and post-colonial epochs in Kenya's history has attracted a lot of attention (Clayton and Savage, 1974; Van Zwanenberg, 1975; Van Zwanenberg and King, 1975; Swainson, 1980; Kitching, 1980; Stichter, 1982; Ochieng', 1989; Jalang'o-Ndeda, 1991 and many more). It is, therefore, important to discuss the labour pattern in Siaya with its attendant effects on the local economy.

It is argued in this section that the colonial labour policies served to impoverish the rural community. The Luo farmers were not dispossessed of land (save for administrative and missionary purposes), and migrant labourer's families continued to feed themselves and often the migrant's relatives, who were paid little wages, thus reducing the socially

necessary wage in the capitalist accumulation. The withdrawal of migrant workers' labour from local production was compensated for by the self-exploitation of their relatives who stayed at home (See Berry, 1984:77; Berg, 1965). The increasingly low wages that were paid necessitated the migrant workers' maintaining constant relations with the rural home. In short, the people of Siaya were forced by the need to earn tax money and by colonial laws to offer their labour. 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 methods (Berman and Lonsdale, 1980:63).

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

By 1908 compulsory labour was made legal only for government purposes; porterage of government provisions, construction and maintenance of roads, bridges, harbours and communications. Conscription under these conditions were allowed where voluntary labour was not forthcoming. Before 1908 the government officers recruited labour both for the government and for private enterprise. Usually the chiefs were simply informed that a certain number of labourers was needed and that they were required to produce them. As a result, a chief was viewed as effective and efficient if he could turn up labour and inept if the record of turning up labour was poor (Jalang'o-Ndeda, 1991:99). In 1908 the policy of official recruiting led to the rise of professional labour recruiting, a service for which settlers had to pay. These individuals were freelancers who went into the rural areas to obtain recruits or charged a commission on each man engaged by an employer. This system soon

led to abuses. Some of the recruiters bullied chiefs and others posed as government officials (Huxley, 1935:213). Sometimes they paid chiefs and headmen to recruit and so labour recruitment became a source of economic income for these people.

Africans reacted by avoiding to be recruited, desertion from employment or inefficiency in work. The government organised transport facilities, provided rest camps along the routes of the migrants. Coercion was necessary because of the presence of viable alternatives to wage labour. In Gem, for example, Headman Odera Akang'o reasoned that factors which made men go to work were either individual or coercion because if they wished to raise the money with which to pay taxes, they could do so by working on their farms in the locality. There was ample land in Gem and individuals cultivated simsim, sorghum and millet which were largely sold to the Indians, and large beans and sweet potatoes for home consumption. We are suggesting that capitalism was not able to compete with local production in its early stage and therefore depended on the state and coercive measures. However, as it developed these became less necessary.

In 1909 it was estimated that the number of able-bodied men available for unskilled work in Nyanza was about 25,000 who were not coming out as voluntarily as was expected (Political Record Book, 1909 – KNA). Labour problems were already evident and the Provincial Commissioner, John Ainsworth, recommended that private individuals could engage their own men either personally or through labour agencies. Indeed, 1910 was a crucial year for Central Kavirondo District because while economic products were grown in increasing quantities throughout the area (simsim and groundnuts exclusively), the demand for labour was also on the increase. In Gem and Sakwa, for example, simsim was very largely grown. Nonetheless, mounting anxiety continued over possible decrease in the

production of simsim, particularly from Gem, in the same year because of the withdrawal of dependable labour force from this locality. An attempt was made to make labour recruiters get their labour from other areas. Mr. Ainsworth lamented that all the best of the youthful cultivators should be drawn away from the work in the district particularly at a time when cultivation and agriculture showed such promise (Political Record Book, December, 1910).

By 1912 the Native Authority Ordinance coerced people to avail themselves for work. It stated that all Africans were liable for upto 60 days per annum forced paid labour for public purposes. The legislation empowered district officers and chiefs to recruit labour from the 'reserves' both for public purposes and settler agriculture. They worked on roads, as porters of administrative officials and missionaries and as servants of Indian traders. Some workers were sent out to work in the Public Works Departments, in Water Works at the Coast and Mombasa harbour, the construction of the railway branch to Magadi and in sisal plantations.

The Kavirondo region did not experience systematic land alienation and instead it emerged as the largest labour reservoir in Kenya. Land could not be alienated due to malaria, sleeping sickness and the climate which did not favour European settlement. Central Kavirondo District is reported as one of the areas that supplied most labour in the years before the war and the most conspicuous areas included Gem, Ugenya and Alego (all in Siaya) which submitted to the colonialists at an early stage (Nyanza Annual Report, 1906-1907). By September, 1912, there was a steady increase in the number of Luo men going for wage labour (PC NZA/1/7, 1911-1912, KNA). In Kisumu alone there was a rise in the number of Luo employees in marine departments and other sections as shown in table 3.

Table 3: Labour Returns for the Quarter Ending 30th July 1912 (Luo, Kisumu District)

Magadi	941
Fuel Contract	43
Nairobi	94
Muhoroni	602
Conservancy	25
Marine	181
B.E.A. Corporation	-
Uganda Railway	46
P.W.D.	157
Misc.	147
Estimated Number who left the District then registered	350
Kibos unregistered	1,500
TOTAL	**4,086**

Source: Nyanza Provincial Annual Report, 1912.

In September 1912, H.B. Partington reported a steady increase in the number of Luo men leaving their localities for work, the number being most certainly double that of the preceding quarter (PC NZA/1/7, 1911-12). In Kisumu alone there was an increase in the number of Luo employed by Marine Department, the B.E.A. Corporation and other employers. It is likely that the increase was due to the fact that this was the most favourable time for recruiting labour.

Table 4 overleaf shows the number of Luo men who were registered and Table 5 shows the estimated number of those who left unregistered and where they went.

Table 4: A Statement of Luo Labour Registered at the Estates

1912-13

	April-June	June-Sept.	Sept..-Dec.	Jan.-March	**Total**
Kisumu	204	2,452	3,756	1,702	8,414
Mumias	801	1,115	2,431	2,092	6,439
Kisii	118	67	953	1,569	2,707
Kericho	-	-	-	-	416
Nandi	-	-	-	-	17
	Plus permanent employees			370	
TOTAL					**18,517**

Source: Provincial Annual Report, 1913 – KNA, PC/NZA.1//8.

Table 5: The Unregistered Luo Labourers at the Estates – 1912-13

Uasin Gishu	3,500
Mumias, Yala and Kisumu Transport	5,000
Kisii, Homa Bay and Kendu Bay Transport	2,000
Trade Centres	1,200
Men who went Down Country Registration	2,500
Men Employed by P.W.D. not Registered	7,439
TOTAL	**21,639**

Source: Nyanza Provincial Annual Report 1913, PC/NZA/1/8, KNA.

By the end of March 1914 there was a remarkable population decrease in Siaya and young men from Uholo, Gem and Ugenya had been recruited in police force and Kenya African Rifles and were more permanently settled outside their home areas.

The advent of World War I in 1914 led to increased demand for labour. More people were forced to join carrier corps and to work in settler farms. The colonial government vested more powers of conscription and punishment for evasion of work in District Officers and Chiefs by the 1915 Native Registration Ordinance and the Native Followers Ordinance. The nature and extent of state coercion between 1914 and 1917 can only be compared with the dark period of slave trade and slavery. Table 6 below is a table reflecting labour recruitment in Nyanza between 1914 and 1917.

Table 6: Labour Recruitment in Nyanza Between 1914 and 1917

	Carrier Corps	Other Labour
1914-1915	18,169	26,245
1915-1916	24,184	17,138
1916-1917	21,900	18,577

Source: Nyanza Provincial Report, 1917

Table 7: Shows the labour registered in Kisumu between 1914 and 1915 and Table 8 shows labour recruitment from specific areas in Siaya in the same period.

Table 7: Labour Registered Between 1914-1915 in Kisumu

Carrier Corps	4,572
Public Works Department	1,292
Forestry	263
Other Government Department	3,237
Private Individual	4,883
TOTAL	**14,247**

Source: Kisumu District Annual Report, 1915.

Table 8: Labour From Specific Areas in Siaya Between March 1914-March 1915

	1914									1915			
	April	May	June	July	Aug	Sept	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar	TOTAL
Asembo	33	12	58	9	81	26	199	21	99	-	-	65	504
Sakwa	24	13	73	46	51	24	105	-	72	-	-	68	476
Uyoma	-	1	88	2	77	1	102	22	75	-	15	-	383
Kadimo	6	6	36	29	99	1	71	4	35	-	1	16	304
Gem	59	85	106	55	395	130	279	138	214	18	162	200	1,841

Source: Kisumu District Annual Report, 1915

By 1916 the methods of recruitment were so brutal that the Luo living in proximity to the Uganda protectorate (such as Jo-Ugenya and Jo-Alego) crossed the boundary to reside in Uganda territory (Nyanza Provincial Annual Report, 1916, KNA).

The introduction of kipande in 1920 strictly controlled the labour system (Ong'or, Okwaro, Adogo, Okecha, O.I., 1998). 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,[1] 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 (Onduru,1992:132). The disappearance of the kipande and any escape from work was met with severe punishment. The influx of labour into European farms and government sector was, therefore, to a large extent regulated and controlled, not by the Northey Circulars (1919), but by this coercive system of labour appropriation. However, the African population had continued to rise until by the mid-1920s it became less and less necessary to use force to bring them out to work. From then on population pressure plus taxation, assured that enough Africans would be available on European farms.

In Siaya, for example, young men increasingly left the reserves in search of employment. By the 1920s they were aware of different working conditions, accommodation arrangements and amount of wages paid, and in most cases, they chose the relatively most 'lucrative' contracts within their reach. Because of the general prosperity of 1920s there arose competition for labourers which in turn led to these differences in working conditions since each private employer tried his or her level best to out-do others. In this

[1] In this kipande each employer was to record the time a worker offered labour power, the kind of work done, wages earned and recommendations.

process, there developed a system of labour recruitment by European owned private recruiting firms. For instance, in Kisumu, labour agents calling themselves 'forwarding agents' appeared who recruited workers and made the required transport arrangements for these workers. Two of the most famous of these agencies were Beadoch and Riddoch companies. They were both stationed in Kisumu and having representatives in most districts in Kavirondo region. The Riddoch company, for example, by 1930s was the sole forwarding agent for Sisal Growers Association, Magadi Soda company and the Railway both in Kenya and Uganda.

Migration of workers was so great that in Siaya alone about 10,000 people left between 1918 and 1921 and this rose in the subsequent years (Kisumu District Annual Reports, 1918-1921). For Labour flow in Siaya see Table 9. See also the amount of labour appropriation from the three Kavirondo districts in 1922, (Table 10).

Table 9: Labour Registered in the Year Ending 31st March 1921

A - Labour Out of Kisumu District
B - Labour Inside Kisumu District

Months	A		M		J		J		A		S		O		N		D		J		F		M		
No. out and in	A	B	A	B	A	B	A	B	A	B	A	B	A	B	A	B	A	B	A	B	A	B	A	B	TOTAL
North Gem	-	23	-	29	-	88	-	53	-	69	30	74	4	77	-	45	-	81	-	64	-	26	-	80	743
Alego	-	35	-	26	-	36	-	27	-	39	29	45	71	71	03	69	-	20	10	60	-	92	32	53	718
South Gem	-	37	-	48	06	52	15	39	4	38	10	32	22	05	02	14	-	10	13	20	-	13	07	49	427
Asembo	-	10	12	06	18	39	38	02	24	01	61	08	-	12	-	25	35	09	-	22	-	17	-	-	339
North Ugenya	-	13	-	05	-	06	-	12	-	10	-	24	10	26	-	21	-	20	-	17	01	10	48	10	233
Sakwa	-	02	-	52	-	10	44	21	15	05	48	-	15	-	-	201	-	07	12	06	54	05	38	09	364
Uyoma	-	01	-	04	06	-	-	-	46	-	21	05	-	-	-	-	-	03	-	01	-	-	-	-	087
South Ugenya	-	-	-	02	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	01	-	05	-	08	-	03	-	01	-	-	-	-	020
Kadimo	-	01	-	19	-	17	-	08	-	-	15	15	06	06	03	03	07	07	-	-	-	-	34	01	114
The number that left unregistered																									3,000
TOTAL																									6,040

Source: Kisumu District Annual Report, 1921

Table 10: Labour from Nyanza Province, 1922

January	38,152
February	39,546
March	41,166
April	45,409
May	43,475
June	43,322
July	44,687
August	46,871
September	45,596
October	49,807
November	52,588
December	45,730

Source: Nyanza Provincial Annual Report, 1922.

The majority of these workers migrated from Central Kavirondo District some leaving privately without being registered (PC/NZA.1/17, 1922, KNA). They disliked written contracts (PC/NZA.1/18, 1922, KNA). And by 1925 about 3,000 Luo men were permanently employed outside the province. By 1928 more than half of the able-bodied men in the two largest African nationalities (the Kikuyu and the Luo) were estimated to be working for Europeans. However, the labour migration increase in the subsequent years was interrupted in 1929 by the depression, which caused a decrease in the prices of farm produce. The decline of export crops forced the settlers to disemploy labour since they were not able to pay labourers The on set 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, 1974:175).

Conclusion

In this chapter we discussed how the people of Siaya were placed under colonial rule, an event which presaged loss of freedom and the incorporation of the people into a capitalist system administratively and economically different from what they were accustomed to in the pre-colonial era. This brought about new form of stress to which the people had to adapt themselves. We have demonstrated that the colonial administration and the systems of taxation and expropriation of labour were together crucial in the incorporation of the people of Siaya into the colonial capitalist system. Colonial administration was an institution of control which also defined the levels of people's political and economic participation, both locally and in the whole country. The system of taxation provided sufficient ideological justification for work. Apart from being a source of capital accumulation by the colonial regime for the running of its day-to-day business, it was an important factor in forcing the people to participate in the colonial economy as migrant workers.

CHAPTER FOUR

4.0. THE AGRICUTURAL CHANGE IN THE EARLY COLONIAL PERIOD TO c. 1930

4.1. Introduction

After the establishment of colonial rule in Kenya, the immediate concern of the colonial state was to create a productive capacity in all parts of the country which would be sufficient to maintain the minimal administration and military presence required to sustain foreign control. However, by 1909, the economic situation in Kenya was never attractive. Revenue fell short of expenditure by £16,000 while the greater part of exports which mounted to a meagre of £157,000 still consisted of 'natural' products like ivory, beeswax, hides and skins (Wrigley, 1965:221). Sir Humphrey who had been sent to Kenya in 1905 to investigate economic prospects of the protectorate had felt that in order to overcome the financial crisis, a highly capitalised plantation agriculture, on the one hand, and African small-scale farming, on the other were to be encouraged (Wrigley, 1965:221-22).

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 government (Huxley, 1975:7). 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 example, the colonial state alienated lands for settlers. The land 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.

When Girouard took over as the governor, it is not surprising that he also saw the future economic development of the country chiefly in terms of European agricultural production (Mungeam, 1966:220). He expected the settler population to contribute 20 per cent of the £680,000 and the local African population 4 per cent of £273,000 of the total revenue estimated for the financial year 1910-1911 (Mungeam, 1966-220). The 'dual policy' which was to characterise Kenya's agricultural development throughout the colonial period had thus been initiated. What was significant about this policy was the greater attention, which the colonial state gave to the settler sector than to the African production.

To achieve the foregoing, the African population had to be made to work for the settlers, for any solution would create insuperable problems by making white men work much harder than they were accustomed to do in other parts of Africa which were equally open to settlers. For the new style to succeed "the African had to be made to enter the

world of money as migrant worker rather than independent producer; for as long as the African farmer had an independent control over the means of production through his control over his own land the African farmer would not be forced to work for the settler but would continue to produce on his own account" (Brett, 1973:169). The need to resolve this contradiction led to the imposition of taxes and compulsory labour in Kenya as a whole.

4.2. Crop Production

The early decades of colonial rule in Siaya was a period of experimentation with new crops and implements. In fact, the years between 1900 and 1930 were, to a large extent, concerned with integrating the new crops and practices which had recently been adopted. During the first decade, for example, agricultural production included encouragement in the cultivation of traditional crops such as sorghum and millet, purchase and distribution of new seeds of simsim, groundnuts, maize and cotton and the introduction and sale of iron hoes and ox-ploughs. All this was done without an adequate knowledge of the climatic and soil conditions of the area. It should be noted, however, that the intensified experimentation of this early period involved mostly small additions to crop varieties – the changes were additive rather than substitutive.

Apart from the compulsion and paternalism which characterised colonial initiatives, there were factors which influenced the people of Siaya's responses to the growing of both traditional and new crops in quantities, over and above, their subsistence needs. The people, for example, considered whether the crops possessed high exchange

value, that is, whether they could be used to accumulate cattle or whether they fetched a good price for purposes of paying tax and buying domestic needs such as clothes. This consideration was made against cash returns from wage labour which was increasingly becoming an alternative occupation. With regard to the growing of new crops, two further considerations were made, namely, whether they fitted in the people's diet and whether they could be easily integrated into the agricultural cycle and the domestic labour process to which they were traditionally accustomed. Further, the influence of local pioneers, the first to grow the new crops, was another important factor in the spread of the crops. Finally, population increase determined the quantity of crop production. It thus took time before new crops were widely grown. 'We mondo ong'e kore mondi' (let us first see its nature), was the people's characteristic attitude towards colonial innovation (Taifa, Orawo, Oluoch, O.I., 1998).

While colonial administrators played an important role in introducing crops and tools which were often completely new to the area, their influence was often marginal in the actual decision-making process of either acceptance or rejection. This was due to the limited resources in funds and personnel available to them. Their general lack of knowledge about the area itself – the climate, types of soil and patterns of rainfall, for instance, or the requirements of indigenous crops – limited their ability to recommend better methods of agriculture. The District Commissioner of Central Kavirondo, D.R. Crampton, confessed in 1910:

> We are still in the experimental stage, and the problem of the rain is still puzzling us. Even now, owing to the difficulty in sparing officers to travel, we do not know

much... about the soil and climate of various locations (Central Nyanza Annual Report, 1910, KNA).

Indeed, it was not until 1933 that agricultural offices were able to draw up a general program of development which identified geographical zones and took into account the differences of environment (Onduru, 1992:80). Ignorance of the region was compounded by the problems of insufficient staff and funds. Until 1923 there was no agricultural officer as such in the district: the District Commissioner had to handle problems of agricultural and veterinary development in addition to his regular administration duties. And as late as 1926, the Department of Agriculture allocated only £9,209 for all 'Native Agriculture' in Kenya out of the total budget of £109,156 (Kenya Department of Agriculture, Annual Report, 1926:1).

By 1904 there was a marked increase in cultivation among the people of Siaya. Crops that were considered traditional like millet and sorghum constituted the largest crop produce in the area (Kisumu District Annual Report, 1905-6). Perhaps this was due to Hut Tax Regulations of 1901 which empowered the Native Commissioner to impose a tax on all huts used as dwelling places, to be paid by all occupants (DC/CN/3/5 – KNA). The tendency for individuals seeking wage labour to acquire food or money to pay taxes (which were paid in kind) was still in the main, foreign to the people of Siaya. Even after the 1901 tax regulations were repealed by the East African Hut Tax Ordinance of 1903 (which specified that the Hut Tax should not exceed three Rupees per annum for each hut) most of the people continued producing a surplus for exchange. Indeed, the economic pressure which increased with efficient collection of taxes, was resulting in the stimulation

of trade, the expansion of land under cultivation and the introduction of production for export (Kisumu District Annual Report, 1905-6).

By 1905 sorghum continued to be the leading product in Kisumu District. It commanded a ready sale in the local market, and there was a growing demand along the Railway line as far as Naivasha. There was also an immense acreage of milllet though much below that of sorghum (Kisumu District Annual Report, 1905-6). Simsim had just been introduced and there was a great excess in the production over that of 1904. Both European and Indian merchants, it was reported, were in a position to pay a better price for simsim and as a result the people of Kisumu District were quick to grasp the advantage and extended the area of cultivation very considerably. And it was estimated that the monthly export by 1905 amounted to some 70,000 pounds. This was being supplemented by a good business in hides and skins which had dropped to some extent due to the good conditions of the livestock. This was due to the fact that the bulk of skins brought for sale were those of dead animals as the people seldomly killed animals for their own needs (Kisumu District Annual Report, 1905-6).

The people of Siaya were forced by the colonial regime to start growing crops for sale, over and above, the level of pre-colonial production. They were gradually introduced into money economy and found themselves producing for subsistence and, increasingly, for sale (Ogot, 1963:254). Consequently, the pre-colonial practice of selling the surplus (that could be stored) was superseded by conscious production of surplus, not for storage, but for sale both in the local and international markets.

The administration, however, intended to discredit such indigenous crops as sorghum and encourage the people of Siaya to grow exportable crops such as maize. According to Wolff (1974:71) one of the imperial goals in the protectorate included:

> Producing those commodities whose availability for import into Britain would lessen or remove what British businessmen and authorities deemed a dangerous dependence on foreign sources of supply.

Sorghum or millet was not such a commodity, and there was an element of administrative propaganda against the crops as is conveyed by the Kisumu District Commissioner, who in 1907 asserted that sorghum and millet were "poor and unsatisfactory crops" which it was hoped to replace with "a good hybrid of maize." (DC/CN/1/2 – KNA).

By 1905 a lot of livestock in Siaya had been sold to pay taxes while others had been confiscated during punitive expeditions. Rural agricultural production was also affected by the outbreak of the sleeping sickness early in the century (in many parts of Siaya: Yimbo, Alego, Ugenya and Uholo) which had killed many folk. Further, the number of those going to work outside Luoland was considerably increasing.

In 1906 the acting Nyanza Provincial Commissioner, H.B. Partington, reported that there was a scarcity of food due to failure of the November rains (Nyanza Province Annual Reports, 1906-7). By the time Partington was writing his annual report the whole of the immediate lakeland was already in the grip of a terrible famine, known as

nyamgori[2] which killed hundreds of people. The Provincial Commissioner reported that the roads between Kisumu and Mumias were being extensively used by the Luo "as they afford an easy access to Kakamega for the purpose of buying food" (Nyanza Province Annual Report, 1906-7). The Nyanza Indian traders took advantage of the famine and bought all the food surplus they could lay their hands on and, in turn, sold it expensively. Very many people in Siaya (especially in Sakwa, Asembo and Yimbo) died because of famine. People travelled far and wide to search for food. (Jalang'o-Ndeda, 1991:120).

The foregoing famine was a big embarrassment to the colonial government. With the appointment of John Ainsworth as Provincial Commissioner of Nyanza in 1907, he was able to begin agricultural innovation among African farmers on a significant scale. Little had been done prior to this time either by the administration or the agricultural department to encourage the production of new cash crops by Africans. Almost no agricultural produce was exported from Nyanza Province before Ainsworth arrival (Nyanza Province Annual Report, 1908-09). He set out to change all that through the introduction of crops that could be produced by local farmers and sold for cash. Ainsworth recognized the considerable agricultural potential of the province and he held strongly to the view that it should be developed. "If this was done", he wrote in his first annual report as Provincial Commissioner, "this country will become by far the richest part of the protectorate" (Nyanza Province Annual Report, 1907-08). There was great potential for agriculture here which had to be tapped if the economic future of Kenya was to be at all rosy (Maxon, 1973:157). In the following year he wrote:

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[2] The Luo called it so because many were reduced to eating nyamgori, a millet-looking wild weed which

> This part of the protectorate is, I consider, by far the most promising portion of it, and under normal conditions must contribute very largely to the future success of the country (Nyanza Province Annual Report, 1908-09).

In encouraging African agriculture, Ainsworth had the support of Governor Sadler. Sadler was, like Ainsworth, in favour of spurring African agriculture in Nyanza. Sadler had pushed the introduction of cotton when he was Commissioner of Uganda, and he was especially interested in seeing the crop taken up by African growers in Nyanza. In 1906, for example, he had visited the province and held a large meeting with chiefs and elders in Kisumu at which he urged them to undertake, with administrative guidance, cotton cultivation (Maxon, 1980:187). Little came of this initial effort as the poor rains of late 1906 and early 1907 spelled failure for most of the cotton planted.

John Ainsworth, took advantage of the above to launch a campaign of agricultural innovation almost as soon as he arrived in Nyanza Province. He concentrated his effort in two main areas, Central Kavirondo and, to a lesser extent, North Kavirondo. He threw the support of the administration directly behind attempts to introduce crops of economic value. This was done largely by the distribution of seeds to servants of the administration, mainly chiefs and herdmen.[3] Most successful of these were simsim, groundnuts, and improved varieties of maize. He encouraged with less success, cotton-growing among the Luo and Luyia of the province. Indeed, when it is realised that money for seed purchase came from administrative funds that Ainsworth was able to earmark for development, not from the agricultural department, the influence of Ainsworth in fostering agricultural

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grew widely along the lakeside.

[3] In 1907-08 and 1908-09, chiefs were paid half their commission on hut tax collected in their locations in seeds of what Ainsworth regarded as crops of economic value (Nyanza Provincial Special Report, December, 1909).

innovation among Africans stands in marked contrast to most of his contemporaries in the service of the East Africa protectorate.

In Siaya, by 1906, some farmers had already started planting simsim, for example, tradition has it that chief Ndeda of Gem South location --had established a simsim farm by 1905. (Orawo, Omollo, Ofenya, O.I. 1998). This is probably due to his connection with the C.M.S. Church at Maseno or other sources. However, it was during Ainsworth's tenure as P.C. that the cultivation of simsim spread in the area far and wide. This was through seed distribution and demonstrations. Seeds for simsim and groundnuts were distributed "under a system which necessitates the different chiefs and headmen paying for most of the seed out of the Hut Tax Commission (Central Kavirondo District Annual Report, 1907-08). Ainsworth also located "small colonies of agricultural Swahilis and Indians at different points where small areas of land were available", for example, at Luanda and Sigomere (Maxon, 1980:188). They would plant the cash crops which the administration sought to encourage. Retaining his faith in the power of example, Ainsworth hoped that their demonstration would prove an object lesson for Africans living in the vicinity.

Though introduced in 1908 groundnuts did not immediately become popular in Siaya. Groundnuts were first planted in communal plots under the orders of the chiefs and headmen – it was coercion that made them unpopular. Serious attempts to encourage groundnuts cultivation in Siaya began in 1910 to 1914, was dropped during the war, and began again in the mid 1920s (Okeyo, 1983:143). It was slowly accepted as a food crop after those who grew and ate it failed to die (Ogowo, Obudho, O.I., 1998). It was also

realised that in comparison with other crops, groundnuts fetched higher price. The popularity of groundnuts was further enhanced by the fact that, as a root crop, it survived the locust infestation of 1930-32. Throughout the rest of the colonial period the crop was grown in increasingly larger quantities – both as a food and cash crop. Uyoma emerged as the main groundnut producing area in Siaya.

The introduction of cotton growing in Nyanza was closely linked to the introduction of the Hut Tax Regulations of 1901, and the completion of the Uganda Railway line in the same year. The British colonial administration in Nyanza wanted to promote the cultivation of cotton as a cash crop in Nyanza to enable the local people 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, influenced John Ainsworth to introduce cotton cultivation in the areas bordering Kisumu in 1907 and 1908 (DC/CN.3/2, 1909:1).

The British East African Corporation built a cotton gin at Kisumu in 1908, although for several years most of the seed cotton continued to be supplied from Uganda. Between 1909 and 1913, the District Commissioner and his staff attempted to introduce cotton growing in the lakeside areas of Samia, Seme, Kisumu, Kano and Nyakach locations (Hay, 1972:135; Onduru 1992:78). Their effort met with a limited success only in Kano and Samia, and elsewhere the project was abandoned until the early 1920s. The fact that cotton prices dropped by 50 per cent between 1910 and 1914 in itself is probably a reason for the lack of Luo enthusiasm (Central Nyanza Annual Report, 1914-15). In Siaya, it was only in Alego and Asembo that Ainsworth's efforts in seed distribution and

pressure to plant were rewarded in late 1911 with the first small production of cotton (Maxon, 1980:216).

Before the introduction of yellow flint maize in 1910, and shortly later another variety, Hickory King, the Luo of Siaya grew a traditional type of speckled maize, odumb-nyamula, though in very small quantities. The new varieties of maize were harder and, therefore, difficult to grind. Like the traditional type, very little quantities were initially grown in Siaya, mainly to be roasted and eaten on the cob, or mixed with beans and baked.

Maize was domesticated in the semi-tropical uplands of Central and North America. It is possible that it was introduced to East Africa by the Portuguese. From Coastal settlements, it seems to have spread along trading routes. It was common in Tanganyika and had reached Buganda in the mid-nineteeth century, for it was observed by Europeans who followed established trade routes. According to Miracle (1966:99), it was much less common in Central Kenya, for example among the Kikuyu, before the colonial period. It was cultivated in the South-Eastern area of the country and around the shores of lake Victoria; these were on or near trade routes. In Kowe (in present-day Kisumu District), for example, maize was planted in small amounts to ripen during the period of famine. Lugard's visit in 1890 testifies to this (Hay, 1972:139). In parts of Siaya particularly Ugenya, Uholo and Gem, there is a strong tradition that what they now consider traditional maize diffused from Wanga Kingdom and their Luyia neighbours (Orawo, Omollo, Ondanda, Ngoha, O.I. 1998). It seems a reasonable deduction, therefore, that maize diffused to other parts of Siaya from these areas

It was not until 1915 that most people for the first time ate ugali or kuon made from maize flour (Onduru, 1992: 81; Nyainda, O.I., 1998). This was also influenced by the 1915 famine -ke-opande- which claimed human lives in Asembo (Seme and Kisumo). Thereafter white maize became popular in Siaya locations. According to a report by the then District Commissioner of Central Nyanza, S.H. La Fontaine, the local people were initially reluctant to accept it because they were used to the native variety. One informant recalls that when white maize flour was being given out for relief during the famine of ke-opande, people did not like its taste when cooked as kuon (Ofisa, O.I., 1998). However, by 1917 individuals often returned from school at Maseno or from outside employment with an acquired taste for kuon prepared from white maize flour rather than sorghum flour. They would often encourage their mothers or wives to begin planting the new maize and to use it for flour (Miracle, 1967:222-223; Ofisa, O.I., 1998).

By 1918 the people of Siaya had developed interest in cultivating white maize for various reasons; foremost, among the reasons was that it is edible. It could also be used as a cash crop. Maize was also valued as a quick-maturing crop, which could break the hunger period preceding the sorghum harvest. This meant that it supplemented domestic food provision before bel (sorghum) was ready for harvesting. For this reason, it was usually maize which was planted in orundu, the small field or dawn garden just next to the homestead. The orundu was planted first, before the main sorghum fields, and the maize on it was eaten before it was fully ripe, either roasted on the cob or cut and boiled with beans in nyoyo (Ngoha, O.I., 1998).

Women found it more difficult to grind maize unlike sorghum, and the widespread use of maize as flour in daily diets depended on another technological innovation – that of the hand grinding mill introduced in the late 1920s. Before the small hand mill had made its way into rural areas, early devotees carried their maize for a long distance to have it ground. Informants recall walking to Aluor, Yala, Maseno, Ng'iya, Butere or Luanda – from five to ten miles away from their homes (Oyolo Odwa, Ondanda, Okumu, Oluoch, Ofisa, O.I., 1998).

Flat white maize had begun to replace local, coloured varieties in Siaya and elsewhere in Nyanza Province by 1930 (Department of Agriculture, Annual Report, 1930, p. 240). The new seed had several obvious advantages over the old. The most important factor was its potential for increased yields, possibly as high as 40 per cent. Miracle has argued that a general preference for lighter-coloured food-stuffs was important in the spread of maize in East Africa (Miracle, 1967:140-206). This was possibly a factor in Siaya as well, although no evidence exists to support this before the World War II period. Yet by 1930 maize remained a subsidiary crop and had not yet bégun to challenge sorghum's position as the major starchy staple (Okeyo, 1983:142; Hay, 1972:144). Thus the use of white maize in kuon tended to become a prestigious food, suggesting education, Christianity, wage employment – in general, experience and familiarity with the outside world.

By the middle of 1909, Ainsworth was beginning to see some positive results from his efforts to press forward simsim and groundnuts while cotton encountered difficulty in getting off the ground. Simsim was most successful. By this time, large

amounts were planted in what was then Central and South Kavirondo and soon after exports had begun. Meanwhile Ainsworth described groundnuts as having "only done fairly well". Cotton showed little results in 1908, and the Provincial Commissioner recognized that it was at a disadvantage compared to simsim and groundnuts. These two crops could be consumed whereas cotton was not edible, and its cultivation was different from other crops grown by African farmers. They would have to be encouraged to grow cotton, as left to themselves, they would probably opt for simsim and groundnuts.

Simsim and groundnuts[4] soon became crops of considerable economic value. Acreage and production expanded yearly from 1908 until the beginning of World War I. The amount of agricultural produce leaving the province which was grown by Africans grew by leaps and bounds as did the value of those exports. For example, in 1908-09, such exports were valued at 287,460 rupees, in 1909-10, 667,000 rupees, and in 1910-11, 987,623 (Nyanza Province Annual Report, 1908-09; 1909-10; 1910-11). By 1913 Nyanza Province was the railway's best customer (Nyanza Province Annual Report, 1912-13; Ogot, 1963:255). In particular, simsim from Nyanza Province advanced very rapidly to become an important factor in the exports of the entire protectorate by 1911 (Nyanza Province Annual Report, 1910-11; 1911-12).

Though not of such immediate importance in the province's exports, the introduction of improved varieties of maize seed during Ainsworth's administration was to prove of even greater significance. The wide distribution of such varieties as Hickory

[4] Ainsworth had in previous years tried to interest European settlers in this crop without much success. "One must remember", he wrote with reference to groundnuts in 1904, "that there is always an assured market for them and that 100 acres means, on the basis of this experiment, £ 200 profit which surely is not

King (Nyanza Province Annual Report, 1911-12) which produced higher yields with less effort, led directly to maize supplanting other grain crops as the major subsistence crop in most parts of Nyanza in the first decades of the twentieth century. Professor Ogot has rightly pointed out that this "revolutionized not only the people's food habits, but to a large extent their way of life as well" (Ogot, 1963:255).

Ainsworth did not stop at the introduction of maize, simsim and groundnuts, crops which could be consumed as well as exported; early in his tenure as Provincial Commissioner, he pushed for the beginning of cotton-growing by African farmers. Despite an initial lack of success (Nyanza Province Annual Report, 1908-09; 1909-10), Ainsworth's attempts to start cotton-growing were indicative of his belief that Africans should play a productive part in the economy of the country by other means than the mere provision of labour for European enterprise.[5]

Cotton-growing did not, in fact, become an important factor in the Nyanza economy during Ainsworth's tenure of office there. Nevertheless, experiments were made and lessons learned, and some success was achieved in at least one part of the province where cotton-growing later became a significant economic activity (Nyanza province annual Report, 1911-12). Yet the kind of programs that Ainsworth was undertaking in Nyanza did not receive support in other parts of the protectorate.

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to be despised by any planter, etc." Comment by John Ainsworth on George W. Evans, "Groundnuts." The East African Quarterly (April-June, 1904), p. 58.

[5] Ainsworth stood up strongly for this view while he was Provincial Commissioner of Nyanza in the face of violent attacks from European settlers. See Native Labour Commission 1912-13 Evidence and Report, pp. 136 and 141.

A more serious attempt to develop cotton production was made between 1923 and 1926, at the same time agricultural officials first assumed their duties in the district. British agricultural officials began to travel in rural areas and engage in actual field work and to return to their earlier roles of advising African growers and inspecting their crops (PC/NZA 3/3/10, KNA – correspondence between Director of Agriculture and the Nyanza Senior Commissioner). The cotton policy of the late 1920's was focused primarily on the Uganda boarder region and on North Kavirondo, though half-hearted attempts were made to encourage cotton in Central Nyanza as well (Hay, 1972:136).

These efforts were frustrated by a steady fall in cotton prices to the grower, from -/30 a pound in 1923 to -/12 a pound in 1927 (Central Nyanza Annual Report, 1923, 1924-27, DC/CN 1/5/2, DC/CN 1/6/1)[6] The Commissioner, Nyanza Province, expected instructions to drop cotton cultivation in his province; on the contrary, he learned that an intensive propaganda campaign was to be waged in 1927 and 28. In his own words:

> I was under the impression that owing to the enormous world overproduction and the consequent drop in prices, cotton cultivation was going to be ... dropped in this province, but the Deputy Director of Agriculture recently informed me that this was not the case and that on the contrary it was going to be definitely encouraged. (PC/NZA3/3/12 – Dobbs to Chief Native Commissioner 28th March 1927).

A failure of the American crop caused a temporary rise in prices, which in turn led to greater confidence and increased cultivation in 1928 and 1929. In 1928 the crop showed a record increase of 60 per cent over the pervious year's acreage in Central Kavirondo (DC/CN 1/6/1 – District Annual Report, 1929:34). However, this

development ended abruptly when world prices fell again in 1930 and Nyanza farmers were offered -/12 a pound or less for their 1929 crop (picked in early 1930). Many refused to pick their cotton at all and greatly reduced their acreages for the 1930 crop. Agricultural and administrative officers alike predicted that it would be extremely difficult to maintain output in the near future (PC/NZA 3/3/11 – correspondence from Commissioner, Nyanza, to colonial secretary, 11th January, 1930).

Agricultural officers first brought cotton seed in Siaya (especially: Asembo, Yimbo, Uyoma, Alego and Sakwa) during the second phase of cotton development described above, probably between 1923 and 1924. During the initial years when cotton cultivation was being introduced in Siaya, it was planted in communal plots along the roads. 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 fields 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 a similar set of grievances and widespread covert opposition (Isaacman, 1990:35-36). Apart from its low prices, delay in payment and the intensive labour it required, the Luo of Siaya were

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[7] The Kenya shilling equals one hundred cents, thus -/12 is twelve cents, not twelve pence.

opposed to cotton cultivation because its planting season often coincided with the principal food crops. They realised that if they actively engaged in cotton cultivation, then it would be at 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 (Okello, O.I., 1998). Although most people in Siaya were reluctant to cultivate cotton, some of them continued cultivating it (though not in large scale). Those who cultivated it normally earned income from it irrespective of the delay in payment (Okello, Ojwang', Omollo, Sudhe, Ojwando, O.I., 1998).

Cotton was also not popular in Siaya because of its price which was generally low compared to that of maize. Yet the men who shaped agricultural policy had little sympathy for the argument that low prices were a sufficient reason for not planting cotton. Apparently they viewed continued cotton cultivation in the face of any odds as a sign of virtue and civilized economic behaviour. In 1930, for instance, the Director of Agriculture noted critically that the fall in prices and 'the failure of the natives to accustom themselves to market fluctuations' had retarded production (Kenya Department of Agriculture, Annual Report, 1929, p. 34, DC/CN 1/6/1). The agricultural files of the Kenya National Archives are full of evidence that the steadily falling price was the major reason for the general reluctance to plant cotton (Central Kavirondo Annual Report, 1925, DC/CN 61/6/1; PC/NZA 3/3/10 – D.C. to Senior Commissioner, 3 November 1925 and 26th January 1926).

Administrative efforts to impose economic innovations were frustrated not only by shortage of staff and resources, but also by a lack of knowledge about the very system which they were attempting to change. The officials who staffed the district and provincial offices in Kisumu knew surprisingly little about Luo agriculture. Before the first African agricultural census in 1950/51, officials would have been hard pressed even to estimate the average needs of a Luo household in terms of land and cattle holdings, grain production and so on (Hay, 1972:140; Ndege, 1987:170; Onduru, 1992:79).

Even with thorough understanding of local agricultural practices and a foolproof program for cotton cultivation, based on extensive crop-trials, the provincial agricultural office could not have provided the advice and supervision necessary for all of Nyanza province – an area of some, 9,000 square miles and a population of nearly 3 million in 1928 – with a staff of 3 Agricultural officers and 12 Native Agricultural Instructors (Department Annual Report, 1929, p. 83).

Sugar cane growing was introduced in Central Nyanza by the colonial administration as cash crop in the 1920 (DC/CN/1/10,1955, p. 12). 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 outside Siaya. When sugar cane growing was initially being introduced, it was not popular with Siaya people because they contended that it required a large acreage (DC/CN.1/4/2, 1929, p. 47). The local people argued that if large acreage was put under sugar cane, there would be no land for other food crops and livestock. Further, 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 one of the most important cash crops in Siaya (DC/CN.1/6/3, 1937, p. 49). Its cash value motivated the people of Siaya (especially in Gem, Ugenya and Uholo) to increase its production. In contrast with cotton, sugar cane had a comparatively higher price and regular payment.

Omwogo (cassava) was introduced in Siaya by the government sometime around the famine of Kanga and chwe kode in 1918-1919. Apart from this first introduction, the district agricultural officials seem to have been little interested in spreading cassava cultivation before 1930. Archival references to cassava are few before that date, suggesting it was not a critical part of district policy. One is a letter from Senior Commissioner of Nyanza, Dobbs, to all missionaries in the area, asking them to encourage their converts to cultivate small amounts of cassava, sweet potatoes, and buckwheat to have on land in case of famine (PC/NZA 3/3/17 – 20th April 1927). A 1938 list of the various food crops which the Department of Agriculture had tried to introduce in Nyanza, both successful and unsuccessful, did not include cassava in either category (Agricultural Officer Maseno to Senior Agricultural Officers, 15th March 1938, in Ag. KSM1/351).

Cassava's special advantage as a locust and drought resistant crop did not really become apparent until the locust attacks and famines of 1931-32. Much like maize during its early days, cassava was generally used as a snack during the 1920s, and not a starchy staple. People ate it as they did potatoes – either roasted over coals, or boiled with milk. Some tried to grind it and use it as flour, but did not like the taste. Many objected to the crop at first because it required a lot of labour, with three or four weedings recommended

during its growth (Okello, Ajuoga, and Osunga, O.I., 1998). Once sweet potatoes, introduced by missionaries in 1906, had become popular among the Luo of Siaya . it became much easier to incorporate omwogo, for much of the planting, harvesting, and food preparation techniques were similar. Agricultural agents capitalized on that similarity in their propaganda appeals.

Hoping to improve local diets and to protect hillsides from erosion, the Department of Agriculture began to distribute a variety of beans, cabbage, onion, and tomato seeds in the late 1920s. They also made available seedling for various fruit, wattle, and wood trees from their seed farm at Maseno. The trees were especially popular because, for a number of years, they were given out free.

4.3. Changes in Agricultural Technology

The introduction of new agricultural implements in Siaya by the colonial government brought about increased crop production. The most significant feature of technological change before 1930 was the rapid and widespread adoption of a succession of new hoe-types. As opposed to the cautious acceptance of new crops, which usually involved new tastes and years of experimentation to fit them into the system of land use, crop rotation, and the allocation of labour, the advantages of the new tools were easily demonstrated and quickly appreciated. The hoe with a fixed iron blade, for example, allowed one person to cultivate a much larger area of land than he could with the wooden hoe. It thus helped to offset the decline in soil fertility and in yields (Hay, 1972:149).

Around 1900 most people in Siaya were still using the traditional wooden hoe (rahaya) and a fired clay blade hoe (nyar-imbo). Hay has noted that nyar-imbo was mainly a preserve of the few rich cattle keepers who were able to purchase them (Hay, 1972:149) This is because they could break easily, a fact that made it not to spread far and wide (Ngoha, O.I., 1998). In the early 1900's the people of Siaya began to import iron blades from Uganda. This importation started with Jo-Ugenya and then later spread to other parts of Siaya. These iron blades were tied onto the wooden "blade" of rahaya. It was called nyar-ite (because the top of the blade protruded on each side like "ears") or kasiri (Hay, 1972:150). These first iron blades usually cost a goat or a sheep (Odhong', O.I., 1998).

The jembe, an improved version of the hoe, were introduced in the 1920s. They could be obtained from Indian traders at Kisumu, Luanda, Butere, Mumias, Ugunja, Sio Port, Ukwala, Siaya, Ng'iya and Yala trading centres. Although jembe is the standard Swahili word for hoe, in dholuo it is used only to refer to hoes with fixed iron blades (usually a stake driven through the circular head of the blade). At the same time opanga (matchet) had also appeared. The Luo used opanga (a longer iron blade with a wooden handle at one end) for clearing the field while the jembe for digging or ploughing. Opanga was also available in Indian shops. The early purchases of the new hoes are generally attributed to jokapango (workers returning from Kisumu, Nairobi and elsewhere), to Christian converts from mission centres, to itinerant traders, and to teachers who travelled outside Siaya in the service of the Anglican Church.

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 in Kibos to be shown how the ploughs were used (Onduru, 1992:82). And the first three ox-drawn ploughs to be used in Central Kavirondo District were given to Chief Owili of Kano, Rading' of Gem and Ondiek of Sakwa (DC/CN/1/6/3). However, it was only until around 1930s that the influence of both the ox-plough and hand mill began to be felt. They were too expensive for the great majority of the farmers in Siaya. In most cases a group of people or clan could purchase one collectively (Ragama, Osino, Abungu, O.I., 1998). It was only a few rich cattle owners, chiefs, traders and wage earners who could afford them. (Taifa, O.I. 1998). They were purchased from Indian traders who settled at various towns and trading centres such as Luanda, Ng'iya, Butere, Asembo Bay, Mumias, Kisumu and Busia.

When the jembe was introduced in 1920s, some people in Siaya showed preference to jembe because it was more effective for turning the soil and for cultivating than the rahaya, nyar-imbo, and kasiri or nyar-ite (Ondanda, O.I., 1998). Further more, a majority of the people of Siaya preferred jembe to the ox-drawn plough because the price of jembe was affordable. However, the jembe and the traditional iron hoes were used concurrently for a long time to come.

The introduction of new agricultural implements boosted agricultural production. At the same time, their introduction had some negative effects. For example, the few people in Siaya who afforded ploughs had the bad habit of encroaching on the neighbours in extending the area under cultivation (Okumu, O.I., 1998). The blacksmiths who used

to produce traditional hoes were gradually transformed. They continued to produce traditional hoes as well as repairing both the jembe and the traditional hoes. The introduction of ox-drawn ploughs also brought about economic differentiation as Butterman (1979:179) contends that those who owned ploughs were able to cultivate larger acres. This enabled them to accumulate wealth, thus creating economic differentiation. The fact that some people were able to obtain 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 Siaya, economic differentiation was already in existence. Wealth was mainly determined by the livestock, agricultural products and wives one had. The introduction of new agricultural implements by the colonial government not only created economic differentiation among the people of Siaya, but also accentuated it. The agricultural system of the people of Siaya was somewhat diversified but not substantially changed by the end of 1930.

4.4: The Impact of Colonial Policies on Agriculture and the Society

It is important to point out that colonial economic policy was very largely determined by the need to maintain the viability of white settler agriculture. This led to the establishment of a new production system based on colonial capitalism and the commoditization of production which began to demolish the various strategies used by the people of Siaya to prevent food shortages and famines. The colonial administration set the pace for this process in 1901 by emptying granaries in Siaya through the extraction of taxes

in kind. Later, tax payment in kind was halted and now grain had to be sold for money which was paid as tax. Indeed, in 1909 Ainsworth wrote that the economic pressure which increased with efficient collection of taxes was resulting in the stimulation of trade, the expansion of land under cultivation and the introduction of production for export (Ainsworth Special Report, Kisumu District Annual Reports 1905-6, and 1909). By 1930 instead of the people of Siaya storing huge grain surpluses, most of them were selling it for money. This was one of the major drawbacks to the prevention of food shortages in Siaya. Money was not synonymous with the availability of food. Given the fluctuation in the market prices of food, the money obtained from the sale of crops could not always purchase an equivalent of the food storage and famine prevention strategies in Siaya.

Apart from the need to pay taxes, the people of Siaya required money to purchase the new agricultural implements and consumer items including clothes, bicycles, sugar, salt, radios, jembe and soap. It was increasingly becoming fashionable, for example, to put on the new cotton textile clothes (Apondi, Okwiri, Aboch, O.I., 1998). This made the storage of the grain for future use less effective. The commoditization of livestock and grain also helped to accelerate the disappearance of the food security system. Consequently, some households were left in a more vulnerable state to food shortages than in the previous period.

On the other hand, Nyanza also became the largest labour reserve in Kenya. When voluntary labour was slow in coming forward, ordinances were promulgated to empower the colonial government to exact labour compulsorily for settler and public works. Oginga Odinga has written of this:

> The District Commissioner issued labour quotas to chiefs and headmen, and the chiefs were turned into labour recruiters. Chiefs were subject to pressure and bribery to exact more and more labour from their areas, and recruiting methods became a major grievance among the people. Chiefs or sub-chiefs, issued with an order for labour, arbitrarily picked batches of forty men at a time from a location, and had them signed up for six months work contract under which it was a penal offence to decamp (Odinga, 1967:23).

As early as 1906 the effect of this labour migration and taxation had begun to tell in Luoland. The grain surpluses, mondo, which the men used to store in the past were no more. A lot of livestock were sold to pay taxes while others had been confiscated during punitive expeditions. It followed that should there be any crop failure there would be trouble, as there would be no surpluses to fall back-on.

In 1906, when the November rains failed, the whole of the immediate Lakeland was in the grip of a terrible famine, known as nyamgori, which killed hundreds of people. By early 1907 the rains had not returned and native crops seemed to be much stunted in growth (Nyanza province Annual Report, 1906-7). Meanwhile, the Nyanza Indian traders had taken advantage of the famine to make money. They bought all the food surpluses they could lay hands on and sold it very expensively. They succeeded to a certain extent and this increased the scarcity of the grain (Nyanza Province Annual Report, 1906-7). Very many people in Yimbo, Sakwa, Asembo, (Seme and Kisumu) died from this famine. People travelled far and wide, to look for food. Indeed a meeting of Europeans in Nyanza was called by the Acting Sub-Commissioner (P.C.) to deal with the questions of famine camps and relief works. In a neighbouring Luyia location of Bunyore, the scarcity

of food brought about a riot, "the inhabitants of which were attacked by the Maragoli people, who believed that it was owing to Bunyore rain-makers that their banana had failed" (Ochieng' 1987:7). In Bukusuland it was reported that "the crops are in a helpless condition owing to want of rain. The last crop of millet failed and the continuance of the drought spoiled the wimbi crops. "There is practically no food in the District" (Nyanza Province Annual Report, 1906-07). Crop failure was also reported in the Kericho and South Nyanza Districts, which had experienced prolonged drought and scarcity of food. It is instructive that the Government had failed to monitor the deteriorating food situation in the province in time, until it was too late. And when they attempted to sell food to the people they could not reach the majority due to lack of access roads. But despite the fact that they had precipitated the 1906-1907 famine, through their policies and neglect of African agriculture, the Government still blamed the Nyanza people for cultivating in the usual superficial manner.

The nyamgori famine embarrassed the colonial government. From then on they encouraged the people to grow cotton, simsim and maize as cash crops. The Government established market centres at Yala, in 1908, at Homa Bay, Kibos, Kibigori and Karungu in 1909. In 1910 other trading centres were established at Rangwe, Kaptumo and Kericho. In these centres the people of Siaya, and other Nyanza people, sold their surplus produce, mainly beans, simsim, ghee, eggs, millets, sorghum, hides and skins, groundnuts and fish to Indian and European traders who exported them out of the Province. In particular, simsim, which was grown wholly in Nyanza, added more to Kenya's export trade than any other single produce between 1911 and 1913 (Ochieng' 1987:7).

After the 1907 famine there continued to be sporadic, localised food shortages in various parts of Luoland. Indeed not a year went by without at least one location reporting a food shortage. Although most such shortages remained minor, sometimes the specter of hunger claimed lives. One such localized famines that claimed human lives in Asembo, (Seme and Kisumo) was the ke-opande of 1915 (the opande famine named after kipande, the Native Registration Ordinance of 1915). However, the next major famine in Luoland was the kanga famine of 1917-1919 (named after the returning soldiers of the World War I).

In Kenya droughts have always acted as catalytical precipitants of famines, while the real causes of famines lie hidden in mistaken human policies and environmental deterioration. British economic policies did not change in Luoland after the 1907 famine. The British kept pressurizing the Luo to produce more cotton and simsim for export while at the same time they stepped up recruitment of energetic men for public works and settler farms. In fact it has been argued that John Ainsworth (the then Provincial Commissioner) was to experience the emphasis on European agriculture in Nyanza not through pressure for more land for settlement, but through settler demands for labour (Maxon, 1980:218). Shortly after his arrival in Kisumu, one of the periodic labour crises that was to mark the rest of his career in East Africa occurred. At the root of controversy over the labour question which developed in early 1908, as later, were the questions of the extent to which the East African Protectorate's administration should go in attempting to safeguard the interests of those Africans who left their homes to work for settlers and

the government, and in helping to provide such labour (memorandum by A.C. Hollis, 7th April 19808, encloser in Sadler to Elgin, Confidential, 8th April 1908).

In the period of World War I, large numbers of Luos were recruited both for Carrier Corps and Settler farms. In April 1916 there was also an increase in Hut Tax (Nyanza Province Annual Report, 1916). To feed the soldiers in the war, Africans were coaxed, or bullied, to sell their food surpluses to the government, and a lot of oxen were bought out of native reserves for military transport and food. Livestock in form of goats, sheep and cattle were continuously drawn from the province for the troops. With so many young men living outside Nyanza province, and an increasing number of young people now attending missionary-aided schools, rural agricultural labour was depleted. Women and old men constituted the majority in the villages. The food situation in the rural areas now needed only a little disturbance to turn into a calamity.

In 1916 the District Commissioner of Kisumu complained that extremely large numbers of able-bodied young men were migrating from their localities. The District Commissioner warned the government that this could easily lead to disastrous effects in future development of local agriculture and on the developments in rural areas. Even though his plea was not taken seriously by 1917 there was a big drop in crop cultivation in the district (KNA: Kisumu District Annual Report, 1917-18). Early in 1918 some 27,784 more carriers were recruited from Nyanza for the military and a further 19,544 "voluntary labourer" were recruited for Government departments and private employers. The Nyanza Provincial Commissioner, C.R.W. Lane was forced to admit in 1917-18 annual report that "agricultural efforts during the year were greatly hampered by the

withdrawal of large numbers of men for carrier corps" (KNA: Nyanza Province Annual Report, 1918).

Earlier in August and September of 1917, 'excessive rainfall' had destroyed most crops in the field. At the end of the same year the short rains failed to come. Maize, millet, simsim and beans – all suffered from adverse climatic conditions. It is no wonder that by the end of 1917 most of Luoland was already in the grip of the kanga famine. To worsen the already bad situation, mbeka (dysentery) also struck the land at the end of 1917. These two disasters raged onto 1918 'as rainfall continued to be below average" (KNA: Nyanza Province Annual Report, 1918). This resulted into deaths of a large number of people, especially those who could not be reached by government relief agencies. One of the most seriously affected Luo locations was Yimbo, in Siaya. At this juncture Yimbo had not yet been connected by road to Kisumu town. People often walked beyond sixty miles, to places like Samia, Luanda (Kamang'ong'o), Kakamega, Kisii and Nandi, to buy millet, maize and beans. Some jumped into their canoes and crossed Lake Victoria to Uganda, in search of food and sometimes people died as they travelled looking for food (Arum, O.I., 1998). Most lakeside locations – Sakwa, Uyoma, Asembo (Karungu, Seme, Rusinga, Kadem, Karachuonyo, Nyakach and Kisumo) were badly affected. When food was not forthcoming people slaughtered their remaining livestock for meat, which they ate with wild vegetables. Often fish was eaten without kuon. The very poor perished.

Yimbo, however, experienced a quick recovery from the kanga, famine, when they resorted to cultivating sweet potatoes and cassava which they imported from

Uganda. By mid 1918 people from Alego, Sakwa, Asembo (and Seme) were heading for Yimbo to buy food. But by 1919 most of Luoland was still experiencing famine. Very little native produce was sold in 1919 due to food shortage throughout the year. The only principal article of export was hides because rinderpest and East Coast Fever had taken a steady toll of the cattle throughout the year. In the same year deaths from a number of epidemics, including small pox, cerebro spinal menengitis, chicken pox and influenza, were recorded in Luoland (KNA: Nyanza Province Annual Report, 1919). By early 1920 famine had not abated, "more especially in the locations bordering the lake" (KNA: Nyanza Province Annual Report, 1920). By now the Luo had given the persistent famine a new name chwe kode.

The colonial government responded to this famine by encouraging trade. Indian and European traders were allowed to import food into the province and to sell it to the people. More Indian-dominated trading centres like Asembo Bay, Ndere, Kadimo Bay (and Rangwe) were established. Luo farmers were encouraged by the government and the missionaries to cultivate famine crops, such as cassava and sweet potatoes. A considerable amount of hybrid seed was introduced and distributed during this period. For example, in Central Kavirondo "700 loads of maize seed, 750 loads of beans seed, and 60 loads of rice seed were sold to the Luo (KNA: Nyanza Province Annual Report, 1919). By the end of 1920 Nyanza had ridden out of the famine, as the Provincial Commissioner, H.R. Tate, reported "magnificent crops in Native Reserves" (KNA: Nyanza Province Annual Report, 1920). However, the British labour and economic policies remained. Settler agriculture was still considered the backbone of the Kenyan economy, while the Africans remained mere suppliers of labour. Meanwhile, it should be

noted that between 1915 and 1919 Nyanza Province supplied about 200,000 workers for civil work and war and over 5,000 herds of cattle (Hay, 1972:125). According to B.A. Ogot (1963:258) about 1/3 of all the recruits for carrier corps died in the war field – and returnees were disabled as they were weakened by diseases. Indeed, the District Commissioner of Kisumu asserted that at least "one half would not be fit for hard work again for a long time" (DC/CN1/5/1 1916-17:17).

By 1928 more than half of the able-bodied men in Luoland were estimated to be working for Europeans. Even though some innovations in Luo agriculture did take place, including the buying of ox-ploughs, water-powered flour mills, harrows and maize hulling machines by certain wealthy individuals, such as Sijeny Otenga in Gem-Uranga, agriculture in most parts of Siaya remained marginalized to wage labour. In so far as they wanted to, or were obliged to earn a money income at all, the people of Siaya, and Central Nyanza in general, found it on balance more lucrative, or congenial, to work for hire than to exert themselves in cultivation, in particular cultivation of unfamiliar and inedible crops such as cotton. Most farmers in Luoland remained subsistence farmers, growing only enough surpluses to meet their immediate household needs. Indeed, throughout the 1920s, the amount of maize, for example, railed from Kisumu for export remained steady at around 10,000 tons per year.

However, Luoland also suffered from natural calamities. In the autumn of 1928 the desert locusts came from the north and ravaged the land, to repeat the process with still greater efficiency the following year. The government was forced to set up a famine Relief and Food Control Board with an initial capital of £200,000 to import maize to the famine-stricken areas of the country. This famine killed a few people around the lake,

"but by now major market centres, such as Ng'iya, Ndori, Kadimu Bay and Ndere were able to supply those with money" (Swan, Ogalo, Omieno,O.I., 1998).

The general hardships of the period before 1920, famines of 1907, 1915 and 1918 and 1919, the rinderpest of 1911 and the widespread epidemics and other dislocations of the war period, all made market activity and trade outside the market place a necessity. There were trade links between the lakeshore areas such as Asembo, Sakwa, Uyoma, Yimbo and mainland areas such as Uholo, Alego, Ugenya and Gem. The commodities exchanged were essentially the ones exchanged in pre-colonial times – Southern lake fish, red meats, chicken, livestock in exchange for northern maize, sorghum, millet, beans, bananas and sweet potatoes. Barter remained the principal means of exchange in local markets. This trade involved mostly women. A group of men became full-time traders between 1910 and 1920. Their trade was mainly in cattle. They travelled to South Nyanza where herds were large and prices low to sell in Central Nyanza. Long distance cattle trade was a new phenomenon among the Luo and many reknown cattle markets later developed (for example, Akala in gem – Seme border and Kabungu in Uholo – Wanga border). There were also other traders who bought soap and salt from the Indians and sold to the people or fish from the lake and then walked with the goods to the local markets like Lwanda, Ugunja, Kamito and Siaya. This group of traders consisted of men and women. This trade was done on foot and in groups (Jalang'o-Ndeda, 1991:130).

As we have mentioned, market centres were also established in places like Sigomere in 1906, Yala 1908 and Asembo Bay 1910. In the centres the Luo sold their surplus produce mainly beans, simsim, ghee, eggs, millet; sorghum, hides and skins,

groundnuts, cotton and fish to the Indian and European traders who exported them out of the province. Aladdin Visram, for example, started motor wagons in Gem, Yala because of increase in simsim trade (Nyanza Provincial Annual Report, 1907-1908). In return for what they sold in the shop trade they got cloth, wire, blankets, knives, cups, umbrellas, beads, pipes and secondhand clothes. They sold their items for cash and bought imported goods for cash.

By 1911 trade was on the increase as the economic requirements of the people were gradually but surely increasing particularly those living near the market centres. Indeed, as early as 1906-07 there was an increased demand for such goods as jaggery, Uganda hoes, salt, Mwanza rice, Mwanza and Kampala ghee (Kisumu District Annual Report, 1906-07, KNA). The introduction of markets meant that surplus value was obtained through unequal exchange. The agricultural economy of Siaya was gradually becoming surbodinate to the new economy.

Migrant labour led to changes in the relations between men and women and young men and elders. Absence of men meant that women now became more responsible for the reproduction and the day-to-day running of the family. Apart from cultivating land and performing other necessary domestic chores women engaged in petty trade to maintain their families (Cliff, 1978:339-342). Young men who were able to save their wages to buy cattle and ox-ploughs now accumulated productive capital and marry wives independent of the patriarchal control of the elders. 'Where once the old man was able to control the economy of the home', observes Whisson, 'now the senior person relies

considerably upon the Charity of his children to maintain himself in clothes, and often food if he has not got a young wife to cultivate for him' (Whisson, 1964:119-120).

Statistics are not available for Siaya, but it suffices 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. AC Hollis, C.M.S. Secretary for Native Affairs, he noted:

> a large number of Kavirondo had contracted syphilis and other veneral diseases when at work, and the chiefs are averse to the young men leaving their reserves and inflicting the women also on their return (Native Labour Commission, 1912-1913, p. 1)

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 (Van Zwanenberg, 1975:106). Many of the workers were surviving 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 World War I, caused a remarkable population decline of Africans (Wolff, 1974:106). The first 30 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, (Wolff, 1974:106).

Although economic differentiation existed among the people of Siaya before colonial rule, wealth was assessed by the large number of cattle and other livestock one had, good harvest and many wives (Oloo, Omwombo, Odwesa, Oduor, O.I., 1998). 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 or Jonanga. 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. On the whole, the colonial policies led to the underdevelopment of local agricultural production in Siaya.

CONCLUSION

In this chapter we have discussed colonial initiatives on crop production and the responses of the people of Siaya. We have argued that in commodity production the colonial policy was influenced by the need by the colonial state to get revenue and the interests of local European settlers. The responses of the local people were, on the other hand, influenced by pre-existing forms of production and the new obligations and needs created by the colonial situation. The subordination of the colonial economy to the capitalist requirements and also of local producers to European settlers, precluded any positive economic development. Forces of production in Siaya were only partially transformed by the introduction of new crops, iron hoes and ox-ploughs. This led to quantitative increase in the surplus of crops and crop products. However, the persistence of pre-capitalist forms of crop production meant that production was not qualitatively

changed. At the level of relations of production, the people of Siaya were marginalised both internationally and within the colony. Among themselves there occurred economic and social differentiation.

Finally, we have contended that the colonial policies were very largely determined by the need to maintain the viability of white settler agriculture. This led to the establishment of a new production system based on colonial capitalism and the commoditization of production which began to demolish the various strategies used by the people of Siaya to prevent food shortages and famines. This led to frequent colonial famines in Luoland. Among the consequences of colonial policies were the underdevelopment of local agricultural production, changes in position of women and in relations between young men and elders, and exposure to new values and acquisition of new goods. Participatory wage labour also led to socio-economic differentiation as it offered some people opportunities for investment in commodity production and trade. These changes however nascent they were in this early colonial period, were further amplified in the later years of colonialism as are discussed in chapter five.

CHAPTER FIVE

5.0. THE AGRICULTURAL TRANSFORMATION IN THE PERIOD, c. 1930-1945

5.1. Introduction

This period is characterized by the intensive transformation of agricultural economy of the Luo of Siaya. The famines of the 1930s and 1940s, the depression of the 1930s, the failure of the government's cotton policy in the 1930s, the discovery of gold in Nyanza in 1931 and the emergence of World War II in 1939 are some of the major events that impacted on the agricultural activities of the people of Siaya. This period was marked by gradual decline in cash crop production; agricultural activity was relegated to subsistence sphere. Local trade as well as migrant labour were increasingly becoming the predominant means of acquiring a cash income.

5.2. Changes in Crop Production and Technology

By 1930 the state of local agriculture was already heading for a crisis. In 1931, the Department of Agriculture declared the beginning of 'a long-range development programme for native agriculture'. This declaration had two major components: a comprehensive survey of potential economic resources in each area, and the formulation of individual development programmes for specific zones, taking soil and climatic variations into account and specifying the food and cash crops to be encouraged in each zone (Department of Agriculture, Annual Report, 1932:20).

This new approach led to the replacement of technically "unqualified" agricultural officers with trained men recruited under the Colonial Agricultural Scholarship Scheme and the decentralization of the Department itself. Decentralization was accomplished by putting a Senior Agricultural Officer in charge of all agricultural work at the provincial level (Department of Agriculture, Annual Report, 1933:82). Thus the Nyanza Senior Agricultural Officer divided the province into ecological zones and drew up a program of work which was put into effect in early 1933 (PC/NZA 2/480, p.1 - KNA). This program of work was revised annually, but remained the basis for agricultural policy in the province throughout the 1930's.

The general objectives of Central Nyanza program of work during the decade included the extension of cotton and groundnuts as the major cash crops and various regulations to improve the quality of marketed crops. Officials also hoped to stop the depletion of soil fertility in Central Nyanza by gradually persuading farmers to consolidate their land and to implement programs of mixed farming (Agriculture: KSM 1/502, 1935 and 1937 – KNA). Agricultural officials were to encourage individual farmers to adopt the following measures: stone terracing, contour lines of grass, live hedges on boundary ditches, reducing cultivation on steep slopes, better conception of land ownership, windbreaks, contour ploughing and planting, stall feeding of livestock, use of manure and compost as fertilizers, control of grass burning, increased tree planting, and the mulching of crops (Hay, 1972:197).

It should be noted however that the foregoing program demanded a large resource base yet the Provincial Office lacked the resources and personnel to implement this

program. In a 1939 memorandum on soil control in Nyanza, the Senior Agriculture Officer noted that the program was still in its genesis. (Ag. KSM 1/502, Thompson Memorandum, 1939:4-5). In practice, officials did too little too late until after World War II.

In Siaya, the major expression of the government's new concern for agricultural development in the 1930s was the intensified cotton campaign. Agricultural officials accordingly launched a new, energetic cotton campaign urging increased production and introducing the crop to a number of areas where it had not earlier been grown, pushing the upper limits of the cotton area to 4600ft above see level. This expansion was signalled by the appearance of new government cotton-buying stations at Ndere, Ng'iya, Sega, Sigomere and Yala (DC/CN 1/6/3, District Annual Report, 1935:6 and Agriculture: KSM 1/502, 1935). This policy eventually paid off for the district as a whole, as cotton production gradually increased after 1931. Prices for cotton also increased between 1933 and 1935. By 1936, Central Nyanza had become the chief cotton-producing district in Kenya, surpassing even North Nyanza in acreage (Ag. KSM 1/370; Memorandum, 1937:37 in DC/NY1 4/1, KNA).

The return of cotton-growing in Siaya in the mid-1930's, at the height of the new cotton campaign, focused once again on group cultivation. Group cultivation was chosen because it allowed for easier inspection of rebellious farmers. Officials felt that such control would be necessary until the people of Siaya accepted the fact that cotton was a necessary adjunct to their livelihood (Agriculture:. KSM 1/370, p. 12, KNA).

The initial harvests were relatively good and opposition to the crop lessened somewhat as the earnings were divided among those who had worked on the farms demarcated by Agricultural officials in each location. A few individual farmers, even began to experiment with cotton on their own farms, with the blessings of the officials who were glad to provide them with seed. Later, however, harvests failed altogether or were of inferior quality, or were damaged by excessive rainfall, hail, and pests, and brought little or no money. Those pioneer farmers argued that the land was not suitable for cotton, and they either abandoned their experiments or arranged for the use of land in a more suitable location (Okwiri, Osir, O.I. 1998).

While the introduction of cotton as a cash crop was a distinct failure in most parts of Siaya during the 1930's, crucial transformation was taking place with regard to food-crop cultivation. Maize, both per capita consumption and acreages increased steadily at the expense of sorghum because of a number of different influences. Maize proved to be slightly superior to sorghum in terms of resistance to locust attacks, a characteristic which increased its popularity following the locust invasions and resulting famines of the early 1930's. A larger number of people began to incorporate maize flour into their diets. Individuals, particularly those who travelled to towns, began to purchase the small hand mills which were available in Kisumu and other towns, and they allowed others to use them for a fee. This was because women generally found maize to be more difficult to grind than sorghum. Hand-mills were later followed by water-powered mills later in the 1930s, the first one having been introduced in the district in 1935.

The outbreak of World War II in 1939 created high demand for foodstuff particularly to supply provisions to the Allied troops in the Middle East and Ethiopia. As a result, the colonial government encouraged greater production of food crops, particularly maize and sorghum. It threw the entire staff of the Department of Agriculture behind this effort. In January 1940 and, August and October 1942, the Nyanza Provincial Commissioner and Agricultural Officer accompanied by the Central Nyanza District Commissioner, toured all Siaya locations in the district. They held barazas in which they exhorted local people to trebble the cultivation and sale of food crops without delay (Monthly Intelligence Reports 1939-1945 PC/NZA/3/1/439). A requisition order for the buying of maize and sorghum was made and those who failed to comply and refused to sell their produce were threatened with legal sanction (Central Nyanza Annual Report 1941 DC/CN/1). The Kenya Farmers Association (KFA) was the sole buyer of all surplus produce. In theory, both African and European farmers received the same, fixed price for their maize, but in practice, African farmers received considerably less than their European counterparts through a series of deductions from the price paid (Fearn 1961:157-162).

Even with these discriminatory practices, prices to the growers increased steadily during the war and were fixed in advance for each season by the Maize and Produce Control Board established in 1942. The volume of maize exports from Nyanza Province increased from 22, 387 metric tons in 1937 to 58, 110 metric tons in 1945. Maize production itself accounted for almost the total increase in export earnings during the same period (Hay, 1972:205; Onduru, 1992:103). Maize continued to increase in

popularity after World War II, to the dismay of agricultural officials who began to worry about diversification.

As a food crop, maize possessed the great advantage of maturing in a shorter period of time than sorghum. It could be grown in both the long and short rains' cycles; and thus offered greater security against crop failures in any one season. In the long run, increased maize cultivation spread the burden of agricultural labour in peak periods. Furthermore, it could either be kept for food or readily sold in local markets or trading centres, depending on whether the demand for food or for cash was more pressing. The maize market has always been much more certain than that for sorghum because of the ever-increasing demand for maize in towns and other rural areas in Kenya (Fearn, 1961:165). Except for local trade in times of famines and the government purchases during World Wars I and II, sorghum was used "solely as food or for the preparation of beer for internal consumption" (Senior Agricultural officer, Nyanza, to seed specialist, Turi, 25 August 1945, in Ag. KSM 1/676, K.N.A.).

Inspite of its prestigious status as a food crop and its clear advantages as a cash crop, however, maize had not supplanted sorghum in local diets by 1945. Thus while most people expressed a preference for maize flour they continued to plant both. The reasons for this include considerations of economic security, a desire for a variety in the diet and the influence of traditional values.

The 1960/61 acreages were Maize, 216,800 and sorghum, 160,500. African Sample Census, 1960/61, II, pp. 55.

Sorghum requires less rainfall than maize and thus does better in a dry season. Maize requires a higher nitrogen content in the soil, so that sorghum produces better yields on tired soils, and will not accelerate deterioration of the soil at such a rapid rate. Since sorghum can easily be ground at home, and maize cannot, a household with less money will prefer to have sorghum on hand (Oluoch, O.I, 1998). Furthermore, sorghum is more nutritious than maize, with a higher content of protein, vitamins and mineral salts (Hay,1972:207).

The adoption of famine and locust-resistant crops like cassava and sweet potatoes and the gradual decline of crops which required a high level of soil fertility was another characteristic of agricultural change between 1930 and 1945. Cassava in particular steadily increased in popularity, because of its drought-and pest-resistant qualities and its ability to produce good yields on soils of low fertility, and because it can be left in the ground for periods of up to 3 years and harvested only when needed (Johnston, pp. 106-112). A factor which further enhanced its popularity was the fact that it could be dried, ground into flour, and then added to sorghum flour or maize flour in preparation of kuon – thus stretching the available grain supply.

The locust attacks and famine of the early 1930's such as Bonyo and Otwoma famines and the Otonglo famine of 1943 vindicated the efforts of those pioneers who had begun to plant cassava and sweet potatoes in the 1920's. These people found themselves in possession of a much-valued commodity and managed to profit from their neighbours' misfortunes (Musewe, Musa, O.I., 1998). During the famine of Otwoma in 1933, for example, the Government distributed maize flour free to the very poor who were

identified to the Government by the headmen in Siaya. The rest of the affected people in Siaya District and neighbouring locations depended on cassava and potatoes grown in Alego, Lolwe and North Ugenya. Traders from Alego and Ugenya brought the crops to markets such as Akala, Ndori, Abom, Bondo and Nyamonye (Odero-Ogwel, 1983:28-30).

The increased use of cassava was due in part to the activities of agricultural officials who distributed large bundles of cuttings during both famine periods and carried on a propaganda campaign to encourage their cultivation. In this they received considerable support from the missionaries at Maseno and other stations (Department of Agricultural Annual Report, 1936:62; DC/CN 1/6/1, 1931: 42 – KNA). The role of returning workers – especially those from Uganda – in spreading the popularity of cassava was still important after 1930. By 1936 the Director of Agriculture could announce that cassava had become staple food in Siaya as well as many areas of Nyanza Province (Department of Agricultural Annual Report, 1936:62).

The cultivation of simsim, and pumpkins began to decrease before World War II, along with the general decline of soil fertility, for all of these crops had fairly high soil nutrient requirements. Cassava had replaced these older crops (Ngoha, Ondanda, Otweyo, Odipo, O.I., 1998). The gradual drop in the price of simsim during the 1930s was also a factor (Department of Agricultural Report, 1934:91). As in the pre-1930 period, individuals could still obtain vegetable seeds and tree cuttings from the Local Native Council Seed farms at Maseno, although these did not become a common practice until after 1945.

The policy of maximum production during the war years led to a state of agrarian crisis in Siaya. Increased crop production had been encouraged without improvement in agricultural techniques. This led to soil degradation and erosion. This situation was exercebated by the fact that although the use of ox-ploughs had become more widespread than before, people had never been adequately trained on their proper use. Fields were ploughed down hill, making it easy for rain water to wash away top soil. Farm boundaries were turned into big gulleys (Othwila, Oloo, O.I., 1998). As soil became exhausted due to overuse and erosion, and as better land was brought under cultivation, weeds – particularly striga – invaded the fields and competed with crops for the already depleted plant nutrients. Crop pests became more rampant, inflicting untold damage to crops.

In contrast to this state of affairs, European agricultural production was better coordinated and planned by a Board of Agriculture. In this sector, production committees were formed during the war in each district to approve schedules of crops to be planted and sold to avoid the disastrous consequences of overproduction (Odero-Ogwel, 1983:32). The European settler sector, therefore, emerged from the war in a better state than the African sector, the contribution of whose production continued to be regarded as fortuitous and unstable even in the years that followed the war (Low and Smith, 1976:259).

When World War II ended in 1945, the Director of Agriculture blamed the underdeveloped nature of African agriculture on the conservative colonial government itself, which was responsible for it. He also reiterated the virtues of paternalism. In his position:

> The African in Kenya has not yet arrived at the level of education, which enables him, of his own accord, to plan his agricultural economy successfully. He has little knowledge of farming practices, no means of gauging the effects of external factors on his economy. In this case, therefore, it is essential, that his general farming policy shall, to a large extent, be dictated to him in the light of the experience and knowledge of the officers of government responsible for his welfare. (Odero-Ogwel, 1983:35)

It was this attitude that characterised the colonial policy of increasing food sufficiency and the conservation of soil in African areas during the post war period. The Troup Commission which compared agricultural prospects in African and European sectors recommended in 1952 that serious agricultural development such as would produce large marketable surpluses should only be undertaken in European settler estates (Low and Smith, 1976:26). It was not until after the recommendations by Frank Swynnerton came out in 1954 that the need of greater capitalisation of Africans was considered. But this was only undertaken in the late 1950's in Central Province, where land consolidation had been carried out and individual farm owners granted security of land tenure. In Siaya, where inheritance customs in land ownership and land fragmentation continued to characterise land tenure, such prospects of agricultural development were precluded.

The period between 1930 and 1945 saw the spread and the gradual incorporation of the new implements which had first been introduced before 1930. By 1945 most people had adopted the jembe and abandoned the use of the wooden hoe. The increased level of money in circulation which reflected the expanded possibilities for wage employment and the development of trade and marketing allowed more people to hire an

ox-plough-team to plough at least one of their fields, or to pay for the use of the hand mills and water-powered mills owned by a few Africans who had accumulated wealth either through wage employment or crop production. An example of such wealthy people was Zepheniah Abungu, the chief of Uholo location, who had purchased an ox-plough, a hand mill and water-powered mill from Mumias. The water-powered mill was installed in the River Wuoroya, a tributary of river Nzoia (Otiende, Ondanda, Othwila, O.I., 1998). Many of their first customers were among the long-term labour migrants, and they had the cash to pay for ploughing services, partly because their extended absences from home made it difficult for them to assume their normal share of agricultural operations, primarily the clearing and first digging of the fields. In this way the custom grew up of "working with money" (tiyo gi pesa) – that is, fulfilling one's customary labour obligations by hiring others to perform the task. For many people, however, ploughing was still a luxury by 1945, and it was not universally practiced even after 1945.

Thus the developments in crop production and technology that took place between 1930 and 1945 were essentially the spread and gradual incorporation of numerous innovations first introduced in the early twenties. The overall effect of these changes was to reduce the investment of labour in agriculture and in food preparation, and to confine the position of agriculture in the subsistence sphere of the local economy. The labour power saved in this way was then reinvested in other activities considered to be more productive, such as wage employment outside the district, and trade. These patterns of labour allocation, set by 1945, have almost entirely remained dominant since then.

5.3. Migrant labour and the underdevelopment of agriculture in Siaya, 1930-1945

In a broad sense, the colonial labour market was much freer during the 1930's than it had been in the previous decade. Government priorities had been reversed to some extent: in the colony-wide financial crisis of the early 1930's, potential African contributions of export crops began to seem more important than the constant supply of African labour for European plantations. On the other hand the depression itself had hit many European farmers badly, and as a result, their labour needs dropped sharply. From 1929 to 1931, for example, the total number of Africans employed on European holdings dropped from 125,885 to 104,120, largely because of the collapse in the world sisal market and the subsequent closing of a number of estates (Department of Agriculture; Annual Report, 1931:48-49). The colony as a whole apparently went through an unemployment crisis during the early 1930's , with more would-be African labourers than jobs with European employers. In Central Nyanza District, however, the development of gold-mining operations made a significant impact upon the local economies by providing labour opportunities for hundreds of Africans (District Annual Report, 1936:39-40, DC/CN.1/63).

In 1931 the locusts returned to Nyanza, destroyed crops and precipitated the Bonyo famine of that year. From 1931 to 1934 there was a disastrous drought in Kenya (Harlow, et al, 1965:223). The drought led to several crop failures in Luoland, which in turn led to the otwoma famine in 1933. Again, the most severely hit were the Luo locations immediately around the lake. The government distributed maize flour free to

the very poor who were identified by the headmen. The rest of the affected people in Siaya District depended on cassava and potatoes grown in Uholo, Alego, Lolwe and North Ugenya (Odhiambo, Ogada, Oduor, O.I., 1998). Traders from Alego and Ugenya brought the crops to markets such as Akala, Ndori, Yala, Abom, Bondo and Nyamonye (Ochieng', 1987:12).

These famines of the early 1930's had several important consequences for the people of Siaya. They gave a new burst of life to trade and to local markets, as people sought to exchange stock for food supplies. But they also emphasized the importance of regular wage labour as a means of setting aside small cash reserves in case of future famines.

The world depression of the early 1930s, though generally swallowed up in the disaster of the great famines, indirectly impacted on the local economy in at least two ways. The new policy of government intervention in African agriculture, marked especially in Siaya by the second cotton-growing campaign, originated in the official realization that a stable economic future for Kenya would have to be based on the full development of the colony's resources, African as well as European. At the same time, the generally low level of prices for cotton and other cash crops during the 1930s made much of that campaign a failure. In the short run, low prices reinforced the determination of the Luo of Siaya to cultivate crops which were staple foods as well as revenue producers, while in the long run, they affected a growing commitment to wage labour as a more secure means of fulfilling cash needs than surplus agricultural production (District Annual Report, 1932:5-6; District Annual Report, 1933:7-8, DC/CN 1/6/2, KNA).

The beginning of gold mining in Nyanza provided critical job and trading opportunities after the years of famines and depression. Gold was discovered in Kakamega in 1931 which ushered in the beginning of the gold-mining industry in Nyanza (Fearn, 1961:26). But the first period of goldmining industry in Nyanza began in 1934. The main gold-mining areas in Nyanza Province included Asembo, Uyoma, Sakwa, (Seme and Micalder Mines in South Nyanza and Kakamega in North Nyanza). About 6,000 people in Siaya were employed in the various mining industry within the province (DC/CN.1/1/1, 1935:137-138). The outbreak of World War II brought the gold mining epoch to a close in late 1939, as the young European operators volunteered for military service or were called to Nairobi for wartime duties.

Meanwhile, in the period prior to the depression, the problem for the settlers had been to get enough labourers from the African reserves. But from 1929, the reverse became almost entirely true. The decline of export crops forced the settlers to disemploy labour since they were not able to pay labourers. 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 in Kenya declined drastically from 160, 435 in 1927 to 132,000 in 1932 (Onduru, 1992:133). Clayton and Savage (1974:175) 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 demand.

Thousands of Luo employees from Siaya were declared redundant and forced to return to the villages. They embarked on crop production and actual production of most crops increased sharply with the return of labour and the problem that consequently developed was how to sell what could easily be produced (Agriculture: KSM 1/370, p. 14, KNA). For those Africans who remained in employment, the problem was even worse. The depression made wages to be slashed by 50 per cent from the 1929 level (Stichter, 1975:95). 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 male labourers from Siaya who were declared vagrants were repatriated (Musewe Okinda, O.I., 1998).

The immediate need to defend Kenya from Italian invasion, when World War II broke out, led to a tremendous expansion of the King's African Rifles. Throughout 1940, 1941 and 1942 the Nyanza Provincial administration was pre-occupied with nothing but obtaining recruits and supplies for the Army. The people of central Nyanza were again required to contribute foodstuffs, cattle, money, labour, and above all, their men, in the service of European war. Many Luo men believing that they would be forced into the Army, opted to leave Nyanza on their own to seek work on settler farms. By the end of 1941, some 91,218 men from Nyanza were working outside the province. In that year some 5,131 young men from Nyanza were recruited to the Army (Stichter, 1975:97). In the same year a lot of foodstuffs, including 553, 771 bags of maize, 27,126 bags of finger-millet, 65,000 bags of sorghum and 12,679 cattle were exported from Nyanza to meet the war effort (Ochieng', 198:107-108).

In 1942 it was estimated that some 95,000 young men from Nyanza were working outside the province. In the same year another 544,446 bags of finger millet and 483 tons of fish were bought by the Government (Nyanza Province Annual Report, 1942). Here was a situation in which the Government was depleting both labour and food surpluses from the province, without paying any attention to the province's food situation.

The attractions of military service, including the payment of regular 'family allowances' which were sent into the reserves, and a cash grant of some £25 paid to each soldier on demobilization, brought a number of the people of Siaya into the army who had not previously been employed outside the district. Thus the experiences of gold mining and Kenya African Rifles both enlarged the group of men who became part of the regular labour force.

World War II, like World War I was also accompanied by a major famine. The long rains in 1942 were too heavy, and floods destroyed most of the crops. Then at the end of 1942 the short rains failed when already Nyanza's food surpluses had been disposed of by the Government. The following year the province was plunged into one of the grimmest famines it had ever experienced (DC/CN.1/6/5, KNA). This famine of the 1943-44 is known locally as the famine of Otonglo, the ten-cent piece, because the shortage of food and resulting inflation of prices meant that the smallest unit of money accepted in the market went from the two or three-cent piece up to the ten-cent piece (Ochieng' Obudho, O.I., 1998). This famine and its effects lingered on until 1945. Indeed the Food Shortage Commission of Inquiry was set up by the Governor in 1943 to investigate the cause of this disastrous famine which had also affected large parts of

Kenya. In an apologetic letter to the Chief Secretary in January 1944, Nyanza's Provincial Commissioner, K.L. Hunter, blamed the 1943 famine on the Provincial administration's inability to estimate accurately the already vastly increased rate of food consumption in the province. He observed; "as late as October 1941 attention was apparently directed to arranging for disposal of a surplus rather than forestal a shortage of maize" (Ochieng, 1987:13).

This food shortage during otonglo famine was an eloquent testimony of the harsh conditions generated by the war. Hundreds of people in Nyanza Province died due to the famine especially in Asembo, Uyoma (Seme and Maragoli), The colonial government responded by suspending conscription temporarily. A Reserve Food-Stuffs Committee was set up and empowered with purchasing and distributing food supplies to the localities. But this was a little too late. Moreover, transport system was underdeveloped and as a result it was difficult for some areas to get food. It is amazing that the colonial government was not concerned with the root causes of the problem. It is true that other factors could have contributed towards the food shortage but the male absence from the localities was a factor which could not be overlooked. The colonial government needed to be concerned with how the present or existing female labour could be effectively utilised or even realise that female labour was already stretched to the maximum and find a solution for the male labour migrant system. Instead in October, 1942 the colonial government began to question lack of involvement by women in war work. L.D. Owen's response is appropriate here:

> Women in the reserves are not able to do what is generally counted as war work, because owing to the absence of so many men from this reserve, the field work and the upkeep

> of kraals, and even the care of cattle, increasingly devolves upon the woman. All the millet which this reserve has produced, not to speak of other food such as eggs and chicken, etc. could never have attained the bulk it has without the hard work of thousands of women and girls (L.O. Owen's letter to D.C. CK. October 13, 1942, KNA).

Women were faced with added responsibilities. Most of them had to face these alone because most kraals or homes were left without even a single man although this was not the government policy in the initial stages. At least one man was supposed to be left in each homestead but as years went by, men were conscripted indiscriminately until certain homes had no males left in them. It was the war and the essential undertakings, but not the African communities from which labour was removed, that concerned the colonial government (Jalang'o-Ndeda, 1991:192).

Towards the end of 1943, the government realised that cereals production during the short rains was below average in some areas while in others it was a failure. Alego was one area that experienced complete crop failure. They did not suffer from lack of food immediately because they bought from neighbouring areas but the position was going to be more serious in April, May and June 1944. The Africans were encouraged to plant sweet potatoes so that they could have a reserve food supply form April onwards the following year. In West Alego the local people were cultivating sweet potatoes on the Eastern fringes of the Yala swamp. There was still need to extend the cultivation to all the fringes of the swamp. In Kadimo, sweet potatoes were already being planted in the Usenge area North of Kadimo Bay and also along the Yala River. But this could also be extended (\Letter from E.W. Godwin Agricultural Officer – Maseno to the D.C. CK. 20th November, 1943 KNA). Bearing in mind the paucity of males due to labour migration the

labour utilised to plant the famine resistant crops was female, moreover the planting of root tubers, traditionally, was the domain of women (Ochieng', 1987:14; Jalang'o-Ndeda, 1991:197).

In 1944 there continued to be a food shortage in the locations of Central Nyanza demonstrated in the tables 11 and 12 below.

Table 11: **Food Shortage in Central Nyanza**

Location	Area	Estimated population
Kadimo	Practically all the locations	7,200
Sakwa	Kapiyo and Wayendhe=West Sakwa	20,000
Uyoma	Okela and Rachar	700
Asembo	Omia sub-location	1,700
Alego	Kadenge, Muwer and W.Alego generally	25,000
Seme	All area below the road from Awach to Paw Akuche	20,000
	TOTAL	56,600

Source: Extracted from Figure 13 of Jalang'o-Ndeda, 1991:197.

The government was very concerned about famine relief and was selling grain to the local people. In March 1944 the following amount of grain was taken to the undermentioned centres and placed in cotton stores as given in the table below.

Table12 : Amount of Grain taken to Centres as placed in cotton stores

Kadenge	1,000 bags from Yala
Kombewa	450 bags from Yala
	300 bags from Kano
Bondo	130 bags from Yala
	200 bags from Kano
Kadimo	100 bags from Yala
	66 bags from Kano

Source: Nyanza Province Annual Report, 1944.

It was estimated that the grains would provide five weeks' relief. These were sold every Wednesday and Thursday and 450 bags were to be sold per week for 14 weeks between April and July. A bag of wimbi was to cost 15/50, and a bag of mtama and maize was to cost 14/-. In other words, food was sold at two shillings a debe. The food price could only be kept low if the government provided food at a fair price and in sufficient quantities. The involvement of the local Indian shop owners or middle men would have meant exploitation not only of the situation but also of the meagre resources of the people.

By 1945 conscription had caused large numbers of men to leave their homes and consequently their production. On the 31st of December, conscription was withdrawn. People had become so hesitant to work that by 28th February, 1946 the government was stating that all must work for the achievement of any form of development. The government stressed that "... constant propaganda should be undertaken to emphasize the necessity of each individual by his work contributing to the development of state." This recommendation was formally accepted by the government in sessional paper No. 2 of 1945 dated 16th May, 1945. It stated:

> It is, therefore, a permanent and pressing duty of the administrative officers to impress upon the inhabitants... that government regards it as essential that all able bodied men shall work either in their own lands, in their own businesses, or in outside employment. It is the duty of administrative officers in cases where surplus able bodied men are living in idleness to formulate scheme for minor communal services e.g. land improvement and soil conservation.

But the irony was that the Nyanza 'reserves' were already depleted of the able bodied males. The few who remained were regarded as living in idleness if they did not get outside employment. 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 for employment. The labour Department Report of 1947 noted:

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

From the foregoing, we can advance some observations. It is our observation that colonialism through its economic and labour policies created a crisis in local agriculture. Civil and military conscription accelerated the tendency to remove labour from agriculture and invest in outside employment. The interference with agriculture eventually resulted in acute shortages of labour in Luoland. Acute labour shortages also contributed to the famines in Luoland. During the war, famine did not mean total shortage of food everywhere. Sometimes food could be found in a neighbouring territory but the inability to import caused the problem because the transportation and marketing

systems were underdeveloped and as a result food could not reach these isolated communities in time.

On the other hand socio-economic relation between men and women changed. There was increased responsibility for women regarding the reproduction and the running of daily affairs of the household. Women cultivated land and engaged in trade to maintain their households.

It is this economic division of the household between katich (Work place) and dala (reserves) that was one of the means through which women were made to subsidize the development of the European economic sector. The impact on women was that they were left as the foundation of subsistence sector. In other words, the traditional subsistence sector (pre-capitalist mode of production) and modern sector (capitalist mode of production) were existing side by side, as a product of capitalism. The pre-capitalist mode of production were not to be destroyed but only to be marginalised. Through them women were to provide food for the family. Men who were mostly engaged in wage labour were to be paid low wages to allow the modern sector to accumulate more capital. The low wages earned by many African male labourers rendered them incapable of buying some basic commodities. Jalang'o-Ndeda has rightly observed that:

> The function of (domestic) agriculture was to be viewed (by migrant labourers) as holding an opening. It was to continue providing the basic elements of subsistence food for the family in the rural areas and often for the absentee labourer it guaranteed him a home and a place in his community which could be activated when necessary (Jalang'o-Ndeda, 1991:166).

It should be noted, however, that there existed migrant workers who were employed under long-term basis in good places such as the railways and other governmental departments. These workers received relatively better wages and send money to their parents and wives at home to hire labour during planting seasons. In Siaya, most of them were found in areas in proximity to the mission stations such as Sigomere, Ambira, Rang'ala and Ng'iya. They had to cultivate strong cultural ties with their families at home so that in case of lack of employment or retirement they could return to the rural area. However, these remittances were quite irregular since the African worker themselves did not own post office boxes and also a man hardly send money to his rural family on a monthly basis. For example, in 1936 a total of £176,000 was paid as wages to Luo migrant workers. Only £25,000 was sent to the reserve in form of goods, postal orders or in cash as a result of wages received outside the province and in 1938 the amount was about £26,000 (PC/NZA.1/31, 1936; DC/KSM.1/36/38, KNA). It is, therefore, suffice to conclude that the family back in the reserve could not depend on remittances due to their unreliable nature.

Migratory labour caused the gradual decline of the once valued tradtional communal work, saga. As the people of Siaya 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.

Important changes also occurred in the social concepts of agriculture and its relations to economic security. The proliferation of opportunity for wage labour, together with failure of cotton as a high value cash crop, and the constant food shortages, produced the conviction that labour export was the most profitable allocation of resources and certainly the most secure. Culturally, the land was no longer such a feasible means of acquiring wealth as it had been in the past. By 1945 a large number of the people had come to feel that the only real economic security lay in some form of education and long-term wage employment outside home. The function of agriculture was seen as a holding operation. It was to continue providing basic elements of subsistence food to the family in the rural areas and often for the absentee labourers as well, guaranteeing him a home and a place in the community which could always be activated when necessary. In other words, the aim was to avoid having to spend cash for any needs which could be provided locally (Jalang'o-Ndeda, 1991:207; Onduru, 1992:63).

Conclusion:

In this chapter we have discussed how colonial policies transformed agriculture in Siaya between 1930 and 1945. We have emphasized that colonial economic and labour policies were influenced by the needs of metropolitan capital, the need by the colonial state to get revenue and the interest of local European settlers. The responses of the Luo of Siaya were, on the other hand, influenced by pre-existing forms of production and the new obligations and needs created by colonial situation. In other words, by 1945 the varied institutions in Siaya were undergoing change as a result of both internal societal dynamism and external factors, specifically colonialism and its attendant institutions.

We have contended that low prices of cash crops such as cotton discouraged Luo peasants from cash crop production. Consequently, some of them were forced to seek wage labour as an alternative financial source. In the process there was a shift of labour from the rural sector (pre-capitalist mode of production) to the settler sector (capitalist mode of production). Migratory labour indirectly undermined African attitude towards agriculture as a means of production and survival. The increasing opportunities for employment, coupled with crop failure and poor harvest, produced the conviction that wage labour was the most profitable and certainly the most secure. Civil and military conscription accelerated the tendency to remove labour from agriculture and invest in outside employment. This interference with agriculture eventually resulted in acute shortages of labour in Luoland which in turn contributed to the famines in the area.

The study has also demonstrated that the household was not virtually distorted. That the household survived as the basic unit of production and reproduction in Siaya is no doubt since the sustenance of the community still remained in essence, the task of the household. Despite the exportation of labour to meet colonial demands, the household re-organised its labour patterns to make up for the absent members. We have demonstrated, for example, that there was increased responsibility for women regarding the reproduction and the running of daily affairs of the family. Women cultivated land and engaged in trade to maintain their families.

The colonial government had neither the will nor the power to totally displace the household production and self-sustenance as this would have become counter-productive in economy. The pre-capitalist modes of production were not to be destroyed but only to

be marginalised. Through them women were to provide food for the family. Men who were mostly engaged in wage labour were to be paid low wages to allow the modern sector to accumulate more capital. The low wages earned by most African male labourers rendered them incapable of buying some basic commodities. In other words, the government encouraged, through direct and indirect methods, greater local commodity production at a controllable level within the capitalist production set-up. Thus, the households were not set free to excel in production and accumulation and grow too powerful economically so as to disregard colonial labour demands. Despite this some local farmers accumulated wealth and bailed themselves out of forced labour.

The commoditization of labour power, the colonial labour demands and the necessity to work for wages to pay taxes were part of the process of articulation where the pre-capitalist institutions were modified, restructured and conserved to operate within and for the benefit of the new capitalist production system. That the basic structure of administration and production (institutions) remained is a clear witness to the necessity to use pre-capitalist structures to function within the new economic system. It is this new economic system that enabled the enterprising individuals to accumulate more wealth than the rest of the community thereby en-gendering socio-economic differentiation amongst the people of Siaya. In the final analysis, it should be remembered that colonialism through its economic and labour policies created a crisis in local agriculture of Siaya.

CHAPTER SIX

6.0 SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION

This study purposed to analyse how colonialism transformed agriculture in Siaya upto 1945. It has been argued that agricultural change was brought about by changes in forces and relations of production during the colonial period. The colonial administration played a primary role in the incorporation of agriculture of Siaya into the colonial capitalist system. In the process the colonial economy disturbed, partially destroyed and then restructured local production and exchange through commodity production, wage labour and trade; and finally, the colonial economic system led to socio-economic differentiation among the people of Siaya.

The agricultural changes which took place were the result of the incorporation of Siaya into the capitalist economy by the colonial state. This event brought about new stresses and opportunities to which people continued to respond. The colonial political structure was a system of control whose chief purpose was to ensure the security of the colonial state for its organisation of the people for participation in the colonial economy and its supervision of the transfer of surplus to Britain. Colonial institutions such as chiefs and headmen, local councils and the system of taxation and labour expropriation were the major instruments in this exercise. A new situation was created whereby people's agricultural activities were no longer undertaken independently but in line with the needs of the colonial capitalist state which represented the interests of local European settlers and expatriate traders.

The incorporation of the people of Siaya into the colonial economy through commodity production led to partial changes in the pre-existing forces and relations of production. In the forces of production, there occurred changes in the variety and quantity of crops grown by local farmers and also in the technology they used. In the relation of production, the division of labour, the purposes for which what was produced was put, and how surplus was extracted and distributed, and finally, the reproduction of producers were all considerably altered.

In commodity production, the colonial state encouraged, mainly through coercion, the local production of greater surpluses of traditional crops such as sorghum and millet and also of those it officially sponsored like maize, simsim, groundnuts and cotton. As a result, there was dramatic increase in the quantity of marketed crops as people sold these produce to pay tax. As local markets were established and as new needs such as iron hoes (jembe), ox-ploughs and clothing arose, production ceased to be mainly for use value. Surplus produce for exchange increasingly acquired prominence. Population increase also led to more land being brought under cultivation.

Increase in commodity production was made possible by changes in technology as imported iron hoes and ox-ploughs were incorporated and used side by side with traditional small-bladed iron hoes which did not disappear by the 1940s. The new agricultural implements increased physical efficiency in production. Imported technology led to the gradual transformation of the traditional industrial skills, particularly the manufacture of iron tools. In the process, traditional craftsmen were increasingly engaged

in both manufacture and repair of traditional implements and repair of imported hoes and ox-ploughs, and other domestic tools.

But the quantitative increase in crop production was never accompanied by appropriate techniques in agriculture due to lack of adequate extension agricultural services. Agricultural services were confined to the settler areas. There was no need for the capitalization of local production through technical and organizational improvements of production so long as the people produced sufficient quantities of commodities required by the capitalist state. As we have seen, this led to the deterioration in soil fertility which led to a relative reduction in crop yields per acre. African production continued to be organised on 'traditional' methods and remained vulnerable to drought and crop diseases. Prices for commodities and wages for labour which was, to a large extent, requisitioned by force, were kept low as the costs of the reproduction of both the producers and wage labourers were transferred to those aspects of the local economy which remained intact. This arrangement was economically and politically convenient for the colonial state but it precluded local economic development. Further, the administrative emphasis on crop production gradually led to the predominance of agriculture over livestock keeping. This undermined the balance which had existed between the two forms of production during the pre-capitalist period. Other economic activities like hunting of wild animals and gathering of fruits and roots which were significant during the pre-colonial period also declined as bushes were cleared for settlement and crop production.

The transformation of production from use-value to exchange-value also led to changes in the division of labour within and among households. Whereas before the advent of colonialism people worked in their fields just long enough to satisfy their subsistence requirements, during the colonial period they were forced to work for longer hours to produce surplus for sale. Also, due to the general absence of males from their homes to places of wage labour, domestic farm work, and even the herding of livestock, which had been traditionally the work of men, increasingly became the responsibility of women. It is also true that the participation of men in crop production was made more regular by the gradual use of ox-ploughs which required more physical effort. Furthermore, as each household became increasingly concerned with its own well-being, and as labour became monetarized, the traditional cooperative work, saga, declined. It was replaced by paid labour as the more prosperous farmers hired labour at a cost (Abudo, Okoth, O.I., 1998).

Commoditization further led to the marginalization of the producers. Although the entire colonial economy occupied a position which was marginal to the capitalist system, within the colony itself, the African (farmers) sector became increasingly subordinated to that of the European settler farmers. It became what may be described a sub-economy. Through commodity production and deepening market relations, the Luo of Siaya came to serve capitalist development by offering cheap labour, cheap food and markets for profit-making goods from Britain. Like African farmers in other parts of Kenya their 'ultimate security and subsistence [lay] in their having certain rights in land and in the labour of family members on the land, but who were involved, through rights and obligations, in a wider economic system which included the participation of non-farmers'

(Arrighi and Soul, 1974:407; Shanin, 1982). At the levels of both production and distribution they became internationally related to Britain and locally to the European settler farmers, a relation which was based on economic exploitation and political domination.

Participation in a wider economic world as commodity producers led to a transformation in the people's cycle of reproduction. Defining reproduction as 'the renewal from one round of production to another of the social and technical elements and relations of production among producers' Friedmann (1980:162-163) has argued that for it to occur, the means of production must be renewed and the social product distributed among those who labour and those who control the means of production in such a way that production must recommence in its previous form'. According to the author, the transformation of reproduction takes place when it is undermined and some of the old elements of production are recombined into new ones. Among the people of Siaya such transformations did not occur in the actual ownership of land as everyone possessed it, but in the size of family land holdings, which varied from household to household.

As we have also seen there was decline in the fertility of land. Livestock also became scarce and more costly. New and more expensive implements of production, iron hoes and ox-ploughs were also introduced. The prices of surplus produce, which had acquired an exchange value were low relative to the imported commodities. All these increased the cost of production and decreased real returns to labour. The people of Siaya found it increasingly expensive to entirely renew their means of production, to adequately buy farm inputs, procure wives, rear children, eat a balanced diet as they sometimes even

sold their subsistence requirements. This pathetic situation which emerged has been described as 'simple reproduction squeeze' (Bernstein, 1979: 427).

Nevertheless, commodity production offered an opportunity for new forms of accumulation to a few people. Those who owned large pieces of land, oxen and ox-ploughs were able to produce greater quantities of surplus whose returns they reinvested in further production and other forms of economic activities. Some of them even hired and paid labour to work on their farms. It was these people who bought milk separators, ox-drawn carts and established water mills. They also entered trade in grain, hides and skins and cattle. They owned shops and built, mabati (iron-roofed) houses. The more adventurous ones bought lorries and entered transport business. These new forms of wealth were indications of the Siaya farmers' economic and social differentiation.

Commodity production had direct effects on the social organisation of the local people. For instance, in pre-colonial Siaya, there existed a strong social bond among the people. The unmarried young men depended on the elders who provided the 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 the bridewealth as they were capable of raising it. Consequently, they no longer held the elders in high esteem as before. This weakened the hierarchical social structure of the people (Ngoha, Orawo, Apondi, Oloo, O.I., 1998).

It has been demonstrated that many men were leaving the rural areas for the labour areas. What was the cumulative effect on the rural economy of Siaya of this prolonged large scale involvement of men in rural migrancy? Jalang'o-Ndeda's (1991:304) response that it takes little imagination to perceive the disastrous effects of such migration on agriculture is appropriate here. Indeed, the effects were widespread. Critical to the impact of the absence of male labour was the nature of the agricultural system; the first consideration being the centrality of the male role in the system and the extent to which the labour of the women could substitute the male economic roles.[8] An important aspect of agriculture that was crucial was how much human labour input was required by the particular crop under production or farming. When so many men left the areas, this meant that their agricultural responsibilities were left to the women. In agriculture this meant that either new ground would not be broken for long or there would be no agricultural expansion or women would undertake to break new ground. The resultant break in the division of labour definitely meant an increased burden for women. In Siaya, most women managed for a while, to keep production up, despite loss of male labour, through the co-operative work party-saga- in the early years. The saga which was fundamental in the early years began to assume a different stance in later years and in fact was not widespread in many areas after 1945.

However, in the lake areas of Uyoma, Yimbo, Asembo and Sakwa women opted for trade. They walked long distances in groups to local markets all over Siaya and sometimes Kisumu District and even Western Province to sell their wares in exchange for

[8] In chapter two the agricultural responsibilities of the males are clearly stated e.g. breaking ground, cleaning of bush.

grain and other badly needed items. In fact, this trade was not the domain of women whose husbands were away, but also included everybody who had the need for cash money and even men could be found within their ranks. There was also a group of men who became full-time traders. Their trade was mainly in cattle. They travelled to South Nyanza where herds were large and prices low to cell in Central Nyanza. Long distance cattle trade was a new phenomenon among the Luo and many reknown cattle markets later developed (for example, Akala in Gem-Seme and Kabungu in Uholo-Wanga border). This trade was a strenuous engagement that carried with it a package of lasting effects on the health of participants, for example, swollen knees and ankles and severe back aches (Jalang'o-Ndeda, 1991:314).

Kitching (1980:14) argues that Africans in Kenya adjusted easily to the labour demands from colonial government due to the fact that in the pre-colonial time, labour time of both men and women was underutilised in both quantitative and qualitative sense. The quantitative underutilisation made it possible to redistribute labour time within the population so as to create a new division of labour; the African could release labour power which they did not need in rural areas to be utilised in other forms of production. Concerning the Luo families whose young men were long distance migrants, Kitching concludes that they rarely needed to replace the labour lost before 1918 (and indeed upto 1930) because those involved were family members who were least involved in family production (cultivation and husbandry) even in the pre-colonial period. Kitching disregards the fact that the choice of men was determined by chiefs, headmen and later private recruiters who in most cases had no regard for one's position in the family so even heads of families went out to work in the pre-1918 era. Again, hut tax was paid by

all who owned houses, so if a man lacked the means, head of family or not, he had to go out to work. Further, the 1914 and 1918 wars took any male regardless of whether he was a family head or not. Consequently, by 1918 the impact of male labour migration was already felt by the entire Siaya community.

Kitching further states that before 1930 the distribution of African labour time had not yet started – the spare capacity had not even began to be utilised so migrant labour could not have any major impact on agriculture. The expansion of women labour time alone was primarily responsible for the commercialization of African agriculture. Specifically in Nyanza, women could even hire labour to replace the men. In the main they filled the gap by their own labour. Qualitatively as Hay (1982) posits, they were aided by the hiring of replacement, the purchase of improved agricultural implements and the remittances sent by husbands. This was the ideal that could not be applicable to all areas of Siaya. Kitching sees 1930-40 as the period marking the downward trend in agricultural development made obvious by the decline in the marketed surplus for Central Nyanza perhaps due to male labour migration. Our observations in this thesis, is that while the impact on agriculture of male labour migration became obvious in later years of colonialism, it was felt all over Siaya much earlier than this by the individual families.

Generally, the migrant labour system brought about decline in food production and health conditions and paradoxically made impossible the development of a cash crop economy. Robbed of the labour power of men folk, there was a staggering deterioration in the productivity of Siaya over the years (Jalang'o-Ndeda, 1991:315). The decline was even more obvious and vivid when compared with the improvement in productivity of

the white farms in adjacent areas (next to Kano and Nyakach). The system, therefore, prevented socio-economic structure from undergoing radical progressive change; also to defend itself, to survive, the Luo society reacted by reinforcing those aspects of their traditional structures, which enabled them to survive this impoverishment. This impoverishment in turn reinforced the push effect on certain elements within the society reproducing the conditions of emigrations.

On the whole, although the local people's responses to and participation in the colonial economy were undertaken within the limitations imposed by the colonial situation, they played a significant role in determining the transformation of the local agricultural economy. Their engagement in the economy was influenced by the pre-existing forms of production and relations of production and, also, the new obligations and needs created and imposed on them by the colonial situation. People's entry into commodity production, wage labour and trade did not result in the transformation of the entire fabric of the pre-colonial Luo society. They produced for cash to pay taxes and buy other requirements for reproduction, but they also continued to produce to meet their subsistence needs. Land continued to be owned on the basis of kinship although this ideology increasingly became confined to the family. Family labour continued to be used in production although a few rich people subsidised family with hired labour. As people had access to land those who were engaged in wage labour did not become a fully fledged proletarian class. Differential responses to and participation, in the colonial economy led to socio-economic differentiation among the people of Siaya. The local agriculture that emerged during the colonial period was underdeveloped.

GLOSSARY

1. *Akeyo*: A kind of green vegetable.
2. *Akur (Akuru)*: Dove
3. *Aliya*: Smoked meat
4. *Alur (Aluru)*: A small species of bird
5. *Ambururu*: A sting
6. *Apamo*: The great rinderpest of 1890s
7. *Apedha*: Small-scale hunting
8. *Apoth*: A kind of green vegetable (*Corchorus olitorius*)
9. *Atipa*: A variety of green vegetable (*Asystassia schimperia)*
10. *Awendo*: A big species of bird
11. *Bel*: Sorghum
12. *Bo*: A kind of green vegetable (*rhus vulgaris*)
13. *Chwe kode*: Famine of 1919
14. *Chwiri (chwir)*: The long rain season
15. *Dala*: A homestead
16. *Dek*: A kind of green vegetable (*Gnandropis gynandra*)
17. *Dholuo*: A dominant culture and language which has been acquired and adopted by the diverse people inhabiting Siaya.
18. *Dolo*: A ceremony organised once in every year by the head of the homestead to celebrate the prosperity in livestock keeping
19. *Dwar*: Large-scale hunting
20. *Gunda bur*: Homestead surrounded by trenches for protection against cattle raiders.

21. *Jadak*: A tenant

22. *Jatend-dwar*: Leader of a hunting group

23. *Jembe (Gembe)*: A western imported iron-hoe

24. *Jodak*: Tenants

25. *Jokakwaro*: Those who shared the same biological father

26. *Jokapango (Jopango)*: Those who went out on wage labour

27. *Jopiny*: The owners or citizens

28. *Kanga*: Famine of 1918

29. *Kasir (Kasiri)*: Traditional iron-hoe

30. *Ke-otonglo*: Famine of 1942

31. *Kimirwa (ich-simba)*: Born out of wedlock

32. *Kipande*: Identity card

33. *Kwon*: A type of stiff porridge made by mixing corn meal with boiling water – or – bread made from corn flour

34. *Kwot*: A large shield

35. *Lihaya (Rahaya)*: Traditional curved wooden hoe

36. *Lupo*: Small scale fishing

37. *Manyur (Manyuru)*: A newly initiated person into adulthood by the removal of six teeth from the lower jaw. Also refers to a woman who has just given birth.

38. *Misumba (Msumba)*: A servant

39.	*Mboga*:	A kind of green vegetable
40.	*Mondo*:	A special garden for the head of the homestead or produce from that garden
41.	*Moso*:	Traditional method of cattle-lease or lending
42.	*Muto*:	A kind of green vegetable
43.	*Nako*:	The practice of removing teeth during initiation
44.	*Napo*:	Large-scale fishing usually by traditional fishing baskets or nets
45.	*Nyiego*:	Rivalry among co-wives
46.	*Obwoch alando*:	A kind of edible mushroom (*Terrytomyces rabuori)*
47.	*Obwoch oruka*:	A variety of edible mushroom *(Terrytomyces microcarpas).*
48.	*Obwolo*:	Mushroom
49.	*Odar*:	A strong wood used for making wooden hoe (*Lihaya or Rahaya*)
50.	*Odwa*:	Our house
51.	*Ofuadho (ojalo)*:	Matchet
52.	*Ogungo*:	A big species of bird
53.	*Onyulo*:	A type of green vegetable
54.	*Opon*:	The short rains season
55.	*Oro*:	Dry season

SAMPLE QUESTIONS

Question Guideline

General Information

Name:_____ Sex:_____

Clan:_____ Sub-location:_____

Age:_____ Marital Status:_____

Amount of land owned:_____

How the land was acquired (first occupier, inherited, or bought)

Number of different pieces of land owned:_____

Types of crops grown:_____

Number and types of animals kept:_____

Number of dependants:_____

Pre-Colonial Agricultural Economy

1. What forms of land ownership existed among the Luo on the eve of colonial conquest? How did people acquire land in the pre-colonial period? Were there any landlords or a group of landless people in your community before the colonial period?

2. How did your people allocate land for various types of use e.g. cultivation, grazing and hunting? Who had the right to allocate the land? How were a person's rights to land protected?

3. What crops did you grow? What items or crops did they gather from nature? What were your planting and harvesting seasons?

4. How was agricultural produce stored and how was it appropriated? Did your households always have enough to eat? If not, how did they supplement their crops? What was their main food?

5. Are there any remembered famines among your people? If so, what were their causes? What measures did the people take to curb food shortages during drought, locust invasion and periods of famines?

6. Did your people have established means of predicting calamities? What were the consequences of remembered famines on the community?

7. Did your people keep animals? If so, Which ones did they keep? Which ones did they hunt? How did the individuals acquire animals or increase their herds? How were the animals grazed and protected from enemies?

8. How did your community organize their labour?

9. Were there specific jobs for categories of people? Was there any form of payment of labour amongst your people.? If so, how was it paid?

10. Did your people have any form of exchange? If so, with whom, and in what commodities? What was the medium of exchange?

11. Were there trading centres? Was there a group of people specializing in trade. If so, why? If not, why not? Colonial Agricultural Economy.

Colonial Agricultural Economy

12. What economic and agricultural changes did the British bring in the area? How did they affect the people's land ownership and usage? How did land alienation affect the people?

13. Were the alienated lands settled on by your people prior to the coming of the British?

14. How did the introduction of new crops affect agriculture in your area? Did this introduction of cash crops affect food production? Which of your people's indigenous crops still existed by the end of World War II.

15. How did your people sell their crops or farm produce? How fair were the transactions to your people? Did your people take any initiative to produce more food to sell to the British colonial officials? If so, what were the colonial government's efforts to boost trade in food crops?

16. Did there emerge an indigenous group or groups of traders? What obstacles or prospects did they encounter?

17. Did the British establish any agricultural farms in Siaya? If so, what agricultural activities were they engaged in?

18. Were there efforts made by the colonial government to increase food production among your people? What were the government's efforts to increase cash crop production? Did trade affect production of food in any way?

19. How did the British colonial rule affect the labour organization of the people vis-à-vis animal husbandry and exchange activities? How were individual roles in the society affected?

20. Were there any imported British and Indian goods among your people? If so, name them. Apart from these where else did other goods come from? What were their effect on your technology, industry, trade and agricultural production?

21. How did the introduction of taxes and 'Kipande' affect your people? How did your people pay their taxes, offer their labour, and maintain agricultural production at the same time?

22. How did the World War I and II affect your people's agricultural production?

23. In what way would you say your people benefited from colonialism? What were its bad effects as far as your people's agricultural economy was concerned?

24. Was there a group of people or individuals that accumulated wealth and land during the colonial period? If so, what was the economic and social status of these people or individuals prior to the coming of the British?

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Jared Okumu	Magoya, Uholo	70	14th-16th/Feb/1998
Patrick Oluoch Ondanda	Magoya, Uholo	65	17th-18th/Feb/1998
Michael Onyalo	Ambira, Ugenya	75	19th /Sept/1998
David Obudho	Umala, Ugenya	67	22nd /Sept/1998
Ochieng` Obudho	Alego, Kadenge	63	18th /July/1998
David Okoth	Alego, Ng`iya	56	20th/July/1998
Pitalis Ong`or	Magoya, Uholo	73	19th-20th/Feb/1998
Lienora Ngoha	Magoya, Uholo	80	21st-2nd/Feb/1998
Ochola Othwila	Uyundo, Ugenya	74	24th/Sept/1998
Peter Ochiel	Anyiko, Ugenya	63	26th/Sept/1998
Mark Ogowo	Simenya, Ugenya	71	28th/Sept/1998
Philip Otweyo	Masat, Ugenya	58	4th-6th/Nov/1998
Ambrose Omollo	Gem, Uranga	66	8th/Aug/1998
Dorina Orawo	" "	59	9th-11th/Aug/1998
Teresiah Asiro	Magoya, Uholo	90	24th-26th/Feb/1998
Domtila Ogowo	" "	73	4th-5th/April/1998
Margaret Apondi	" "	62	6th-18th/April/1998
Jonathan Okwiri	Alego, Obambo	68	7th-9th/April/1998
Okelo Aboch	Ndori, Asembo	77	6th-7th/Dec/1998

Elias Okello	Magoya, Uholo	61	9th-10th/April/1998
Mary Ang`awa	Akoko, Sakwa	64	15th/Dec/1998
Judith Aoko	Gem, Malanga	70	12th/August/1998
Ziporah Ajwang`	Nyamira, Sakwa	72	3rd-4th/June/1998
Zebedo Odawa	Ndori, Asembo	58	8th-9th/Dec/1998
Frncis Mang`ong`o	Uriya, Uholo	82	11th-13th/April/1998
James Arum	Gem, Marenyo	66	13th-25th/Aug/1998
Arum Pala	Gem, Uriri	76	24th-25th/Aug/1998
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