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The Role of Colonialism in the Transformation of Livestock Economy among the Akamba of Machakos, Kenya, 1895-1919

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Abstract

This article examines the transformation of the Akamba livestock economy as a result of the articulation of colonial capitalism to African indigenous modes of production. The objective of the study is to analyse the role of colonialism in the transformation of livestock economy among the Akamba of Machakos, 1895-1919. Specifically, the article analyses how various colonial policies altered the livestock economy of the Akamba of Machakos. Methodology involved data collection from primary and secondary sources. The study demonstrates that livestock was the backbone of the economy not only in Machakos but Ukambani in general. It was both the measure and store of value. Therefore, the study maintains that during the pre-colonial period, the livestock economy among the Akamba of Machakos was robust, reliable and self-sufficient. However, with the advent of colonial rule, there were major transformations which placed livestock economy among the Akamba of Machakos on a negative trajectory.

Keywords: Akamba, Articulation of Modes of Production, Capitalism, Colonialism, Livestock Economy, Transformation.

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Introduction

Generally, during the pre-colonial era, most Africans depended on the produce from their farms as well as livestock keeping to sustain their livelihood. However, livestock keeping was more valued because of their social and economic values. Even among the sedentary agricultural peoples and in the mixed agricultural and pastoral societies, the possession and control of livestock had a high economic and social value in the 19th century (Van zwanenberg and King, 1975). The basis of political power of the Bahima or the Tutsi ruling classes in western Uganda, Burundi and Rwanda was based on their ownership of livestock rather than on any ethnic differences within the societies (Van zwanenberg and King, 1975). The Akamba of Machakos who are the focus of this study, were agro pastoralist. Prior to the colonial regime, the Akamba grew sorghum, millet, maize, cow peas, beans, sweet potatoes, bananas, squash and sugarcane among other crops. They also reared animals like cattle, goats and sheep. Although crops were viewed to be important source of staple food, livestock was also highly valued as a source of food during dry seasons when crops would fail. The Akamba would also exchange their livestock with the neighbouring communities like the Agikuyu to acquire other commodities like grains especially during famine. As such, cattle served as an insurance against crop failure because seasons of low rainfall did not always result in scarcity of pasture (Matheka, 1992). The spatial and ecological design of traditional Akamba life provided a sustaining foundation for their economy (Munro, 1975).

Statement of the Problem

In the pre-colonial period, livestock was the hallmark of wealth among the Akamba of Machakos. It was both a measure and store of value. However, with the advent of colonialism which bred capitalism in Kenya in general and Machakos in particular, the Akamba livestock economy was placed on negative trajectory such that by the time Kenya attained its independence, livestock keeping was no longer as prestigious among the Akamba of Machakos as it was the case during the pre-colonial period. It is therefore necessary to examine and detail the colonial capitalist agency in the apparent marginalization and neglect of livestock industry among the Akamba of Machakos.

Methodology

The study was conducted in Machakos County formerly Machakos District in the period 1895-1919. Machakos County is one of the forty seven counties in Kenya and one of the eight counties in the Eastern region. The study was based on historical research design which according to Walliman (2011), is the systematic and objective location, evaluation and synthesis of evidence in order to obtain facts and come up with conclusions about past events. Data collection was done through primary and secondary sources. Primary sources involved the use of vast archival materials which provided the official state position on the topic. The most targeted records were the ones that focus on the Athi District and the Ukamba Province, Ulu District, Machakos district, Central Province, Southern Province,

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Eastern Province, District and Provincial Annual Reports of the aforementioned administrative units, Annual Reports of the Agriculture and veterinary departments, Political Record books, the colonial handing-over Reports, Minutes of the Machakos Local Native Council, Memoranda on issues like soil erosion, destocking, etc. In addition, oral interviews with selected informants helped to reveal the Akamba perception on the livestock economy in the area during the period under study. Data from archival sources was cross-checked and supplemented by data from oral interviews.

The target population consisted of people who were involved in livestock management or trade during the colonial period. Purposive and snowballing sampling was used to select a sample of 25 informants who were well versed with Akamba livestock economy. The research instrument that was employed to collect oral data was unstructured interview schedule. In addition, secondary sources were also utilised. They included books, journal articles, dissertations and unpublished documents. They helped in identifying the gap, hence laying the basis for the significance of the proposed study which was the need to document the transformation of livestock economy among the Akamba of Machakos as a result of the introduction of colonial capitalism from 1895-1919. Data was analysed using qualitative method. It was compiled into themes and reported in descriptive texts and direct quotations.

Results and Discussion

The Origins of the Akamba and the Place of Livestock in their Economy on the Eve of Colonial Rule

According to oral tradition, the Akamba came to Machakos area in the early 16th century. Before that, they were living on the plains around Mount Kilimanjaro, and were probably semi-nomadic. In this semi-arid area the Akamba kept livestock, hunted wildlife and collected edible plants and roots (Matheka, 1992). According to Jackson (1976), the Akamba began to move out of the Kilimanjaro Plains towards the end of the sixteenth century due to competition for resources with the Maasai and other groups. Other sources indicate that the Akamba, who were hunters at the time, arrived in present-day Machakos at around 1600. The Akamba initially settled in the Mbooni Hills in the 17th century, having moved slowly northward through the Chyulu Hills, Kibwezi, Makueni, and Nzauwi (Jackson, 1972). From Mbooni, the first major move, occurring about 150-200 years ago, was across the Athi River to other massifs, reaching Kitui in the eighteenth century and Kilungu, Iveti, Kalama, Mukaa, and Mbitini thereafter (Lindblom, 1920). This dispersion was fostered by population growth and pressure, by a flexible social system in which fissioning was a norm, and by the gradually declining threat of the Maasai and other pastoral peoples who occupied the plains of eastern Kenya, and eventually settled permanently in the Mbooni Hill (Hobley, 1971). Here they first became consolidated as a separate people and turned increasingly to agriculture (Owako, 1971). Eventually, overpopulation and overgrazing forced them to move into the bush, and the traditional land-use system of integrating highland agriculture with lowland cattle-grazing came into being (Lambert, 1947). Livestock owners led the settlement were always the ones to open up new lands as they were attracted to the fertile grazing fields on the plains. They started establishing cattle posts which later became permanent villages. They retained integrated both crop growing and livestock rearing in highlands and lowlands respectively. The main reason of the land-tenure system was to spread risk and ensure group survival. The

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system was flexible, equitable, and geared towards benefitting the community as a whole (Wamalwa, 1989).

Availability of water and distribution of tsetse fly also controlled the movement of the Akamba pastoralists. Moreover, oral tradition indicates a wide dispersal to the wet season grazing grounds in the lower unoccupied areas (*Weu*). For instance, Mutiso, (1977) notes that the Akamba traditional grazing areas in the last century extended as far as Holla and in the north-east as far as Garissa. To the west, the Akamba grazed the whole of Yatta plateau as far as Mwea plains, Katw'anyaa and around Donyo Sabuk in the environs of Thika/Athi River. To the South, they claim to have grazed all what is now Tsavo National Park and Kibwezi area. Other tribes of course grazed in these areas also, but the point is that the Akamba established *Syengo* in these areas, especially in the dry periods, but later receded to their tribal core areas in Machakos and Kitui district (Kisovi, 1992).

The settlement of the Akamba in the above areas helped them to transform their pastoral economy. First, as (Ambler, 1988) states, the Akamba settlements in these areas had the advantage of access to extensive pasturelands, and as a rule, farmers living in these drier sections placed great emphasis on herding. Indeed, in the early 1890s, Major J.R.L. Macdonald observed that the people of Kibwezi owned considerable flocks of sheep and goats but comparatively" few cattle. The great attraction of settling in the relatively open lands of northern Ulu was, of course, the opportunity for increased livestock ownership. This emphasis on herding provided a basis for expanded trade with the highlands. They established a strong trade link with some agricultural societies living around Mount Kenya and also the pastoral Maasai. (Ibid). Further, they established trade relations with the coastal Swahili and Arabs popularly known as the long distance trade. In this trade, the Akamba acted as middlemen between the Mount Kenya region and the coast. Ndolo, (1989) notes that the involvement of the Akamba in the long distance trade made their demand for livestock to go up thus intensifying their production of livestock.

The Place of Livestock in Socio- Political Organization of the Akamba

Livestock economy played a significant function in the evolution of the Akamba institutions. It provided both political and social necessities largely influencing the evolution of the social and political institutions which were established among the Akamba community. The significance of livestock in the Akamba social and political system was well expressed in social structures and institutions. The Akamba livestock attachment intervened at one point or another in the ceremonies concerned with all their social and political structures and functions. For example, livestock was an important ingredient of the family, clan, marriage, child birth, initiations, among others.

At the family level, livestock was an important aspect of the Akamba. The father was the head of the family. He played the managerial function. Further, he had the physical and jural rights over the household's livestock. The father therefore, had the right to transfer physically an animal from his herd to somebody else. For instance, he could transfer part of his animals from his herd to that of his in laws in the form of bride wealth. The members of the family had the jural rights of ownership of animals. According to this right, they physically owned the animals and enjoyed the use of their products like milk, blood and meat but had no right to transfer these animals to friends (Oral Interview, Mutua Nzuki, 01/11/2020).

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In child birth ceremonies, livestock was highly involved. As Herskovits (1926) notes, the livestock attachment intervened at one point or another in the ceremonies concerned with the birth of a child among the Akamba. For instance, there was the use of milk and the imposition of milk-taboos on the mother before the birth of her child. On the day after the birth of a child, the family would have a feast; a he-goat would be slaughtered for the celebration, or, if the family was well-to-do, an ox would be slaughtered (Oral Interview, Tabitha Kilonzo, 30/11/2020)

As far as initiation ceremonies (nzaiko) were concerned, livestock played a very crucial role. The father to the *mwaikwa* had to pay a certain fee to the performer of the rite. The fee was a bull or a certain number of goats agreed by the father of the *mwaikwa* and the performer (*mwaiki*). If a man was too poor and could not afford this fee, he would postpone the circumcision of his children till he could raise the fee.. On the material day, the elders would have good supplies of meat around a fire place. The animals to be slaughtered for these elders would be provided by the parents to the *mwaikwa* as a payment for the privilege of going through the ceremony. The fathers to the *mwaikwa* could also use this opportunity to buy a higher rank in the council of elders (*Nzama*) by providing more animals for slaughtering as compared to the others. This gesture would appease the elders who would then consider them for higher ranks. The animals provided during these ceremonies were eaten in common (Hobley, 1910).

In the marriage institution, livestock occupied an integral part as it was used for the payment of bride-price. Traditionally, the bride-price, known among the Akamba as *Ngasya*, was paid in terms of cows and goats (Muthiani, 1973). The father (or the lineage) was responsible for acquiring the first wife for each son. A young man depended on the good will of his father for the payment of the bride price, hence the father determined whether his son would get a second wife or not. Sometimes the livestock for the sons' dowry was acquired through dowry payments for their sisters. In some instances, the capacity of a man to marry more than one wife would be determined by his wealth rather than his father's. Thus, those who could afford to pay *Ngasya* (bride-price) could marry another wife. In this case, if a man was wealthy enough (which meant having a huge flock of livestock), and could afford to pay the bride-price, he took a second wife with the consent of his parents and, of course, that of his first wife. Therefore, men ensured both the material and biological reproduction of their lineages through what Sheriff (1985), calls "their control over the means of production, cattle and procreating women". Thus, individuals used livestock to expand their lineages and to create allies or clients.

The Akamba also used livestock to offer sacrifices to their ancestors and also to *Mulungu* (God) Mbiti, (1969) contends that the Akamba made sacrifices to God on occasions such as at the rites of passage, during planting period, at their first harvest, when holding a purification ceremony after an outbreak of a disease and above of all, during droughts. Therefore, there was always a good reason to occasion the offering of sacrifices among the Akamba during pre-colonial period.

In the political sphere, those who had livestock to pay to the elders could raise in the political ladder and sit in the council of elders. Those were the ones who had reached the age of a *Mutumia* (an adult male). However, upon reaching the *Mutumia* age they were required to pay some livestock to the council in order to be allowed to be part of it. In fact, according to Lindblom, (1920) the *Mutumia* grade did not in itself carry with it the right to a seat in the council of elders. Any *Mutumia* who wished to be admitted in the Council of Elders had to

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make a special payment to the sitting council members and had to be a member of the immediate lower grade. This was usually a bull. This means that the attainment of a higher grade among the *Atumia* was chiefly a question of economic means and in this case, livestock.

Even in the same council of elders, seniority of an elder was determined by the number of payments made. The most junior member of the council usually the one who had just paid the entrance fee, and was usually demonstrated by the part of the slaughtered animal to which a member was entitled to during the feast. This grade was usually attained simply by the presentation of a goat to the members of the *Nzama* (council). The person presenting the goat assumed the right to eat a goat's head, and was called *Mutumia wa Mutwe* (elder of the head). The next age grade among the Akamba was gained by giving a bull, which entitled one to the meat of the animal's lower limbs. When he gave another bull, it gave him the right to the upper part limbs. When he was able to present another bull, he advanced further. A fourth bull entitled one to eat from the hump, which was highly regarded. A fifth and last bull was paid before one could be allowed to eat of the tongue and head of cattle. By the time one had become an elder of the fifth grade and the highest grade, he would have acquired the right to eat all the portions of meat. (Oral interview, Tabitha Kilonzo, 30/11/2020) When a man had made sufficient payments to enable him to be in the highest seat, then he would stop paying. This exemplifies the role played by livestock in the political pillar among the Akamba. (Kimanthi, 2016)

The Pre-Colonial Akamba Livestock Economy

The Akamba, like other pre-colonial African societies depended on livestock production for their livelihood. The animals kept by the Akamba included cattle, goats and sheep. Livestock keeping was more valued in terms of social qualities as well as their economic values. Those people who kept large herds of cattle were held in great respect because livestock was the most prestigious thing to possess. In other words, animal wealth defined the economic status of a person. Hence, livestock were 'vital to the ladder of economic status which most men essayed to climb at some time in their lives.

According to Ambler, (1988), wealth and influence were inextricably intertwined in the societies of central Kenya (implying Kamba, kikuyu and Maasai). Since land was freely available, prosperity and security depended essentially on access to and control over labor. A fact that was illustrated in the popular aphorism *andu ni indo*, "people are livestock" in this case, wealth meant livestock. So it can also be translated to mean that 'people are wealth.(Oral Interview, Musyoka Ndolo, 1/11/2020)

In addition, livestock was also the most important form of saving in the Akamba economy. At the subsistence level, cattle provided the essential foods which included meat, milk, ghee, blood and butter. The herd also acted as a bank from which resources could be drawn to satisfy some needs like buying grains in times of food scarcity. In case of severe famine, cattle would be driven to Kikuyu land to be exchanged with grain (Matheka, 1992). In the same vein, Jackson (1976) notes that the pre-colonial trade categorised under the heading *kuthuua* involved the selling of livestock and livestock products by the Akamba to the Agikuyu in order to obtain grains and tubers such as beans, maize, yams and arrowroots. However, the Akamba viewed their cattle as an attractive piece of investment and they would

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only exchange them for grain as their last resort when they didn't have any other commodity to give out in exchange for grain (Mutie, 2003).

Establishment of Colonial Administration in Machakos

In the 1890s, the Akamba experienced the first significant contact with colonial officials and administration (Rocheleau et al, 1995). In January 1889, Fredrick Jackson established an IBEA temporary post at Nzau. The company officials then built the first permanent post near Masaku's homestead (which they misspelled as Machakos), and from there, they relied on a series of alliances with local leaders to spread British influence across Ulu (Ambler, 1988). In August the following year, Jackson established another post at Kaani in the Iveti Hills after signing a treaty with a local trade-broker, Mbole wa Mathambyo.

Consequently, in 1889, Machakos station was established. It became the first British upcountry station and remained the capital of the Imperial British East Africa Company (IBEAC) territories (Masaku Couny Council, 2009). Its major role was that of a store and forwarding centre. However, when the colonial regime took over the administration of the Protectorate from the IBEAC in 1895, Machakos continued being the capital of that administration and remained so until the time the Uganda Railway first reached Nairobi in 1899. Accordingly, Nairobi was declared the capital because Machakos was not within the railway which was still under construction (Muendo, 2015).

British then used the company to administer the East Africa Protectorate to fulfill its role of the Berlin Conference's requirement of effective occupation. The main objective of IBEAC was to take over the long distance trade that had linked the East African interior to the coast. It sought to replace the Swahili, Mijikenda and Akamba ivory traders who had travelled the routes that ran all the way from the coast through Kitui, Mount Kenya, into the Tugen and Cherengany hills to Mount Elgon and Turkana (Muendo, 2015). The Akamba mastery of these routes was harnessed and used to the advantage of the Company. The knowledge acquired by the IBEAC officials was later to be of great use in the survey and engineering reports for building the Kenya-Uganda railway. (Atieno-Adhiambo 2000).

Following the failure of the International British East Africa company to administer the territory, The British Crown took over the administration of the East Africa Protectorate. Consequently on 15 June 1895, a protectorate henceforth known as the East Africa Protectorate (EAP) was declared over the territory between Uganda and the coast. Subsequently, the administration was formally transferred from the company to the protectorate authorities on 30 June, 1895 (Sorrenson, 1968). The high cost of the construction of the Uganda Railroad was one impetus for this change, and making the railroad pay was the major force behind the decision to try to entice white settlers to the Kenya highlands (Bates, 1987).

When colonizers established themselves in Ukambani with the British Imperial East Africa Company, the Akamba put up resistance, particularly between 1887 and 1892. In 1892, Frederick Jackson, an employee of the Company, made a peace treaty with the Nzama of Akamba. The Nzama was a sort of Upper House of the Atumia (Council of the Elders) that made the most important decisions concerning the whole region or different utui (villages). Although this treaty was not respected immediately, it curbed the fighting force of the Akamba. The Company, in order to surround the region, established a police post at Machakos in 1892 (Muendo, 2015).

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During the tenure of John Ainsworth's (the first Sub-Commissioner of Ukamba province, 1892-1899) the whole of Ukambani was brought under British control. When IBEAC was replaced by real colonialism in 1895, the mode of interaction soon changed into a military frontier, and conquest battles became the norm from 1894 onwards (Atieno-Adhiambo, 2000). Several punitive military expeditions were sent to bring the Akamba under control. The most serious were those to Kilungu, Mukaa, Mbooni and Kangundo between 1894 and 1896 (Tignor, 1976). In some cases, very severe punishment was inflicted and in other cases, the Akamba had to flee from these expeditions with their stock hence they suffered the burning of their huts and destruction of villages. According to Lonsdale (1989), the period 1894-1910 was characterised by geographical survey, fortress building and military conquest all over the future Kenya.

Following the above developments, within that decade, the formerly fragmented but autonomous society lost its political and to a large extent, economic independence to a foreign power. This was done against a background of calamities. First, in 1898-1899, foreigners brought smallpox to the region. This was followed by a severe drought. The drought led to a succession of failed harvests and massive death of animals and social turmoil (Wamalwa, 1989).

Land alienation

During the period under discussion, the most important factor affecting the Akamba livestock industry was land alienation. The land policies introduced by the colonial government marked the onset of a series of Ordinances which eventually led to the alienation of large tracts of land from the indigenous people. The colonial state felt that its dream of turning Kenya into a flourishing European colony would never come true as long as pastoralists continued to hold possession of some lands in the country. Therefore, these lands could only be useful to the country if alienated for European agriculture and stock raising (Spencer, 1983). The land was therefore alienated and the Akamba families, together with their animals had to be driven away. The alienation continued gradually such that by the start of the First World War, nearly 300,000 ha of land (more than 650,000 acres) in Ukambani had already been alienated to the white settlers (Simiyu, 1974). The extent of land alienation in Machakos during this period can be discerned from the statistics represented in the table below.

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Table 1: Land Alienated in Machakos up to 1915

Year	Ha
1906	48,228
1907	54,696
1908	86,408
1909	21,837
1910	9,622
1911	8,159
1912	29,026
1913	22,614
1914	14,152
1915	3,272
Overall Total	298,014

Source: Adopted from V. G. Simiyu. (1974)

As the table above shows, colonial authorities consistently alienated large tracts of land from the Akamba of Machakos from 1906-1915. It is in 1906 when Sadler, published an order (11) defining the boundaries of the Kamba Reserves. However, as shown from the table above, there was a sharp increase on land alienated 1908. This is the year when many Akamba were forcibly moved from the Mua Hills. The settlers envied the more rainy Mua Hills where there were, apparently, no ticks, and applied for more land on the hills (Simiyu, 1974). For instance, F. Jackson, the then Acting Commissioner, recommended that the Akamba on the hills be induced to move because the land was not only suitable for White settlement, but it would be put into better use by settlers than by the Akamba. Jackson was supported by J. T. Maclellan, the then Secretary for Native Affairs, who argued that the Kamba reserve was too big therefore more land should be opened to White settlement (KNA/DC/MKS/I0A/8/1: 1908).

As a result of the alienation of the best African land for the interest of the European settlers, often African herds were confined to areas from which some of their richest grazing lands had been excluded. Consequently, the Akamba herders were forced to graze in tsetse fly infected areas due to shortage of pasture in open pastureland. The concentration of livestock in specific favourable areas of the district enhanced the widespread infection of livestock diseases such as pleuro-pneumonia and rinderpest. As is demonstrated earlier, the Akamba land-tenure system had depended on seasonal and periodic access to large tracts of grazing land during the pre-colonial era. This was done through the transhumance movement from the lowlands to the highlands to get pasture in the highland during the dry spell and also from the highlands to the lowlands to avoid livestock diseases prevalent in the highlands during the wet seasons. However, through the process of land alienation, the society's adaptation to environmental risks was greatly reduced.

In order to restrict the Akamba from grazing in the white highlands, the colonial government further instituted several regulations directed against pastoralism. The outlying District Ordinance of 1902 and later the Special District Ordinance declared Machakos a closed district (Mutiso, 1979). Further, The Cattle Disease Ordinance of 1902 restricted the movements of livestock between districts. This greatly hampered the marketing of stock. As such, Machakos district was in perpetual quarantine throughout the colonial period ostensibly

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to protect settler cattle. For instance, in 1906, Sadler enacted an ordinance on animal disease. The following year, he imposed quarantine on cattle in Machakos and Kitui Districts except those destined for slaughter. The quarantine lasted to October 1908, only to be re-imposed in 1910 and the trend continued. This made the DC of Kitui to lament in 1916 that the cattle in the Kamba districts had been subjected to an almost permanent quarantine (KNA/DC/KTI 1/11: Kitui Political Record Book.). Apart from land alienation, another aspect of articulation was the imposition of tax to the Africans as discussed below.

Imposition of Taxes

Taxes in Kenya were initially introduced to meet the costs of colonial administration and to make the country self-sufficient (Ndege, 1992). The colonial state also used taxation as one of the measures to compel Africans into wage labour. This was done through altering the indigenous modes of production which in turn forced the Akamba from being livestock keepers and became to wage earners. Hence as a result of the articulation between the pre-colonial society and the colonial capitalist state, Machakos was transformed into a labour reservoir for the colonial government and the white settlers.

The continual drain on livestock for tax payment affected the Akamba livestock industry adversely because as evident, money for the payment of hut tax was obtained almost entirely by the sale of livestock. As a consequence of the forced sales of livestock to meet the tax obligation, there was further depletion of livestock among the Akamba.

On the whole, taxation had transformed the pre-capitalist social formations of the Machakos Akamba in a number of ways. First, it made wage labour, commodity production, and sale of livestock necessary thereby influencing the monetization of the pre-capitalist economy. It also changed the pre-colonial political system into a colonial institutional infrastructure, Power now rested on the chiefs who rechanneled surplus produce from the people for the purposes of accumulation by the colonial state, mainly for the capitalization of the settler sector. This in turn led to socio-economic differentiation since taxation was a means by which colonial chiefs and headmen appropriated their subjects' surplus to accumulate wealth. It also undermined the pre-colonial political institutions like the Council of Elders (Nzama) which had been the dominant political force in the pre-colonial period. Taxation also undermined food security among the Akamba of Machakos. As demonstrated earlier, livestock acted as food security for the Akamba when crops would fail. But with the increased sale of livestock to meet tax obligation, there were no livestock to be sold in case of food shortages. Livestock economy in Machakos would further suffer shortage of labour following the institutionalization of wage labour as analysed below.

Colonial Labor Demands

Lord Delamare, the doyen of the colonial settlers, put it that, 'land is of no use without labour' (Ochieng, 1985) He believed that apart from the Africans giving their land to the white settlers, they were also expected to provide labour so as to make the same land productive. His statement thus set the motion for the determined efforts by the colonial administration to make the African people provide the labour force required.

The first step employed by the colonial administration to create a migrant wage labour class was the removal of land rights from the African people as well as taxation. Land alienation was undertaken through direct seizure, conquest, pressure on chiefs and every

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other means open to the colonialists. This was done in order to make the Africans impoverished hence being forced to look for wage labour. The chiefs were thus empowered not only to collect hut and poll taxes but also to provide cheap labour for public and settler requirements. Thus, these years saw a series of labour laws being introduced (Ochieng, 1985). The expatriation of Akamba men to work outside their homelands greatly affected their livestock production. The outflow of labour created acute labour shortages for the livestock economy in Machakos. In response to these shortages, the traditional household division of labour was adjusted. Younger people, the elderly and women increasingly took part in animal husbandry as opposed to the pre-colonial period. This was a new trend in the Machakos economy which was brought about by the demands for colonial labour. The demand for labour also resulted in loss of livestock among some Akamba livestock owners as they had to dispense with some livestock to avoid conscription into wage employment in the colonial establishment.

Commercialization of Livestock and Livestock Products

The process of commercializing livestock and livestock products in a pastoral society took place in most pastoral societies in Kenya during the era of colonial rule. It was part of a wider process of turning livestock and its products into commodities. Commoditisation involved a process in which the utility value of livestock and its related products increasingly changed. Hitherto, livestock was majorly used for the subsistence of the producers and some political and social functions. However, during the colonial period, the utility value of livestock began to have an exchange value and its products could be sold and acquired on the market. At first, this exchange took place as barter trade, but soon money was used as an intermediary (Sahil m et al 2000).

Local livestock trade became part of the international trend of supply and demand, with emphasis on price formation (Ndege, 1989). This was also accompanied by the acquisition of non-food consumption items or rather material goods like ornaments, blankets and clothing. In Machakos for example, the need to raise money for buying consumption goods such as sugar, kerosene, blankets and clothing led to the intensification of commodity production, which also aided the Akamba in the payment of taxes. According to Matheka (1992), the first two decades of colonial rule in Machakos saw new developments in trade and exchange. This was marked by the introduction of money and emergence of new market centres. For instance, in a circular to District Officers (D.Os) in 1909, E.P.C. Girouard, the then Governor of Kenya, emphasised that it was "an important duty of District Officers to encourage trade by every means in their power" (Machakos District Quarterly Report, 1909: KNA/DC/MKS 1/1/3).

To ensure that the trade in Machakos succeeded, the colonial government with the help of Indian merchants undertook to set up shops in Machakos. Sites were then granted to Indian traders who for the first time sold such commodities as cotton, shawls, kerosene lamps and salt (OI. Musyoka Ndolo 1/11/2020).

One feature of this trade was that money was increasingly used as a medium of exchange while bartering of commodities was dying out slowly. Local commodities were now exchanged more often using the new currency introduced by the colonial government in trade between the Akamba, Maasai and Kikuyu. This new trend could only mean that livestock was gradually ceasing to be a medium of exchange as it had been during the pre-colonial era. For example, bulls were sold at prices between Rs 30 and Rs. 50 according to

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their size. Hides for cattle were sold at 50 cents per lb while skins for goats and sheep 10 to 50 cents per piece. Ghee was sold at Rs 23 per frasila. Bee wax was also sold and it went for 50 cents per lb (Munro, 1975).

The Akamba households were therefore engaged in the production of use-values rather than exchange-values. This saw the Akamba of Machakos produce livestock and its production for sale rather than subsistence. The increasing orientation of livestock products to the market became more marked in the case of hides and skins. Hides and skins were now mainly produced for the market instead of clothing and beddings as it was in the pre-colonial era. Furthermore, the acquisition of food through the market became important and was often accompanied by a change from a mainly livestock-based diet to mainly grain-based. For instance, ghee, which had been a valuable food among the Akamba of Machakos was slowly entering the market in large quantities in comparison to the pre-colonial period. The demand for ghee started to reduce the domestic consumption of milk and compelled people to consume other types of food. Hence, the commercialization of livestock and livestock products not only deprived the Machakos Akamba of nutritive foods such as milk, ghee and eggs but also reduced food surpluses through increased sale of cattle, goat sheep and chicken which were the source of milk and/or meat.

Changes in Crop Production and Technology

In order to develop a self-sufficient economy, the colonial government encouraged cultivation of food and various cash crops. Basing their exploitative designs on prior imperial experience, the British looked for agricultural products that could be included in an international system. The most significant change in agricultural technology in Machakos was the rapid and widespread adoption of a succession of new steel hoe (jembe) types. By 1905, most the Akamba were still using wooden blades (Mwoo) to till their land, but the administration encouraged Kamba women to use the metal hoe and in 1908 and 1909, the market of hoes in Ukambani was reported to be impressive. The introduction and diffusion of the steel hoe (jembe) was a major success in the realm of agricultural technology (Machakos District Annual Report, 1908-09: KNA/DC/MKS 1/1/2). Another major symbol of economic change was the introduction of the ox-plough and the training of ox-teams. By 1909, one or two chiefs had trained teams of oxen for ploughing. The introduction of the plough undoubtedly increased areas under cultivation and also yields and encouraged the Akamba to accept the growing of cash crops as already mentioned (Munro, 1975).

However, the development of cash crop production was detrimental to livestock production in Machakos in several ways; first, with the extension of the cultivated area, the grazing areas became smaller and livestock fewer. Accordingly, scarcity of pastureland, along with other financial and administrative pressures, resulted in an overall decrease in Akamba livestock wealth and a drastic decline, for most households, in livestock holdings. As a consequent, by the beginning of WWI, a significant number of the Akamba was peasant cultivators instead of herders, and cash crops had become a significant income source (Tiffen & Gichuki, 1994). Second, the development of crop production also led to diversion of labour from animal husbandry. Agriculture and animal management from then onwards had to compete for the available labour. This became more marked during planting, weeding and harvesting periods. Akamba men began to appreciate the advantages of plough cultivation when they found out that the new technique implied less work on their part as compared to livestock care.

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World War I and Its Implication on Livestock Economy in Machakos

The First World War was a watershed in the economic history of Kenya. It became a catalyst for transforming the African livestock economy into an important aspect of a market economy and a source of income. By so doing, it caused a closer incorporation of African peasants into the colonial economy. African local production of foodstuff came under the control of the state, owing to the enormous demand for food for troops and porters engaged in the East African Campaign (Tiffen & Gichuki, 1994). The military also demanded livestock for slaughter to feed the soldiers and as a means of transport in areas where tsetse flies were absent. Required were sheep, goats and cattle.

Among the protectorate's first people to be affected by the war were the Akamba. Not only did they contribute in terms of manpower recruitment by means of forced labour and livestock procurement, but had to pay huge sums of money in hut and poll tax (Gupta, 1973). This was engendered by the fact that the Akamba were close to the German East Africa war zone where the British were fighting with the Germans. It was therefore easy to transport the fighting troops. Accordingly, during this period, the Akamba livestock sales increased dramatically.

From 1915-19, 23, 835 head of cattle were obtained for the war earning the Machakos Akamba Rs. 810, 839 (Matheka, 1992). Furthermore, from 1916, the colonial government raised the hut and poll tax from Rs. 5 to Rs. 6 in order to raise funds for the war demands (Tarus, 2004). In this case, the Akamba of Machakos had to sell more livestock to buy food and also meet the tax obligations. Apart from livestock, the colonial government also procured large amounts of labour to serve in the First World War and in the civil service. The P.C. for Ukamba Province observed,

The government asked without ceasing for two of the main assets and most cherished possessions of a native tribe - their young men and stock (Overton, 1989).

According to the statistics obtained from the Kenya National Archives, Machakos was the largest contributor of the carrier corps in Ukamba Province especially in 1918-1919. It contributed 41% of the total number of carrier corps in the whole province. Further, according to in early 1917, when animal and mechanical transport for the East African Campaign failed due to tsetse fly, Machakos District was forced to surrender 77.15 per cent of her able-bodied men as carrier corps for the war effort (Munro, 1975). In addition, as the allied troops advanced into German East Africa in 1916 and 1917, the need for carriers increased, and the administration in African areas more aggressively sought out able-bodied men (Maxon, 1986).

Besides the procurement cited above, the war intensified the impoverishment of the livestock economy of the district in various ways. First, about 3,000 Carriers died in the war. To borrow from Maxon's words, 'Many men never returned as they died in a war of little concern to them' (Maxon, 1986). Consequently, for the Akamba, loss of livestock was one enduring collective memory. By 1918, the continued calls for military labour had led to severe population loss and dislocation in many parts of Kenya. As the demand for fighters grew, so did labour supplies and livestock in Machakos decrease. Consequently, during this period, not enough men were home to provide adequate labour for livestock production. Generally, Machakos had become a labor pool for the colony, hence, draining it of its best

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youthful laborers who, during the pre-colonial era, had been relied upon for herding and raiding for livestock. Famine and social distress resulted. Again, in 1916, tax was also increased considerably to meet the cost of the war. Given that most of the Akamba people obtained their tax money from the sale of livestock, the increase in tax rates definitely meant selling more livestock. Consequently, the Akamba were to bear most of the burdens of the First World War (Tarus, 2004). The article thus concludes that the First World War was detrimental to the development of livestock industry in Machakos.

Conclusion

The article has discussed the impact of colonialism on the livestock economy of the Akamba from 1895-1919. It has demonstrated that on the eve of colonial rule, livestock economy in Machakos was reliable and self-sufficient. It has also shown that livestock was the backbone of the economy not only in Machakos but Ukambani in general. It was the hallmark of wealth, and therefore accumulation of livestock was vital to the ladder of socio-political and economic status which most men desired to climb at some point in their lives. However, in the first two decades of the colonial regime, colonial state asserted itself in Machakos by alienating land for settler production. As a consequence, the Akamba lost effective access to about two-thirds of the land which they had formerly controlled including their most fertile lands and half of all their pasture. This in turn curtailed the movement of stock into grazing zones that were formerly important to the community's transhumant pattern. Thus, the Akamba herders lost the freedom to migrate seasonally and periodically in search of water and pasture. Eventually, the delicate balance which the Akamba had painstakingly maintained between their pastoral economy and the ecosystem was completely disrupted.

Other measures imposed by the colonial government necessary for the articulation of the African modes of production into colonial capitalism included imposition of tax, institutionalization of wage labor for settlers and public works and opening up of trading centers, development of transport and communication networks. The imposition of tax resulted in the migration of many Akamba in search of wage labor hence transferring the labor hitherto used in livestock production to settler farms. In addition, the imposition of Hut and Poll tax by the colonial government forced the Akamba to sell most of their stock to meet the imposed financial obligations.

Furthermore, the opening up of trading centers led to the commoditization of the livestock and livestock products and the commercialization of the Machakos economy. This made the Akamba to sell more livestock to acquire material goods like sugar, clothing and kerosene. Moreover, the First World War led to the outflow of men for military purposes. This created acute labor shortages for the livestock economy in Machakos. In response to these shortages, the traditional household division of labor was adjusted. Younger people, the elderly and women increasingly took part in animal husbandry as opposed to the pre-colonial period. This was a new trend in the Machakos economy which was brought about by the demands for colonial labor. The overall consequence of all these was the relative depletion and decline of the livestock economy of the Akamba of Machakos.

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