THE INTERPLAY BETWEEN STATE POLICIES AND AGRICULTURAL PRODUCTION IN KAKAMEGA, KENYA, 1930-1970

BY

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Moi University

2019
DECLARATION

Declaration by Candidate

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This thesis is dedicated to my grandmother Jones Liaka Nyongesa. Live long *kukhu* to educationally inspire many more.
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

This study on agrarian transformation in Kakamega, 1930-1970, would not have been realizable without the encouragement and assistance of countless individuals and institutions; First, I warmly extend my gratitude to Prof. J.K Chang’ach, my supervisor, for his general academic guidance and perceptive criticism of this study through the necessary channels. Indeed his association with me has been academically stimulating and inspiring. In the same vein I acknowledge the academic growing by Prof. P. O Ndege, my esteemed academic guardian.

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ABSTRACT

The study set out to examine how and why African peasant agricultural production in rural Kakamega stayed resilient between 1930 and 1970 despite the multiple complex challenges it faced. It examined how the state reconciled the contradictions between the need for a fiscal base of the state and keeping the settler production afloat to prop African peasant petty commodity production in Kakamega. The study, moreover, detailed the agentive initiative of the African peasants in surviving the multiple complex contradictions of the day. Finally, the study endeavored to show how, the interplay between the state and the African peasants of Kakamega impelled the African peasant agrarian trajectory in western Kenya within the period under study. To facilitate these; the study employed the theories of articulation of modes of production, expropriation and agency in a simple reproduction squeeze. Methodologically, archival records provided the official state position on the topic; oral interviews with selected African peasants in Kakamega were of equal importance that provided the African perception of the agrarian situation in the period and area under study. Besides, secondary sources ranging from books, journal articles and unpublished documents informed the study. They facilitated literature review, provided subject vocabulary to the researcher as well as the significance of the study. The essence of this study was to document and preserve the African peasant agrarian economic history of Kakamega in the libraries, necessitated by the gradual death of the older generation which makes it untenable to record oral traditions; hence, this study was a matter of utmost urgency. The beneficiaries of this study will be academicians, students, the young generations and policy makers with ultimate effort to put the county on a sound economic footing. In addition, the preservation of this history in document form will enable the spread of this knowledge far and wide especially in the current digital era. The study established that African peasants in Kakamega between 1930 and 1970 were active participants in shaping their agrarian destiny, at times succumbing to the forces of the state while in most cases exploiting state machinaries to their advantages. The study concluded that the interactions between the state and the peasants and the peasants’ agentive response, integrated the peasants into the global capitalist system while at the same time entrenched the African peasants’ creativity to re-affirm their agrarian economy for their own survival. The study recommends that the county government of Kakamega takes up the active role of agricultural revitalization in the area for increased peasant production to guaranteed adequate food production and eventual food security in the area.
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OPERATIONAL DEFINITIONS

Agrarian Trajectory: the analysis of the channel taken by the agricultural sector in Kakamega as influenced by both the state and the African peasant forces through space as a function of time, specifically between 1930 and 1970 in Kakamega.

Agrarian Transformation: A process of profound and gradual change in the agricultural sector that orients peasants in a new direction of commodity production.

Indigenous: the people who occupied the study area before the arrival of both the Indians and the colonialists. These inhabitants were predominantly of Luhya origin.

Peasant: Rural households engaged in agricultural production (commodity production) by the use of simple agrarian techniques.

Trajectory: the channel followed by a moving entity under the action of given forces through space as a function of time. In relation to the study, it implies the trends and agricultural patterns taken by the Africans.

Transformation: A gradual process of change which alters the performance of someone or something.
CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION, METHODS AND CONCEPTS

The study of African peasant agrarian transformation in Kakamega was premised on post-structuralism. The post-structuralism paradigm maintains that knowledge could be arrived at by charting of differences within and between structures. In the case of Kakamega, this study was launched on the premise that the peasant agrarian history in the area was not surrounded by state structures but traversed by the limits of the state structures marked in the inside by the multiple furrows of the African peasants. This study took the assumption that in the case of Kakamega, the state (core) was not much more reliable, significant and better than the peasants (its limits or outer boundaries).

The study, therefore, believed that a clear distinction of the core and its limits in Kakamega was not possible, making the present study to be launched on post-structuralism with the intention of folding the limits back to the core in order to provide a detailed understanding of the peasant agrarian trajectory in Kakamega between 1930 and 1970.

This chapter lays the foundation for the study through a background set to launch the analysis of the problem. The research problem is evidenced in the problem statement while at the same time the chapter postulates the possible explanations of the problem through the assumptions/hypotheses that tend to answer the research questions. To contextualize the study, a relevant and related literature review was undertaken in the chapter guided by a post-structural philosophical paradigm that bred the research methodology with which the study was conducted. The chapter concludes by postulating the chapter presentation of the study.
1.1 Background to the Study

Despite immense official state support,\(^1\) the settler agrarian enterprise failed to become the real prop of Kenya’s colonial economy up to 1920s. This failure provided the background to the enunciation of the dual policy in 1922. The Dual Policy\(^2\) served as the initial official acknowledgement of the centrality of the African peasant sector in propelling Kenya’s colonial economy. After the Great Depression, the settler agrarian economy contracted as many farms were abandoned, and the settlers failed to deliver the goods.\(^3\) The ‘shock of the slump’ made it necessary for the government to immediately react by establishing ways and means of rehabilitating the settler sector.\(^4\)

In 1929, Britain introduced the Colonial Development Act, which allowed for the provision of a sum of £ 1million per year to fund settler agricultural production, by providing loans to help resuscitate the settler economy. For the six year period between 1929 and 1935, Kenya received £ 181, 000 for reconstruction of the adversely affected settler economy.\(^5\) In 1930, the state passed the Agricultural Advances Ordinance, which made provisions for finances to the settlers at the initial planting and harvesting periods. In the same year, the state refunded up to four-fifth to the settlers for grading their produce.\(^6\) In 1931, the government established the Land Bank where settlers could borrow money using land as collateral at low interest rates. In the same year, the

\(^1\) The official support coming from the state included agricultural extention services, the infrastructural network, labour mobilization policies and even the cheap offers to the settlers in the acquisition of large tracts of land. See Sorrenson, M.P.K, (1968). Origins of European Settlement in Kenya. Oxford University Press, Nairobi.

\(^2\) The Dual Policy was a state policy document proposed the then Governor, Sir Edward Northey. Sir Northey proposed limited official state support to be extended to African peasants in the reserves with the intention of catalyzing African peasant production for both subsistence and foreign markets. See Robert Maxon & Thomas Ofcansky, (2000).(2nd Ed). Historical Dictionary of Kenya: African Historical Dictionaries, No. 77. London; The Scarecrow Press, Inc.


\(^5\) Ibid.

\(^6\) Ibid.
Railways Corporation reduced freight charges and reimbursed farmers up to four-fifths of storage charges of their produce. Finally, the Ottawa Agreement of 1932 provided preferential tariff benefits for the settler produce entering Britain while at the same time protecting it from competition outside Britain. All these measures proved futile in the attempt to make the settler sector solvent.

This compelled the colonial government to re-establish and nurture African peasant agricultural production in the rural areas of Kavirondo [as Nyanza province was then called and which Kakamega was then part of]. The Great Depression, therefore, provided the need for a major re-assessment of the state agricultural policies which resulted in positive attempts to maximize African agricultural production. In the 1930s, the colonial government sought to encourage African production particularly among the Luhya, in order to bolster the fiscal base of the colonial state. With the onset of the Second World War in 1939, African peasant agricultural production in Kakamega continued to prosper instead of diminishing. The state bore the responsibility of ensuring that Africans not only produced to meet the needs of the war time food demands, but equally, the returns from African peasant agricultural production in areas like Kakamega were siphoned off and used to finance British military purchases from the United States. By 1945, increased African peasant agricultural production had led to the emergence of African proto-capitalists, who had managed to accumulate funds to invest in land which assured them of continuity in peasant production. The African proto-capitalists by 1945 threatened the sociological equilibrium in African peasant

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7 Ibid.
areas like Kakamega which saw the spread of ‘selfish individualism’ at the expense of the ‘communal solidarities’. This was consolidated in the 1954 Swynnerton Plan. The provisions of this plan were keenly pursued through independence. The independence state continued with the plan through Session Paper No.10 of 1965. The early 1970s marked a profound change in the African peasant agrarian economy of Kakamega as the African peasants gradually gravitated towards sugarcane production.

This study, on the one hand, examined the role of the state in the African peasant agricultural transformation in the African reserve area of Kakamega between 1930 and 1970. Further, it explored the avenues utilized by the state(s) to articulate, ‘squeeze’ and expropriate through the process of ‘simple reproduction squeeze’ the African peasant agricultural surplus value in Kakamega. The African peasants in Kakamega acted as agents of production and reproduction in a complex process of interactions through policies, production, subsistence consumption and surplus value appropriation.

The study focused on how African agricultural production in the African reserve of Kakamega was re-established and nurtured by the state after the onset of the Great Depression in 1929. The state encouraged African peasant production in order to bolster the fiscal base of the state as well as incorporate African peasant agricultural production into the needs of the colonial economy and the global capitalist economic system from 1930 to 1970.

During this period, African peasants in Kakamega were coerced by state policies to cope with the increasing agricultural production demands of the state. The state

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10Ibid.
nurtured African peasant agricultural production by formulating policies and providing incentives and mechanisms\textsuperscript{13} to the African peasants who acted as self-agents of the peasant agrarian economic transformation in Kakamega in a simple peasant reproduction cycle.

The state formulated policies, which revolved around, the provision of inputs, training of locals in agricultural production, determining both what was to be produced and how it was to be produced, supervising the production, determining the quality of the produce and where it would be marketed\textsuperscript{14}.

Despite the economic recession of the early 1930s, African agrarian production in the Kakamega reserve steadily increased. In the mid 1930s, the area under review experienced a multifaceted range of natural agrarian calamities including attacks from locusts, prolonged rainfall, rain shortfalls and drought. Despite the calamities, the agrarian development of the area persisted positively especially with the discovery of gold. The end of the 1930s witnessed a global economic scare with the onset of the Second World War, which seemed to have provided more impetus to the African peasant agrarian production in Kakamega than to deflate it. With the end of the Second World War in 1945, the resurgence and resilience of the African peasant agricultural production was still visible. The end of the 1940s saw the cloud of nationalism cover the political-economy in colonial Kenya. Yet, at the preceding years to the declaration of the state of emergency, the African peasant economy of Kakamega proved to have withstood the political turmoil bedeviling the colonial state.

\textsuperscript{13} KNA: PC/NZA/2/12/20. \textit{Crop Production Correspondence}. DC North Nyanza to PC Nyanza

The colonial state’s economic prescription to the prevailing nationalistic economic grievance would be the Swynnerton Plan of 1954, which served to further invigorate the firmly grounded African peasant agrarian production in Kakamega. On the eve of independence in 1961, the Provincial Commissioner Nyanza for instance, confirmed that African peasant production was unstoppable\(^\text{15}\) and with independence, the *Sessional Paper No. 10 of 1965 on African Socialism and Its Application to Planning in Kenya* seemed to have breathed more energy into the African peasant agricultural sector in the area. However, five years later, the African peasants in Kakamega sought a balance from 1970 when they progressively adopted sugarcane production in their production cycle. The study affirms that the enthusiasm and the hyp that came with a new crop (sugarcane) in addition to the establishment of the Mumias Sugar Company in Mumias were responsible for the shift. It is against the foregoing background that this study sought to document the agrarian experience of the African peasants in Kakamega within the context of these changes in the policy prerogatives of both the colonial and post-colonial states between 1930 and 1970.

To fully explore the agricultural transformation in the Kakamega region of Western Kenya, the study established pertinent issues that assisted in the in-depth analysis. First, the state’s role in the transformation/revitalization of African agricultural production in Kakamega. Second, the resilience of African peasant agricultural production in the face of multiple complex upheavals in the region between 1930 and 1970. Third, the agency of African peasants in progressive agricultural production in Kakamega. Who benefited from the resilient production. To help unravel these issues, the study sought to apply

\(^{15}\) DC/NC/1/40: *Annual Report, 1961*
the concepts of articulation, agency, simple reproduction squeeze and expropriation. The concepts analyzed how the state articulated African peasant production with colonial capitation, using the African peasants in Kakamega as agents of production in a simple reproduction cycle with state mechanism and machineries to not only ‘squeeze’ out the surplus value, but also expropriate the African peasant surplus agricultural produce.

This narrative presumed first, that the state profoundly intervened to prevent the destruction of the African peasant agricultural production, transmuting it into a viable enterprise. Second, the intersection of African peasant interests with those of the state guaranteed resilient production despite the copious intertwined challenges that faced the African peasant agrarian sector. Third, the state utilized the African peasants as surplus value production agents in its own interest.

1.4 Statement of the Problem

The problem that the study sought to resolve was why and how African peasant agriculture in Kakamega evidenced persistent resilience in spite of compound challenges in order to first, understand how the state was able to play the contradictory role of propping up the African peasantry as petty commodity producers and expropriating their surplus value at the same time. Secondly, the concern of the study was to evaluate the role of the African peasantry of Kakamega in petty commodity

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17 Rod Aya, The Third Man; or, Agency in History; or, Rationality in Revolution in History and Theory, Vol. 40, No. 4, Theme Issue 40: Agency after Postmodernism (Dec., 2001), Wiley for Wesleyan University


production in order to find out whether they were sheer victims of colonial capital or whether their self-agency was expressive in commodity production and their own reproduction. Hence, the study sought to provide an answer to the fundamental problem of how and with what results peasant households in Kakamega interacted with state policies and prerogatives between 1930 and 1970.

1.5 Objectives of the Study

The following objectives guided the study, namely, to:

1. Examine the role of the state in incorporating the African peasants of Kakamega into the capitalist economy
2. Illustrate the role of the African peasantry in petty commodity production.
3. Establish the consequences between the interplay of state initiatives and the African peasant responses/agency on peasants agriculture

1.6 Research Questions

To fully explore the agricultural transformation in Kakamega, the study was guided by the following questions:

1. What was the role of the state in incorporating the African peasants of Kakamega into the capitalist economy?
2. How did the African peasantry of Kakamega respond to state initiatives tailored to incorporate their production systems into a capitalist economy?
3. What were the consequences of the interplay of state initiatives and the peasant responses/agency on African peasant agriculture in Kakamega?
1.7 Assumptions of the Study

The study proceeded from the following assumptions; first, that the state employed both cohesive and coercive mechanisms utilizing state machinery to revamp African peasant agricultural production in the rural area of Kakamega. Second, that the buoyancy of African peasant agricultural production amid the myriad ecological and economic challenges was influenced by the socio-subsistence ethos of the African peasants and not only by the economic necessities of the state. Third, that the state took advantage of the African peasant socio-subsistence production ethos to not only transformatively increase agricultural production, but also to skim off the surplus value of African peasant production. With these, the African peasants of Kakamega played a significant role in agrarian production and reproduction primarily through self-agency inspite of the process of a simple reproduction squeeze.

1.8 The Study Area

Kakamega is one of the four counties alongside Vihiga, Bungoma and Busia that make up the Western Region of Kenya.\(^{20}\) In the colonial period, Western province formed just a single district North Nyanza of Nyanza province (the other districts were South Nyanza and Central Nyanza), up to 1956 when it was subdivided into North Nyanza (Kakamega\(^{21}\)) and Elgon Nyanza. It borders Vihiga County to the South, Siaya County to the West, Bungoma County to the North and Nandi County to the East and Uasin Gishu to the North-East. The area, as indicated in my earlier study is well watered with the dry season from mid-December to mid-February (not entirely dry); two rain seasons


\(^{21}\) In colonial Kenya Kakamega came into the main stream limelight with the transfer of the colonial western headquarters from Mumias to Kakamega in 1920. The origin of the name Kakamega, however, remains district was created and in 1956 the district was split into Elgon Nyanza and North Nyanza. Kakamega belonged contestable. In colonial Kenya, kakamega fell under the expansive North Kavirondo district until 1949 when North Nyanza to the later. See Maxon & Ofcansky; *Historical dictionary of Kenya.*
are experienced in Kakamega between March and December. The long rain season which is agriculturally intensive runs from March to July and the short rain season is experienced between August and December. The area has a fertile red soil, making it an agriculturally rich region. As Were\textsuperscript{22} points out, the area is well drained with various rivers and streams all year round. The drainage in the area is north-east to south-west due to the tilt of the plateau,\textsuperscript{23} as rivers Nzoia on the north-western and western side, Lukose (Yala) on the eastern and south-eastern part and Lusimu in the middle of the region flows into Lake Victoria.

1.9 Literature Review

This section undertook a survey of the literature related to the study. It structured the related literature thematically which elaborately succeeded in responding to the fundamental research questions in order to execute the study more precisely. Three eminent categories of the relevant related literature are on African agricultural production, the role of the colonial and post-colonial state and African Agriculture and its sensitivity to markets.
1.9.1 African agricultural production

African agriculture has been largely viewed as static and resistant to transformative impetus in the colonial epoch. James Scott\textsuperscript{24} analyses traditional African peasant agriculture as repulsive to the penetration of colonial state capital which would have otherwise initiated positive transformation in the African peasant agrarian economy. This study examined if the African peasant economy in colonial Kakamega repulsed the penetration of colonial capital or if the traditional African economy restructured itself in light of the penetration of colonial capital. The current study affirmed the position that African peasant agriculture was accommodative to the penetration of colonial capital only to the extent to which it aided in sustaining household production and reproduction. In line with Scott’s argument, Hyden\textsuperscript{25} avers that African traditional economies were risk averse resulting in their conservative and backward nature. The study holds the position that this indicates the marked misinterpretation of the pre-capitalist relations of production during the colonial period. The study maintained that African traditional economies were ever forward looking which prompted the African peasants in Kakamega to straddle the capitalist and the pre-capitalist modes for their continued reproduction. The study, therefore, sought to establish if indeed the traditional economy in the study area was inward looking and further, if the African peasants of Kakamega were positively responsive to the penetration of colonial policies and capital.

\textsuperscript{24} James Scott, (1976), \textit{The Moral Economy of the Peasant: Rebellion and Subsistence} in SouthEast Asian. London: Yale University Press.

P.T Zeleza,²⁶ R. Chambers,²⁷ P. Hill²⁸ and P. Richards²⁹ argue that traditional African economies were positively responsive to the integration of African peasant agrarian production into the colonial capitalist relations of production. Zeleza argues that commercialized peasant agricultural production was articulated in the pre-capitalist subsistence economies, which because of their positive response, enhanced peasant agrarian production and reproduction hence the integration of pre-capitalist societies into colonial capitalism. The present study maintains the view that not all positive responses to commercialized production resulted into exclusive enhancement of peasant subsistence ethos. The study, therefore, examined if the articulation in Kakamega allowed the co-existence of the colonial capitalist mode with the pre-capitalist subsistence one in the interest of the African peasant or the state. Further, Hill and Richards maintain that African peasants are economically sensitive to incentives offered to them by market opportunities which spur agricultural commercialization in traditional African peasant economies. This position is contrary to Scott and Hyden’s portrayal of a conservative African peasant economy. On his part, Chambers views peasant agrarian economies as receptive to market demands for exports making them sensitive to the forces of commercialization in the colonial period. The current study maintains that the sensitivity of the African peasant agricultural economy to the markets was limited to but not exclusive to the surpluses reproduced by the African household economy. This study strove to find out the extent to which the African peasant

agricultural economy of Kakamega was progressively responsive to colonial capitalist forces and in whose interest it was adaptive to market needs.

R. Wolff\textsuperscript{30} and H. Fearn\textsuperscript{31} peripheralize the Africans in the colonial capitalist economy and relegate them to the position that African peasants were passively waiting for ignition from an external agent in what they termed, the static economy of Nyanza in relation to the slow African response to cotton cultivation. Conversely, they argue that the impetus to the colonial economy was provided by Asians who were commerce oriented and the colonial settler economy. Ignorantly, Wolff reduces African peasants to mere labourers in the European settler economy. The current study avers that such colonial misconceptions which warranted the study to apply a post-structural paradigm overlooked the reality that African peasants in Kakamega were actively involved in devising locally friendly ways of enhancing production and reproduction which was firmly guided by subsistence ethics. This study, while acknowledging the role played by the Asians and the settlers in transformative efforts to the African peasants in areas like Kakamega, nevertheless argues that African peasants were self-agentive forces in transforming their own agrarian economies. The study confirmed that the African peasants in Kakamega most at times acted in their own interest and out of self motivation.

R. Maxon\textsuperscript{32} and S. Orvis\textsuperscript{33} tackling African peasant agrarian economies in Kenya differ with the position held by Fearn and Wolff. Examining the Gusii, both agree that commercial opportunities stimulated African peasant agricultural production and

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{33}Stephen Orvis, (1997), \textit{The Agrarian Question in Kenya}. Gainesville: Florida University Press.
\end{itemize}
reproduction in the area. Maxon’s study reveals that African peasant agrarian production is ever sensitive to market opportunities which stimulate the African agrarian production and reproduction trajectory in the light of a moral economy which confirms the position of the African peasant as an agent of progressive economic change in a subsistence sense. The contemporary study, however, embraced the position that rather than African peasant agricultural production being entirely market oriented, it was instead also subsistence guided. The present study established that this was the case for Kakamega between 1930 and 1970. Equally, Maxon in a comparative study between the Gusii and the Maragoli affirmed that colonial policies served to accentuate the Gusii agriculturally while the same policies rendered the Maragoli area a labour reserve to the adjacent settler economy. The study embraced the view that the African peasants who worked in the adjacent white highlands gained more experience and were better exposed. This experience was then harnessed when they returned back to the African reserves in Kakamega. The study, therefore, examined the impact that colonial state policies had on the African peasant agrarian economy in Kakamega.

1.9.2 The Colonial State and African Agriculture

According to B. Berman and J. Lonsdale, agrarian transformation in colonial Kenya was necessitated by the colonial state through colonial capital penetration together with the introduction of marketing facilities in the African peasant agricultural sector. The colonial state took initiatives to modernize African agrarian production. In the 1930s, campaigns by the colonial state to upgrade African peasant agricultural production persisted. The current study asserts that the campaigns were colonial state generated

since the African peasants aided in providing financial stability to the colonial state in the wake of the economic depression, the Second World War and the liberation of the 1950s and the juvenile nation in the early 1960s. This leads Berman and Lonsdale to the introduction of the concept of relative autonomy where the colonial state as the propeller of agrarian economic transformation in African peasant areas like Kakamega was keen not to antagonize the African peasant productive sector. The study retained the position that although the policies were formulated by the colonial state, they worked only to empowering the African peasant agricultural sector after the settler economy had proved a total failure. The study sought to determine the extent to which the concept of relative autonomy was applied to the African peasant production zone of Kakamega. Illustrating the role of the colonial state in articulation and transformation in the African peasant areas like Kakamega, Kitching characterizes it as distributing seeds to the African peasants and providing agricultural extension services which aimed at re-affirming African peasant production especially with the Great Depression that had hit hard the global economy, yet, the colonial state needed financial self-sufficiency to continue running its programs. The study determined how far the colonial state went in revamping African peasant agriculture in Kakamega with such incentives as seed distribution and agricultural extension services. The distribution of seeds and the extension services as the study maintains, were accepted by the African peasants mostly to the extent to which they played into their subsistence sustainability.

Until the early 1930s as Maxon & Ofcansky\textsuperscript{37} aver, limited capital was invested in African peasant production in the reserves like Kakamega. Maxon\textsuperscript{38} and Kanogo\textsuperscript{39} noted that colonial state policies and plans squeezed out the African peasant traditional economy to create an eclectic labour supply and an export oriented agrarian economy in the reserves which transferred surplus to the core from the periphery in form of low prices. In effect, the colonial state, through its administrative machineries subjugated African peasants to capitalist relations of production that contributed to the growing surplus in African reserves. The study proceeded from an established position that in Kakamega, the colonial state administrative machinery squeezed the African peasant traditional economy guided by the concept of relative autonomy. Therefore, the study established the kind and amount of agricultural surplus produced in the African reserves of Kakamega, and determined to whose satisfaction the surplus was marketed.

Comparing rural community transformation in Kenya among the Kikuyu, Kamba and Masai, Tignor\textsuperscript{40} is concerned as to whether the colonial state in Kenya was a modernizing force to the Africans or a hindrance to the modernizing wave. He, for instance, asks why the Kikuyus were transformed into proletariats in an agrarian sense while the Masai largely remained traditional pastoralists despite their collaborative contact with the colonial capitalist agents. Corroborating Tignor’s findings, Makana\textsuperscript{41} and Chang’ach\textsuperscript{42} affirmed the centrality of the ecology of rural Kenyan communities in

\textsuperscript{40}Tignor, R.L, (1976), \textit{The Colonial Transformation of Kenya: Kamba, Kikuyu and Masai from 1900-1939}. Princeton University Press
charting their transformation path. They hold that the fertile soils of Bungoma and Keiyo respectively set the communities on an agricultural transformation course. Therefore, the study showed how the geography of Kakamega stimulated the persistence of agrarian production and reproduction setting the rural community in the area on an agrarian economic transformation path.

Kanogo\(^{43}\) and Maxon\(^{44}\) aver that African peasant agrarian production increased in the colonial period. Whether this is attributed to the high prices of agrarian commodities produced by the African peasants as alluded to by Cowen\(^{45}\) in colonial central Kenya or the mere involvement of men in agrarian production to satisfy the colonial tax demands in Kakamega was the concern of the present study. The foregoing analysis agrees with Kitching’s\(^{46}\) position that the unproductive engagements like hunting, fighting and stock raiding by agriculturally productive men in the pre-colonial period would not transform African peasants. Kanogo and Stichter\(^{47}\) affirm this when they indicate that migrant labour in Kenyan rural communities like Kakamega ended the unproductive engagements like wrestling, hunting and cattle raiding as well as spending productive time at local brews. Men according to Kanogo and Stichter were liberated in the colonial economy where they could engage in new productive activities like trade, wage labour and cash crop production. These productive engagements as the study affirmed, and as Rodney\(^{48}\) views them, provided the colonial capitalists opportunities to siphon off the surpluses of the African peasant economy in areas like

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Kakamega and conveying them to the colonial and metropolitan capitalist masters. The study established that the active involvement of African peasant men in agricultural production in Kakamega was for both the household’s subsistence needs and for the needs of the colonial state. The study maintains that often, the African peasants would escape the siphoning by resorting to informal marketing channels to make more out of their surpluses for their households.

In 1936, the Director of Agriculture in Nyanza acknowledged the prosperity of what he termed native agriculture to the degree of what he indicates as the “most satisfactory”\(^\text{49}\). The study concerned itself with establishing how African peasant production was “most satisfactory” in a year that experienced unfavorable weather conditions throughout the African peasant reserve of Kakamega.\(^\text{50}\) The study affirmed that African peasants were themselves agents of agrarian transformation to the extent that African peasant agriculture blossomed amid manifold ecological challenges. The progress of African peasant agrarian transformation was corroborated by the construction of go-downs at Butere, Luanda and Broderick Falls by the Local Native council despite the hostile Geopolitical economy of the time. While the P.C Nyanza in 1947\(^\text{51}\) lamented the lack of cooperation between the indigenous land elders, Olukongs, and chiefs who hindered colonial efforts to advance agrarian capitalist interests, he congratulates them for the sum accumulated by the Maize Produce and Control Board in the Agricultural Betterment Fund which indicates that the agent of transformation was not exclusively the colonial state but rather the African peasants’ subsistence ethics.

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\(^{50}\)DC/NN/1/18; 1936 *North Nyanza District Annual Report*.

\(^{51}\) Provincial Commissioner Nyanza, (1947), *Correspondence with the Department of Agriculture*. Nairobi: Government Printers.
1.9.3 Sensitivity of African Agriculture to Markets

Leys\textsuperscript{52} and Brett\textsuperscript{53} maintain that colonialism provided the impetus to the integration of Kenya’s peasant colonial economy into the global capitalist system which resulted in unbalanced development on the two sides of the core and the periphery. Leys attributes this to the exploitation and suppression of the African peasants like those of Kakamega by the colonial state. The current study established that exploitation and suppression were responsible for the persistent agrarian progress in Kakamega. The exploitation as Stichter,\textsuperscript{54} Maxon\textsuperscript{55} and Van Zwannenberg\textsuperscript{56} explains, was done by the colonial state as an extractor of surplus value from the African peasant sector in the forms of labour and agricultural produce. Van Zwannenberg maintains that primitive colonial accumulation involved extracting a greater portion of the resources from the African peasant agricultural sector and transferring it to the settler sector. In relation to Kakamega, the study established that African peasants in Kakamega remained vulnerable to the extraction of surplus value but they devised means and mechanisms to evade the extraction as the study detailed the cushioning mechanisms applied by the African peasant in Kakamega.

The commercialization of African peasant agriculture was not just facilitated by the existence of the various markets. Henry Bernstein\textsuperscript{57} and Robert Maxon\textsuperscript{58} concur that the prices offered for the African peasant agricultural produce equally provided high

impetus to the African peasants than the mere presence of the markets. Bernstein who introduces the concept of the simple reproduction squeeze notes that a drop in the market prices for the African peasant agricultural produce results into withholding from the markets and concentrating on subsistence ethics. The study evidenced that the fluctuation in the market prices during the Great Depression and in its aftermath resulted in the African peasants with-holding from the markets in Kakamega, and discussed the cushioning measures undertaken by both the African peasants and the colonial state towards such reactions.

In a related study, P. Ndege’s\textsuperscript{59} Struggle for Markets in Western Kenya indicates the convergence of a multiplicity of forces and divergence of interests operating within a capitalist system, intertwined at the market place. These multiple forces and interests reflect the politics and economics of the 1930s when the world was operating in an unpredictable world economy experiencing a depression. However, the three region analysis is broad based and the need for specific area analysis warranted the present study. The Native affairs Annual Report of 1932\textsuperscript{60} indicates the utilization of propaganda in an effort to intensify peasant agricultural production and integrate the peasant economy into the global capitalist economic orbit by intending to increase African peasant production for export purposes. The current study concerned itself with the extent to which this satisfied the subsistence economic concerns of the African peasants in Kakamega. On its part, the 1933 Annual Native Affairs Report\textsuperscript{61} indicates that few African peasants were becoming a little agriculturally minded. This indicates what David Anderson would call being master of their own destiny. The Marketing of


Native Produce Ordinance and the National Produce Inspection Rules which provided for compulsory inspection of produce by peasant households before sale were promulgated in 1935. The study proved that these were part of the colonial policies meant to tame the increasing African peasant production as a response to the struggle for markets in Western Kenya as indicated by P. Ndege. However, despite all the stringent measures, the African peasant agrarian production increased. The study sought, therefore, to discuss qualitatively what was behind the African peasant persistence to increase production.

It is thus clear from this review of related and relevant literature that there exists a lacuna in the current state of knowledge pertaining to the theme of agrarian transformation in Kakamega. This thesis attempts a contribution to bridging this scholarly gap by documenting the experience of peasant households in Kakamega as they articulated with both colonial and post-colonial state policies between 1930 and 1970.

1.10 Theoretical Framework

The present study was grounded on a conceptual framework that sought to highlight the African peasant agency in the history of agrarian transformation in Kakamega. As David Anderson strongly avers that, African history must at all times emphasize African agency as opposed to Eurocentric historical writings that have always portrayed the Africans as victims of colonialism.

The study further applied the concepts of articulation of modes of production, simple reproduction squeeze and expropriation in order to analyze the specific case of

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stimulated and resilient African peasant agricultural production in Kakamega. These concepts delink the colonial African peasant agricultural economy of Kakamega from the blanket analysis of Kenya’s colonial economy given the unique environmental and socio-economic situation of the African peasant in the area under study.

Articulation is the process of struggle and uncertainty in which European capital and the colonial state attempted to control the labour power and agricultural production of African peasant societies. Essentially, the state took the central role of managing and representing the myriad encounters and struggles between the capitalist and the pre-capitalist mode of production. The state provided the social, economic and political services for capitalist penetration; it orchestrated the re-structuring of elements of the pre-capitalist mode with the dis-locative consequences of the expansion of the capitalist mode. Therefore, articulation is a complex, conflict-ridden and unstable process through which pre-capitalist indigenous/traditional African peasant societies of Kakamega were, with considerable difficulty, penetrated and dominated in varying degrees by the forces of the imperialist state. The primary contribution of the concept of articulation was to examine adequately the diverse patterns of agrarian transformation, restructuring and preservation of the African peasants’ traditional agricultural production in Kakamega. However, the theory of articulation of modes of production did not provide room for analyzing the African peasants as indispensable players in the agrarian trajectory of Kakamega and this called for the utility of agency.

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Agency, as David Anderson strongly avers, denotes the use by African peasant producers of their own imaginative and creative responses to the colonial and post-colonial state capitalist conditions to make their own lives better or gain from the imposed situations, despite its odds. The main question that this concept addressed was; how did this happen in Kakamega and with what success? This theoretical framework analysed African peasant agency in the history of agrarian transformation in Kakamega. The study maintains that African peasant history of Kakamega emphasized the African peasant agency as opposed to historical writings that portray African peasants as purely victims of the colonial and post-colonial states. The approach demonstrated the multiple means by which African peasants in Kakamega delayed, avoided, deflated and even deflected the intentions of the state(s) to their own advantage. In reality, the African peasants in the rural reserve of Kakamega were people who lived in an environment that they knew too well, and they were masters and shapers of their own destiny within their environment. The main shortcoming of this theory in relation to the study, however, was the view that African peasants were an independent island amidst the turbulent natural calamities and state interventions. As such, the current study maintains that African peasants were not always successful in their ways of circumnavigating the multiple and complex challenges that faced them. This theory permitted the analysis of men, women, children and even the youth as agents of African peasant agrarian transformation in Kakamega with the aim of sustaining their households.

Simple reproduction squeeze implies a reduction in the levels of consumption or an intensification of commodity production or both, simultaneously. It operates at two levels; first, exhausting both land and labour given the techniques of cultivation employed. Second, rural development schemes encourage or impose more expensive means of production with no assurance that there will be increased returns to the African peasant labour commensurate to the costs incurred. The state’s rural development programs operated to incorporate the Kakamega African peasantry into further commodity relations and attempted to standardize and rationalize African peasant production of commodities for the local/domestic and the international markets. The Simple Reproduction Squeeze acted as one of the mechanisms utilized to intensify the African peasant household labour in Kakamega maintaining or increasing the supply of commodities, with the supervision of the production process. The utility of this theory in the study was attributed to the fact that it went beyond modernization and maintained that transformation/development was not the same as westernization. It equally tied in satisfactorily with the ideas of agency, that African peasants in Kakamega enjoy flexibility in their response to tight market environments in the area.

Expropriation denotes the transfer of the product of the African peasant’s labour power to the state through the process of agricultural commodity production. The mode of appropriation of surplus value implies that a product over and above the African

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peasants’ subsistence needs is obtained from them by the state. Expropriation was utilized to examine how the imperial state skimmed the surplus agricultural value from the African peasants in Kakamega to its advantage. The misconception that the state(s) continually extracted surplus value from African peasants as a challenge wasn’t true as the African peasants at times turned to black markets for exchange.

With the short comings of each of the above concepts, the need to supplement and complement each other was inevitable. These concepts analyzed how the state articulated African peasant production by providing stimulative impetus and incentives through policies. By so doing, the state utilized the African peasants’ self agency in Kakamega for production in a simple reproduction cycle where African peasants used the socio-subistence ethos to continuously increase production. With increased production, the concepts helped investigate how the state skimmed off the surplus from the African peasants and how it expropriated these surpluses for its own interests. Finally, these conceptual approaches demonstrated the multiple means by which African peasants deflected, delayed, deflated or even avoided the colonial state intentions. In reality, the African peasants in Kakamega were a population that lived in a unique environment that they were fully familiar with, as masters who fully controlled their own destiny.


1.11 Conceptual Framework

This section relates the dependant variable to the independent variable with the aim of giving a clear picture of the role of the state in African peasant agricultural production in Kaka mega. This relationship is pictured in the model conceptualization below.

The conceptual model shows the state policies as the independent variable, which influences peasant agricultural production in Kakamega. Therefore, African peasant agricultural production is the dependent variable. Peasant agriculture in the case of Kakamega relied on the state formulated policies which influenced the direction of production in the area. However, the African peasant agriculture in Kakamega was equally influenced by two intervening variables; their own subsistence ethos that guided their agency and resilience in difficult times and the pre-existing land condition, which informed the state policy formulation for the area to guide the peasant agriculture in the region. Although the intervening variables were on opposite sides, the interrelation with the theoretical framework was guided by post-straturalism as conceptualized below.
1.12 Theoretical and conceptual interplay

Figure 3: Theoretical and Conceptual Interplay

The conceptualization of the theory in itself was a product of the state policies’ interplay with peasant agricultural production in Kakamega. While the state considered the productive capacity not just of the peasant in Kakamega, but also the productive capability of the region itself, this was with a keen intend of incorporating the area area into the global capitalist economy through producing for the market and as such the state would cream off the surplus value of the peasant. On the other hand, the peasant were keen to balance between producing for their own consumption and producing for the market and the former always overshadowed the latter as the peasants were largely guided by subsistence ethics in both their productive and reproductive initiatives.
1.13 Typologies of Bi-Production

The model above represents the folding-in of both the state and the peasant interests. It indicates the different levels of peasant and state satisfaction. The model is titled the typologies of bi-production to mean that the peasants in Kakamega needed to satisfy a double interest in their agricultural production. The horizontal axis represents the peasant/family level of food satisfaction while the vertical axis represents the level and extent of state satisfaction and interests. The initial box (green) represents the level which both the state and the peasant satisfaction is low this is explained by the fact that peasant production had not been fully stimulated by the state and as a result, the state received low market satisfaction as the peasants had not been sensitized to the market needs of the state. At this stage, the peasants mostly trade in the economy of affection and sometimes they turned to the black market. The maroon box on the horizontal axis represents peasants’ highly sensitivity to the family subsistence needs and this was
marked by the production of directly foods which could be marketed to the state’s official markets. The yellow box on the vertical axis represents high sensitivity to state interests when peasants enhanced maize production to meet their tax obligations. The orange box represents the ideal position where both the peasant interests and state needs intersect. This is ideal for that was never achieved in Kakamega between 1930 and 1970.

1.14 Justification of Study
The Kakamega area of western Kenya has been largely missing in the study of African peasant agricultural development. This study redresses the balance in favour of the area. The study provided a highly specific nature of the experience within the context of Kenya’s colonial and independence economy. Further, the study offered insights from which an understanding of past and present situations is obtainable. The intense impact of the capitalist state between 1930 and 1970 through articulation and the analysis disclosed the immense impact of the colonial state on agrarian transformation in the region within the period under review. The study began from 1930 since it marked the onset of deliberate efforts by the state to reawaken, nurture, transform and promote African peasant agricultural production in the African areas especially Kakamega in order to bail out the state from the fiscal dilemma of the Great Depression. On the other hand, 1970 marked the profound change in the African peasant agrarian economy of Kakamega as the African peasant population gradually gravitated towards sugarcane production. 1970 also allowed the study to analyze the impact of both the Swynnerton plan of 1954 and the Session Paper No. 10 of 1965 on the region in the wake of Kenya’s independence. More importantly, while specific colonial economic narratives of Bungoma, Nandi and Vihiga have been presented, such a chronological study for Kakamega remained to be done, prompting this study.
1.15 Research Methodology

This section covers the research method’s philosophical paradigm which subsumed the research methods applied to study the agrarian trajectory in Kakanega between 1930 and 1970.

1.15.1 Research Methodology Philosophical Paradigm

This research applied a Post-Structural methodological approach to document the agrarian trajectory in Kakanega between 1930 and 1970. Post-Structural research methodology maintains that there is no single perspective that can give a complete picture of a given historical narrative. Hence, in the case of Kakanega, the current study as reconstructed from both the archival sources and the oral interviews reconciled the official state position with that of the African peasant households in order to provide an extensively wide-ranging narrative of the agrarian trajectory of Kakanega within the period of study. The reasons for the application of a Post-Structuralist methodology for this study were threefold. First, the ‘researcher formed the object’ – implies that the researcher reconciled the official state view with that of the African peasants, with no one particular view being classified as ‘authoritative’. Second, Post-Structuralists methodology allowed the study to affirm practical expression rather than abstract narrations of the agrarian trajectory in Kakanega. Third, there was a close link between Post-Structuralism and Constructivism, a movement beloved of progressive educators, which in this case opened up areas of further academic pursuits.

1.15.2 Research Methods

This historical research discussed the agricultural history of Kakanega from 1930 to 1970 with the year 1954 as an end-point of one part of the narrative and the beginning of the other expiring in 1970. This was corroborated with interviews from the research
participants in Kakamega and backed up by secondary data especially library literature for purpose of content and context analysis. The study was conceived under the purview of Post-Structuralism, guided by the concepts of Agency, Simple Reproduction Squeeze, Articulation of Modes of Production and Expropriation to bring out the unique position of African peasant production of Kakamega in the integration of the African peasants in the world capitalist economy.

To reconstruct the African peasant experience in Kakamega, primary and secondary sources were consulted. The primary sources were of two main categories archival materials and informal oral research participation. The archival materials consulted are; Department of Agriculture Annual Reports, Safari Diaries of the Agricultural Officers in Kavirondo region, Kakamega District Agricultural Reports, Native Affairs Report in Kakamega, Provincial Commissioner’s Report on Agriculture, Correspondences between the District Agricultural Officer in Kakamega the Provincial Commissioner Nyanza and Agricultural Officers’ Safari Diaries which were available at the Kenya National Archives in Nairobi and the archive repository center at Kakamega. The archival materials provided the study with qualitative information especially the colonial state’s plans and policies put in place to promote African peasant production in Kakamega. Moreover, these documents provided the state(s) official position on the agrarian trajectory in Kakamega. The archival sources equally provided quantitative data ranging from the quantities of agricultural products produced annually, the quantities marketed through official and formal channels as well as those marketed through the black market. Further, they provided the statistics of migrant labour where secondary data was utilized to examine the impact of migrant labour on African peasant agricultural production in Kakamega. From the quantitative/statistical data the study examined the trajectory in form of the quantities of African peasant production in
Kakamega. In addition, information on Kakamega gold mine was of importance to examining the dialectical relationship between African peasant food production and the local demand for food.

The qualitative and quantitative information was utilized to evaluate the extent to which the articulation of the capitalist mode of production on the pre-capitalist mode of production resulted into partial destruction, integration and co-existence of the two modes to promote African peasant agricultural production. Therefore, the penetration of the capitalist mode of production seemed not to weaken the pre-capitalist mode as the African peasants innovatively found a way of developing new relations of production acting as self agents of agrarian production. The potency of archival sources and material for the study was in providing the first hand primary perspective and perception of the state towards peasant transformation in Kakamega. The archival materials revealed the state policies that guided the African peasant production, in addition to blow by blow accounts of the production details in Kakamega in the eyes of the state. In reality the formal quantities produced were found in the archival materials. On the contrary, archival materials only provided a single sided perception of agricultural transformation in Kakamega as viewed through the state’s lenses. This in itself shielded the African peasant perspective of their agrarian ventures. To overcome this, the study sought the African peasants’ version of the agricultural transformation in Kakamega through oral interviews with the peasants of Kakamega. Equally, to affirm the authenticity of archival sources, the study corroborated them with the library sources.

The informal oral research participation was utilized directly between the researcher and the participant(s), which established a professional relationship between the researcher and the participant(s). The researcher was relaxed, understanding, patient
and humble for the participation provided a homely atmosphere desirable for the participants who freely expressed their views without fear or embarrassment. The Informal participants provided the African peasants’ perspective of the increase in agricultural production amid a cloud of challenges to the economy of the period under review. The research participations were conducted during the actual research and a targeted forty informants across the region averagely aged sixty-five years and above with useful relevant information identified through snowballing was corroborated by information from documented sources and the research participants provided first hand and second hand narratives of the agrarian transformation in Kakamega between 1930 and 1970. The interviews sort to establish how the people of Kakamega balanced between satisfying the demands of the state while at the same time sustaining the subsistence household needs. Equally, the interviews sought to establish how the peasants in Kakamega circumnavigated the whims of the Second World War as well as those of decolonization to ensure that African agrarian production stayed afloat. Moreover, the interviews provided the informal marketing mechanisms that were at the disposal of the peasants to ensure they were not always victims of the state policies for them to maximise the returns from their agrarian production. For the information to be of value to the study, the peasants’ narrations were corroborated with the library source and the archival sources. These served to minimize the African peasants’ subjective narrations which permitted the study to provide a balanced presentation of agrarian transformation in Kakamega between 1930 and 1970. The major challenge of the oral interviews was the wayward narrations of the interviewees which at times did not directly address the concerns of the study. This was tackled by the researcher’s patience and guidance of the interviewees back to track. Equally, some interviewees exhibited a
degree of biasness in favour of themselves which was overcome by comparisons with others narrations, archival sources and library information to give a balanced position. Besides these primary sources, the study utilized secondary sources like books, journal articles, and unpublished documents from libraries which provided vital information, what other scholars have done about colonial agriculture and thereby identified the gap within the existing body of literature to warrant this study on Kakamega between 1930 and 1970. This historical narrative is finally presented in chapter form which took into account both thematic and chronological considerations for a cumulative narration of the African peasant agrarian transformation in Kakamega between 1930 and 1970.

1.16 Chapter Organization
The narrative on agrarian transformation in Kakamega between 1930 and 1970 is in chapter form. The chapters are both chronological and thematically informed. Chapter one provides the preliminaries to the study and it comprised of: the abstract, background to the study, statement of the problem, research questions, objectives of the study, assumptions of the study, related and relevant literature review that is thematically presented, theoretical framework, research methodology and the study area respectively. Chapter two provides the historical geography of Kakamega in order to distinguish the unique environment and climate of Kakamega which informed the study, the basis on which agriculture in western Kenya was premised hence the springboard on which the agrarian trajectory was launched in the colonial period. Further, chapter two presents the pre 1930 period, which provides the detailed analysis of the early colonial period in terms of policies and official position of the state on African peasant agriculture then. The state policies during the First World War and those of the 1920s are discussed in details and illustrate how they laid the foundation for the agrarian transformation in Kakamega in the later years.
Chapter three covered the period from 1930 to 1939. In this period the influence of how the Great Depression informed the state policies on the African peasant agrarian economy of Kakamega as well as the pre Second World War politics are examined providing understanding of how agricultural production in the area remained afloat. Chapter four covered the war years of 1939 to 1945. Here the delicate balance between the needs of the metropole, the colonial state and those of the African peasants in Kakamega were under consideration to understand the trajectory. This period indicates that African peasant took advantage of the colonial state’s exercising of the principle of comparative autonomy to their advantage to entrench African peasant agriculture in Kakamega. The period 1945 to 1963 characterize chapter five which endeavored to examine the effects of the war on African peasant agriculture in Kakamega. The politics of liberation and emancipation were equally analyzed. The intersection of politics and economics formed the base on which this chapter was premised. The Swynnerton Plan of 1954 marked an end to ansection at the same time the instigation of another deeply grounded in individualistic capitalism. The current study belaboured in this chapter to show how the blend between the decolonization effort and the Swynnerton Plan affected African peasant agrarian development in Kakamega. Chapter six covered the period 1963 to 1970. It examined how the post-colonial state carried on the works of the colonial state through Sessional Paper No. 10 of 1965: African Socialism and its Application to Planning in Kenya. In addition the chapter examined the need for the accommodation of sugarcane farming in Kakamega by 1970. Chapter seven provides a summary of the study, eventual conclusions and offers recommendations.

1.17 Summary of Chapter One

Chapter one set out to lay the corner-stone foundation on which African peasant agrarian transformation in Kakamega was pursued between 1930 and 1970. The chapter
was premised on the fact that African peasant agriculture in Kakamega remained resilient in the face of multiple challenges that faced the sector, exemplified by limited support (if any) from the state prior to 1930. The chapter laid a preposition that from 1930; Kakamega saw a deliberate change in the state’s tact and began receiving state attention in relation to agricultural production. In addition, the chapter provided the theoretical links that holds the study and in particular the agency and simple reproduction squeeze which provides the African peasant perception of the agrarian trajectory in the area while articulation and expropriation provided the official state’s position of the same. The study, therefore, blended the two perspectives provided the trend in Kakamega’s productive trajectory. The relevance of the theories was visible in the research’s post-structural utility in harnessing the relevant related literature which justified and provided the vocabularies as well as the practical research methodology to the study. The chapter defined the study area in brief, which laid the basis for chapter two; to describe and discuss the influence of historical geography on agricultural production in Kakamega as well as how the colonial state dictated kakamega’s production before 1930. Chapter two, therefore, examines the African peasants’ pre-capitalist mode in Kakamega and the state’s articulation of the capitalist mode as favored by the historical geography of the area.
CHAPTER TWO

HISTORICAL GEOGRAPHY, TRADITIONAL PRODUCTION PATTERNS
AND THEIR ARTICULATION WITH COLONIAL STATE INITIATIVES IN
KAKAMEGA BEFORE 1930

2.1 Introduction

This chapter examines how the historical geography of Kakamega influenced the agrarian production cycle of the African peasants in the area, assesses the traditional African peasant mode of production and examines how the state penetrated and articulated itself in the African peasant economy of Kakamega. The chapter begins by discussing the peopling of Kakamega in order to contextualize African peasants in the area. In this section, a brief history on the migration and settlement of Kakamega’s African communities is attempted. Equally, the geography of African peasant agrarian production is analyzed. The section further details the soil structure and composition, drainage as well as rainfall patterns in the area in relation to their influence on African peasant subsistence production. In addition, the chapter evaluates the introduction of new crops in Kakamega which set the area on a commercialization course of African peasant agriculture. Moreover, the peasant traditional production patterns and agricultural cycles are discussed. Finally, the chapter examines the pre 1930 colonial state policies as facilitating its articulation with a view to explain why African peasant agriculture was not invigorated until the 1930s. These laid a firm foundation on which the study of African peasant agrarian transformation in Kakamega between 1930 and 1970 is launched.
2.2 Peopling Kakamega

According to Were, recorded history on western Kenya does not begin until the later part of the 19th century. However, by then, the region had for long been home to its modern day inhabitants. Its history was basically un-documented and with the oral nature of their history, the urgency of this study is to capture the economic transformation of the people of Kakamega. The essence of this documentation as Were rightly puts it, is that memory plays a fundamental role and, however, excellent memory may be, everything cannot be retrieved.

A brief historical trace of the inhabitants of the study area before the arrival of the Abaluyia is crucial. There is a general agreement among scholars on migratory trends that Kakamega was previously inhabited by Kalenjin-speaking people and the Maasai pastoralists. Their remnants who still live in the area around Mt. Elgon among others include; Abang’oma, Abalago and the Kony. This view is supported by place names such as Kakamega, Kakalelwa, Kitale and Kitosh.

Ogot firmly indicates that the Abaluyia moved into their present homeland from Eastern Uganda. Barker emphasizes that by around 1250 AD, the earliest Abaluyia settlers arrived from Eastern Uganda. The study affirms that they were the ancestors of the people occupying the study area presently. They consisted of the ancestors of the Abatirichi, Ababukusu, Abasamia, Abamarachi and Abakhayo. Wagner on his part

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75 This general position is drawn from historians who have delved into migratory histories of western Kenya, the position is held by affirmative scholars like Ogot, Barker and Wagner and Were concurs with them.
76 Were, *A History of Abaluhya*
77 Although Barker writes earlier than Ogot, he indicates more precisely the location of homage of the Abaluhya in Uganda which in essence give an insight into the study by understanding their economy before they finally arrived in Kakamega. It must be indicated, however, that the two pioneer migratory scholars agree on the Abaluhya’s occupation of Uganda en-route to Kakamega.
maintains the view that the Abaluyia (some of who occupy the study area, Kakamega), moved into their present homeland from Eastern Uganda. He specifically indicates that the occupants of Kakamega came in from the south of Kavirondo Gulf. At this point it must be noted, Wagner alludes to the heterogeneous origin of the Abaluyia which Were agrees with.

Oral traditions of the people who presently occupy Kakamega point to migration from Misri. ‘‘Misri’’ is regarded by the Abaluyia as their area of origin which they left owing to the scarcity of rain and water, poor sandy soil, poor harvests and constant starvation. Ogot suggests that some of them migrated up the Nile in boats while the rest simply trekked southwards through the wonderlands. Whether ‘‘Misri’’stands for Egypt (and this is highly improbable), or for the Anglo-Egyptian Sudan of more recent years, or for neither of them, is a question the present study may not be able to correctly provide an answer to at the moment. What the people are certain of is the northern direction of ‘‘Misri’’. It is, however, highly probable from the accounts that the region was either arid or semi-arid. This, as Ogot puts it may lead to the temptation to identify the area as present day Karamoja or Turkana. As Ogot notes, to fully understand the migration and settlement of the Abaluyia, one must examine and analyze the origins of the various Abaluyia clans within the wider context of inter-ethnic movements in Eastern Uganda and Western Kenya. The study hereby narrows down to examine the migration of the present day Abaluyia occupants of Kakamega.

78 Wagner, G. (1948). *The Bantu Kavirondo*
79 Oral interview with Jones Liaka at her home in Sengeteti Village
80 This information from oral interviews indicates the agentive nature of the people who occupy the study area as not only being sensitive to their environment but also their agrarian mindfulness from the onset of their migrations which was in search of a suitable environment that would support an agrarian economy.
Osogo postulates that the ancestors of the several Abaluyia clans comprising of the present-day Abamia, Abatsosto, and the Abatachoni clans of Luyia originated from “Misri”. The Abaluyia’s Adam and Eve counterparts are Mundu and Seera. The indigenous inhabitants of Kakamega are believed to have been the direct descendants of Mundu, who came from the Abyssinian in the Masaba direction. The sons of Mundu; Masaba, Mgishu and Muvukusu formed a formidable and united community in Misri.\(^{82}\)

From Misri they trudged southward through Abyssinia to Uasin Gishu plateau. However, attacks from the Abyssinians and Kalenjin saw them wander into the Mt. Masaba region, before slogging to Esamoya in Uganda.\(^ {83}\)

From Esamoya the people who populated Buluhya began retracing their steps. According to Ogot, Lonsdale, Were and Barker,\(^ {84}\) all Luyia came from the inter-lacustrine area of Uganda, travelling eastwards along the northern shores of Lake Victoria. Therefore, the Abaluyia were an amalgam of all sorts people being a product of highly complex migration movements making them a hybrid community. Place names for instance, Kakamega, Kakalelwa, Kitale and Kitosh prove the Kalenjin inhabittance of the area under study in the period before the arrival of the people of Kakamega.

The study area is populated by a number of Luyia sub-tribes who arrived at different times to establish themselves in their respective settlements. The Abakhusia clan for instance, who later on established themselves as the Kabras to the north east of Kakamega involuntarily vacated their land for the Batsotso upon the arrival of the comparatively powerful Batsotso.\(^ {85}\) The Abakhusia are related to the Abanyala and their ancestors came from Bunyala through Lubinu, Butsotso and finally established

\(^{82}\) Jones Liakia, Oral interview, 24:05:2017, Sengeteti village

\(^{83}\) The information is obtained from the songs, chanting the migration of the Abaluhya into Kakamega by musicians like Wambusi wa Musungu in his song “Olukendo lwa Abanyala ba Enavakholo”

\(^{84}\) All of these scholars have extensively written about the history of western Kenya

\(^{85}\) Rapando Ndunde, Oral interview, 26:05:2017, Mchuma home
themselves as the modern day Abakabaras. The ancestors of the Abanyala sub-tribe of Navakasho to the north of the study area trekked into the area from eastern Uganda. The Teso invasion pushed the Banyala and Bukusu to Amukura hills, Bukus hills, Bunyala, Isukha and Buholo. Therefore, the significant single outcome of the Teso invasion was the massive immigration into Kakamega by the ancestors of the Banyala of Navakholo. The invasion of the Banyala by the Teso at Muyemba saw the migration of the Banyala to their present homeland via Busia and Matungu in Wanga. They were led by Nasokho, Masiribayi and finally Mahero who established the community in their present day homeland in Kakamega. The Wanga occupy the western part of the study. The Abawanga are believed to be of both Bantu and Kalenjin origin. The abamuima sub-group of the Wanga, however, established a hegemony over the agriculturalist sub-group that had preceded them at Imanga. The Abamuima were led by Muima until the arrival of Wanga, who had a permanent imprint on the history of the state of Imanga. Wanga belonged to the Abashitsetse who had left Buganda and he was born in Tiriki where they had initially settled. They went through Kisumu, Maseno and by 1652, Wanga and his people had settled in present day Wanga-land. The Isukha and Idakho sub-tribes of the Luhya occupy the southern and eastern parts of the study area and their occupation of their present land is equally attributed to the Teso invasion of the Luyia at Buyemba. The arrival of the two groups pushed the Tiriki to the frontiers of the study area to the east.

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86 The information is obtained from the songs, chanting the migration of the Abaluhya into Kakamega by musicians like Wambusi wa Musungu in his song “Olukendo lwa Abanyala ba Enavakholo”. The information was equally sourced from Jones Liaka, Oral interview, 24:05:2017, Sengeteti village.
89 Ibid.
90 Ibid.
The population of the greater Kakamega has incessantly grown over the years. Initially, Kakamega was a single district that was subsequently divided to create other districts after 1989, probably for ease of administration. In 1962, the greater Kakamega region had an estimated population of 56,100 people and by 1979; the population had risen to an estimated 103,100 people. By 1989, the population was estimated at 1,464,000 and 1,795,072 people as at 1999 census. Currently according to the National Population and Housing Census of 2009, as well as the Kenya National Bureau of Statistics, Kakamega had a population of 1,660,651 people occupying an area of approximately 3,033 square kilometers. 800,989 of these were male while 859,662 were female. The projected growth rate for the area is +2.51 percent and has a population density of 547.3 inh/km². The birth rate per 1000 population in the area stood at 44, while the unemployment rate in the area for the vibrant population aged between fifteen and sixty-four years was 7.7 percent. According to the Kenya National Bureau of Statistics, Kakamega had 355,679 households by 2009. In these households, the gross school attendance ratio at primary school level was 148,802 whereas 63,035 was for the secondary school. These resulted into a poverty index of 36.2 percent by the year 2000 in the area.

2.3 British Penetration of Kakamega and the Transfer of the Administration Headquaters

The British declaration of protectorate status over Uganda on June 10th 1894 set off the British desire and initiative to penetrate western Kenya (then Eastern Uganda)

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93 Kenya National population and Housing Census 2009
94 Kenya National Bureau of Statistics
95 Ibid
96 The declaration of protectorate status followed the coming into force of the Land Acquisition Act of 1894 which provided for the compulsory acquisition of land for public purposes by her majesty’s
elsewhere termed the Kavirondo region. The colonization of western Kenya as indicated by Wolf was the economic rationale for the Uganda railway which was intended to provide a rich trade between Europe and Uganda. This position is echoed by Eliot as he observed sizable agricultural production of the population around the western end of the Uganda Railway and along the Gulf of Kavirondo. However, he lamented of the people’s love for alcohol and leisure which he termed as a barrier to sustainable productive agricultural activity. The study maintains that Eliot’s view represents the official colonial state position with regard to the need to appropriate not only the surplus value of the people of western Kenya but also their labour. The state believed that the surplus value appropriation by the African peasants was not in line with the articulation of the capitalist economy. Eliot’s view point indicates then why African peasants in Kakamega were subject to contradictory patterns of transformation, destruction and preservation of their indigenous internal African agrarian productive structures resulting in the articulation of the capitalist mode of production with the African peasant mode and prompting the African peasant agency response amidst the prevailing contradictions.

In 1905, Eliot noted that Britain had the rare opportunity of dealing with a tabula rasa and an almost untouched and sparsely inhabited country, a point Hobson, Fieldhouse, Rostow, Robinson Brown and Gallagher strongly concur with by maintaining that the trade with the area was “small, precarious and unprogressive …” This the study government representatives. This Act was a mere extension of the India Land Acquisition Act which was applied by the British to her India Colony.


98 This position however, contradicts Sorrenson’s position of the strategic considerations of Uganda and the Nile having propagated the colonization of the Kavirondo Gulf. It is therefore important to note, however, that Sorrenson’s position was the initial motive before the Britons stumbled on the immense agrarian treasure in Western Kenya which Kakamega is a central player

99 This explains why Sir Charles Elliot as the commissioner carefully and secretly amended the land regulations to purportedly attract “progressive” settlers to take over the land. For instance resuming
maintains was not the case as the rare opportunity Eliot was referring to must have been
the exact opposite, in this case the rare opportunity of expropriating the surplus value
of the peasants in Western Kenya in general and Kakamega in particular. Wolf
evidenced this position when he strongly affirmed that from 1870 to 1913, commodity
exports from the region which included among others raw cotton, silk, vegetable oils,
hides and skins, wood pulp for paper manufacture and crude rubber as well as food
accounted for 80 percent of the value of British imports.100 This illustrates the essence
of the British penetration, colonization of Kakamega and its eventual integration of the
area into the global capitalist orbit as in essence it was significant in providing the
imports crucial for domestic production, employment and consumption.

With the establishment of the British protectorate over Uganda in 1894, Mumias was
utilized as an administrative center for the eastern part of the expansive Uganda
protectorate administered by Spire. The focal position of Mumias in the British
conquest of Western Kenya was cemented by the fact that it was one of the three main
food buying stations established each with garrison.101 The garrison was manned by
Charles Hobley who was posted as the first Provincial Commissioner of what was then
Nyanza Province in 1895. Using the garrison, Hobley armed local militia as the state
struggled to survive in a fragmented regional economy. In 1908, Hobley with the aid of
the militia for instance forced the Ababukusu to give up their Swahili-supplied guns102,
(this earned Hobley the name Obilo/Opiro from the people of Buluyia, these were the
ways the indigenous people of Kakamega, including the neighbouring Luo, pronounced

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the name Hobley). In addition, the choice of Mumias as the British operational and administrative base was informed by the fact that the village, as indicated by Berman and Lonsdale, had been the center of Swahili operations for slave raiding and ivory hunting from the Indian Ocean coast before the arrival of the British.

With the British expeditonal conquest, penetration and cooptation, the African peasants in Western Kenya were subjected to unequal distribution of the costs and the benefits of the loot of conquest within Western Kenya. This is instanced by the fact that the British punitive expeditions in Western Kenya involved comparatively little loss of life. According to Berman and Lonsdale, they were directed to African peasant properties, crops and livestock. The study affirms that the targeting, looting and redistribution of the booty by the British in Kakamega at their base in Mumias is a clear pointer to the concept of expropriation of the African surplus value/resources which then informed the economic terms of the conquest. These resulted into the primary contradiction that thronged the state, the contradiction of state formation versus state building since British penetration of Western Kenya was not only a political process but equally an economic force that provided for the oppressive and corrosive tendencies to the African pre-capitalist mode for the articulation of the State’s capitalist mode of production. Hence the penetration of British colonial rule in Kakamega did not only entrench state power, but also enlarged the market opportunities for the African

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103 Hobley became famous particularly among the Wanga for handling ruthlessly their archrivals more specifically the Bukusu, the Banyala and the Luo. It is the mis-pronunciation of his name by the Wanga people that earned him the name Obilo/Opilo. Also see Berman and Lonsdale (1992), *Unhappy Valley*

104 These indicate the state’s self-articulation, which in essence was a contradiction between state formation and state building. In coping with this contradiction, the state had to strike a compromise between coercion and cohesion. The discretion of this compromise, however, was left to be decided upon by ‘the man on the spot’.

105 This indicates the economic sense of the state in trying to penetrate the peasant traditional economy in order to articulate its capitalist mode of production. See Berman and Lonsdale: *Un Happy Valley*
peasants in the area. This contradiction stirred the African peasant agentive response to the market opportunities. Lonsdale indicates this when he notes:

*Peace drew cultivators out of chiefs/kings’ sight and closer to their crops as thousands of African peasant households sold penny-packets of grain and vegetables to the Indian traders who roamed the area with ox-carts.*

This in itself was stimulative to the African women who toiled even harder with their hoes as large numbers of the unmarried young men voluntarily earned the means to invest in marriage. Hence African peasants were not mere victims in their economy but rather agents in their dynamic agrarian trajectory.

The British occupation of East Africa was a communication strategy as indicated by Sorrenson. Until 1898, the British consideration was to protect the Suez route to India and to achieve this, the control of Egypt, the Nile Valley and the White Nile head waters in Uganda was necessary. Above all, the domination of the intervening territory between Lake Victoria and the East Coast was fundamental that prompted Salisbury to partition East Africa protectorate courtesy of the dual agreements of 1886 and 1890. Subsequently, Rosebery established the Uganda protectorate in 1894 and the East Africa Protectorate the subsequent year. To secure communications with Uganda

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106 The use of money as a currency indicates the fracturing of the African peasant’s “economy of Affection”. Moreover, it amplifies the concept of expropriation as the hard worked for packets of grains as well as the vegetables produced by the African peasants were bought cheaply by the Indian traders. The state therefore, perfected the act of skimming off the surplus value of the African peasant which the Indian traders had entrenched.


108 Lord Salisbury was the British Prime Minister and foreign secretary in the late 1880s and the 1990s. He was the architect of the African Policy and the Heligoland Offer of 1890, which was meant to prevent Germany expansion towards Uganda and the head waters of the Upper Nile as the Germans were interested in acquiring the Kingdom of Buganda. See an article David R. Gillard, “Salisbury’s African Policy and the Heligoland Offer of 1890”, in English Historical Review, 75 (1960)

109 In the two agreements, the Germans gained the Island of Heligoland in the North Sea in exchange, Germany handed over to Britain the protectorate over the sultanate of Wituland and parts of the East Africa vital for the British to build a railway to Lake Victoria and pledged not to interfere with British actions vis-à-vis the independent sultanate of Zanzibar
and to facilitate the operations in the Nile Valley, the Rosebery government decided to construct the railway in June 1895 to link the East Africa Coast to Lake Victoria. Interestingly, however, commercialization of the East Africa territory and humanitarianism were the reasons advanced to shield the strategic consideration for the sinking of the Uganda railway.\footnote{Sorrenson, M.P.K., (1968). Origins of European Settlement in Kenya. Nairobi; Oxford University Press.} This study maintains the position that the hiding of the economic interests for the construction of the railway line indicates the malicious intentions of the state to siphon the economic resources of the people of Kakamega. The railway construction was pioneered by Frederick Lugard and Frederick Jackson for the first 300 miles. They established the first permanent station at Machakos, the second at Dagoretti. On arrival of the rail caravan at Mumias, Sorrenson singles out the regularity of supplies and more so, the abundance of food in the Luyia country.\footnote{Ibid.} The establishment of the rail stations in the East Africa protectorate (Kenya) was characterized by the presence of food supplies in those areas. This author holds the position that the establishment of these stations was guided by the metropolitan need to expropriate the surplus value of the African peasants. In this view, the Uganda railway was not only meant to facilitate strategic communication between the East African Coast and the Nile head waters but equally to skim off the African peasant resources more pertinently their agrarian surpluses. On 20\textsuperscript{th} December 1901, the first locomotive steamed into Kisumu, the lake side terminal. Although not indicated by Wolf in his economics of European colonization, this study affirms the position that the locomotives’ return journeys were full of African peasant agricultural produce. The abundance of the peasant produce aboard on the return journeys was sufficient to warrant the March 31\textsuperscript{st} 1902 transfer of the Eastern Province of Uganda to the East
Africa protectorate. However, the transfer was publicized as having been necessitated by the need for the railway to be under a single unit of administration, the East Africa protectorate.112

By 1903, Kakamega existed as a market centre annexed to the vibrant economic and political powerhouse, Mumias.113 By this time, Indians had established the first shops in Kakamega and it was gazetted as a market centre in 1912 temporarily inhabited by the Europeans. In 1900, as the railway approached the lake side terminus of Kisumu, the Provincial Commissioner, Hobley, was ordered to move from Mumias and establish a new headquarters of Nyanza Province at Kisumu.114 Hobley at his new provincial headquarters at Kisumu was aided by Chief Odera Ulalo (chief of several Luo pinje {multilineal territories}). By 1920, Mumias had infamously become ‘a death trap’ as the cemetery at Mumias had eight European graves.115 These European health imperatives obligated the transfer of the district headquarters from Mumias to Kakamega, due to the death of eight Europeans.116 The decision for a healthier place was taken and they settled for Kakamega after the water tests indicated the area to have pure and clean water. In 1921, despite the transfer of the district headquarters from Mumias to Kakamega, both towns retained significance in the district. With time, however, Mumias gradually lost its prominence as a trading centre, and even the Post Office at Mumias had been closed and only two African telegraph engineering staff had remained on the ground.117 Although the transfer to Kakamega took place in 1920, the official sanction by the governor was given in 1927.118 It was in the same year that alien

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112 Ibid.
113 KNA, PC/NZA, 1/15
114 Oyugi, J.O., transformation of Kakamega into an Urban Centre 1920-2010. Master’s thesis
116 Ibid.
117 KNA, DC/NZA/ 1/16: Crop Production, Correspondence, DC North Nyanza to PC Nyanza
settlement villages were rolled out in plots prompting greater Swahili and Indian translocation to Kakamega. With the relocation of the administrative headquarters from Mumias to Kakamega, Mumias remained a decaying relic of early British penetration of Western Kenya in general and Kakamega in particular.\textsuperscript{119} In 1930s, Mumias was reduced to the role of a trading centre. However, the advent of the sugar economy in the region and the eventual establishment of Mumias Sugar Company in the 1970s saw Mumias exclusively rejuvenated.

2.4 Agricultural Production

The county depends primarily on agricultural production and most farmers currently grow sugarcane as the main cash crop. Initially, food crops were mostly grown on large scale annually prior to the introduction of sugarcane.\textsuperscript{120} The main crops are sugarcane, maize, bean, cassava, finger millet and sorghum. Maize forms the staple food for the county. Maize and sugarcane are generally grown on large scale while bean, millet and sorghum are grown on small scale; the main cash crops grown are maize and sugarcane. Currently, the total acreage under food crops is 114,053.6 ha while the acreage under cash crops is 141,429.7 ha. This totals to 255,483.30 ha. The average farm size in the county is 3 ha for small scale holders while large scale holders have an average of 10 ha.\textsuperscript{121}

Kakamega has two main ecological zones; the Upper zone and the Lower zone. The Upper zone covers the central and southern parts of the region where intensive farming of maize, bean and horticulture is carried out by small scale farmers with a section of

\textsuperscript{121} Kenya National population and Housing Census 2009. See also, Kenya National Bureau of statistics
the population engaged in large scale farming.\textsuperscript{122} The Lower zone, covers a major portion of the northern part of the county where the main economic activity is sugarcane farming after its introduction in the 1970s. Generally Butere Mumias sub-county, Kakamega East, North and South sub counties have lower average land holdings as compared to the upper parts of Lugari Sub-county.\textsuperscript{123}

In Kakamega, the peasant agricultural season is commenced with the cultivation of the eleusine gardens from around mid-July. A new calendar year for the peasants coincides with the comparatively dry season which allows them a rest from the intensive agricultural works. Two major agricultural seasons are witnessed in Kakamega, \textit{egudu}, which was initially an eleusine season but later \textit{amalavu} season which runs from February until August\textsuperscript{124}. The \textit{etjuwvi}, the beans season which then extends from August to December. \textit{Egudu}, is marked by the long rains widely experienced across the entire region between April and May while \textit{etjuwvi} is characterized by the short rains across Kakamega from August to September\textsuperscript{125}.

The entire agricultural season is characterized by two maize and two sorghum crops but a single sweet potatoes crop, a single eleusine and two beans crop in a year. In Kakamega, the two main agricultural seasons are punctuated by a number of sub-seasons. These sub-seasons are predominantly named after the most outstanding agricultural activity. The \textit{egundu} season starts in around December/January with the ground breaking ceremony for eleusine or \textit{amalavu}.\textsuperscript{126} This is immediately followed by

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\textsuperscript{122} Physical Researcher Observations in the area. See also, Were, \textit{A History of the Abaluhya.} And MoL, \textit{The Greater Kakamega Regional Physical Development Plan}
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\textsuperscript{123} Kenya National Bureau of Statistics
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\textsuperscript{124} Were, G.S.,(1967). \textit{A History of the Abaluhya of Western Kenya.} Nairobi; East African Publishing House
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\textsuperscript{126} Jones Liaka, Oral interview, 24:05:2017, Sengeteti village.
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planting of eleusine in February, as weeding comes in March and April. In-between May and the harvesting of the eleusine in July or Maize in August, the sweet potatoes are cultivated and planted. The *etjuvwi* season begins in August with the beans clearing season before its planting in September. The weeding of the beans is done in October and November before its harvesting in December.

However, these are not the only crops produced in an agrarian cycle in Kakamega. The peasant traditional crops principally cultivated are; *ovulo*, *amavere* (sorghum), *amabuoni* (sweet potatoes), *amaganda* (beans), *amatore* (bananas), *amaduma* (maize), currently Kakamega’s principal staple food. Other crops cultivated although in a smaller scale include, *edzindjogu* (groundnuts), *edzimbande* (black peas), *emikhonye* (sugarcane), *emihogo* (cassava), among others.¹²⁷ Since almost all crops constituted food stuffs, women had a greater share in the various agrarian pursuits in Kakamega compared to men. The involvement of women was informed by the fact that the subsistence ethics in the area was a preserve of women.

Cattle, is reared as well as sheep, goats and pig. Chicken rearing is pre-dominant with almost all households keeping them while donkeys are limitedly reared. In Kakamega, about 19.15 million litres of milk are produced annually while 364,000 kg of beef is also produced per year¹²⁸. According to the Population and Housing Census of 2009, the unemployed population in the county was at 7.7 percent.¹²⁹ This implies that majority of the people in the labour force are not gainfully employed. Majority of the people are employed in the agriculture sector, and they predominantly engaged in land ploughing, weeding, bush clearing, planting, harvesting and post-harvest handling.

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¹²⁷ Jones Liaka, Oral interview, 24:05:2017, Sengeteti village, and John Rapando, Oral interview, 26:05:2017, Mutsuma village
¹²⁸ *Kenya National Bureau of Statistics*
¹²⁹ *Ibid*
2.5 Geography and Topography

Kakamega district lies between Latitudes 0° 07’30” North and 0° 15” South of the equator and Longitudes 34° 32” and 34° 57’ 30” East. Topographically, Kakamega district has a varying topography with altitudes ranging from 1,250 meters to 2,000 meters above sea level. Kakamega town lies on the altitude 1500 meters above sea level. Broadly, the district can be divided into two main physiographic units, namely the southern hills made up of rugged granites rising to 1,950 meters above sea level, and the peneplain with remnants of denudation at Kakamega and Kambiri. The Nandi Escarpment forms a prominent feature on the district’s eastern border with its main scarp rising from the general elevation of 1,600 to 2,000 metres.

The annual rainfall range is between 2214.1mm and 1280.1 mm per year. This rainfall is evenly distributed all year round, with March and July receiving heavy rains while December and February receives light rains. The temperature range is between 18°C and 29°C. The hottest months are November, December, January and February. Other months have relatively higher and similar temperatures. The county has an average humidity of 67%. Kakamega County has two natural forests covering Shinyalu, Lurambi and Malava and one farm forest which has been integrated with agriculture, the Turbo-Lugari forest. All the forests have agrarian value to the agraricultural economy of Kakamega.

With the exception of the limited cattle-keeping in the area, the tilling of the soil is the most essential economic activity pursued by the people of Kakamega. The whole life

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131 Kakamega County Development Profile, 2013
of the people centers on their agrarian production work as the district as a whole is arable. In western Kenya in general and Kakamega in particular, agricultural occupation, production and patterns of settlement are influenced by the geography of the region. Geographically, Kakamega is located to the western side of the country and to the north of Lake Victoria. The area, therefore, is a high altitude area which has a direct influence on the agrarian production cycle of the people of Kakamega. With Kakamega’s proximity to Lake Victoria, the area experiences reliable convectional rainfall predominantly witnessed in form of heavy afternoon rainfall although it is accompanied by thunderstorms. The presence of Kakamega forest, Turbo-Lugari forest and Malava forest and juxtaposed with the Nandi escarpment ensures adequate rainfall and guarantees the people of Kakamega an all year round agrarian production cycle. These forests which are home to indigenous trees, large species of birds, butterflies, monkeys, snakes, baboons, hares, and rabbits also provide a tourism attraction in the region, and research sites for a number of institutions in the country.

Other attractive activities include bull fighting, cock fighting, the *ikhongo mrui* in Elesi and the preserved ancient Wanga Kingdom in Mumias.

The soil composition and structure as well as the drainage of the area are a significant factor in the agrarian economy of Kakamega. The agricultural production of the area thrives on productive soils. The soil in the area is fertile, characterized by fertile red soil, alpine meadow soil, shallow stony soils, brown loam soils, dark red friable clays, sandy clay loams, granite soils alluvium clay soils. The soil structure and composition has encouraged the intensification of agrarian production by the people of

133 Were, G.S., (1967). *A History of the Abaluhya*


135 Were,G.S., (1967). *A History of the Abaluhya*
Kakamega. In terms of drainage, western province is well watered with Kakamega being drained by a number of rivers which generally flow all year round. The major rivers include; river Nzoia which doubles up as the natural boundary with Bungoma, Lusumu, Isiukhu and Lukose. The general drainage of Kakamega is north-east to south-west due to the tilting of the topography which is largely associated with the warping of the plateau.

River Yala, which originates from the Nandi Escapment, east of Kakamega is one of the main rivers that drain the county. It flows westwards through Kakamega Forest and the southern part of the county. The Nandi Escarpment forms the catchment zone for numerous streams among them the Shitiya, Kabkalet and Nurungo, which flow westward to join the River Nzoia. Equally, Kakamega area is drained towards Lake Victoria by River Isiukhu, which is a tributary of the Nzoia River. It originates from the Nandi Escarpment and flows through Kakamega Forest before reaching Kakamega town. Generally, several small streams form tributaries to these main rivers, exhibiting dendritic drainage patterns dissecting the peneplain surface often with steep erosional valleys. Only the northwestern part of the study area, to the north of Mumias is swampy due to low gradients and poor drainage. The area is well suited for sugarcane growing.

The numerous streams and tributaries in the area eventually flow into the three major rivers which eventually drain their waters into Lake Victoria. The continuous flow of the streams all year round provides the people with the psychological catalytic agency

136 Physical Researcher Observations in the area. See also, Were, A History of the Abaluhya. And MoL, The Greater Kakamega Regional Physical Development Plan

137 Ibid.

to engage in agricultural production throughout the year. Kakamega experiences equatorial rainfall which is fairly well distributed throughout the year. The rainfall ranges between 1250mm to 2000mm with the highest average recorded in the central part of the region. In Kakamega, the rainy season runs from March through December with the maximum rains being experienced in March and October and the minimum rains experienced in May/April and August/September. The comparatively dry season is largely experienced between mid-December to mid-February although the period is not entirely dry.\(^{139}\) This motivates the peasants to engage in further agrarian production of drought resistant crops during the dry season.

### 2.6 Land Administration

With agriculture as the dominant economic mainstay in Kakamega, land is the predominant means of production. In the traditional African peasant agrarian economy, access to land was dictated by one’s membership to a community.\(^{140}\) This implies that land in Kakamega was jointly owned by members of the community and each member of the community had equal access rights to the land.\(^{141}\) Under the customary laws, the community held the allodia title to the land as membership to the community guaranteed one only of the usufruct rights.\(^{142}\) The rights motivated the people to fully venture into agrarian production. However, the council of elders mediated over land issues in the community. They administered and allocated land to members and settled land disputes in the community. The council of elders performed these functions in the belief that land was owned by the ancestral spirits, and the living are their trustees.

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\(^{139}\) Physical Researcher Observations in the area. See also, Were, *A History of the Abaluhya*. And MoL, *The Greater Kakamega Regional Physical Development Plan*

\(^{140}\) *The East African Royal Commission Report of 1954*. See also, Sessional Paper No. 10 of 1965 and correspondences by research participants Saul Bunyali, Winston Wekesa and Philip Nabwangu.

\(^{141}\) Mukhwana M.D. M.A Thesis, Moi University, 2013

\(^{142}\) Ochieng’ W.R: Food Production in the pre-colonial Period, in *Themes in Kenyan History*
responsible for holding the land together and administering over it properly.\textsuperscript{143} Unlike labour in agrarian production which was feminine dominated, land administration and control was purely masculine dictated by the patriarchal nature of the people of Kakamega. In allocating land, the council of elders first distributed land to the various clans which in turn distributed it to the families and then the family head distributed to the houses that formed a homestead. The families then worked on the land collectively for production purposes where the labour strength rested in the number of children a house had.

2.7 Labour Organisation and Division in the Traditional African Peasant Economy in Kakamega

In the peasant African economy of Kakamega, crop cultivation was considered the major economic mainstay; however, it was to a lesser extent agro-pastoralism. In this economy which was characterized by shifting cultivation, men cleared the bush and broke the virgin land. On the other hand, women planted, did the weeding and harvested the food crops and they were largely assisted by their daughters.\textsuperscript{144} Boy in the agrarian economy of Kakamega herded the livestock which essentially provided milk to the peasant households. It was the responsibility of women to milk the cows. The youth especially the unmarried men were pre-occupied with providing protection to the household possession in addition to engaging in trade, especially inter-tribal trade more so in food crops. The off-farm economic activities like smelting, basket weaving, production of vases, harps, and general wood carving as well as pottery was practiced. Hunting was equally a preoccupation of unmarried young men.

\textsuperscript{143} Mukhwana, M.D. M.A Thesis, Moi University, 2013
\textsuperscript{144} Physical Researcher Observations in Kakamega
According to Kitching, African peasant male labour in pre-colonial Kenya— which Kakamega was part of— was underutilized through activities that were not in any way directly productive, for instance rituals and judicial functions for elderly men and herding/raiding livestock, wrestling and hunting for the young unmarried men. The study maintains that although such activities might not directly have contributed to the stock of use values, they were vital for the harmonious co-existence of the African peasant economy which provided calm and enabling environment for the agrarian production in the peasant households. Nonetheless, what Kitching terms as the underutilization of male labour by producing low rainfall resistant crops like eleusine and millet on the contrary illustrates the sensitivity of the Africa peasant agency to their environment and to their needs which were a priority. Moreover, what is viewed as the slack periods were in fact economically busy productive periods for women who, cognizant of their agrarian schedule, diversified their engagements and produced baskets, pots and other handicrafts all of which had market value as he confirms them either being bought or sold at the different markets within Kakamega. With the introduction of colonialism and the need to justify the construction of the railway line to the neighboring Kisumu, the state rendered these economic activities otiose and instead replaced it with extra labour input concept which was intended to produce surplus value to be appropriated by the state.

### 2.8 Commercialization of African Agriculture and the Introduction of New Crops

The state haphazardly attempted to introduce new crops to the African peasant economy in the then Nyanza province. Furthermore, the state encouraged the peasants to grow

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the crops which the state perceived to be of economic value\textsuperscript{146}. To this effect, all sorts of new varieties of crops were introduced in Kakamega, both industrial and subsistence ones, among them: sesame, white maize, beans, peas, wattle trees in addition to groundnuts. The 1909 Kisumu quarterly agricultural report indicates that white maize variety, rose coco beans plus sesame seeds were distributed to peasants and they had proved a success.\textsuperscript{147} However, the report affirmatively notes that cotton growth in the area had failed. The current study affirms that the success of the crops was attributable to two possible factors; first, the crops were given due devotion by the African peasant households for they directly contributed to the subsistence economy of the households in the region. This in essence corroborates the sensitivity of the African peasant households’ agency to their subsistence needs which was their primary priority. Second, once harvested and surplus value is realized from the crop, the surplus could be easily marketed or exchanged amongst the people within the area to acquire what was scarce in the households’ subsistence economy contrary to cotton which could only be marketed officially and through formal channels. In addition and more fundamental as noted by Kitching, most of the agrarian tasks on the farms in the areas of Nyanza were pertaken by women. Women heavily invested their labour in subsistence production of which cotton is not part of. They negatively skewed their labour dedication towards cotton production which caused cotton production to shrink.\textsuperscript{148} Equally, the study reiterates the view that the haphazardness with which the cotton was introduced by the state in order to illustrate the economic viability of the railway line failed to consider whether the area was agriculturally viable for cotton. The failure of cotton to be


accepted until 1931 as illustrated by Hay and Fearn was the state’s inadequate knowledge of the soil and the rainfall conditions in the area.\textsuperscript{149} This position, therefore, exonerates the African peasants from the purported economic sabotage of government efforts and pronounces the position by Anderson\textsuperscript{150} that African peasants were masters of both their environment and their destiny as their destiny was agrarian shaped and that they were not victims of both the state and the environment they were living in. This study, therefore, argues that the reason as to why the African peasants snubbed cotton production was the knowledge of their own climatic conditions which could not support cotton.

On the other hand, food crop production in Kakamega witnessed expansive expansion in the production of subsistence crops like beans, sesame and maize, up to the end of the First World War. The study perceives the expansion to have been two-phased; first, the expansion is attributable to the expansion of the land area under cultivation of the food crops as alluded to by oral research participants and second the introduction of the wooden hoe (\textit{kisiri}) in the 1900s revolutionized and revitalized the African agrarian peasant production technology which was initially solidified on the wooden hoe.\textsuperscript{151} However, of them all, the output of maize was much more noticeable than any other crop. The increase in the quantities of maize produced was stimulated by its positioning as the peasant households’ main staple by edging out the indigenous staple, millet. Moreover, maize provided the peasants with the window of opportunity to commercialize their agriculture. Its surplus production earned them a cash income.


\textsuperscript{150} David Anderson employed the agency theory to study how the residents of Baringo harnessed the ecology to their advantage as a response to the colonial pressures. See Anderson, D. (2002), \textit{Eroding the commons: the politics of ecology in Baringo, Kenya}. Nairobi: East African Educational Publishers.

\textsuperscript{151} David Anderson & David Throup: \textit{Africans and Agricultural Production in Colonial Kenya; The Myth of the war as a watershed}. 
whether traded through the formal or the informal channels.\textsuperscript{152} Quantitatively for instance, in 1918, 550 tons of maize was marketed from the area through the official state channels of marketing.\textsuperscript{153} The expansion of maize production in Kakamega by the African peasants allowed them to commercialize their agriculture at the same time and the commitment of labour power and land to new agrarian ventures enhanced the peasants’ security of food supply for their households. Therefore, with the commercialization of African peasant agriculture and more specifically with the sale of surplus value, the African peasants in Kakamega were able to meet their tax obligations without necessarily parting with either their livestock or engaging in migrant labour in the adjacent white highlands. This position was echoed by the District Officer in 1910 when he indicated that:

\textit{The new economic crops are now mainly producing the hut tax, and instanced the decline in stock sales at the tax collection period as proof.}\textsuperscript{154}

\section*{2.9 The Colonial State Agricultural Initiatives Before 1930}

The period before 1930 was characterized by colonial state initiatives and policies seeking to articulate the state’s capitalist mode to the traditional forms of agricultural production in Kakamega. In the agricultural sector, and particularly within the Nyanza region, the state articulated itself by attempting to encourage the growth of ‘economic’ crops by the African peasants in Kakamega. However, as indicated by Kitching, the process of encouraging the peasants to engage in commercial agriculture was harphazard.\textsuperscript{155} This according to the study explains why the peasants were not

\textsuperscript{152}Oral interview with Jones Liaka and Mzee Bunyali at their homes in Sengeteti and Butere respectively. See also Kitching,G., (1980). \textit{Class and Economic Change in Kenya; The Making of an African Petite-Bourgeoisie, 1905-70.} London; Yale University Press Limited


\textsuperscript{154}Ibid.

\textsuperscript{155}Kitching, \textit{Class and Economic Change in Kenya}
enthusiastic about the commercialization of agriculture at this time. The peasants were, however, not repulsive of the introduction of new crops in the area especially those crops which had domestic value. This indicates the agentive nature of the African peasants in the study area to adopt to the state articulation policies to their own advantage. This, for instance, is the position held by the 1909 Kisumu Quarterly report which acknowledges the promising uptake of white beans, groundnuts, rose-coco, simsim and maize while there was a nil up take of cotton seeds in the same Nyanza region. 

According to state officials, the motivation for the uptake of these commercial crops was to provide the peasants with a cash income which was to facilitate their meeting of the tax obligations. Yet in addition to meeting their tax obligations, African peasants in Kakamega also selectively accepted crops which would have boosted their subsistence economy which was much more crucial to their subsistence needs than the cash income. This illustrates why they discriminated against crops like cotton, rice, wheat and oats. The study affirms that the introduction of these crops was aimed at ensuring that the colony was self-sustaining, a reason why there was massive investment in infrastructure. As Hay indicates, the peasants inadequate knowledge in the production of purely commercial crops like cotton was to blame for the ‘nil’ acceptance. In this period of trial and error, it must be argued that the failure for the swift acceptance of commercial crops like cotton, oats and rice is attributable to the

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156 Kisumu Quarterly Report of 1909
157 To the state, taxation was the mode of appropriation of the peasants’ surplus value in Kakamega by obtaining from them the produce, products and value that are over and above the peasants subsistence needs. In response to these the peasants in a simple reproduction squeeze concept, adopted crops that were high in subsistence value and low in market value vis-a-vis those with high market value and low subsistence value, like beans and cotton respectively. According to Fearn, cotton was introduced in Nyanza in 1908, however, by 1922 cotton cultivation in Nyanza was almost non-existent despite repeated attempts to mainstream it.
climatic conditions as well as the limited knowledge of the soils by the administrative
machineries in the areas of Kakamega where they were encouraging the production of
those crops. In addition, they were ignorant of the weather conditions like rainfall in
the area.\textsuperscript{159} Hence the peasants’ uptake of crops was facilitated by such knowledge
which confirms their agentive sensitivity to their physical environment. The blame
further lies with the state machineries on the ground, especially with the manner in
which and the techniques with which they introduced these crops. Hay singles out a
high degree of coercion on the part of the administrative machinery to compel the
peasants to accept those crops.\textsuperscript{160} The peasants’ response to these was guided by nature
in which force is present, the response expected was resistance. In the case of
Kakamega, the use of force by state officers to compel the African peasant to adopt
economic crops resulted in resistance from the African peasants. The agentive response
by the peasants during this period was, however, not limited to the incorporation of the
new crops into their agrarian system. They equally modified the technology for the
production which went hand in hand with the newly adopted crops. For example, Hay
illustrates the technological transformation by the peasants in Kakamega from the
wooden hoe which was predominantly used in the 1900, gradually phased out by the
iron bladed hoe (\textit{kisiri}) in the 1900s, then came the stronger iron bladed hoe (\textit{opanga})
from India around 1918, before the introduction of the jembe in the early 1920s.\textsuperscript{161}

According to Berman and Lonsdale, in the early 1900s, the chief concern of the state
was security and supply of the Buganda road. The year 1902, however, was the turning

\textsuperscript{159} The study affirms that no feasibility study was conducted on the viability of the non-food ‘economic’
crops within Kakamega. This to a larger extent contributed to the failure of the crops especially for the
people who experimented with those crops. The failure led to quick abandonment of the crops and back
to their subsistence ones which they were familiar with both the weather, climatic conditions as well as
the seasons of production.


\textsuperscript{161} Ibid
point both for the state interests and the integration of the African peasants of Kakamega into the metropolitan capitalist economy.\textsuperscript{162} This year was marked by the intersection of policies which in general were non-favorable to the peasants and in particular skimmed off the African peasants’ surplus value from their agrarian sector. To illustrate the point, on 31 March 1902, the administration of the railway was handed over to the East Africa protectorate.\textsuperscript{163} Politically, this was meant for the ease of administration of the railway under a single administrative territory. However, economically, this was after the immediate realization of the enormous agro-economic resources in the Kavirondo area. This is confirmed by the encouragement of large numbers of Europeans to settle in Kenya and engage in plantation agriculture. A confirmation that the Nyanza area of the protectorate which Kakamega was part of was economically viable in an agrarian sense, is derived from Chief Paul Agoi who stated before the Kenya Land Commission;

\begin{quote}
We were not warned that European settlers would come, and yet they settled in Kaimosi and our people have been driven away. The miners have come in without previous notice to us … the proper boundary of the black man is the sea (Mombasa). We want the land for ourselves and our descendants. We do not agree to a share being given to Europeans.\textsuperscript{164}
\end{quote}

Chief Agoi’s oral submission confirms that African peasant land was alienated in Kakamega and these had severe implications on the agrarian production in the area, as it shrunk the land on which the African peasants were to practice agrarian production

\begin{flushright}
\textsuperscript{162} In 1902, the Eastern province of Uganda was transferred to the East Africa Protectorate and it became the Kavirondo/ the Nyanza/ Western province. At the same time the 1902, marked the promulgation of the Hut Tax Ordinance which coincided with the Village Headmen Ordinance. This confirms the year 1902 as the turning point in the economic history of the Nyanza region in general and the Kakamega area in particular.


\textsuperscript{164} 
\end{flushright}
in the area. The case was tragic in other areas of Kakamega as illustrated by Chief Dominiko Muzulu when he noted with concern before the 1934 land commission:

_There are cases of “natives” who have been dispossessed to make room for European settlers and have received no compensation. This place Mumias was a government station, but has been abandoned. Yet we are not allowed to return to cultivate it. ... Nothing was paid for loss of cultivation rights. And no alternative land has been given._

The alienation of land by the state was part of its articulation to integrate the African peasants of Kakamega into the global capitalist economy. The dispossession indicated by Chief Muzulu denied the indigenous people of Kakamega the chance to expand their agricultural engagement. Furthermore, the creation of room for European settlers meant that the African peasants in Kakamega were then transformed into labourers on these alienated lands. The absence of compensation played well into the entire state narrative of articulation which was blended by the introduction of the hut tax in 1902. Living in squalid conditions within the congested reserves, and with the pressing tax demands on the African peasant, the indigenous people of Kakamega had no option but to hire themselves out as labourers on the European farms. The hut tax ordinance of 1902 coincided with the 1902 Village Headmen Ordinance, which did not only give the headmen the powers to collect taxes but also to recruit labour for the settler farms. Finding themselves in a tight position, the African peasants in Kakamega invoked their

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165 Ibid.
166 The hut tax was a type of taxation introduced by British colonialists in Kenya on a per hut or household basis. It was variously payable in money, labour, grain or stock and benefited the colonial authorities in four related ways: it raised money; it supported the currency (chartalism); it broadened the cash economy, aiding further development; and it forced Africans to labour in the colonial economy. In Kakamega, households which had survived on, and stored their wealth in cattle ranching now sent members to work for the colonialists in order to raise cash with which to pay the tax. The colonial economy depended upon black African labour to build new towns and railways, and in southern Africa to work in the rapidly developing mines. See also, Sorrenson, M.P.K. _Origin of European Settlement in Kenya_.
167 The enactment of the Village Headman Ordinance of 1902 empowered the colonial commissioner to appoint village headmen who would assist the state among other things to assist in hut tax collection as well as report any removal of or addition to the number of native houses in his area.
agentive sense of response by ‘voluntarily’ hiring themselves out as labourers on settler farms. However, while on the farms, the African peasants were not ordinary labourers as they were keen to learn from the practice and the experience on those settler farms. As a result, they gained more skills on agrarian production that proved vital to the success of African peasant agriculture in Kakamega in the years to come. Moreover, they did not only earn a cash income that they used to meet their tax obligation, but also accumulated cash that was invested back in the reserves. For instance, they bought land and expanded their agricultural pursuits as instanced by Saul Bunyali in the oral research participation. This was as a result of the loss of cultivation rights in Kakamega as demonstrated by the cases in Mumias and the absence of the alternative land to cultivate as Chief Dominiko Muzulu evidenced before the Kenya Land Commission of 1934.

The colonial state introduced settler and corporate production in Kenya as the mainstay of the colonial economy. The state forcibly seized land, livestock and other indigenous means of production from certain regions, communities and households on behalf of the settlers and corporate interests. By the mid-1930s about one-fifth of all arable land in Kenya was under the exclusive control of the settlers. In addition, the state provided the settlers and corporate companies with the necessary infrastructural, agricultural and marketing services and credit facilities. And above all, the state sought to create, mobilize and control the supply of African labour for the capitalist settler economy. The state itself also required massive supplies of labour to build and

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168 A lot of times African labour was forcefully requisitioned as provided for by the Northey Circulars. The prevailing circumstances equally forced them to hire themselves out to meet the state demands like the tax obligations.

169 Sorrenson, M.P.K, Origin of European Settlement in Kenya. See also, Okoth-Ogendo, H.W.O, Tenants of the crown

maintain the colonial economic infrastructure as well as the administrative bureaucracy.\textsuperscript{171}

\textbf{2.10 State Articulation of Labour Procurement in Kakamega Before 1930}

The state used five main policies to secure and control African peasant labor in Kakamega. First, it established African peasant reserves, (eventually with official boundaries) where each and every African ethnic group in the colony was expected to live separately from the settler.\textsuperscript{172} The study maintains that this was the genesis of negative ethnicity in Kenya. As Africans lacked sufficient land in their reserves, they had little choice but to migrate to the European farms in search of work.\textsuperscript{173} Stated in another way, through the act of alienating land to settlers, the colonial state deprived the indigenous people of Kakamega their means of production and livelihood and instead laid the basis for the entry of African peasants from Kakamega into the escalating numbers of the wage labour force.\textsuperscript{174} The number of African peasants from Kakamega who took up labour outside the area during the First World War period kept increasing as shown on the next page.

\textbf{Table 2.1: Labour supplies in North Kavirondo from 1914-18}

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>1914-15</th>
<th>1915-16</th>
<th>1916-17</th>
<th>1917-18</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Work outside the district</td>
<td>10190</td>
<td>12712</td>
<td>10340</td>
<td>13730</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Carrier corps labour</td>
<td>4372</td>
<td>7459</td>
<td>6469</td>
<td>10036</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Inside the district</td>
<td>204</td>
<td>305</td>
<td>334</td>
<td>178</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

\textit{Source:} DC/NN/1/1: 1917-1918 North Kavirondo District Annual Report.


\textsuperscript{172}In May 1903, the Commissioner of the day, Eliot, instructed his land officer, Barton Wright, not to grant rural land especially in the highlands to Indians. See, Sorrenson, M.P.K, \textit{Origin of European Settlement in Kenya}.

\textsuperscript{173}Tabitha M. Kanogo, \textit{Squatters and the Roots of Mau Mau}, 1905-63

\textsuperscript{174}Caroline Elkins, \textit{Imperial Reckoning: The Untold Story of Britain's Gulag in Kenya}. See also Tabitha Kanogo, \textit{Squatters and the Roots of Mau Mau 1905-1963}
These, are the officially registered who went out to the neighbouring European settler farms like Trans Nzoia, Uasin Gishu, Muhoroni among others. However, there were a very large number of men who went out of which no record is available. From table 2.1 above, there was a record increase in the number of African peasants leaving Kakamega in search for labour during the First World War. The study maintains that this increase was necessitated by food shortage in Kakamega during the war period. In this case, the African peasants in Kakamega were recruited to provide labour first in the war and second but most important were the increase by the colonial state in the number of works on roads and bridges, required from the locals.\textsuperscript{175} From table 2.1, it is clear that, African peasant labour from Kakamega was utilized at two levels that denied the African peasant agrarian sector in Kakamega the productive energy required to thrive. The number of African peasants in Kakamega who provided labour outside the reserves as table 1 indicates kept increasing steadily between 1914 and 1918, which the study maintains was as a result of the white settlers in the adjacent areas of Uasin Gishu, Trans Nzoia and Kericho holding the colonial state at ransom by passing punitive labour laws as the metropole concentrated on fighting the First World War. Equally, the number of African peasants working inside the district steadily increases between 1914 and 1918 as shown by table 2.1 for the colonial state needed the infrastructure of roads and bridges in the area. As a result of these, therefore, the African peasants in Kakamega lost touch with their household lands as their productive energies went to the war efforts, settler production and the infrastructure within the district.

\textsuperscript{175} DC/NN/1/2 North Kavirondo District Annual Report 1918
Second, the state imposed a hut tax and a poll tax,\textsuperscript{176} together amounting to nearly twenty-five shillings, the equivalent of almost two months of African peasants’ wages at the going local rate\textsuperscript{177}. According to the North Kavirondo District Annual Report of 1917, the tax was raised from Rs 3 to Rs 5. With this increment, the cumulative hut tax fell from 661,245 in the year 1916-1917 to 587,250 in the year 1917-1918.\textsuperscript{178} While the monetary tax declined as indicated, it is a true reflection of the agrarian economy of the people of Kakamega as their agricultural produce were utilized for the war, there by justifying the explanation. For instance, in July 1918, 650 porters were sent with Mr Hodge ADC on transfer to Turkana to convey KAR posho. The absence of 650 people in Kakamega did not only deplete the labour reserve in the peasant agrarian sector in Kakamega, but also their use to deliver posho implies the role of the peasant sector in the subsistently sustaining the state. This is consolidated in November 1918 with more cattle being collected for military\textsuperscript{179}. In Kakamega, however, taxation was a double edged sword for the indigenous people; it encouraged African peasant commodity production in the area, which confirms the agentive response mechanisms on their part as well as wage employment, where they gained both capital and knowledge to expand their petty commodity production back in the reserves. In reality, African peasant petty commodity production increased as precisely indicated by the hut tax revenue over the

\textsuperscript{176}In 1910, Poll Tax Ordinance was introduced in order to prevent circumvention of Native Hut Tax. This Ordinance empowered the Commissioner to impose tax on anyone who was not covered by the Hut Tax. All African males 25 years and older were required to pay Poll Tax. The circumvention of the Hut Tax was necessitated by two factors; The tax was charged on all huts used as dwellings at a rate of Rs 2 (2 Rupees) per annum and in 1903, the Hut Tax was raised to Rs 3. The tax could also be paid in kind including labour. The occupier of the hut was responsible for paying the tax. The African peasants of Kakamega being a largely polygamous society the household head, the man had many huts for which he had to raise money for all the huts. Alternatively, he had to work with some of his wives and sons. From 1910 women living in their own huts were required to pay Hut Tax. See Priscilla Shilaro, \textit{A Failed Eldorado}

\textsuperscript{177}Caroline Elkins, \textit{Imperial Reckoning: The Untold Story of Britain’s Gulag in Kenya.}

\textsuperscript{178}DC/NN/1/1. \textit{North Kavirondo District Annual Report 1917}

\textsuperscript{179}DC/NN/1/2 North Kavirondo District Annual Report 1918
years in Nyanza (which Kakamega was part of), an area where the colonial state and capital was expected to draw their labour. The table below illustrates this point.

**Table 2.2: Revenue Collected in North Kavirondo between 1912 and 1918**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>1912-13</th>
<th>1913-14</th>
<th>1914-15</th>
<th>1915-16</th>
<th>1916-17</th>
<th>1917-18</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Hut tax revenue</td>
<td>355,917</td>
<td>383,706</td>
<td>417,126</td>
<td>426,357</td>
<td>661'245</td>
<td>587,250</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


According to table 2.2, the hut tax revenue collected in Kakamega steadily increased in between 1912 and 1917. The increase in the hut tax revenue collected in table 2.2 can partly be explained on the one hand by the fact that the African peasants in Kakamega were productive to the extent that they disposed off their agricultural produce to pay the tax, and partly as a result of the increase in the hut tax revenue collected was due to the increase in the tax rate.

In 1916, the colonial state raised the hut tax from Rs 3 to Rs 5 which was to compel the African peasants in Kakamega not only to sell their agricultural produce but also turn up for labour. The later in some way worked against the state as the hut tax revenue declined in 1918. The decline, however, the study maintains was catered for by the fines netted on the forfeitures of tax obligations. For instance, Rs 15,413 was revenue collected out of fines and forfeitures in 1918. Moreover, the declining hut tax revenue can also be explained by the political scenario of the day, with the First World War coming to a closure and the metropole redirecting more of its attention to the colony. A keen examination of the graph plotted by the hut tax revenue figures in table 2.2 reveals

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181 DC/NN/1/1 North Kavirondo District Annual Reports 1917-18
an almost constant margin of increase from 1912 through 1915. The average of Rs. 30000 is a reflection of the pressure exerted on to the African peasants in Kakamega to support the colonial state’s war efforts from the onset. However, table 2 indicates a slight decline of Rs. 9231 between the years 1914-15 and 1915-16, this decline the study maintains exemplifies the war concentration efforts by the state on the recruitment of war millitias and the African peasants in Kakamega also hatched a scheme to forfeite their hut tax obligations. In response the state sort to quickly curb those forfeiting their tax obligations and imposed fines to the forfeiters and to recover what was lost in the previous year, the state increased the hut tax rates from Rs. 3 to Rs. 5 from 1916-17. As such the increased hut tax rates and the imposition of fines to the African peasant forfeitures of their hut tax obligations accounts to the geometric increase of Rs. 23488 in the hut tax revenue collected in Kakamega between 1916 and 1917. In the period 1917-1918, the decline in the hut tax revenue of 73,975 can be explained by the declining First World War demands as well as the ease of colonial demands of African peasants in Kakamega to produce for the war efforts.

In addition, the African peasants in Kakamega only went out to work mostly to meet their tax obligations. In 1923, the DC indicated in the annual report that:

The natives have shown an increased disinclination to go out and work, owing to their hut tax troubles being over. This will right itself again in 1924 when more money is required.\textsuperscript{182}

The study maintains that this provides the evidentiary threshold that wage labour was resorted to by African peasants in Kakamega primarily as a method of obtaining money to pay tax. Hence, to scare African peasants in Kakamega from competing with settler farmers in the adjacent highlands, the state imposed the third technique which was to

\textsuperscript{182} DC/NN/1/4 North Kavirondo District Annual Report 1923
encourage African labour: the peasants from the African reserve of Kakamega, like elsewhere in the country at large, were forbidden from growing the most profitable cash crops, especially coffee and tea. It was not formally or officially illegal for peasants in the reserves to grow coffee but coffee growers were required to have a license which proved extremely difficult and expensive for the peasants in the area to obtain. Therefore, the people of Kakamega continued growing and selling maize until marketing boards established after the Second World War set a two-tier system that benefited European settler farms.

Furthermore, forced or compulsory labour was widely utilized and was institutionalized during the first decades of colonial rule in Kenya. This was a period when massive supplies of labour were required to lay the very foundations of the colonial economy: rail lines and roads were to be built, bridges constructed, administrative centres erected, and forests cleared and settler farms established. Forced labour inevitably became the most reliable means of securing labour from the African peasants in Kakamega. For instance in May 1918:

Very large numbers of porters were forced to carrier corps and many other recruits were sent for UAR and Maxim Gun Corps with more cattle being requisitioned for military.

Few government officials or settlers ever questioned the need for some form of labour coercion. For many, it was even an act of benevolence, a necessary 'shock therapy' for people deeply mired in idleness and indolence. Equally important was the fact that with thousands of Luhya and Kikuyu migrating to look for work, the colonial

184 DC/NN/1/1. *North Kavirondo District Annual Report 1917*
government introduced the pass or *kipande*\(^{186}\) system to control the movement of African workers and to keep track of their employment histories.\(^{187}\) The Kipande system was first passed into law in 1915 under the Registration Ordinance. However, the Colonial Office deferred the implementation of the Kipande Registration until the end of the First World War in 1919, and abolished it in December 1947 when the Colonial government sought to mollify the Africans by the adoption of a Registration of Persons Ordinance, that was applicable to all races. By 1920, all African men leaving their reserves were required by law to carry a pass, or *kipande*, that recorded a person’s name, fingerprint, ethnic group, past employment history, and current employer’s signature.\(^{188}\) By 31\(^{\text{st}}\) March 1920 for instance, 5097 certificates had been issued. According to the District Annual Report of North Kavirondo in 1919 this explains the large decrease of hut and poll tax which according to the DC would continue from year to year. This is accounted for by the large number of African peasants who had left the district in search for labour.\(^{189}\) The year 1923 witnessed 4526 new registration of African peasants for labour uptake.\(^{190}\) The peasants of Kakamega put the pass in a small metal container, the size of a cigarette box, and wore it around their necks. They often called it *esikhuli*, or cow’s bell, because, as one old man recalled, “I was no longer a shepherd, but one of the flock, going to work on the white man’s farm with my *esikhuli around my neck*”\(^{191}\). The *kipande* became one of the most detested symbols of British colonial power, though the Africans peasants in Kakamega had little recourse but to

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\(^{186}\) *Kipande* means “piece” in Swahili, in this case, an identity document which featured basic personal details, fingerprints, and an employment history. The main intent of the policy, supposedly, was to keep track of the labor pool efficiently. *Kipande* caused much resentment as all African males were required to wear it at all times around their necks.


\(^{189}\) DC/NN/1/3 *North Kavirondo District Annual Report 1919*.

\(^{190}\) DC/NN/1/4 *North Kavirondo District Annual Report 1923*.

\(^{191}\) Winston Wekesa, Oral Interview, 24:05:2018 at his Sivilie home.
carry their identity at all times; failure to produce it on demand brought a hefty fine, imprisonment, or both.  

Squattership was the fifth form of labour procurement in colonial Kenya. Squatters were Kenyan African peasants living, cultivating, and generally grazing their livestock on land that did not belong to them. Settlers in the neighbouring Uasin Gishu, Trans Nzoia and the Lumbwa (kipkelion) valley, permitted African squatters from Kakamega and other neighboring African reserves to live on their land in essence to secure a continuous supply of cheap African labor. By 1930, squatter labour had become the main source of cheap African peasant labour on settler farms and estates, especially in the Rift Valley which is adjacent to the study area. Initially, the early squatters were actually the original inhabitants of the land taken by the settlers within the Rift Valley. However, with time, squatters came from the established African reserves like Kakamega escaping the restrictions of the reserve life, specifically conscription during the First World War, and the abuses of communal labour after the War in Kakamega. Food shortages in the Kakamega reserve also played a role in pushing the African peasants to become squatters, as was the desire to escape the education and missionaries, which were more pervasive in the reserves like Kakamega than on settler farms. For Kakamega, however, there was an intrinsic push factor that pushed the Africans peasants from the reserve to squat in the highlands. Oral evidence confirmed

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193 A squatter in this context is a labour tenant. According to Maxon & Ofcansky (2000), Squatters provided part-time labour to the landowner in exchange for the right to cultivate a piece of land and to graze.


195 The Northey Circular of 1919 directed administrators at all levels to ensure that Africans, women and children included leave their homes to work for European settlers. At times this circular is called the *Labour circular of 1919*. 


this with Mzee Upande noting that people went to *mzungu shambas* to learn agricultural skills under the pre-text of squatting.

Realizing the ploy of the Africans, the Resident Native Ordinance was passed in 1918 demanding that squatter payments to be made in labour and not in kind or in cash. This was done to keep the squatter farms from competing with or even eclipsing settler farms. Conditions for squatters began deteriorating from the mid-1920s. As reserves became more crowded, more people left them to become squatters and they returned to Kakamega with agricultural ability and skills. With time, squatter plots shrunk while the time they spend working on the settler farms increased. In 1918, a squatter was obliged to work for a settler for three months, but this increased to six months in 1925. Further measures were put in place to tame the squatters. Squatters were denied the right to raise cattle for the settlers wanted to protect their exotic cattle from diseases.

The period between 1895 up to around 1930 undermined the African peasant way of life and all of the social-economic bonds that had existed in Kakamega before colonialism and restructured the African peasants’ in a way that suited the British colonial masters. The imposition of artificial boundaries on the people of Kakamega, the mass removal of peasants in Kakamega to work in the colonial whitehighlands, and the displacement of the rural Kakamega peasantry farmers who were the backbone of the African peasant economies all had debilitating impacts on the area of study visible to present day.

196 David Anderson, *Histories of The Hanged: The Dirty War In Kenya And The End Of Empire*
197 S. M. Shamsul Alam, *Rethinking Mau Mau in Colonial Kenya*
198 *Speaking with Vampires: Rumor and History in Colonial Africa* by Luise White
2.11 The First World War and African Peasant Production in Kakamega in the 1920s

In the period 1895 to 1930, Colonial Kenya endured two major economic tumults before the change of state policies to mainstreaming of African peasant agriculture. The first agrarian related turmoil was the First World War from 1914 to 1919. During this period, the Settlers took advantage of the concentration of the metropole on the war to capture, control and dominate the colonial state and in effect punitive agrarian laws and policies to the peasants of Kakamega were passed, exemplified by the poll tax, hut tax, kipande system, squattership and the crown land ordinance. The second crisis, from 1919 to 1923 was a result of the economic depression that came from the ruins of the First World War. This economic upheaval was complicated with the prevailing status both within and without the protectorate/colony. For instance, in 1919, the war came to an end with massive infamous effects to the British colonies, Kenya not being an exception. These had far reaching implication to the African peasant reserve of Kakamega. This was testified to by the large decrease of hut and poll tax which was unavoidable and which the DC indicated was to continue for the years to come as indicated in the table below. This agrees with the situation in 1927, where the trade was generally a bad year for the African cultivator in Kakamega as the effects were felt through the first half of 1928. According to the annual report, the trade reacted to the depression.

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199 Anderson D & Throup D. *Africans and Agricultural Production in colonial Kenya: The myth of the war as a watershed*


201 The depression referred to is the mini-depression that was as a result of the First World War. See DC/NN/1/9 *North Kavirondo District Annual Report 1928*
Table 2.3: Comparative statement of revenue during the First World War

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>1916-17</th>
<th>1917-18</th>
<th>1918-19</th>
<th>1919-20</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Amount (Rs)</td>
<td>683642.20</td>
<td>660445.49</td>
<td>648433.92</td>
<td>606921.14</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: DC/NN/1/3 North Kavirondo District Annual Report 1919

According to table 2.3, the cumulative poll and hut tax revenue collected in Kakamega is on an almost constant decline rate. The average decline rate between 1916 and 1920 is 25574. The interesting thing is that table 2.3 provides a scenario that is more of a continuation of the trend in table 2.2. The current study maintains the position held earlier that the declining tax revenue beginning from 1916-17, a year which marks Kenya’s prime peak involvement in the First World War efforts. As indicated elsewhere, this decline is explained by the mass exodus of the African peasants in Kakamega to provide labour as indicated by the District Commissioner in the adjacent settler farms in Eldoret and Trans Nzoia and the fact that most of them decided to squat on those farms.202 In this case, table 2.3 paints a reduction in the revenues collected agrees with the position held by the study that; with majority squatting in the farms in Eldoret, Kericho and Trans Nzoia, the subsequent fall in poll and hut taxes were to be felt as very few people remained in Kakamega to account for the tax obligations; table 2.1 affirmed this point. In addition, while the absence of African peasants naturally eased the population pressure on the African peasant agricultural land in the Kakamega reserve, the persistence of the few who remained to invest their time and labour to feed the households provided a case study for the state to revive African peasant agriculture in the 1930s. Table 2.3 provides the evidence that the African peasant agricultural sector in Kakamega was taking the economic responsibility for the First World War effects,
which the settler economy had succumbed to. This provided the necessity of the state to revive African peasant agriculture in Kakame since 1930.

The declining trend is further accounted for by the effects of the war which destabilized the agrarian economy. Equally supportive of this, is the large number of African peasants from Kakamega who left the district in search of jobs.\(^{203}\) In the year 1920, following the declaration of the crown land ordinance in 1919,\(^{204}\) Kenya was eventually declared a colony. The declaration of colonial status on Kenya coincided with the change in currency.\(^{205}\) For the African peasant in Kenya and Kakamega in particular, the change of currency, declaration of colonial status and the raging effects of the First World War culminated in a sudden fall in the market prices of their main agricultural crop.\(^{206}\) For instance by 1923, the DC in his annual report notes that trade during the year has been brisker than in the previous year.\(^{207}\) The cost of production in the words of the then Director of Agriculture were abnormally high.\(^{208}\) Politically, 1920 was the year Kenya transitioned from a protectorate to a Crown colony and this officially sanctioned the period of settler control in Kenya.\(^{209}\) This increase in settler population would have marked effects in Kenya; more demand for colonial state resources by the settlers and stiffer competition for African labor from the African reserves. This increase in colonial state expenditure to bail out the ailing settler economy had the predictable effect of large budget deficits. As a result, the Colonial Office in London

\(\text{DC/NN/1/3 North Kavirondo District Annual Report 1919}\)
\(\text{Ibid.}\)
\(\text{Director (1924). Annual Report of the Department of Agriculture for the year ending 31st December, 1924. Nairobi; The Uganda Railway Press. Also see Kitching, G. (1980). Class and Economic Change in Kenya}\)
\(\text{DC/NN/1/9 North Kavirondo District Annual Report 1928}\)
\(\text{DC/NN/1/4 North Kavirondo District Annual Report 1923}\)
\(\text{Director (1924). Annual Report of the Department of Agriculture for the year ending 31st December, 1924. Nairobi; The Uganda Railway Press. Also see Kitching, G. (1980). Class and Economic Change in Kenya}\)
advised the colonial state to increase production in African areas as a means of stimulating the economy.\textsuperscript{210} However, the establishment of massive tracts of soldiers’ settlement schemes tremendously escalated the influx of the settler population, and thus a balance had to be struck between the two economies, traditional and the colonial capitalist economies.

African peasant production was the method employed, and a strategy that was officially named the Dual Policy was implemented after 1922. The Dual Policy was an economic policy proposed by Governor Sir Edward Northey, which advocated limited state support to African Peasant agriculture to support their production of crops for both domestic and foreign markets.\textsuperscript{211} In his own words, Northey hoped that the Dual Policy would facilitate complimentation, rather than competition, between African peasant agricultural production and the European settler production for the control of the export market. His successor, Governor Sir Robert Coryndon, enthusiastically adopted the dual policy, which had gained support among the Colonial Office officials who had realized that in the severe post-World War 1 depression, European Settler agriculture alone would not underwrite colonial economic solvency.\textsuperscript{212} Nonetheless, throughout the 1920s, the Dual Policy remained just but an official policy on paper, as state support for European settler agriculture far surpassed that provided for African Peasant agriculture. For instance, the DC admits that it is difficult to decide whether peasant

\textsuperscript{210} This the point at which this study is conceived. After realizing that the sinking of more London tax payers’ money could not yield as much profit, the London based colonial office owned up and took a bold step to advice the colonial state. The advice was not only to cut down the colonial state’s expenditure but to encourage it to be self-reliant and achieve a self-sustainable status. It is on this advice that deliberate steps were taken by both the Metropolitan and the colonial state to revamp and re-engineer African agriculture in the African peasant areas like Kakamega. See Berman, Bruce. (1990). \textit{Control and Crisis in Colonial Kenya}. London; James Currey. Also Luise White. \textit{Speaking with Vampires: Rumor and History in Colonial Africa}.


traders had a prosperous year or not. The study maintains that this would not have been the case if the state gave support to the African peasants in Kakamega as the difference would have been practically visible. The struggling African peasant agricultural sector traded badly, as the value of practically every trade produce was only 60 percent of the price during the same period the previous year. In essence the Dual Policy favoured European settler production, which prompted Ochieng’ to note that while African production was aided in the 1920s, it could not, however, compete with the cash crops (coffee, sisal and tea) that were grown by the settlers. With the declaration of the Dual policy in 1922 by his predecessor Northey, the Colonial Office had faith in Coryndon to resolve the Indian question given his South African experience. The Indian Question in Kenya revolved around four issues: the exclusive right of European ownership of the White highlands, immigration, political rights (the right to elect members to the Legislative Council), and segregation in commercial and residential areas. These contentious issues managed to draw away the attention of both the colonial state and the Colonial Office from any implementation of the Dual policy of 1922, which negatively affected the African peasant agricultural production in the reserves Kakamega not being an exception. This is illustrated by the prices of most commodities deteriorated towards the end of the year. The Indian question resulted in the Devonshire Declaration/White papers of 1923. The secretary of state for colonies (the Duke of Devonshire) in seeking to quell the long-simmering political tension accepted two of the Indian demands: allowed Indian migration into Kenya to continue and put an end to urban segregation. On the contrary, the Colonial office represented by the Duke of Devonshire rejected the other two of the Indian demands: demand for common roll

213 DC/NN/1/10 North Kavirondo District Annual Report 1929
elections in favour of communal voting and eleven seats were reserved for the Indians in the Legislative Council. Also the Indians were denied ownership of land in the White highlands as it was stated categorically that the White Highlands were exclusively reserved for European land ownership.\textsuperscript{215} The 1923 Devonshire Declaration went over and above solving the political impasse and made a provision which redirected the agrarian trajectory in Kenya in general and the African peasant agriculture in the reserves like Kakamega in particular. The White paper declared that future policy in Kenya would be based on African “paramouncy”.\textsuperscript{216} This essentially meant that African peasant interests were to override those of both the European and the Asians. However, this was never practical as the figures for the labour contracts attested after the declaration of African paramouncy kept on increasing. This contradiction saw as usual Kakamega be the happy hunting ground for labour recruiters both whites and blacks.\textsuperscript{217} The spiral effect of this declaration in the view of this study was the Colonial Office in London made it futile for the European settlers to gain state control in Kenya. The study maintains that both the declaration and the spiral effect helped to refocus the state efforts, policies and mechanisms as well as machineries to the African peasants that took shape from the 1930s.

Therefore, the period of 1920s in Kenya and Kakamega in particular was a period of reconfigurations to both the political and economic scenario in the colony. Within the reconfigurations, the African peasant in Kakamega repositioned themselves to pursue their agrarian agenda on their own agentive initiative. This reconfiguration was


\textsuperscript{216} This study maintains that this provision is what qualified the Devonshire papers to be termed the Devonshire Declaration of 1923. See Maxon & Ofcansky (2000). \textit{Historical Dictionary of Kenya, 2ed}. Also see Berman, B. (1989). \textit{Control and Crisis in Colonial Kenya}

\textsuperscript{217} DC/NN/1/9 \textit{North Kavirondo District Annual Report 1928}
compounded by the world depression of 1920-1923. The colony’s earnings from exports dropped sharply during this time.\textsuperscript{218} The loss of funds in Kenya, like other British colonies at the time was supported by enhanced taxes on African peasants in particular reserves like Kakamega. The common method was establishing a tax regime (hut and poll taxes were used in Kenya) on African peasants in the reserves, and for the case of Kakamega, this forced them into the wage labor market in the adjacent settler farms\textsuperscript{219}. This had a dislocative effect on the export industry as the bulk of Kenya’s export earnings before 1920 came from African produce in the peasant reserves like Kakamega in North Kavirondo/North Nyanza/Elgon Nyanza.\textsuperscript{220} The period of the 1920s, therefore, left few Africans on the land in the African peasant reserves,\textsuperscript{221} which was compounded by the fact that commodity prices for African Peasant produced goods remained stagnant in the 1920s.

\textbf{2.12 Summary of Chapter Two}

The chapter analyzed three broad thematic areas. First, the historical geography of Kakamega was discussed with the focus on how the geography of Kakamega influenced the agrarian choices of the people and this was evidenced by the people’s migration and choice of settlement in the area. Second, the chapter detailed the African peasant pre-capitalist mode and it did not only discuss the traditional African mode of production, but also elucidated the concept of self-agency in the African traditional mode of production. Further, the traditional agrarian annual production cycle was narrated with the aim of displaying the self-reliant and sufficiency nature of the African traditional

\textsuperscript{218} Berman (1989). \textit{Control and Crisis in Colonial Kenya}


mode of production. Finally, the chapter analyzed the pre 1930 state articulation. In this section the state penetration is discussed with the objective of showing how it re-structured the traditional mode of production at the same time introducing the capitalist mode of production. This section revealed that the Africans were not at any given point in time mere victims of the state but, they actively and innovatively adapted and adopted to re-structured colonial capitalist mode to suit their interest. Moreover, the influences of both the First World War and the 1920s on the African peasant agriculture were detailed, and this sub-section shows the ensuing crises which worked in favour of the state to re-consider entrenching African peasant agriculture at all costs. Hence, as it will be discussed in the immediate subsequent chapter, the early 1930s will mark the turning point in African peasant agriculture in Kakamega.

The period before 1930 in Kenya’s colonial history in general and Kakamega’s agrarian trajectory in particular was more pro-settler than pro-African peasant. From the onset of its articulation, the state punctured the African pre-capitalist mode and penetrated it to entrench the capitalist mode, which was settler friendly at the expense of the African peasants. During the war, punitive policies were passed which denied the African peasants’ rights of place in agriculture as the peasants were relegated to mere labourers on the settler farms. However, in the 1920s, the effects of the war and the politics of the day led the state to re-focus on revamping African agriculture in the reserves as demonstrated by the Dual Policy. This chapter concludes that despite being the agrarian beast of burden in this period, the African peasant innovatively circumnavigated the pressures axerted on him both by the state and the settler to claim his rightful place in the agrarian trajectory of Kakamega from 1930 to 1970 as the next chapters shall discuss. The tail end of the 1920s witnessed a global economic slumber which significantly affected the area of study. With the prevailing situation, the African peasant agrarian
production in Kakamega was further complicated with natural calamities which succeeded the economic depression. Chapter three, therefore, examined how the post 1930 period elicited events that shaped colonial state policy as pertains to its relationship with African peasant agricultural production in Kakamega.
CHAPTER THREE

THE STATE RIVITALIZATION OF AFRICAN PEASANT AGRICULTURE

IN THE 1930s

3.1 Introduction

The decade 1930 to 1940 kicked off on a rather low note for the World agrarian economy. The period commenced in with the Great Depression which began in 1929 to 1939. This gloomy economic scenario in the world was occasioned by the crushing of the global market system. The core of the global economic crisis was the tumbling of the New York based Wall Street Stock markets, which sent shock waves throughout the global capitalist market system\textsuperscript{222} of which Kakamega was a peripheral part. As displayed by this crisis, agrarian economic events in Kakamega, and by extension Kenya, were often connected to outside metropolitan triggers. This is based on the fact that Kenya as a colony received grants in aid from the Colonial Office in London, and was interconnected to London via trade and finances. Globally, market value for primary commodities sharply declined proportional to the trade between Kenya and the Metropole. On the face of it, primary commodities export trade was, in specific terms, the settler export monopolized trade shrunk to a greater extent and to a lesser extent affecting African peasants who were making breakthroughs in the agrarian economy. Immediately after the Great Depression was drought and locust infestation/invasion which necessitated the nyangweso situation in Kakamega as well as soil erosion in the area. However, the wakeup call that maintained the African peasant agrarian economy in Kakamega was the discovery of the gold mines in the area as it particularly sustained

its focus throughout the 1930s. The presence of Bukura agricultural training centre in
the area worked to the advantage of the African peasants in Kakamega. This chapter
analyzes how in the midst of the Great Depression, soil erosion and natural calamities,
the discovery of gold in Kakamega guaranteed the solvency of African peasant
production in the 1930s. The study affirms that solvency of the African peasant
agriculture in Kakamega was permitted by African peasant agency in spite of the state
expropriation of their surplus to redeem the effects of the Great Depression.

3.2 Government’s Last Measures to Absolve the Settler Economy in the 1930s

The settler economy in colonial Kenya was the darling of the state despite it being
unable to ensure the state was financially independent. From the onset, the settlers arm
twisted the state to give them an edge over the African peasants in the agrarian policy
formation and the mainstream state support. For instance, the state applied double
pressures (financial and political), on the African peasants in African reserves like
Kakamega compelling the Africans there to engage in the labour market outside the
reserve. This to some extent disoriented the African peasant agrarian sector in
Kakamega but, did not put the African agricultural sector in the area to a hold. As
Kanogo illustrates, by 1930, the African peasants were responsible for 37.5 percent of
the colony’s total revenue. This indicates that although the African peasant was the
beast of burden, (s)he was simply agentive in his adaptive innovation of the articulated
capitalist pressures to resiliently emerge as the solid economic pillar of the state at all
times. Moreover, while Swainson estimates 70 to 80 percent of the African peasants’
contributions to have been accrued from direct taxation, in the form of hut tax and poll
tax, the study emphasizes the fact that the revenue generated by the African peasants in
Kakamega benefited the settler economy far more than them. In the early 1930s, the
state gambled with ensuring that the settler sector remained afloat after suffering the
wide ranging effects of the great depression. To attain this, the state came up with varied
detailed measures; to ensure the settler sector was supplied with adequate labour
constantly, the state passed numerous labour regulations to ensure that the peasants in
Kakamega abandoned the agrarian ventures back in the reserve and ventured out in the
adjacent Trans-Nzoia, Uasin-Gishu and the Kipkelion (Lumbwa Valley) to engage in
labour provision. In 1906 and 1910, the Master Servants Ordinance was operationalized
and in 1918, 1924 and 1937 the Resident Native Labour Ordinance was in place. In
addition, other forms of labour legislation like the Kipande system were enacted but
they failed to redeem the settler economy despite it having immense state support.
These having not worked and the manifestation of the highly dwindling settler sector,
the state put in more measures; in 1929 for example, the Colonial Development Act
was effected. The Act was designed to allow for the provision of a sum of £1 million
per year which aimed at improving the infrastructure necessary for the improved settler
economic performance. This study takes the position that since Kakamega was an
African peasant reserve, it never benefited directly from this Act directly for it was
meant to benefit the settlers and their areas. However, the African peasants of and from
Kakamega benefited from the act through proxy, since the African peasants from
Kakamega worked in the settler areas, they gained from the act in form salaries which
given their instinctive innovative agentive sense remitted back to Kakamega where their
households invested in African peasant agriculture in Kakamega and as a result of these,
the African peasant agricultural economy of Kakamega turned out formidable even in
the face of absent labour which was working in the settler areas. For instance, more
ploughs had been purchased in the area by non-headmen as indicated by the 1918 North
Kavirondo District annual Report.223 This position is informed by Brett’s view that the

223 KNA: North Kavirondo District Annual Report 1918
Colonial Development Act emanated out of the concern of British unemployment and not the problem of colonial development. While this is highly probable, the study maintains that the largest beneficiaries were the African peasants working on settler farms who were the majority employees as the European employees on the settler farms only accounted for farm managers and to a small extent, supervisors. African peasants were the beneficiaries against the odds.

In the year 1930, the state gave the settler economy a dual dosage booster to enable it not only stabilize but also have an edge over the African peasant sector that played unhealthy relations with the settler one. In the first instance, the state refunded the equivalent of four-fifths of the levy charged for grading maize and wheat. While this compensation went to the settlers, it is important to note as Kitching observes, more than 70 percent of the maize in the Nyanza came from North Nyanza which Kakamega was part of. Equally, it must be indicated that at railway stations and go-downs at Butere and Yala located in Kakamega, the quantities of maize inflows were amazing. This study maintains two explanations for this, one, the effect of the world depression on the settler economy was extremely catastrophic and this went hand in hand with a sharp decline in African peasant employment on settler farms. This, however, was a blessing in disguise as the African peasants from Kakamega returned to the reserve armed with the new knowledge and financial resources to launch and intensify African peasant production in Kaka mega, hence the steady maize production among the African peasants.

First, the African peasants arrived back in Kakamega armed with agricultural production knowledge like the best practices of spacing which proved productive to the peasants agricultural sector thus its resilience in the most difficult of the time. Second, the African peasants arrived with financial resources which they heavily invested in
peasant agrarian technological improvement by purchasing the ploughs. These explain why the African peasant agrarian trajectory in Kakamega proved bold amidst multiple challenges.

Further, the effects of the Great Depression had far reaching impact on the official price of maize (and Kakamega was not being exempted), with the price of maize for instance falling by 50 percent despite the 1928-29 drought that had driven up the prices. The African peasant households in Kakamega first solidified their subsistence base and most importantly, they backtracked from official marketing state chains and resorted to black market trade. In this context the African peasants in Kakamega sold their maize as posho which was supplied to the workers in the environs of Kakamega in the settler economy. This study affirms that while the depression was expected to have adverse effect even on the local markets, the hardest hit was the settler sector which did not only reduce the wages of its workers, but also laid off workers. In essence the laid off workers saw an agrarian opportunity in feeding those who remained on the settler farms as workers and therefore they expanded the area that they cultivated in the African reserve of Kakamega and also but importantly improved the techniques and technology on their small-scale production. The agrarian trajectory of Kakamega was thus on an ascending gradient.

In the same year 1929, the state passed the Agricultural Advances Ordinance, which established agricultural advisory boards to provide financing to settler farmers between the period of planting and that of harvesting the maize crop in the course of the year. The constituted boards advanced £68,000 and £50,000 in the subsequent year. Moreover, the railway reduced its rates for maize, wheat and barley transportation. This was with anticipation of reviving the settler sector, and even strengthen it further; the Legislative Council voted in a loan of £108,000 to the maize industry in order to raise
the price of a bag of maize to the economically viable figure of Sh.6 back then. The Legislative Council anticipated the loan to be paid off when the maize prices pick up and stabilize. To the contrary however, for Kakamega, it took long for the anticipated price to stabilize and by the time the prices were stabilizing, two things had happened in the area; one, in land ownership, changes had taken place and two, African peasants had resorted to the black markets in order to gain more from their maize. In recognition of these facts the state decided to write off the loan terming it in economic language as a subsidy.

In 1931, apart from the railways corporation reducing the freight charges of crops among the extensively produced and the African peasants stable crop in Kakamega maize, as the sole hauler, the state produced an additional strategy which aimed at bailing out the settler economy but the contrary ended up consolidating African peasant production in Kakamega instead. The established the Land and agricultural Bank on a permanent basis. According to the Land Bank Ordinance of 1930, the Land and Agricultural Bank was mandated to invest public funds by providing credit to settlers. To acquire the credit the settlers were to use their land as collateral in borrowing from the bank. Foreseeing a situation where many of the settler farmers would be declared bankrupt, the state lowered the interest rate for the loans. However, this did not absolve the settler farmers from solvency as many of them were declared bankrupt while others in the face of the prevailing circumstances decided to abandon their farms altogether. Two things happened as a result of these; one as the settlers were either declared insolvent and had to exit, they just quit due to difficult times as the African peasant farmer breathed a sigh of relief and liberation at long last as it meant that the Kakamega peasant was now free to return to Kakamega and engage in African peasant production. Second, with most of their former employers deserting their agrarian ventures in settler
areas for gold prospection, the African peasants stepped in to maximize on this opportunity by mainly producing local consumables which had a ready market in the gold mining industry. This explains why the African peasant sector blossomed despite limited state support.

Determined to uplift the settler sector despite the fact that all the previous policies and mechanisms had proven futile, the state decided to give it a last shot. In 1932, the state produced the Ottawa Agreement. The agreement also termed the Imperial Economic Conference or the British Imperial Economic Conference was, in, the case of Kenya, designed to enable the settler economy to benefit from preferential tariffs that allowed its produce to enter Britain at lower rates while it received increased money supply from the ballooning state expenditure. For Kakamega, the Ottawa Agreement was responsible for the intensification of African peasant production in the sense that what was mostly exported represented by maize came from the area. According to Kitching\(^{224}\) and Maxon\(^{225}\), the maize that filled the go-downs at Yala and Butere came from the African peasants and, with the favorable tariff rates in Britain being her colony, the African peasants benefited from the spiral effect of better prices for their maize which was eventually exported to Britain. With this the African peasants in Kakamega felt invigorated to intensify agrarian production in the area.

Despite all these policy measures and mechanisms to ensuring that the settler economy stayed afloat and even after spending enormous resources to achieve this, the state finally gave in and accept the place of the African peasant areas like Kakamega in redeeming the state’s financial stability. The present study affirms that for the African peasants of Kakamega, the Great Depression seems to have provided the break through

\(^{224}\) Kitching G Class and Economic Change
\(^{225}\) Maxon R.M Going their Separate ways.
the African peasants were waiting for to gain the official state recognition of their productive dynamics. This is explained by the fact that while peasants in Kakamega like anywhere else never received state compensation for the loss they suffered during the depression. They nonetheless were fortunate that their agricultural sector picked up relatively faster once the traumatic effects of the depression subsided.

3.3 The Revitalization of African Agriculture

The state’s interest in African peasant agriculture was systematically formulated from the cornerstone pillars laid in 1922 by the Dual Policy. With definite policies and programs the state undertook to revamp African peasant agriculture in African areas exemplified by Kakamega. In this regard, the state put pro-active programs in place to stimulate African peasant production through the Bukura Agricultural Training Institute and the Siriba Agricultural Training Institute. On the forefront, the state distributed high yielding seed varieties in Kakamega and its environs. The high yield seed varieties were for both cash crops and food crops.

As noted by Kitching, these seed varieties were developed by the department of Agriculture on the experimental farms in Kakamega, at the centers of Bukura and Siriba. While the study established that the seed varieties were developed at the Scott-Agricultural Laboratories at Kabete, the seeds were tested for conformity with the climatic conditions and for suitability for more local conditions at Local Native Council seed farms. After successful development, testing and approval, the seed varieties were distributed to African peasants from the two centers of Bukura and

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226 The Dual Policy was an economic policy proposed by the sitting Governor Sir Edward Northey in 1922. According to the policy, the state was to provide support to African peasant agriculture in order to jump-start the peasant agricultural sector to produce both the foreign and domestic consumption. However, this purely remained theory until the 1930s when the settle economy became insolvent.

227 Maxon R.M Going their Separate ways. Also see Kitching G Class and Economic Change

228 Kitching, G Class and Economic Change
Siriba. The research ascertained that the seeds were not just merely distributed, but the distribution was accompanied by relevant agricultural experts like the agricultural instructors and the agricultural extension officers.  

In addition the distribution of the high yielding seed varieties was reinforced by local state agents among them headmen, missionaries and chiefs. In Kakamega, the African “elite” peasants were highly receptive to agricultural innovations especially those that reinforced their survival ethos. For example, the African peasants readily adopted the newly introduced and distributed white maize variety, which not only had a high yield per unit of land compared to the African peasant traditional variety of yellow maize but also, benefited the locals in a double way.

First, the high yielding white maize variety per unit of land resonated well with the African peasant by boosting the households’ subsistence security; given that posho was the local peasants’ stable food. Second, the high yields produced guaranteed the households’ surplus which then gave the households an opportunity to engage in ‘commercial’ production of maize. The study believes that this is the single reason why colonial Kakamega in the 1930s was the lead exporter both formally and informally of maize. In light of the fact that Kakamega experienced drought and famine in the 1930s, the state produced new improved varieties of the drought resistant crops. For instance, at Bukura Agricultural Training Institute, a unique variety of protein rich

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cassava was produced through cross-breeding but more importantly the variety was highly resistant to drought.\textsuperscript{232}

In addition, during the drought prone period of the 1930s in Kakamega, Bukura and Siriba Agricultural institutions produced other high yielding but drought resistant food crop varieties among them millet, beans and sorghum.\textsuperscript{233} With this program of seed variety distribution campaign in the 1930s, the government was keen to spread a commercial agrarian sense in the peasants of Kakamega which the African peasants were responsive to with their agency sense of fortifying their subsistence economy before engaging in commercial activities only with the surplus realized over and above their subsistence needs.

Second and most fundamentally, the state in Kakamega was on a campaign trail to induce the African peasants in Kakamega into the production of nutritionally rich and high value fruits and vegetables.\textsuperscript{234} As established by the study, this campaign in Kakamega came with the striking of gold in the area in the early 1930s. while the state advanced the explanation that the cultivation of fruits and vegetables although intensive compared to grain crops, the African peasant would realize high prices per unit of weight and therefore, higher returns would redeem the peasant off the intensive cultivation.

The study established and maintains the position that the state’s propaganda to grow fruits and vegetables was meant to justify two covert objectives for the state. One, the state was out to justify the reduction of the African peasant land holdings in Kakamega when it became obvious that with the discovery of gold, the state would violate the

\textsuperscript{233} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{234} Kenya Land Commission Evidence (1934). Nairobi; Government Printer
Duke of Devonshire declaration\textsuperscript{235} of African ‘paramountcy’ when it came conflicts and the 1930 Native Lands Trust Ordinance.\textsuperscript{236} With the discovery of gold it became eminent that African peasant land was to be alienated to give room to mining companies to prospect at the same time to provide land for European urban settlement especially with the gold mining activities. In essence this left the African peasant with limited portions of land which would be uneconomical for grain crop production.

Therefore, the African response to the state campaign was an agentive response to their ensuing imperative of needs of the utility of the limited available needs to attain their survival. For instance, by 1934, vegetables and fruits were cited by the District Agricultural Officer as the lucrative venture by the peasants around the gold mines.\textsuperscript{237} The study holds the view that despite the loss of land to the miners at Goldmine (Ikolomani), the African peasant saw an economic opportunity that would “compensate” for the loss of their land. In this case, the mining industry provided the African peasant with a ready market which they sought to maximize on. The African peasant thereby intensified the production of fruits and vegetables in the vicinity of Ikolomani which they sold lucratively to the mining industry and the settler as the good prices they earned enabled them to purchase their main staples. This stimulated the growth of Kakamega both as a market center and as an urban center. Among the fruits and vegetables grown were; pawpaw, mangos, kale, cabbages, onions, tomatoes,

\textsuperscript{235}While the Devonshire white paper declared in 1923 that henceforth policy in the colony, African interest would override those of the European and Asian communities. For the case of Kakamega and specifically in relation to gold mining, the provision of this declaration was out rightly violated when the African peasant in Kakamega were alienated from their lands to pave way for mining.

\textsuperscript{236}This ordinance grew out of the African peasants’ fear over the insecurity of their land in the reserves which the Ormsby-Gore and Hilton Young Commissions had exposed. Besides reserving the land for the use of Africa tribes “forever”, the ordinance contained an express provision to the extent that if any land was taken away from a reserve for public purposes, then land equal in amount and value must be added to the reserve and the LNC had to consulted in such alienations. It is important to note that for the cases of Kakamega gold mining both provisions were violated but this did not deter the African peasant in Kakamega from innovatively adapting to the eminent realities by being an agent of himself for his own survival.

\textsuperscript{237}Maxon, R.M. Going their Separate Way
lemons, oranges and ginger, all of which were easily marketable at the Kakamega gold mining industry while the surplus was sold at neighboring market centers like Yala, Chavakali Mumias and Kisumu.\(^\text{238}\)

For the African peasant economy in Kakamega to be set on a sound agronomic base, the state invested heavily in the agronomic human resource in Kakamega through the Bukura and the Siriba institutes. The state systematically dispatched agricultural experts to African reserves with great agricultural potential. For Kakamega, the state deployed a District Agricultural Officer and accorded him over time with the enabling working environment to in order to deeply seed African peasant Agriculture in the area at this crucial time. The state also posted and kept increasing the number of agricultural expert staff working under the District Agricultural Officer particularly on agricultural extension and agricultural instructional works.\(^\text{239}\) This initiative in Kakamega was picked up by the Africans who localized it to address their unique agrarian desires and needs. This was demonstrated when the Local Native Council bestowed upon itself the responsibility of increasing the number of agricultural extension officers and the agricultural instructors at Bukura. They equally bore the remuneration of what was famously termed the ‘native’ instructors.

The aim of the Local Native Council taking responsibility resulted in the increase in the number and size of the LNC seed farms as well as demonstration plots on which the agricultural extension officers and the agricultural instructors experimented and tested the seeds and the crops suitable for Kakamega. Therefore, from the early 1930s, the prospects of African peasant agriculture were forward looking as the African peasant

\(^{238}\) Kisumu Quarterly Report 1934

were agentively responsive to the capitalist articulations by the state, but, they were quick to modify them to suit their interests which made African agricultural production boom despite the myriad challenges faced by the African peasants at the time. To illustrate, the LNC’s take over of the agricultural extension officers and the agricultural instructors and the LNC’s transformative approach of Africanizing of it by increasing their numbers\textsuperscript{240} and ensuring that the two groups were full of Africans made their seeds and the extension practices acceptable to the peasants who’s sons and daughters they were. Moreover, the LNC’s increase of the size of experimental plots and demonstration farms did not only increase the quantities of seeds which when disbursed reached many peasant households to improve their productive capacity, but also more demonstration farms accommodated the ever increasing number of African peasants farmers eager to improve and sharpen the agronomic skills. The acquired skills, the study maintains, were responsible for the persistence of African agricultural prosperity between 1930 and 1970.

With the congestion of African peasants in the reserves, the Kakamega ‘native’ area situation was compounded by the discovery of gold and the subsequent activities thereof. The discovery of gold and the subsequent gold mining activities in Kakamega saw the African population in the area squeezed in an ever smaller portion of land to create room for mining companies. In essence, the congested land went beyond their carrying capacity and as the African peasants intensified their agrarian activities, soil degradation set in and eventually soil erosion.\textsuperscript{241} With the eminent danger at hand the state designed mechanisms and measures to reduce and in the long run prevent soil-erosion. For the Kakamega case, the District Agricultural Officer produced numerous

\footnotesize{\textsuperscript{240} Kitching, G. (1980). Class and Economic Change
\textsuperscript{241} Maxon, R.M Going their Separate Ways}
measures primarily aimed at both reclaiming the soil fertility and preventing soil erosion. He noted:

It seems necessary that the department itself should adopt some course which would assist the object of soil improvement, and at the same time afford a useful contribution to the cropping part of the mixed farming system.

Among others, the measures encompassed the campaign for the intensified use of compost and organic manure, the planting of trees in order to prevent wash/splash erosion, stone terracing on slopes and wash stops on hills which was to go hand in hand with contour ploughing and ditching on slopes. Where practical and as indicated by the District Agricultural Officer, mixed farming was to be practiced. Both the agricultural instructors and the agricultural extension officers at Bukura and Siriba agricultural institute were to play a key role when it came to soil erosion and the reclamation.

The District Agricultural Officer Kakamega indicated that the involvement of the two groups into the soil conservation measures had a threefold intention as noted by Kitching; first, they were to ensure an ecologically balanced use of the land on intensively cultivated small holdings. Second, they were to make sure that soil erosion is prevented while increasing production through the use of organic manure. Three, they were to ensure, improved diet and the marketed surplus by adding the production of meat and dairy products to a wider variety of food crops. While the third intention reflects the state’s intentions to spread the tentacles of the capitalist articulated system, the African agency for self-subsistence preservation is largely visible when the LNC takes up to increase the number of agricultural instructors and extension officers. Further analysis will be tackled under the subsection of agrarian trajectory amid escalating calamities in the 1930s.
3.4 The Soil Conservation Imperatives in the 1930s

Soil is a crucially necessary component of the factors of agrarian production as already discussed in chapter one. For the case of Kakamega where the soil was productively reliable, certain factors limits the soil fertility to culminate into an agrarian crisis. In the period under discussion, while the peasants struggled with the contradiction of balance between the subsistence security and the market needs of the day, pressure mounted on the land resulting in soil degradation. According to the Kenya Land Commission Report of 1934, the estimated average acreage per household as per the figures given by the North Kavirondo Agricultural Officer was 6.085.\textsuperscript{242} This indicates population pressure as put by Wagner’

\textit{The pressure of population, together with the increasing production of cash crops, has resulted in a growing need for land. There are more mouths to be fed and, at the same time, people must produce more than formerly if they want to export. The former reserve of undistributed land has practically ceased to exist. … , all arable land is either under cultivation or only temporarily lying fallow.\textsuperscript{243}}

The current study maintains that while there were more mouths to feed, the same people to be fed were the same to engage in production of the food to feed on. Therefore, the increase in population while it provided the desired labour in the peasant household agricultural sector on the one hand, the continuous investment of their energies in the agricultural sector led to the exceeding of the land’s carrying capacity on the other, which results in the deterioration of the soil. Equally, the increase in the population given the tradition African land tenure system in Kakamega, led to land fragmentation through the increased sub-division among the household male inheritors.\textsuperscript{244} This resulted in soil erosion, a major impediment to agrarian production globally. In practical

\textsuperscript{242} The Kenya Land Commission Report of 1934, also see Robert Maxon, (2003), Going Their Separate Ways


\textsuperscript{244} Robert Maxon, Going their Separate ways
terms, soil erosion coupled with the demographic pressure on land hampered the appropriation of certain traditional techniques of the traditional agrarian system. Hence the ensuing agrarian techniques and practices like hillside cultivation and the absence of furrows following intense sub-divisions caused soil erosion in Kakamega. This is well illustrated by Maxon when he notes that by 1935, several hills were practically denuded of vegetation and much of the fertile soil had been washed away, as a result of extensive cultivation and removal of trees.\textsuperscript{245}

At this point it must be indicated that soil erosion was a consequence that the state had to confront as a result of its earlier policies which were pro-settler and which ignored the African peasant reserves and relegated them to mere labour reserves. In light of this, the soil conservation measures and efforts was a key feature of the state policies and efforts in the 1930s in Kakamega. For example, in 1933, the Agricultural Officer in Nyanza was directed to deliberately put in place measures to maintain soil fertility.\textsuperscript{246} The seriousness of this issue was evident when an Agricultural Officer was seconded to Kakamega to deal exclusively with soil conservation in 1938.\textsuperscript{247} To keenly resolve the issue of soil erosion, the state massively invested in both policies and expert human resource.

In 1934, the Agricultural Officer in Kakamega organized demonstrations of the popular soil conservation techniques.\textsuperscript{248} However, these efforts were repulsed by the African peasants. For instance in his oral submissions before the Land Commission of 1934, chief Agoi indicated that the Africans were unhappy with the land reclamation efforts

\textsuperscript{245}Ibid.
\textsuperscript{246} Native Affairs Department, (1934). Annual Report on Native Affairs; Nairobi: Government Printers
\textsuperscript{247} The Deputy Governor, Wade to Ormsby Gore, May 1937. Also see David Anderson, Depression, Dust Bowl, Demography and Drought: the Colonial State and Soil Conservation in East African During the 1930s, in African Affairs 83. (1984).
\textsuperscript{248} KNA/NN/2/27: North Kavirondo Annual Agricultural Report, 1934, Department of Agriculture
for it spelled doom for them. According to chief Agoi, the moment the soil is conserved and it starts showing signs of prosperity, the vicious settler will rob them off their land.249

The Agricultural Officers working in conjunction with the Agricultural Instructors demonstrated the construction of contour terracing well as planting ground cover crops like sweet potatoes. With the objection by peasants to engage in conservationist efforts, the government applied threats and coercion to push their agenda through. These came through government machineries and administrative structures, the manifestation of these threats were when chief Agoi and chief Muubi were warned by the Agricultural Officer that if their people were not going to listen to instructions, it would be deemed criminal offense.250 The Agricultural Officer insisted that they would be forced to hard work in addition to being fined. The conservation efforts went a notch higher in 1935 when a major stakeholders’ meeting was convened, among them the District Commissioner, the District agricultural Officer, the Local Native Council, the Chiefs, the headmen and hundreds of villagers. As a result of the meeting, the Local Native Council passed a by-law to the effect that the District Commissioner could issue orders through a headman providing for compulsory measures to the effect of conserving the area from soil erosion either collectively or individually.251

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249 Chief Agoi’s oral submission before the the Kenya Land Commission. Chief Agoi was one of the vocal colonial chiefs who gallantly rose to stand firm against the colonial government’s injustices against the peasant Africans in North Kavirondo. With regards to soil conservation efforts by the state, chief Agoi has been depicted as a retrogressive leader who opposed transformative efforts by the government to better the economic standards of the African peasants in Kakamega. To the contrary, chief Agoi was one of the most progressive of the colonial chiefs. His opposition to state soil conservation efforts was informed by the fact that the European settlers hungered for productive land and therefor the effective soil conservation and reclamation of the denuded lands would further African peasant land alienated yet the situation in the reserve had already been worsened by the land alienation for gold mining in the area.

250 KNA/AK/21/24: Safari diary Graham on 23 February 1935. Graham was the Agricultural Officer of North Kavirondo, in Kakamega district in the 1930s.

251 KNA/AK/2/24: North Kavirondo Monthly Agricultural Report of August 1935
Furthermore, the LNC injected financial capital in the soil conservation efforts when they voted £350 towards soil conservation. With this financial boost, the state sprung to the occasion by sending two more Agricultural Instructors to specifically engage in soil conservation measures. The two instructors used the farms of influential people as demonstrative farms for others to emulate. With the veracity of the soil conservation, the agricultural Officer recruited a number of Africans to aid in the reclamation of the denuded fields. These Africans under the vigil of the Agricultural Officer terraced hills, constructed storm water furrows with was stops, planted trees and napier and implemented the prohibition of grazing in denuded fields. This gave the Africans the firsthand experience with the effects of soil erosion but the equipped them with the practical skills of tackling the soil erosion menace. The conservation campaigns in Kakamaga also came in form educating the public soil conservation through chiefs’ barazas through which African peasants in Kakamega were to work under the guidance of the agricultural staff. The aim of such public education on soil conservation in Kakamega was to reclaim the barren areas which was not only possible but also practical, equally African peasants were educated on the precautionary steps against further soil erosion.

The public education went hand in hand with the state constituted agricultural Councils and African conservation specialists. However, the North Kavirondo Central Association opposed the utilization of African peasants’ labour for free in combating soil erosion. This is captured in the Agricultural Officer’s report when he indicated the

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252 Maxon, Going Their Separate Ways. See also, Anderson, the Dust bowl
253 North Kavirondo Central Association was a political entity established in 1932 and agitated for equal pay for equal work done by the Africans with regards to the soil conservation efforts by the state. Furthermore, the association was equivocal against the violation of the 1930 Trust Land Ordinance which called for no more alienation of African land in the reserves. Yet, the state had alienated land for gold mining.
North Kavirondo Central Association, objected to the use of communal labour on soil conservation,\textsuperscript{254} by saying that there had been an undertaking in the past objecting to the use for the Local Native Council provided funds to pay for the work done in soil conservation. By 1940, soil conservation efforts had hardly achieved any success as soil conservation plots were admonished as soon as the Agricultural Officer and the District Commissioner left the area due to the dynamics of the war.

\section*{3.5 The Impact of Gold Rush}

In the early 1930s while the world was under an economic siege due to the 1929-1934 Great Depression, gold was struck in Kakamega. The striking of the gold in Kakamega is attributable to two people; A.D Combe who recommended that prospecting be carried out in North Nyanza specifically the areas of Nyang’ori and Maragoli in 1930 and L.A Johnson who discovered alluvial gold in October 1931.\textsuperscript{255} Occurring amidst the economic depression, the settlers from the adjacent settler regions saw this as an opportunity to economically emancipate themselves making Shilaro to refer to it as an ‘Eldorado’.\textsuperscript{256} For the Kakamega peasants, the discovery of gold in 1931 intersected what can be termed as a bad year. This is echoed in the North Kavirondo District Annual Report of 1933 which indicated that the year started badly with the intense political unrest engendered partly by a misunderstanding of the intentions of the Native Land Trust Amendment Ordinance and partially by the feeling that government had taken sides with the miners against the local African peasants and that the latter could accept no redress.\textsuperscript{257} The political unrest, therefore, depicts the African peasants in Kakamega not as mere victims and passive recipient but as active actors in shaping their agrarian

\textsuperscript{254} Anderson, the Dust bowl. See also, Maxon, Going Their Separate Ways
\textsuperscript{256} Priscillah Shilaro, Failed Eldorado
\textsuperscript{257} DC/NN/1/14: North Kavirondo District Annual Report 1933.
destiny by responding to government policies. In essence, the great depression greatly depressed the market value for the agricultural produce of the African peasants which indeed was the economic mainstay of the peasants in Kakamega.

The 1932 District Annual Report confirms this position by noting that in Kakamega trade had stagnated as most local peasant agricultural produce were at a very low price. As a matter of reality, with the unprofitable prices offered on the market, the African peasants in Kakamega received meeker returns for their produce. The alternative source of income for the African peasants in Kakamega (labour in the neighbouring highlands) was equally on the decline, as the number of Africans contracted from Kakamega as labourers declined as indicated by table 3.1.

**Table 3.1: Contracted Labour in Kakamega 1930-1932**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>1930</th>
<th>1931</th>
<th>1932</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Contracts attested</td>
<td>268</td>
<td>128</td>
<td>77</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Natives contracted</td>
<td>2732</td>
<td>1928</td>
<td>1228</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Source: DC/NN/1/13: North Kavirondo District Annual Report 1932*

The declining numbers of African peasants from Kakamega going out to provide labour, while it was necessitated by the Great Depression, it ignited a second thought in the peasants such that they decided to labour on their own farms in the reserves back in Kakamega so that they could maximally cash in from the blossoming market for agricultural produce in the infant mining industry.

In Kakamega, the gold rush massively attracted both individual prospectors with little capital and large mining companies. With potential capital investment there was a window of opportunity for the African peasants in Kakamega to leverage themselves.
The onset, the settlers in the immediate White Highlands sought to engage in mining as a substitute to the shrinking settler farming sector. In the words of Huxley Elspeth, the settlers flocked to Kakamega a time when most of them could do little other than watch locust eat their crops, and if they managed to harvest a little, they could sell it only at a loss due to the prevailing economic crisis.²⁵⁹

Therefore, to the settler, the discovery of gold in Kakamega in 1931 opened a window of opportunity for their survival and release from despair. It is estimated that approximately 200 Europeans had arrived in Kakamega only a month after the discovery of gold. Hereby, while gold mining gave temporary relief to the European settlers from abject poverty, it gave the African peasant farmers in Kakamega a fresh interest in agrarian life in the struggle to feed the escalating number of Europeans in the mines. This position is evidenced in the District Annual Report of 1934, which revealed that the mines had supplied a ready market for vegetables, fruits, eggs, and significantly maize.²⁶⁰ The annual Report further notes with regards to stimulation of African peasant agriculture and the general economy of the households in the reserve,

...there can be no doubt that it (gold mining) has proved a blessing financially to the natives of North and Central Kavirondo. It is estimated that the average monthly employment of natives is 7000. Cash drawn for labourers wages by the larger companies from this treasury has averaged about 60000 monthly. Added to this there is the ready market for vegetables, poultry, milk, fuel thatching grass etc.²⁶¹

From this Annual Report, it is apparent that the African peasant agrarian production in Kakamega was on an upward trend. This is despite their huge tracts of land being alienated for gold mining. The highly demanded products were vegetables and poultry.

²⁶⁰ DC/NN/1/15: North Kavirondo District Annual Report 1934
²⁶¹ DC/NN/1/15: North Kavirondo District Annual Report 1934
products which require limited space, this proves the innovative agency to stay afloat in the face mixed fortunes.

The acquisition of prospecting licenses in the area left a lot to be questioned about the Native Lands Trust Ordinance of 1930, as the African peasants in Kakamega had rights to the land they occupied while the colonial state retained mineral rights. To articulate the mining economy in Kakamega, the state sought to circumvent the Native Land Trust Ordinance of 1930 by having a Mining Ordinance in place, this was achieved in 1931 and it allowed for prospection in African reserves with the consent of the Native Lands Trust Board, which in practice translated to being permitted by the Provincial Commissioner.262 This opened the flood gates for the penetration of the African reserve of Kakamega as indicated by statistics. For instance, by February 1932, over 700 prospecting licenses had already been issued over 1700 claims registered in Kakamega.263 By 1933 over 1000 prospectors were active in Kakamega gold fields.264 This study maintains that even though the mining licenses squeezed African peasant production in Kakamega in terms of the quantity of land being cultivated by the peasant, it re-awakened the peasant Africans’ agentive sensitivity to the market forces as they intensified production on the small portions they had been left, as the market especially for subsistence consumable was readily available courtesy of the increasing influx of the miners in addition to the many African employees the mining companies had employed. African agriculture in Kakamega was to even shine brighter in the 1930s as the mining economy the seemed prospectively promising. According to Albert Kitson265

262 Shilaro Prisillah, Failed Eldorado
263 Ibid.
264 DC/NN/1/15: North Kavirondo District Annual Report 1934
265 Sir Albert Ernest Kitson was a British-Australian geologist who was instrumental in the geological fieldwork for the discovery of goldmines in Kakamega. See Shilaro Prisillah, Failed Eldorado
From the evidence I have seen, I am of the strong opinion that prospects of the field was quickly becoming a useful goldfield and later developing into an important field are directly encouraging ...266

This report according to Prisillah Shilaro, escalated the rate and population of European prospectors influx into Kakamega. This high influx, portended two things for the African peasant in Kakamega; one, they provided massive employment opportunities to those Africans probably rendered landless in the area and those returning from the impotent settler economy and after accumulating in the mines they secured land for agrarian production. Second, the increasing number of both European prospectors and the increasing number of employees by the multiple mining companies meant a ready and reliable market for the African peasant agrarian commodities in the area. Therefore, the wages paid in the mine fields and payments for compensation and local produce must have greatly increased the spending capability of the natives. This is corroborated by the wares displayed in the dukas in Kakamega town.267 The wares included but not limited to utensils and other general housewares.

3.6 Drought and the Nyangweso\textsuperscript{268} Famine, 1930s

During the 1930s, generally speaking, Kakamega like many other parts of Kenya suffered from adverse natural calamities which had far reaching implications on the African peasant agrarian economy of the area. For instance the area suffered from locust infestation and un-favourable weather conditions. In Kakamega, the rainfall was considerably below average, and the Agricultural Officer termed the situation as “two droughts and a flood”.269 However, under these adverse circumstances, much in regard

\begin{footnotes}
266 North Kavirondo District Annual Report, 1932
267 DC/NN/1/15: North Kavirondo District annual Report 1934
268 Nyangweso was a famine outbreak that occurred in 1934 or there about. The famine was caused by the locust invention with the locust lava clearing the agricultural fields in Kakamega and reducing the fields to nothing. This resulted into poor harvests that culminated into the infamous nyangweso famine.
\end{footnotes}
of African agriculture in the reserve was accomplished. This could be attributed to the efforts of the Agricultural Department which posted an Agricultural Officer to Kakamega with the aim of ensuring continuity of policy and definite lines of development works in the area.  This was the position despite the fact that the prices for agricultural produce tended to fall as the global economy was recuperating from the effects of the Great Depression in the mid-1930s. With the glaring calamities in Kakamega, the state sought to take cautionary measures to curb any food shortage in Kakamega. In 1933 for example, owing to the delay in the harvest necessitated by the shortage of rain, the export of foodstuffs was prohibited from the area between the 20th of April and the 8th of August 1934.

During this period, Bukura Agricultural School played a vital role in combating the famine situation. To illustrate, in 1934, the school had 55 pupils who carried out experimental works on drought resistant seeds. This, according to the Native Affairs Annual Report eventuated agrarian prosperity in the district in the 1930s. On their part, the peasant Africans played a self-declared role in ensuring that their households didn’t succumb to the prevailing natural calamities. In 1932, the District Commissioner reported that the fear of locust caused the planting of more root crops and less grain crops, while they reduced the planting of maize to average although the maize yields for the year were heavy. The study maintains that the decision by the peasant Africans on their own volition to plant more root crops than grain crops illustrates the sensitivity of the peasant Africans to both their ecosystem and the need to subsistently sustain their households.

270 Ibid.
271 Ibid.
Furthermore, the peasants were ready to strike a compromise even their major stable food maize, whenever natural calamities threatened to send maize to its knees. In the same year, the Kenya Land Enquiry Commission received oral submissions to the extent that the registration for individual titles in the reserve was not wanted. To the peasants, title deeds only were asked for to guarantee the “natives” their tenure of the land.\textsuperscript{273} In the face of the profound natural calamities in the 1930s, the African peasants need to ensure that their lands were safe and secure such that they could easily temporarily revert to their fallow and ‘mwangeleka’ for production to averts the disasters of nature. This view is captured in the 1932 annual report where the African peasant spokesmen lamented that the immigrants hand robbed them of the land formerly theirs and subsequently prevented the expansion of the “tribe” whenever faced with natural calamities like drought and famine. The situation was compounded further by taxation system. The DC confessed when he indicated that, hut and poll tax were not easy to collect there being great reluctance to pay for 1932.\textsuperscript{274} While it would have been naturally anticipated that the revenue to be collected inform of hut and poll tax would be higher due to the establishment of the gold mining industry, the truth of the matter was the African peasants responded differently to the situation given that subsistence stability to them was a priority than anything else. For the peasants, the drop in the amount of the collected hut and poll taxes was justified by the shrinking of the land, as massive land alienation for mining fully happened in the 1930s. Furthermore, the prevalence of drought and famine in the 1930s made the peasants to engage less in trade and with this came the decline in the taxes collected. In 1936, however, the situation was a bit different. While the number of the ‘non-native’ population at the gold fields

\textsuperscript{273} The Kenya Land Commission Report 1934
\textsuperscript{274} DC/NN/14: North Kavirondo District Annual Report, 1933.
declined,\textsuperscript{275} enhanced agricultural produce prices led to a revived trade in the trading centres.\textsuperscript{276} Generally, the agrarian economy of Kakamega in the 1930s was partially devastated by natural calamities and numerous strains as instanced by the locust incursion at the beginning of 1931. This situation was an outstanding one in Kakamega district as the arrival of locusts and the consequent lack of money to purchase food resulted in food shortages. The locust devastatingly destroyed the crops in Kakalelwa, Kabras and Butsotso comparatively more than other areas. The North Kavirondo District Commissioner sums it up in his report;

\begin{quote}
\textit{In April crops began to suffer in all locations infested with hoppers and the damage continued throughout June to some extent. In June, flying swarms became active and did considerable damage.}\textsuperscript{277}
\end{quote}

The damage caused by both the hoppers and the flying swarms was so severe to the African peasant agrarian economy and with this magnitude of the damage, the peasants named the children born between 1931 and 1934 ‘Nyangweso’. The naming as established by the study was a symbolic gesture and a constant reminder that the peasant household was to do everything within its powers to prevent and protect themselves from such natural calamities in the years to come.

\textsuperscript{275} This decline in the population in Kakamega town would definitely have a negative on the agrarian economy of Kakamega as the general trade in the township would be less flourishing than for the past five years of the 1930s. The decrease in the population decrease the number of consumers and therefore production for the outside markets would suffice the deficit. See DC/NN/1/18: North Kavirondo District Annual Report, 1936.

\textsuperscript{276} While the trade had declined due to the effects of the drought and famine and the restructuring of the African peasant economy to accommodate the gold mining industry in Kakamega, and by the fact that the world economy was recovering from the global economic slump, the decline in the population in Kakamega coincided with the promising economic times in the area as with the peasants in Kakamega having more money to spend than they have ever had since the beginning of the world economic slump. See DC/NN/1/18: North Kavirondo District Annual Report, 1936. See also, Maxon, Going their Separate Ways. See also, Makana, An Economic History of the Batsotso. See also Shilaro, Failed Eldorado.

\textsuperscript{277} DC/NN/1/112: North Kavirondo District Annual Report, 1932
3.7 Agricultural Production Trends in the 1930s

African peasant production in Kakamega begun with the station of three Assistant Agricultural Officers at Kakamega to work with the African peasants in the area, these were as indicated by the North Kavirondo District Annual Report of 1930; Mr. A.B.S. Ransford, Mr. A. Bentall and Mr. M. H Grieve.\(^{278}\) These were in addition to the establishment at Bukura. However, the production cycle was first disrupted by the unseasonable rains in December 1929 which delayed the harvesting of the short rain crops and the consequent preparation of the farms for the long rains of 1930. As a result the 1930 Annual Report noted that seed was sown in dirty agricultural fields in most of the African peasant farms, but the report quickly indicates that despite this, very large crops resulted.\(^{279}\) The study affirms that the sowing of seeds in the dirty agricultural fields as indicated in the annual report and the subsequent realization of the enormous yields confirms the African peasants’ agrarian agency as they worked so hard in the dirty shambas in order for them to produce the large crops. With this realization and the need to expropriate the surplus value from the African peasants in Kakamega, the state increased the quantities of seed distributed from both the Local Native Council and the Department of Agriculture to a total of 490 bags of maize seeds as per the 1930 District Annual Report.\(^{280}\) As reported by the DC to the PC Nyanza, maize was virtually unsaleable in Kakamega owing to the massive yields realized. With this massive production and with limited market opportunities, the African peasants in Kakamega reverted to storing their produce in the granaries and the year 1931 witnessed a huge reduction in the agrarian engagements in the district.

\(^{278}\) North Kavirondo District, Annual Report, 1930
\(^{279}\) Ibid.
\(^{280}\) Ibid.
To their advantage, the year 1931 was ravaged by locust infestation as indicated in the 1931 North Kavirondo District Annual Report, “flying bands were reported throughout the year and hoppers were present from time to time during the year”. The study maintains that the flying bands and the hoppers damaged completely the little crop that the African peasants had planted which made them to turn to the food reserve realized in 1931. The situation was further complicated by the increasing demand for food in the newly discovered gold mines and the increasing number of European gold prospectors in the area.

For instance, by 1932, 1297 foreigners had arrived in Kakamega to engage in gold mining. This in 1932 necessitated the African peasants in Kakamega to intensify their production. During the year, the District Commissioner North Kavirondo reports that; fortunately, district African peasants were enabled to reap an exceptionally good harvest. The exceptionally good crop during the year 1932, the study holds and as indicated by P. Ndege and R. M. Maxon in their study of African peasants’ sensitivity to the markets and corroborated by Upande, Bunyali, Wekesa and Nabwangu, was as a result of the African peasants’ sensitivity to both the market opportunities in within Kakamega as exemplified by the gold mines and the prices offered in 1931 for their produce in the wake of locust destruction of the crops. With the gold mining on track, African labour was sought after the purposes of mining.

In 1933, the number of African peasants contracted to work in the mines had increased from 1228 in 1932 to 2545 in 1933. This the study maintains translated to almost 100

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281 Shilaro P, Failed Eldorado
282 North Kavirondo District, Annual Report, 1930
285 North Kavirondo District, Annual Report, 1933
percent increase in the demand for food as the population to be fed at the mines had doubled. The African peasant agricultural production in Kakamega received a boost in the 1933 with 15 African peasant instructors who in the words of the DC, Mr. T.Y. Watson, had proven themselves in most instances of great value and Mr. Watson on seeing the value they brought to agricultural production among the African peasants in the area promised to increase their numbers the next year.\textsuperscript{286}

Generally, crop production by the African peasants in Kakamega suffered in the year 1933 for two reasons; first, for the African peasants who planted early, their maize suffered from a serious drought in March. Second, for those who planted late, their crop did fairly but in the long run prevented the \textit{shambas} to be ploughed for the short rain season. This compounded with the poor pay of KSh. 2 per bag of maize\textsuperscript{287} the study affirms, sufficed the \textit{nyangweso} famine of 1934 the annual report indicated a way below average yield particularly for maize in 1933. For \textit{mtama} and \textit{wimbi}, however, yielded well and gave the African peasants in Kakamega an escape route from the glaring \textit{nyangweso} famine.

The DC reported that: fortunately, \textit{wimbi} and \textit{mtama} yielded excellently as the crop did exceptionally well this year.\textsuperscript{288} With the distorted production cycle during 1933, the poor prices for maize and the demand for increased African contracted labour in the gold mines made 1934 a potentially terrible year. In the year 1934, owing to the rapid expansion of the gold mining industry in Kakamega, the study avers that the number of contracted Africans to work in the mines increased by more than double that of 1933 as indicated by a figure of 1452 up from 2545 in 1934. This, the study affirms reduced

\textsuperscript{286}North Kavirondo District, Annual Report, 1933
\textsuperscript{287}Ibid.
\textsuperscript{288} Ibid.
the number of labourers on the African peasant farms in Kakamega but directly increased the number of people to be feed by the household.

Although it can be argued that the money earned in the mines was invested in African peasant agriculture in the area to cater for the absence, the study maintains that the realization of the benefits to the same were not immediate and the exodus of more African peasants in Kakamega from the production sector in the gold mining sector, the 1934 famine was the only price the African peasants in Kakamega were to pay. The situation was worsened by the poor pay in the mining industry, which in 1934 was estimated to have 7000 labourers who were earning as low as KSh. 8 per month.289

African peasant agricultural production in Kakamega received a further reinforced attention in the year 1934, with the arrival of an additional Agricultural Officer, Mr. W.O Sunman and true to his word Mr. Watson increased the number of African peasant staff to 25 from 15 and a further 6 temporary instructors were engaged in the year from June.290 The year 1934, despite the increased agricultural human resource in Kakamega witnessed the worst performance of the area in the 1930s as the nyangweso famine manifested itself. Besides the prescribed situation of the year 1933, in 1934, the rains failed until towards the end of April.291 In effect, this prevented or delayed the planting of crops for at least 8 weeks. The African peasant production was further made futile when rain fell heavily in August and September292 a time when the crops were ripening and this partially delayed the harvesting while it partially destroyed the crops. As a

289North Kavirondo District, Annual Report, 1934
290Ibid.
291North Kavirondo Native Affairs Report, 1934. See also, North Kavirondo District, Annual Report, 1934
292North Kavirondo Native Affairs Report, 1934
result planting of short rain crops was late and the situation was further aggravated by a spell of drought just when the short rains crops need the rains.\textsuperscript{293}

With such a complicated situation, African peasants in Kakamega stimulated by the agency in the need for food security as noted by Wekesa, Upande and Nabwangu\textsuperscript{294} took precautionary measures owing to the shortage of rain in the late 1933 and early 1934 by shunning trade. The withdrawal from the markets by the African peasants in Kakamega in 1934 prompted the state to ban the export of all food stuffs from the district between April 20\textsuperscript{th} and August 8\textsuperscript{th}.\textsuperscript{295}

However, trade within the district was permitted which made the African peasant to sell their produce within the district with the gold mining sector providing an opportunity to the peasants to sell their limited produce. As recorded by the District Annual Report for instance, the mines supplied a ready market for vegetables, maize, eggs and fruits,\textsuperscript{296} as Krisha Flour Mills of Eldoret erected an up to date mill next to the gold mines, with a capacity of turning out 40 bags of maize meal in eight hours.\textsuperscript{297} The study notes as upheld by Sulumena Indushi, Noel Nabwangu and Jones Liaka that this erection of a mill stimulated the local trade within Kakamega with the prices of maize also being stimulated hence it entrenched maize production by the African peasants in the area. The production of maize by the African peasants in Kakamega was strongly supported by the introduction of a new variety by the state in 1934, as Maratha,\textsuperscript{298} an early maturing seed maize variety was distributed.

\textsuperscript{293}North Kavirondo District, Annual Report, 1934
\textsuperscript{294}Philip Nabwangu, Oral Interview, 21:04:2017, Idakho at Nabwangu’s home
\textsuperscript{295}North Kavirondo Native Affairs Report, 1934
\textsuperscript{296}North Kavirondo District, Annual Report, 1934
\textsuperscript{297}Ibid.
\textsuperscript{298}North Kavirondo District, Annual Report, 1934
Recovering from the Nyangweso famine, more African peasant farmers invested their time and energy in agricultural production guided by their sense of agency in a simple reproduction squeeze paradigm. They harvested heavy yields although the DAO, Mr. Sunman, lamented the poor quality.\textsuperscript{299} The study established that the African peasants in their production targeted the market within the area and as such the African peasants were less concerned about the quality especially at a time when they were emerging from the Nyangweso famine. By this time, the price for maize in the words of the DAO was far much better than of the recent years and it continued to rise steadily.

In regards to the food situation during the year, the DAO observed that it was good throughout the year although he encouraged the planting of root crops during the short rains. According to research participants Winston Wekesa and Jones Liaka, the agricultural sector warned the people of something severe happen, with was symbolized by the enormous soil erosion that was witnessed. In response, the state increased the African staff from 67 in 1937 to 80 instructors and inspectors in 1938.\textsuperscript{300} The increase as indicated by the annual report was necessitated by the need for soil control. The study avers that the portended severe happening was the occurrence of the Second World War which began in 1939. The department of agriculture in 1938 employed 111 labourers and all except 11 were to deal with soil reclamation.\textsuperscript{301}

Besides soil erosion, the prices for food crops especially maize fell as a result of intensified production of the same.\textsuperscript{302} The fall in the price of maize aggravated the African peasants’ refusal to cooperate with the soil conservation staff as the staff advanced conservation measures such as terracing, planting of trees and grass strips, all

\textsuperscript{299}North Kavirondo District, Annual Report, 1936  
\textsuperscript{300}North Kavirondo District, Annual Report, 1938  
\textsuperscript{301}Ibid. see also R.M Maxon, Going Their Separate Ways  
\textsuperscript{302}Ibid.
of which according to Chief Paul Agoi of Maragoli do not contribute to the African peasants’ food security.

The year 1939, marked the state’s shift of attention from agricultural production in Kakamega through staffing of the area with the necessary expert human resource to recruitment of manpower for war purposes. As indicated by Mr. H.T. Measures, the acting DAO in 1938, it was unfortunate that owing to the war demands it was not possible to maintain soil conservation activities even where the situation was bad like in Maragoli and its surrounding areas. The study maintains that the war time imperatives were a much more urgent pressing need for the state than focusing on the agricultural sector of the Africans in Kakamega via soil conservation effort. The year 1939, in a snap shot was not a favorable agricultural year in Kakamega as first it witnessed light rains and the two locust infestations in January and May to July, implied a comparatively low yield as the state’s focus was to the war. However, the trajectory of African peasant agrarian trajectory can be summarized in a tabular form as exemplified by maize, which doubled up as a cash crop and as food.

Table 3.2: Cumulative bags of maize sold in Kakamega in the 1930s

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>1933</th>
<th>1934</th>
<th>1935</th>
<th>1936</th>
<th>1937</th>
<th>1938</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>No. of bags sold</td>
<td>4600</td>
<td>10800</td>
<td>28500</td>
<td>36500</td>
<td>38000</td>
<td>42000</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Source: North Kavirondo District, Annual Report, 1938*

The study affirms that the tabulated figures excludes the quantities of maize produced by African peasants in Kakamega and sold through the black market or traded through the traditional African peasant economy of affection system plus those consumed as food by the households.

\[303\text{North Kavirondo District, Annual Report, 1939}\]
3.8 Summary of Chapter Three

This chapter examined the agrarian performance in Kakamega in the 1930s. With the effects of the Great Depression raging on at the beginning of the 1930s, the state was faced with the difficult situation of ensuring the economic stability of the state. It came to the fore that due to the effects of the depression the Kenyan economy could not singularly depend on the settler economy given that the global market prices for goods had fallen. As a result, the state deliberately and in a structured manner sort to rehabilitate the settler economy. The state for instance, in 1929, Britain introduced the Colonial Development Act. In 1930, the Agricultural Advances Ordinance was passed. In the same year, the government refunded up to four-fifth to the settlers for grading their produce.

In 1931, the government established the Land Bank where settlers could borrow money using land as collateral at low interest rates. In the same year, the Railways Corporation reduced freight charges and reimbursed farmers up four-fifths of storage charges of their crops. Finally, the Ottawa Agreement of 1932 provided preferential tariff benefits for the settler produce entering Britain while at the same time protecting from competition outside Britain. All these measures proved futile in ensuring the settler sector remain solvent. To cushion the settler sector and ensure that the state remained fiscally viable, the state sort to re-engineer African peasant agriculture in areas like Kakamega. Among the mechanisms instituted to achieve these in the peasant reserve of Kakamega were; the establishment of Bukura Agricultural Training Institute, which trained peasant farmers on the best agricultural practices and experimented on the best seed varieties for the area in addition to providing demonstration farms. The state further distributed the best seed varieties for free to the peasants and made a follow up through agricultural extension services. Equally, the state took a lead role to
rehabilitate the denuded farms courtesy of the agricultural extension officers who were specifically posted in the Kakamega area to combat soil erosion by educating the peasants on the best soil conservation practices. African peasant agriculture in Kakamega was, however, rejuvenated not necessarily by the state advances but the African peasants in Kakamega re-position themselves on guided by the self-agency instincts of survival. For example, the discovery of gold in Kakamega motivated the African peasants to deeply entrench their agrarian ventures with an intention of maximizing on feeding the gold mining fraternity.

The African peasant agricultural sector equally cushioned the Africans from the area who had gone to the adjacent highlands to provide labour. With the settler economy on the decline, the African labourers and the settlers alike found refuge in the blossoming mining industry in Kakamega. Moreover, the chapter accessed how the drought and famine of the 1930s influenced and shaped African peasant production in the area. The chapter concludes by providing a graphical chronology of the African peasant agricultural trajectory of the 1930s and revealed the resilience of the African peasant agency. Towards the end of the 1930s and particularly in 1939, the state’s focus shifted from African peasant agricultural production to deal with the war at hand.

Chapter four will therefore, deal with on the onset how the Second World War invigorated African peasant production in Kakamega as laced by the werecha famine. The chapter will equally detail how the war interfered with the soil conservation efforts and what the end of the Second World War portended for the African peasant agricultural sector in Kakamega. In a nutshell, the 1930s African agrarian situation in Kakamega proved highly resilient amid complex and multiple challenges. This establishes the fact that African peasants in Kakamega were not mere victims of the
state and the ensuing natural and artificial circumstances but, they were dynamic self-agents that sort to ensure survival by exploiting the situation to their advantage.
CHAPTER FOUR
THE WAR PERIOD, 1939-1945

4.1 Introduction
The Second World War was a land mark event in global history, and a transformative one in Kenya’s colonial economic experience. Kenya as a British colony was significant to the war in a dual perspective; the contribution of military conscripts to the British army and the contribution of economic value to the sustainability of the British in the war through agrarian production. Kenya’s contribution to the war efforts, Nyanza province in general and Kakamega district in particular fundamentally contributed to the war efforts in a great way. However, Kakamega’s contribution to the war had a direct brunt on the African peasant agrarian production within Kakamega which the present chapter seeks to examine. In essence the African peasant was faced with three intertwined complexities which directly influenced the peasant agrarian trajectory during the War; labour conscription for both the war and for private use, the pioneer corps and the war generals famine (inzala ya panyako/warecha), and soil erosion. The chapter will herein provide a detailed analysis of the foregoing with regards to African peasant agriculture in Kakamega. At the peak of the war the famine of the women (inzala ya kiavakali) and or ‘inzala ya panyako’ revolutionized the African peasant approach to their reorienting of agriculture in Kakamega.

4.2 The Onset of the War
The onset of the Second World War in 1939 and the subsequent course of the war shaped the African peasants’ involvement in the war in Kenya. The African peasants in Kakamega found themselves in a contradictory position with the state in respect to their participation in the war. As pointed out by Mzee Bunyali and Mama Jones Liaka, the households were raged apart with male members being forcefully taken to go and
fight. In Kakamega, the state was faced with the contradiction of ensuring increased agricultural production in support of the war efforts and the escalating and glaring soil erosion as alluded to by Anderson & Throup\textsuperscript{304}. The study affirms that during the war time, increased agricultural production in Kakamega enjoyed the pride of place compared to soil conservation, prevention of soil erosion and soil reclamation quest a position shared by Orvis and Heyer and documented in both the Native Affairs Report and the Annual Agricultural Report of North Kavirondo District.\textsuperscript{305} For instance, the agricultural officer, Oates indicated that all efforts must be made to ensure increased food production, apposition maintained by Upande, Nabwangu and Wekesa who from their different localities indicated a reduction in the number of trips made in the villages by the \textit{sikurukacha} people.\textsuperscript{306} Oates notes’

\begin{quote}
... all owners of stock must put the manure from their bomas on land under crops. It will then be possible not only to increase production but to do lasting good to the land ...
\end{quote}

From Oates intentions, it is obvious that the state was much more interested in ensuring more food was produced to support the colonial masters during the war than maintain good soil for the African peasants in the reserves. Mzee Bunyali confirmed and several others being reprimanded by the area \textit{liguru} to apply the \textit{boma} manure on their lands.

\textsuperscript{304} David Anderson & David Throup; Africans and Agricultural Production in Colonial Kenya: The Myth of the War as a Watershed
\textsuperscript{306} Sikurukacha as established by the researcher was a mutation and poor pronunciations by the African peasants of Kakamega of the phrase ‘School of Agriculture’. The sikurukacha people were simple agricultural instructors and inspectors who were attached to Bukura Agricultural Centre and employed by the North Kavirondo District Agricultural Department as liaisons offices. They patrolled the villages guiding the African peasants in the area on the best agricultural practices.
\textsuperscript{307} Oates was the Senior Agricultural Officer in charge of Nyanza Province at the outbreak of the Second World War. He wrote as a word of advice to the Director of Agriculture in Nyanza Province in 1939 with regards to what can be done by peasants in Nyanza to support the British war efforts by November 1939. See KNA/DC/KSI/DP/3/13.
This position is shared by Sir Robert Brook the then colonial governor in his address to the nation at dawn of the war,

... the more reason then for all of us in Kenya to help Great Britain by every means in our power, especially by ensuring that we are ready to face any eventuality, that we continue to be self-sufficient in all essential foodstuffs and so far as we are able, we produce what Great Britain wants most.\(^{308}\)

In this national address the governor confirms that the interest of the metropole supersedes both those of the colonial state and those of the African peasants back in the African reserves. This pre-empted the approach and the policies the colonial state was to apply in ensuring that the metropole received unwavering support. The means indicated by the governor are both coercive and cohesive, and the African peasants in the African reserves like Kakamega were to gallantly bare the overwhelming demands of the state by engaging in massive agrarian production as more land according to Ochieng’ was brought under cultivation in African areas and new technologies were adopted to guarantee the self-sufficiency of the British in the war efforts\(^{309}\), the men bought ox-drawn ploughs as noted by Liaka Bunyali and Wekesa. To attain the massive production, it required the colonial government on its part to mobilize all the potential resources of the colonial empire, both material and human for the purposes of the war. Therefore, the colonial state officials in Nairobi plus the men on the spot needed to ensure that African peasants in reserve areas like Kakamega increased production not to cushion them from any such impending subsistence upshots of the war but as put by Tiyambe Zeleza, for war purposes and the increase must be on an immense scale.\(^{310}\)


\(^{309}\) Ochieng’ William, ‘Food Production in the Pre-Colonial Period,’ in Themes in Kenyan History

1940 Annual Report indicates the initial role played by the African peasants in Kakamega towards the war efforts:

The year has been a memorable one in the annals of this district. The local African peasants have given proof of their loyalty through a magnificent war effort. Apart from a voluntary gift of £1,500 to the Central War Fund and the Ambulance Fund, they have made notable contributions of recruits to the K.A.R., the Pioneer Corps, the Labour Corps and other units of the forces. No less than 2,105 recruits were sent forward during the year ...

This contribution meant that the African agricultural sector was directly affected by the war with both the human labour and the finances meant for production being diverted to the war efforts. Most of the recruits as indicated by Zeleza and oral evidence from Liaka, Indushi, Luwoyero and Imbayi were men. This placed the African peasant agricultural sector in the hands of the women in men’s absence and steps were to be taken for increased African peasant production for the sake of safe guarding Britain and for the African peasants themselves would be emphasized in the advice by the undersecretary at the colonial office. He advised that freehold lands of the larger farmers be purchased by the Kenya government and resold to the peasant Africans who had shown their resilient capacity to produce but were limited by the access to land. This indicates the desires of the colonial office to situate the peasant economy in the global orbit in a peripheral position at the time of war. However, the question as to whether the African peasants in Kakamega had the financial capacity to purchase the large farms and even more, if they possessed the productive capacity in terms of labour and other highly costly commercial farm inputs to sustain such huge farms at this time of the war was clearly not considered.

311 North Kavirondo Annual Agricultural Report, 1940
312 This emanates from the DC’s promise to supply 7,000 heads of cattle for war effort during the year 1941. See, North Kavirondo Annual Agricultural Report, 1940
To the contrary, settlers who were large scale farmers never allowed the purchasing of their farms with the intention of transferring them into the hands of the Africans. In fact the outbreak of the war provided them with an opportunity to penetrate and control the state\textsuperscript{314} by either directly or indirectly manipulating the colonial state to their advantage. For instance, they coerced the colonial state into forming the Settlement and Production Board in 1939\textsuperscript{315} which coincided with the outbreak of the war and no doubt the state was much more focused at this point on metrople interest than internal interracial domination artifices. What was at stake at this time was the primary function of the board; to solely coordinate the economic activities in the colony. This, as maintained by the study, put the settlers at a vantage position in the war time economy to manipulate economic production particularly in the African reserves like Kakamega to their advantage. By controlling the economic activities in the colony, the settlers had an upper hand in the procurement of labour for their farms neighbouring Africans areas of Kakamega like Uasin Gishu and Trans Nzoia as well as Kericho. As noted by Ochieng’, during the war, settlers achieved preponderant influence on the statutory boards and committees which controlled agriculture and marketing policies\textsuperscript{316} The study affirms that this was detrimental to African peasant agriculture in Kakamega. The settlers even gained more grip on the manipulation of colonial state during the war for the control of the African peasants when the 1937 Resident Labourers’ Ordinance\textsuperscript{317}

\textsuperscript{316} Ochieng’ William, ‘Food Production in the Pre-Colonial Period,’ in Themes in Kenyan History
\textsuperscript{317} The Resident Labours’ Ordinance passed in 1937 gave the settlers an upper hand with regard to the general control over the African squatters on the settler farm which saw an extension of the days the squatters were to work to 180 days. In addition, the children of the African squatter under the provisions of the ordinance were perpetually squatters as the settler had to determine what the squatters were to produce and had a direct control over the marketing of the produce of the squatter. See, Tabitha Kanogo, (1987). Squatters and the Roots of Mau Mau. London: James Currey. See also Gavin Kitching, (1980). Class and Economic Change in Kenya. London: Yale University Press.
was passed and the Civil Defense and Supply Council was established by the governor in 1942. The council was made up of eight members; six unofficial members, all of whom were settlers and two state officials. The settlers were out to manipulate the state into controlling the entire economic system to their advantage as more focus by both the colonial and the metropolitan states was on the war efforts much more than the internal wrangles within the colonial state. The boldness of the settlers emanated from the Emergency Power Act which was passed in London by the British government in 1939. The Act provided that all constitutional approaches were suspended with the outbreak of the war which was equally applicable to the colonies. The settlers exploited this loophole to their advantageous dominance position in the settler areas adjacent to Kakamega while squeezing the African peasants of Kakamega into a labour reproduction squeeze.

4.3 Contradictions of Military Conscriptions

With the outbreak of the Second World War, British military power was to be determined by the number of soldiers on the battle front. Therefore, as documented in the native affairs report and the Annual Reports and supported by oral discussions with Angelina Shitendesa and Anyende Muyeka and as captured by Berman and Barker, the British embarked on the recruitment of African peasants in Kakamega for military

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318 Civil defense refers to a system of defensive measures designed to protect civilians and their property from enemy attack. The civil defense and supply council was established to aid in safeguarding the Kenyan people of all races from any eminent attack by British enemies. Equally it was meant to aid the colonial state in soliciting for supplies to the British during the war. However, being dominated by the settlers the council sort to consolidate their position by soliciting supplies for their farms, particularly labour supply.

319 The Emergency Powers Act 1939 was emergency legislation passed just prior to the outbreak of World War II by the Parliament of the United Kingdom to enable the British Government to take up emergency powers to prosecute the war effectively. It contained clauses giving the government wide powers to create Defense Regulations which regulated almost every aspect of everyday life in the country.

320 George Dalton ‘How Exactly are Peasants Exploited?’ See also, Bruce Berman ‘The Concept of “Articulation” and the Political Economy of Colonialism’
purpose\textsuperscript{321}, and as observed by Robert Maxon, this recruitment in Nyanza province began even before the real war started as early as August 1939.\textsuperscript{322} The African peasants from Kakamega were recruited into the military from two wings; first, they were recruited as East African Military Labour Corps or services. This were service men and women who engaged in support services like barracks construction. Second and supported by Mzee Bunyali and Mzee Nabwanguthey were recruited as King’s African Rifle soldiers. The recruitment of the African peasants into the army, therefore denied the African peasant households in Kakamega the much needed labour in the African war time production yet as earlier indicated the colonial state was meant to support Britain in the war by producing more to meet the demands of the war. In reality the number of the African peasants recruited into the army kept increasing from the start of the war to the end of the war as revealed by the statistics in the table below.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>1939-42</th>
<th>1943</th>
<th>1944</th>
<th>1945</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>No. of recruits</td>
<td>9335</td>
<td>3065</td>
<td>4763</td>
<td>4438</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

\textit{Source}: KNA/PC/NZA/2/3/61

Evidenced by the table, many African peasants from Kakamega were recruited in the army. If between 1939 and 1942, 9335 men were recruited for military purpose, then numbers were even much higher considering the fact that service men and women were equally recruited and they did not form part of the above statistics. For instance, by June 1940, more than 3600 men were enlisted as services men and by the end of 1941


they numbered over 17500 people. The years 1943 and 1944 are depicted as having the highest number of African peasant recruits in Kakamega. This coincided with the peak of the Second World War that required more military men and this explains why inzala ya panyako as instigated by warecha, which affirmed the position held by the 1942 Annual Report that conscript labour recruitment for essential war undertakings had overshadowed every aspect of normal activities. This is reinforced by Frankel when he affirmed that the absence of Nyanza males has hindered the improvement of African farming as men were likely to be more agriculturally progressive. According to Maxon, North Kavirondo which Kakamega was the headquarters provided the second largest military recruits at an estimated 21600 men for military purpose.

The conscription into the military took a gender dimension as mostly men were conscripted into the army. This is show by the fact that at the end of 1941 about 92000 men from Nyanza only had been recruited in the civil service which added to the 17500 men in direct military line of duty. The conscription and recruitment of most men into the labour outside Kakamega resulted into an artificial labour shortage on the African peasant farms in Kakamega. As indicated by Frankel, the men were likely to be more progressive because of more education opportunity with the additional experience they had gained from the European farms. The complexity of the matter was when it became evident that the agricultural instructors and veterinary can’t teach the farmer when he is away from the farm into the military service. This negatively affected

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323 KNA: PC/NZA/2/20/13. See also KNA: PC/NZA/2/3/16 The number of military recruits from kakamega
324 North Kavirondo Annual Agricultural Report, 1942
326 KNA: PC/NZA/2/3/60. See also, Robert Maxon, Going their separate way
327 KNA: PC/NZA/2/3/61
the African peasant production capacity while at the same time re-engineered the female labour power in agrarian production in the area.

4.4 Shrinking Labour during the War

Conscriptions and recruitment of men from Kakamega for both military and civil purposes squeezed the African peasant household labour base and resources. The excessive manpower drainage in the Kakamega had retrogressively bestowed the entire agrarian production process to women and children,\(^\text{328}\) and practically reduced the region to be of the hand-to-mouth nature.\(^\text{329}\) In the agricultural production cycle, the absence of the male labour was largely felt at the start of the production season; the limited capacity by the women folk to clear land for planting in addition to bringing more land to agricultural production. With these limitations, the agricultural department was worried that the area might not contribute immensely to the aid of Britain as the war situation demanded and as directed by the governor in his address to the nation at the outbreak of the war.

The agricultural officer did not for instance visualize how the women could produce food crops for the families’ consumption while at the same time be in a position to produce for both commercial purposes and for the military aid,\(^\text{330}\) a position equally shared by most women who lamented of shouldering the responsibility as their husbands had been snatched by the warecha. While the state generally anticipated an increased production to support the war efforts, what it failed to consider was the far reaching implications of its actions of denuding Kakamega of its crucial male

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\(^{329}\) North Kavirondo Annual Agricultural Report, 1943

\(^{330}\) KNA: PC/NZA/2/1/130. The Special Agricultural Officer writing to the Director of Agriculture
agricultural labour which in the long run depleted the areas agrarian production capacity.

The department of agriculture headquarters in Nairobi was not in touch with the realities on the ground and the delicate situation that faced the man on the spot in Kakamega. While the man on the spot was faced with a threefold situation of ensuring increased production, he had to achieve this amid declining male labour on the peasant farms in Kakamega at the same time he had to ensure that soil conservation was adequately taken care of. The soil conservation efforts were to utilize communal labour yet the labour base in Kakamega was depleted. The department of agriculture headquarters in 1943 called for increase in agricultural production; the special agricultural officers in North Nyanza were called upon to ensure a specific increase in maize production, as it was indicated that the position in respect of foodstuff supplies was not satisfactory for the year that ended as the quantity produced and sold through state recognized formal channels declined to 182,646 bags in 1943 down from 287,116 bags in 1942.

What the colonial state in Nairobi did not understand was the dialectical situation on the ground which precipitated the declining agricultural output in Kakamega. Most interesting was the fact that on the ground, since African peasant production was under the predominant purview of the women folk; they were more concerned with their subsistence needs at such a time when the household heads were absent and limitedly concerned about their expansion of the output for war purposes. This was despite

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331 Oates, the agricultural officer indicated the desire to plant the maximum amount of land with maize in Kakamega, and noted that for this to succeed there was need for adequate state support. See KNA: PC/NZA/3/2/196
332 KNA: PC/NZA/2/12/76
333 North Kavirondo Annual Agricultural Report, 1943
334 Oral interviews by Noel Nabwangu and Sulemena Indushi who affirmed that the production of maize steadily declined as the women sort to diversify into food crops that could be inter/mixed cropped and which assured their families food all the time.
Nairobi’s calls to increase by whichever means possible the output particularly maize. However, the study maintains that the fall in the quantity of crops produced in 1943 as demonstrated by the number of bags of maize was compensated for by the rise in the value for the crops as noted by the DC in the 1943 Annual Report.

When the harsh reality of the diminishing production for sale and war efforts finally hit the state, the Nairobi authorities were quick in their response especially when it became evident that Kakamega was to be hit by expansive crop failure. This was illustrated by the temporary stoppage of civil labour conscriptions as from the 1st of February 1943.335 In its pronouncements, the state sought to address the foreseen state of crop failure and cushion the African peasant households from famine which the failure of the rains necessitated. According to the Food Shortage Commission of Inquiry Report of 1943:

… with the inevitable development after the war throughout the colony, and with the knowledge about the European and ‘native’ production, it is obvious that a crisis is slowly but surely looming up ahead and may well come much sooner than anticipated, should drought conditions assume serious proportions at any time.336

But, in reality as established by the state, the state only publicized what the women folk in Kakamega had already done to avert an impending crop failure. As indicated by majority of the women interviewees, the women extensively engaged in the cultivation of sorghum, sweet potatoes and cassavas as well as sim sim and millet, only for the lugongo and makuru to call for an increase of the acreage under food crops in

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335 The conscript labour recruitment for essential undertakings had overshadowed every aspect of administration. The majority of the labour in Kakamega went to three major sections at this point in time; the ongoing military activities because of the war efforts, the gold mining at Rosterman where the North Kavirondo district annual report of 1939 confirmed the plentiful of labour for miners and the neighbouring European farmers together with the railway construction led to the exodus from Kakamega district resulting in the reduction in hut and poll tax revenue. See DC/NN/1/21: North Kavirondo District Annual Report 1939 and DC/NN/1/20: North Kavirondo District Annual Report 1938.

Kakamega reserve while called for the intensification of the cultivation of food crops like sweet potatoes and *wimbi*. Equally, the state called upon the African peasants in Kakamega to increase the production particularly of maize.\(^{337}\) While it is argued that with increased maize production the crop would be available on the market to increase the chance of rescuing the subsistence crisis in Kakamega, the study maintains that the controlled market had seen the women folk shun formal marketing channels for this was not only inadequately paying but also placed the limited available maize in the hands of the state which eventually utilized it for the war efforts.\(^{338}\) As this did not achieve much in 1942, the colonial state made it compulsory that all maize was to be sold to the Maize Control Board established on 1st July 1942.\(^{339}\)

The board was required to fix the maize prices in advance for African maize. While the set prices reflected an increase over and above the market prices to attract the African peasant produced maize in Kakamega, this failed to be achieved as the study established that during the hard agrarian times, the African peasants shunned the capitalized commercial exchanges and trade, and reverted back to their tradition African peasant economy of affection.\(^{340}\) This was in addition guided by the fact that the available household labour did not permit so much engagement into commercialized production as the labour was not only quantitatively limited but also its gender biasness pushed the women folk to spread the household subsistence security risk by diversifying it subsistence production base.

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\(^{337}\) DC/NN/1/25: North Kavirondo District Annual Report, 1943.

\(^{338}\) According to Saul Bunyali, Anyende Muyeka, Noel Nabwangu and Sulumena Indashi, marketing was predominantly done by women except for livestock. The women opted for barter exchange of their produces which the measure of quantity was *shitonji*. The trade was highly lucrative in a subsistence sense, besides, *imbusu* permitted *okhwechikhana* where people with small children loaned a cow plus it’s calf for his children to enjoy milk to avert nutritional problems.


\(^{340}\) Oral interviews with special attention to *imbusu okhwechikhana* and *shitonji*
In spreading their subsistence risk security measures, the women folk for instance in 1940 having experienced erratic climatic conditions towards the end of 1939 decided to engage in early planting courtesy of the early rains. With dry weather conditions having tickled their ethical subsistence response mechanisms, the women planted on an expansive scale than such previous production season.\textsuperscript{341} Their efforts eventually paid off when green maize was ready for consumption in April,\textsuperscript{342} this in reality helped avert a food crisis in 1940 and 1941.

During this season a bumper harvest was realized and sensitive to their traditional economy, the women instead of selling their produce like maize to the control board decided to withdraw from the market and withhold their produce as an insurance against any future crop failure. The failure of the short rains in 1942 resulted in unprecedented food shortage\textsuperscript{343} and more efforts were dedicated on production with the colonial state choreographing the situation to suit the production of maize for the war demands. The African peasant households responded swiftly, while Maxon points out that the response was to the state calls, higher prices and good weather, the study through oral interviews established that the response was out of fears of famine which necessitated their increased cultivation during the long rain season.

\textbf{4.5 The 1943 Famine}

The second half of the year 1942 and the first half of the year 1943 were tough agro-economic times for African Peasants production in Kakamega like elsewhere across the colony as described by Jones Liaka, Sulumena Indushi and Anyende Muyeka. The year


\textsuperscript{342} Philip Nabwangu, Anyende Muyeka and Saul Bunyali oral interviews.

\textsuperscript{343} DC/NN/1/24: North Kavirondo District Annual Report, 1942.
1943 witnessed famine which not only affected the state but also the African peasants in their reserves particularly in Kakamega. While the source of the famine might have been environmental conditions, the study points out that the environmental cause were in themselves necessary but not sufficient to warrant the famine in Kakamega. Environment-wise, the agricultural officer in his December monthly report of 1942 noted a looming severe food shortage. A gloomy picture for Kakamega was painted as he indicated that only a light crop of maize reached maturity. According to Maxon and revealed by the Annual Report in 1943, by the end of the month, many households had given up on the short rains and as indicated by Winston Wekesa and Upande Omusia, they had begun to break land in hopes that the long rains might be early.

The Agricultural Officer’s report indicated that the failure of the short rains were to blame for the scenario that eventuated in the failure of the crop. However, while it is true that failure of the short rains caused crop failure, the study emphasizes the fact that crop failure was necessitated by the state in Kakamega and as per the Agricultural Officer’s report it meant maize failure. Therefore, the failure of the maize did not only portend doom for the state in its war supplies quest but also food poverty for the households in Kakamega as maize formed the main staple for the African peasants in the area, but mtama and wimbi produced to advantageously rescue the African peasant

344DC/NN/1/25: North Kavirondo District Annual Report, 1943
346KNA: AK/2/58: North Kavirondo January Crop Report, 1943
347The January Monthly Report on the food situation by the Assistant Agricultural Officer for Vihiga describing how the situation was in Kakamega in January 1943. KNA: AK/2/43
348North Kavirondo Annual Agricultural Report, 1943
households in Kakamega. The DC indicated these to have extremely well corroborated by women research participants who affirmed harvesting full granaries of *wimbi* and *mtama*.

From 1941, the state through *amaguru* launched a maize production expansion campaign in Kakamega which translated into increased land surface cultivation but shrinking root crop surface area cultivation. Moreover, while the Agricultural Officer indicated that the failed maize crop was feed on livestock, the study affirms the agentive nature of the African peasants in Kakamega who sort to not only seek refuge in diversified household economy by taking care of some livestock, they also knew less pressure was put on livestock production for war efforts by the state in Kakamega. Hence circumventing the state pressure on maize production during the infamous *inzala ya warechaby* utilizing *shitonji, okhwechikhana and imbusu*. In addition, when the Agricultural Officer noted that the African peasants in Kakamega had given up on the short rains and began to break land in preparation for the long rains, the study through research participants determined that what the African peasants in Kakamega planted immediately after the breaking land were famine resistant crops that took a short time to mature which would quickly intervene in the situation in addition to small portions of maize.

The Agricultural Officer’s report is, however, silent on the crops that were planted after the breaking of the land. The study attributes this silence to the fact that the African peasants in Kakamega shunned maize to produce root crops and since they were not

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350 Research participants’ oral presentations. Philip Nabwangu, Anyende Muyeka, Saul Bunyali, Noel Nabwangu and Sulumena Indashi. See also North Kavirondo Annual Agricultural Report, 1942

considered as food that would contribute to the colonial state’s efforts towards the war, they were not worth noting. Notwithstanding the failure of the short rains in 1942, the African peasant agency was largely visible in Kakamega when they broke the land in December 1942 and planted in January 1943 amid a dry spell. The limited rains at the end of January and early February 1943 gave a reprieve for the peasants’ root crops but, the disappearance of the rains seemed to pronounce doom for the peasants’ maize crop in Kakamega. The script was transformed in April and May as the root crops that survived the dry spell were ready for consumption; maize was consumed as green maize. While the state had resorted to the importation of food aids to Kakamega as indicated earlier, the African peasant agency never alienated them from affirming the role in utilizing the environment to enable them survive the famine as proved by the mass production of wimbi and mtama which quickly substituted for the main staple maize.

The maize expansion campaign by the state of 1941/2 was equally to blame for the 1943 warecha famine situation in Kakamega. During the campaigns, the man on the spot was under pressure from the Nairobi authorities in order to increase maize production in Kakamega to go towards war efforts. As reported by the District Commissioner North Kavirondo in his letter to the Provincial Commissioner towards the end of 1941, the uniformed prices throughout the province greatly enhanced the chances of obtaining the required quantity of maize in the 1942 harvest. As indicated by Ndege and Maxon, while the African peasants were generally responsive to market

353 Ibid.
354 North Kavirondo Crop Report for the month of April 1943
opportunities, in Kakamega the African peasants responded to the guaranteed prices for their produce by expanding the land under cultivation. In Kakamega, the study established that the expansion in the area under production was at the expense of soil conservation and therefore, the 1943 famine in Kakamega was a long term manifestation of the heavy pressure on the land by the peasants which culminated in soil degradation and the degradation was coupled with declining yields which eventually culminated into famine in 1943.

The research respondents affirmed that the African peasant instincts never permitted the peasants in Kakamega to watch the land go to a waste while their households were ravaged by hunger and famine. They swifted to subsistence needs by planting root crops which doubled up as cover crops for the soil. As observed by the Agricultural Officer Bukura, with the failure of crops, the African peasants decided to plant root crops to bail themselves out of the situation. This response to the prevailing famine situation in 1943 was a pure reflection of the African peasant self-agency in ensuring subsistence security without necessarily succumbing to the existing pressures by the state to produce for the war.

The state Agraricultural pressure on the African peasants in Kakamega necessitated the famine, but it was not solely to blame for the prevailing situation. More pressure was exerted on the African peasant households in Kakamega during the Second World War which, in the long run, was coupled with other factors to produce the famine. Through conscriptions in Kakamega the state sought to exert immense pressure on the African peasants for their produce.

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358 North Kavirondo Annual Agricultural Report, 1942
359 KNA:AK/21/52. Safari Diary for the Agricultural Officer Bukura in November, 1943
peasant to provide both military and service men to the state to aid the colonial masters in the war.\textsuperscript{360} In addition, the settlers had lured the state into forceful procuring labour for themselves. According to oral informants, many men were forcefully taken from their villages for war purposes and Maxon estimated that 48550 men from North Kavirondo were employed outside the district for non-military service in 1943.\textsuperscript{361} This the research established that the numbers as at May 1943 which intersected with peak of the famine spell and the declining yields per household production unit.

With such numbers out of Kakamega, plus those who provided military labour, including squatters in the nearby plantations of Trans Nzoia, Uasin Gishu and the Kericho area, Kakamega was largely deprived of the much needed labour of able bodied men and women who would have otherwise gallantly faced the prevailing conditions and coped with the demands of the day while at the same time ensuring food security for their households. Evidently, with the pressure to expand production the clearing of the land and the breaking of the virgin land was predominantly a male dominated responsibility among the African households of Kakamega. But with the absence of this crucial labour composition from the men increased production for commercial production was greatly on the decline while the production of household food was constant.\textsuperscript{362} With the repeated production by the women on the same plot, the depletion of the soil nutrients was inevitable and resulted in the famine situation of 1943. With the eminent crisis, the women who dominated production were inclined towards

\textsuperscript{360} According to a research participant Phillip Nabwangu, in his area of Isulu people like Joel Shibunji, Michael Likhakasi, Itaya Itambasi, Michael Luwoyero Makotsi and Petti Ashiono were among the many other young men conscripted to serve the war interests. See also Robert Maxon. (2003). Going Their Separate Ways: Agrarian Transformation in Kenya, 1930-1950. London: Associated University Press.

\textsuperscript{361} Ibid. see also North Kavirondo Annual Agricultural Report, 1943

\textsuperscript{362} Research participants; Jones Liaka, Sulumena Indashi, Noel Nabwangu and Angelina Shitendesa
subsistence root crops and avoided commercial food crops\textsuperscript{363} which in the realities of the day, they were forced to sell them through control organs.

The drifting away from the maize which eventually defined the dry spell was as established by the study caused by the fears that locust would soon invade the area. Traditionally, according to oral evidence, the locust invasion followed the dry spell which made the household through self-subsistence agency to invoke the locust risk averse measures by planting root crops.\textsuperscript{364} In the long run even though the conscription of labour was suspended in February 1943, the African households in Kakamega were not in a position to mobilize adequate labour to invest in agriculture in order to avert the food shortage\textsuperscript{365} that became famine in the long run. In Kakamega, African households were compelled to hinge their production on the marginal household labour inputs mapped by women and children. At the extreme of the famine situation in 1943, vulnerable peasant households were compelled by circumstances to provide labour on the farms of wealthier households for food.\textsuperscript{366} Furthermore, the forceful diversion of the little remaining male labour in Kakamega to soil conservation also denied the area the crucial labour power that would have naturally averted the food shortage.

The labour conscription intricacies contributed even more to when it came to the year 1943 and the famine situation. The dimension took a health line as alluded to by the Senior Provincial Medical Officer, examining the labour recruits from Kakamega, he concluded that the majority of the recruits suffered from starvation and malnutrition.\textsuperscript{367}

\textsuperscript{363}Ibid.

\textsuperscript{364}Research participants; Jones Liaka, Sulumena Indashi, Noel Nabwangu and Angelina Shitendesa. See also KNA:AK/21/52. Safari Diary for the Agricultural Officer Bukura in November, 1943

\textsuperscript{365}Research participants; Jones Liaka, Sulumena Indashi, Noel Nabwangu and Angelina Shitendesa


\textsuperscript{367}KNA: PC/NZA/3/2/8. Senior Medical Officer Nyanza Province to the Provincial Commissioner Nyanza Province. See also North Kavirondo Annual Agricultural Report, 1943
On the directive of the Senior Medical Officer, Arthur Okwemba\textsuperscript{368} was mandated to investigate the situation which he undertook in May 1943. According to J.A Okwemba’s report, after observing 9764 people (men, women and children) he concluded that majority suffered from starvation, cacagxia and general physical deterioration that resulted in malnutrition.\textsuperscript{369} Going by the sample, Okwemba concluded that about 51 percent of the population suffered from starvation in Kakamega a position agreed to by Jones Liaka, Sulumen Indushi who confirmed that generally most people in their villages were physically weak. While the study affirms that acute food shortage had made people vulnerable to diseases like dysentery, malaria and ulcers, these not only weakened the household remaining in Kakamega in term of working on the household land, but also the energetic few that remained were highly preoccupied by the taking care of their weakling household members.\textsuperscript{370} In the long run less productive labour time was committed to expansion and intensification of African peasant agriculture resulting into the 1943 famine case.

In equal measure, the colonial state policy to squeeze out more than 287,116 bags of maize out of the African peasant area of Kakamega\textsuperscript{371} was responsible for the famine situation that befell the African peasant households in Kakamega. In February 1942, the colonial state issued circular that demanded all maize to be drained out of the reserves Kakamega not excluded. The circular noted:

\textit{The government’s most immediate and urgent problem is to insure that sufficient rations are made available for native labour working in}

\textsuperscript{368} Arthur Okwemba was a brilliant young man of humble origin. John Iliffe describes Arthur Okwemba as the most academically successful of all the early medical students who passed in 1941 with distinctions in anatomy, physiology, pathology, pharmacology and surgery. He came from the prestigious Alliance High School but was described by it’s headmaster as “a church of God boy” from a very poor family.
\textsuperscript{369} KNA:PC/NZA/3/2/8. Senior Medical Officer Nyanza Province to the Provincial Commissioner Nyanza Province.
\textsuperscript{370} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{371} North Kavirondo Annual Agricultural Report, 1943
the towns, railways and in essential farming industries and for the troops. In all these cases the maintenance of essential services is dependent on the daily ration. Wherever, therefore, there is any surplus maize available most urgent steps should be taken to place it immediately at the disposal of the control and to impress upon the natives in the reserves the importance of using alternative foodstuffs and releasing the maximum amount of maize possible.372

From the onset, the circular engages in a self-defeating exercise, while the state is calling upon the foodstuffs for the native labourers without the African peasant areas like Kakamega, the same circular calls upon the ‘natives’ to release the maximum amount of maize possible. The study sought to establish who was to produce in the Kakamega, if the labour that is meant to produce in the area was utilized as military conscripts in addition to the other respective areas indicated in the circular. While equally, the government wanted to provide sufficient rations, the major area to be supplied given the prevailing world political economy was for the war efforts and as such, the justification is found in the circular when the emphasis is laid on squeezing out more maize from Kakamega and other African peasant areas. With all efforts therefore directed towards acquiring more from Kakamega, the state was well prepared and determined to stop at nothing but milk the Kakamega dry. These confirmed that the state was never interested in the food security situation in Kakamega. The evidence in the circular is when the state called upon the African peasant households in Kakamega to resort to the consumption of alternative foodstuffs to maize. The study holds that this was responsible for the drifting away from maize production and the delicate transition gap to subsistence root crops production saw Kakamega hard hit by the famine situation.

4.6 The Wartime Agricultural Production

The onset of the Second World War in September 1939, except for a ripple of uncertainty and excitement at the end of August and beginning of September the events in Europe as acknowledged by the North Kavirondo District Agricultural Officer, caused little noticeable disturbance in the district. However, as indicated by Philip Nabwangu, Winston Wekesa and Jones Liaka all indicators revealed something extremely bad happening judging from the agrarian cycle experienced throughout the year. From a general point, the year 1939 was a bad agricultural year for the African peasants in Kakamega. As described from the oral evidence, documented by the Annual Report and historicised by R.M. Maxon, a combination of deficient rainfall, locusts and poor prices had not made the agricultural conditions in the Kakamega reserve easy. But the bad agrarian situation in Kakamega was compounded by the imperatives of the war which the DC North Kavirondo acknowledged that all the state objectives had been met. He notes: however, African peasants in Kakamaga did all that was asked of them. They kept peace; they produced readily the recruits that were required of them for K.A.R., police, pioneers and miscellaneous military duties. What this implies is that the African peasants went out of their way to respond to the needs of the state at the beginning of the Second World War.

However, the study maintains that the African peasants’ doing what was expected of them in 1939 was informed by an agrarian dimension to the extent that with a failed agricultural year, the African peasants had limited options to engage in on the farm and as such, the excitement about the British military engagement saw the volunteer in large number to provide the different military services to the state. The African peasants also

373 North Kavirondo Annual Agricultural Report, 1939
374 R.M. Maxon, Going their Separate Ways. See also North Kavirondo Annual Agricultural Report, 1939
375 North Kavirondo Annual Agricultural Report, 1939
did what was required of them, for they had a solid reserve emanating from the bumper harvest of 1938 and had eschewed the market owing to the poor prices as demonstrated by the maize prices.376

Unquestionably, the study affirms that with African peasant recruits joining the military in aid of the state, it became inevitable that soil conservation activities would be hampered henceforth, as the DC complaint of not being able to deal with the same problem owing to the war demands. This is evidenced by Mr. Grahams, a resident Agricultural officer in charge of Bukura leaving Bukura to aid in military measures in Kakamega.377 The effect of all these are summed up in the general harvest as described by the Annual Report as a regrettable fact that owing to a repetition of unsuitable conditions the 1939 crop is unlikely to be any better which rightly reconciled a position held by informants Philip Nabwangu and Saul Bunyali.

On the backdrop of the agrarian situation in Kakamega in 1939 and with the war at hand, the short rain season of 1940 still disappointed as the short rains crops were excessively damaged by the dry spell as the yield was way below average. For the long rains as described by the annual report and the native affairs report were persistent necessitating good yields for most crops, making the year to produce a suitable crop.378 As illustrated by the maize crop, there was a tremendous increase in the quantities produced owing to increase in acreage under production.379 The study holds the position that the expansion of the land under production was at the expense of soil conservation which was at the time the least concern of the state. While the expansion yielded a high

376 P.T. Zeleza Kenya and the War. See also North Kavirondo Annual Agricultural Report, 1939
377 North Kavirondo Annual Agricultural Report, 1939
378 North Kavirondo Annual Agricultural Report, 1940
379 Ibid.
crop in the short term in the long term it negatively affected African peasant production in Kakamega as amplified by R.M. Maxon.

In the subsequent year, much of the time in the area as a necessity was spent on matters directly connected with the war; obtaining recruits for military, industrial labour and obtaining cattle for the military.\textsuperscript{380} As established from the annual report, in the year 1941, a total estimate of 6,843 people were recruited in the military while an estimated 4,856 heads of cattle were confiscated.\textsuperscript{381} This reflected the position held during oral interviews where the oral informants like Upande Omusia and Philip Nabwangu, exemplified the scenario with people like Joel Shibunji, Michael Likhakasi, Itaya Itambasi and Michael Makotsi having been recruited forcefully for military while people’s animals confiscated. For instance; 2 animals belonging to Elia Muandili, and 1 each to Jeremiah Manuni and Jeremiah Sechero. In Idakho the whole village was shocked when Zacharia Shiho-lo’s ceremonial bull named \textit{lichina} was confiscated. All informants emphasized the fact that all the animals were taken for free. Besides these, the year 1941 saw the African peasants of Kakamega contribute a lump sum amount of Shs. 13,975/5 to the war welfare fund.\textsuperscript{382} As pertaining to agricultural production by the African peasants in Kakamega in the year 1941, the land area under cultivation was in excess of the previous year, and on a whole, the crops were good.\textsuperscript{383} This in reality translated into a satisfactory food situation throughout the year despite all the contributions made to the war. In the year, the major crop produced and exported was \textit{mtama} with a record export of 7,500 bags exported outside the district.\textsuperscript{384} This massive production that resulted into export the study upholds was caused by the African

\textsuperscript{380} Native Affairs Report, 1941  
\textsuperscript{381} North Kavirondo Annual Agricultural Report, 1941  
\textsuperscript{382} Native Affairs Report, 1941  
\textsuperscript{383} North Kavirondo Annual Agricultural Report, 1941  
\textsuperscript{384} Ibid.
peasants’ sensitivity to their subsistence needs especially with the memories of the 1939 crop failure situation as opposed to the position held by the DC that it was as a result of self-denial by the African peasants of beer.\textsuperscript{385}

The year 1942 on its part was one of strenuous efforts on the part of the African peasants. The DAO indicated that the conscription labour recruitment and the collection of stock overshadowed every aspect of the agricultural duty. As noted in annual report a total estimate of 11,120 African peasants were recruited for military purposes which had far reaching implications on production. For example the quantity of maize sold in the year stood at an estimated 295,000 bags down from 309,718 bags in 1941.\textsuperscript{386} The study argues that the decline was despite the expansion of the land under cultivation. Therefore, while the state attributed the decline to the partial failure of the short rains the study affirms the same to be as a result of the shortage of human labour to work on the expansive land as an estimated 11,120 African peasants from Kakamega were without the district contributing to the war efforts. With the partial failure of the short rains in 1942 and the huge absence of African peasant labour, 1943 was a year destined for greater African peasant agrarian challenges. This according to Saul Bunyali, Sulumena Indashi, Philip Nabwangu and Jones Liaka was infamously marked by \textit{inzala ya eshikombe} and Bunyali singled out the areas of Kitosh, Kabras, Bunyala and Butsotso as rescuing the areas of Isukha, Idakho, Tiriki and Maragoli. As noted by Anyembe Muyeko, Philip Nabwangu, Upande Omusia, Winston Wekesa and Saul Bunyali, the women played a significant role in saving the community, for instance Saul Bunyali candidly recollected the year 1943 as a year when Maragoli daughters were exchanged for bags of maize in Bukusu and the significance of the same was

\textsuperscript{385} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{386} North Kavirondo Annual Agricultural Report, 1942
preserved in a song that reminded the Maragoli that all wasn’t lost as their daughters were both safe and with something to eat. As captured by Chavasu and Maxon, inzala ya warecha necessitated the initial Maragoli diaspora in areas of Lugari schemes. Corroborating this position, Saul Bunyali noted that his own parent migrated to Migori living him with the grandmother as a result of the warecha/inzala ya ekekombe. In the year 1943, the annual report indicates a total of 6,303 African peasants as having left the district and this coincided with the state restricting military recruitment as the labour commissioner noted that at least 50.7 percent of the able-bodied African peasants had been out at work inclusive of those in the service. The man power remaining according to the DAO in his annual report was hardly sufficient for the huge volume of crop production that was now required for the war. The state maintained that by the DAO and the Labour Commission accepting that they were responsible for depopulating Kakamega of its able bodied men, the state was in essence accepting being solely responsible for the inzala ya ekekombe/waracha famine. Compounding the already worse situation the highest ever number of animals was confiscated in the year 1943 at 5,871 heads of cattle. Generally, the food situation was bad with the areas of Bunyore, Maragoli, Isukha, Idakho and Tiriki being the worst hit with an estimated 30,000 people suffering from acute food shortage and deaths attributed to it were equally reported. The African peasant production for the year 1943 in Kakamega is best recaputilated by

387 Chavasu, The Making of the Ma Native Affairs Report, 1941
388 North Kavirondo Annual Agricultural Report, 1942
389 Ibid.
390 Ibid.
391 Food shortage commission, 1943
the Agricultural Officer who reported that “on the whole it was an extremely difficult year and no definite development in African peasant agriculture can be reported.”

The year 1944 provided, however the exact opposite of 1943. As noted by the DC, it was an excellent year for crops and bumper harvests were reaped everywhere. The production of 1944 had a dual motivation; first was warecha famine menace which motivated the peasants to work hard as those working both in the adjacent highlands and the gold mine deserted their contracts and returned to the reserves. Secondly the high prices advanced for produce like maize motivated the African peasants to strive to produce even more. This is evidenced by the amount brought in by the Maize Control Board which was at least 5 times that realized in 1943 of 553,607 against 179,912. The situation continued to be bright in 1945 as the Agricultural officer observed;

\[\text{the emphasis in year 1945 was on increased food production and the efforts of the agricultural staff was largely directed to that end. With good guaranteed prices cultivators were only but too willing to tear up more and more land for the sake of quick returns and while no doubt it is essential to produce all the food possible at present, the damage being done to the land is incalculable.}\]

While the war was coming to an end, the most significant thing at hand was to ensured adequate food was produced for African peasant consumption without due regard for the process of production. As a result soil erosion was enormous and with the end of the war it was now the time for the state to focus on soil conservation in Kakamega which was completely ignored in the course of the war. The table below summarizes the quantitative production during the war as illustrated by maize sold.

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392 North Kavirondo Annual Agricultural Report, 1944
393 North Kavirondo Annual Agricultural Report, 1945
Table 4.2: Quantities of maize sold from Kakamega during the Second World War

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>1939</th>
<th>1940</th>
<th>1941</th>
<th>1942</th>
<th>1943</th>
<th>1944</th>
<th>1945</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Number of bags sold</td>
<td>135,614</td>
<td>286,591</td>
<td>309,718</td>
<td>295,00</td>
<td>182,646</td>
<td>333,607</td>
<td>316,264</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Source:** Figures extracted by the researcher from North Kavirondo District Annual Reports

The African peasant agricultural production tangent steadily ascends from 1939 to 1941, the partial failure of the short rains in 1942 accounts for the slight stifle in the years production while the massive decline in African peasant production in 1943 is explained by the state’s war imperatives. For instance, 50.7 percent of able-bodied African peasants were out of Kakamega serving the needs of the state in the war. In 1944, the gallant stride made is affirmed by the deliberated campaign by the state to increased food production in Kakamega, the labour contracts desertion by the Africans both in the adjacent white highlands and the Kakamega gold mines and the state’s abolition of recruitment for war purposes in Kakamega.

### 4.7 Summary of Chapter Four

This chapter has examined the influence of the Second World War on the agrarian trajectory of Kakamega. The chapter examined the extent to which the new demands occasioned by the war shaped African peasant agrarian production in Kakamega. The chapter began on rather a low note that was characterized by the failure of the short rains in 1938, and the excitement of the African peasants to serve in the British army, what the state termed volunteers. The chapter maintained that the conscription of labour of service men. The men from Kakamega equally served in the Kings African Rifle, the confiscation of livestock, the engineered demand for increased maize production, the highly priced market demand for maize and the gold mining activities at the gold mines in Kakamega catalyzed by the bad climatic conditions were responsible for the 1943
famine in Kakamega. Equally, the chapter affirmed that the over emphasis on crop production in Kakamega for the war efforts happened to the neglect of soil conservation efforts which henceforth profoundly reshaped the agrarian change of Kakamega especially in Tiriki, Maragoli, Bunyore, Isukha and Idakho areas. Fundamentally, the state policies pursued during the Second World War in Kakamega worked to the detriment of African peasant households’ pursuit for sufficiency, as exemplified by the 1943 famine. The chapter affirmed that with the glaring challenges and contradictions that befell the African peasant households, the African peasants diversified their strategies to circumvent the state exerted pressure. In the long run African peasants on Kakamega invoked their instinctive self-agency to redeem themselves from the 1943 famine in Kakamega. By the end of the war, African peasant agricultural production in Kakamega was bedeviled by a raft of challenges among them soil degradation and the return of the Ex-World War Two soldiers which the state aimed at addressing through elaborate plans like the Swynnerton plan and the East African Royal Commission of 1954. The proceeding chapter will assess the extent to which these problems and policies were handled and how such plans like the Swynnerton Pan and the return of the Ex-World War Two soldiers influenced African peasant production in Kakamega.
CHAPTER FIVE

THE AFTERMATH OF THE SECOND WORLD WAR, 1945-1963

5.1 Introduction

Chapter four detailed the Second World War imperatives on African peasant production in Kakamega, where it demonstrated that Kakamega made an immense contribution to the war efforts in a duet: through military conscriptions; soldiers as well as service men and women were recruited to serve in the war; the state’s compelling pressure to produce food crops especially cereals in particular maize and the confiscation of livestock to provide food rations to the soldiers as well as to redeem the food crisis in the entire East Africa region. At the turn of the war, Kakamega received some of her ‘lost sons’ who had served in the war. The return of these Ex-World War Two soldiers necessitated the permutation of the entire household to accommodate them but at the same time the households were to deal with the perennial challenge of soil erosion. To help in the resolving the soil degradation issue, the state formulated the Swynnerton plan as a master plan for progressive African peasant agricultural production in areas like Kakamega. The present chapter herein undertakes to examine the core state agrarian policies that influenced the post-World War Two agrarian trajectory in Kakamega maintaining the invigorative agency of the African peasants in ensuring their affluence with regard to household food production. The chapter endvours to expound on the influence of soil erosion and its conservation efforts on the African peasant agrarian change in Kakamega. The study equally maintains that the African peasant

394 R.M. Maxon maintains that the pressure exerted to Kakamega by the state, especially the areas of Maragoli during the war caused excessive soil degradation compounded by population pressure, yet the area was to feed the locals, Kenya and East Africa at large. See R.M Maxon, Going their separate ways

395 Oral research participation as evidenced by Jones Liaka, Sulumena Indushi, Winston Wekesa and Philip Nabwangu.

396 Swynnerton plan was a state produced master piece that spelled the round map to be pursued in order to reaffirm the place of African peasant producers
self-agency bred the diversification of agrarian production that served to sustain the households especially emerging from the 1943 famine. In the ensuing stratum of challenges, conflicts and contradictions, the chapter maintains that the state remedies like the Swynnerton plan provided the launching platform for the emergence of a class of African petty bourgeoisie which accumulated land through the plan’s spirit of consolidation. The African petty bourgeoisie shaped the agrarian trajectory of Kakamega through the independence period. The chapter also affirms this happened at the expense of weaker households that were relegated to labour reserves for the bourgeoisie class within the area.

5.2 Soil Conservation Measures

In the course of the Second World War, increased food production campaigns in Kakamega enjoyed the pride of place while soil conservation was relegated to play second fiddle. At the end of the war, however, it became evident as indicated by the District Agricultural Officer that soil degradation had taken a serious toll in Kakamega to the extent that warranted immediate attention. This was reported by the Provincial Commissioner Nyanza in 1946 when he noted with concern:

"On the other side of the picture, however, we have a story of soil deterioration resulting from heavy cropping and depasturing, which have been inevitable with the high prices of stock and products and the constant urge to provide more and even more food for a hungry East Africa, without the staff to ensure rehabilitation of the soil."\(^{397}\)

From the Provincial Commissioner’s report, a number of salient issues are evident concerning the soil conservation needs and efforts. By noting that the other side of the picture, the Provincial Commissioner sought to bring to the attention of the state the realities on the ground after achieving what was the most pressing priorities of the war.

\(^{397}\) DC/NN/1/28: Annual Report by the District Commissioner North Kavirondo to the Provincial Commissioner Nyanza Province.
While the Provincial Commissioner notes that the soil deterioration was caused by two major factors, the study affirms that the heavy cropping was as a result of the pressures by the state. Which pressed for increased production during the just concluded war. On the one hand, the citation of depasturing indicates the pressure exerted on the land; on the other, it paints the self-agency nature of the African peasant households in Kakamega to spread their risks when it came face to face with the challenge of food production and diversification. The Provincial Commissioner’s acknowledgement of the favourable market prices as having been catalytical in the intensification of production that culminated in soil degradation is indeed an affirmation of the study’s position that the African peasants in Kakamega where highly sensitive to economic opportunities which they maximized from by being proactive to the market imperatives as echoed by Maxon, Ndege and Makana. In his last statement the Provincial Commissioner affirmatively confirmed the preposition of the study that soil conservation took the rear position as intensification of food production became the darling of the state during the war period. The study holds that this was done when most, if not all, agricultural state officers were called upon to do all that was within their powers to ensure increased production making them to ignore soil conservation.

Although the official state position was that the end of the war would usher in the process of agrarian recovery in Kenya, the District Commissioner in his annual report of 1945 reveals the contrary. The District Commissioner points out:

_During 1945, 4438 men were conscripted for essential industries, and 6413 heads of cattle were requisitioned by the Livestock Control at a price very much below the current market rates. It was announced that civil conscription came to an end on December 31st while it was announced that cattle requisition would continue ... The latest Labour Department Bulletin shows that on 31st December 1945, 50738 adult males belonging to this district were in employment, 4249 conscripts were included in this figure, but not men who were in the forces._
Considering that this district supplies very few squatters, there is every reason for saying that North Kavirondo supplies more labour than any other district in the colony... The drain of the man power in the reserve is very great though this is apt to be concealed because of the apparent large numbers of men still to be seen...

From the District Commissioner’s report for the year 1945 alone over 4438 men from Kakamega were conscripted in essential services this indicated the massive labour force that was absent from the agricultural fields in the area. The agrarian situation was, however, worsened by the fact that livestock products which often subsidise the subsistence needs of the households were equally cread off by the confiscation of over 6413 heads of cattle. These explained why inzala ya warecha and inzala ya panyako was inevitable at the time. It is important to point out as indicated by Philip Nabwangu that most healthy cows were taken leaving behind calves which were not only a burden to the family to be taken care of, but also could not alleviate the family subsistence crisis as they could not provide milk or even be sold. To complicate the situation, while the requisition of cattle had stopped by December 31st 1945, the conscription of men continued and by the close of the year 1945 over 50738 men had been conscripted. This negatively affected the agricultural situation in Kakamega.

While soil conservation was crucial in Kakamega, it turned out to be an uphill task for the state. The conservation efforts were majorly banked on collective communal masculine efforts, but as revealed by the District Commissioner, with over 4400 men conscripted in the year 1945 alone and for industrial work, and the situation even worsened when by 31st December the Labour Department records showed that 50738 adult males who were potentially soil conservers were in employment on the war front, then, soil reclamation wasn’t going to be a walk in the park for the state as the labour required for it as indicated in the district annual report was absent. Moreover, the

398 DC/NN/1/27: North Kavirondo Annual District Report 1945
depasturing that the Provincial Commissioner mentioned in the 1946 report and as corroborated by Philip Nabwangu, Upande Omusia and Saul Bunyali, it must be noted was a response mechanism by the African peasants in Kakamega such that when more cattle would be requisitioned even after the end of the war, the African peasants could have some animals left for themselves. The concealing of the statistics are hinted to by the District Commissioner wasn’t going to help much as the absence of the men hampered the soil conservation efforts. Generally, the progress of soil conservation was an even and these the District Agricultural Officer attributed to what he termed as a great deal of lip service to the idea of soil conservation, lack of practical assistance and the destruction by the locals of soil conservation works done by the agricultural staff in varied localities. The District Agricultural Officer cited underground propaganda as being responsible for the poor land conservation efforts. The peasants argued through chief Agoi to that if the land was to be put into good order; it will be alienated to Europeans. This made it difficult to combat soil erosion.

However, as noted in the 1947 Native Affairs Annual Report and corroborated by Maxon, all was not lost as in places like Vihiga, progress was made where grass strips and terracing was gradually picking up. Initially, the agricultural officers coerced the African peasants into soil conservation but with Norman Humphrey’s classical work ‘The Liguru and the Land’, the approach to soil conservation began to be heavily hinged on traditional authority and at this point as it emerged from the oral participation of Philip Shiholo and Muhambi Muyeka, the state through the agricultural officers pushed through the Local Native Council for soil conservation. Applauding the efforts of the

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399 In vihiga soil conservation was matter of urgency considering the red ridge, the degradation was so severe which warranted the state to use force to reclaim the denuded fields. See Robert Maxon, Going their Separate Ways. Also see the Native Affairs Annual Report of 1947.

chiefs/council of elders (*amaguru/olugongo*), the Agricultural Officer in his Annual Report indicated:

> While cultivation was in progress during the first quarter, determined efforts were made to extend the construction of narrow base terraces in the central and southern locations. Some good work was accomplished in areas where there was co-operation between the indigenous land elders, olugongo and chiefs. This was after the visit to Fort Hall and Machakos by the olugongo and the chiefs in June.401

As revealed by the report only the African peasants in Kakamega felt the pressing need for the immediate involvement in soil conservation, and the decision by the state officials on the guidance the Senior Agricultural Officer Norman Humphrey in his *Liguru and the Land* went a long way in impressing upon the African peasant land elders of Kakamega the seriousness of soil conservation which trickled down to the peasant households. Besides the human resource capacity for the direct involvement into soil conservation, adequate financial capacity was crucial in ensuring the success of the task.

In Nyanza Province and North Nyanza District in particular, the marketing system adopted in late 1943 in collaboration with the Maize and Produce Controls accumulated considerable funds in the Agricultural Betterment Funds which was greatly appropriated for the soil rehabilitation works. As at 31st December, 1947, the standing amount credit in favour of North Nyanza was £ 133 276, which was the highest in the province compared to Central Nyanza at £ 16856 and South Nyanza at £ 36797.402

While the credit amount in favour of North Nyanza might imply that soil erosion was massive, the reality the study affirms is that the Kakamega area was highly productive

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402 Annual Native Affairs Report, 1946–47. Nairobi; Government Printers
to the extent of contributing such lump sum amounts in the agricultural Betterment Fund to which they well understood their use.

With this financial capacity at their disposal and the enthusiastic need to rehabilitate their soil, the African peasants were not ready to compromise soil conservation for whatever reason. This was revealed when the Provincial Commissioner Nyanza noted with concern in the 1948 Annual Report that in (North Nyanza/Kakamega) one large maize-producing area, the people have often expressed a desire for a hospital and advanced school, the suggestion that a limited proportion of the accumulated funds might be diverted to these purposes from the Agricultural Betterment Fund had invariably been refused by the people with the remark “the soil needs healing, even more than the human.”

The blatant refusal by the African peasants in Kakamega to divert any of the resources meant for soil rehabilitation affirms the study’s position that agriculture was at the center of the households’ economic mainstay and couldn’t be substituted for anything.

Equally, locally available resources through the inducements by the amaguru and the olugongos worked to stimulate soil conservation efforts in Kakamega. For instance, the state through the olugongos and the amaguru popularized the most generally acceptable techniques which came with additional benefits like; the spreading of farmyard manure, the production of compost and the encouragement of stock holding on grasslands. According to the Native Affairs Report, Kakamega had a head start on these techniques in Nyanza Province and as an encouragement in December 1947, a consignment of 50 tons of phosphate was purchased in Uganda with the view of making a free issue to persons who had manured their land, with the Kakamega farms having shown that

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403 Annual Native Affairs Report, 1948. Nairobi; Government Printers
Uganda phosphate mixed with organic manure, gave excellent results.\textsuperscript{404} The study maintains that this boosted the soil rehabilitation efforts in Kakamega in addition to motivating more African peasant households to get directly involved in the conservation of the soil on their farms.

By 1950, soil conservation in North Nyanza proceeded well beyond, planting of grass strips and manuring of the denuded fields. By this time in North Nyanza the African peasants had graduated to the construction of terraces.\textsuperscript{405} This happened concurrently with the introduction of uncultivated strips which were widely spread in Kakamega as the uncultivated strips according to Mzee Saul Bunyali and Muhambi Muyeka served as either grazing strips for the stock or for planting nappier. The Provincial Annual Agricultural Report of 1950 indicates that the best work of ordinary terracing had been done and now the use of uncultivated strips with terracing on slopes was intensified in areas like Bunyore.\textsuperscript{406} The intensification of terracing with uncultivated strips, together with earlier measures of planting strips of grass and manuring the denuded fields affirms the research’s position of the self-agency among African peasants in Kakamega to redeeming their agrarian sector thereby playing a pivotal role in controlling the destiny of their own agrarian projectile in Kakamega.

In addition, agricultural education went a long way in the soil conservation efforts. For instance, Siriba Combined Training Centre opened up its doors at the beginning of 1950 with a Departments of Veterinary and Agriculture.\textsuperscript{407} The training centre received an

\textsuperscript{404} Annual Native Affairs Report, 1946-47. Nairobi; Government Printers. See also R.M Maxon, Going their separate ways
\textsuperscript{405} Annual Provincial Agricultural Report, 1950. Nairobi; Government Printers.
\textsuperscript{406} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{407} The agricultural department at Siriba Combined Training Centre was established in the Post-Second World War with four clear objectives aimed at boost agriculture in Kakamega and its environs in general and soil rehabilitation in particular. First, to secure the adoption by the whole farming community of agricultural practices which will stabilize the soil; second, to investigate and devise sound farming systems and improved methods of cultivation which will restore soil fertility; third, to persuade the
Assistant Agricultural Officer to run experimental farms and assist with instructing African peasant farmers from around the area on the best agricultural practice with the bias towards soil rehabilitation.\textsuperscript{408} By the closure of the year, the centre had successfully trained 53 African peasants on the best Agricultural practice with regards to soil conservation. The successful completion by 53 African peasants from Kakamega was no mean achievement for the district as they became the ambassadors championing soil conservation back in their rural areas. In the long run African peasant agrarian production in Kakamega was being transformed into a productive venture as envisaged in objective three of the Siriba Department of Veterinary and Agriculture using the African peasant self-agency. Besides Siriba, the age old Bukura Farm Institute\textsuperscript{409} sensitized and trained African peasants exclusively on improved agricultural practices and better and sustainable soil conservation. On its part Bukura was mainly designed for Agricultural Instructors. The Annual Agricultural Provincial Report of 1950 provides the statistics to the effect that:

\textit{At ten such refresher courses 118 Africans Instructors underwent a fortnight’s instruction. In addition, 26 parties comprising of 831 Africans were conducted around Bukura. Only 13 holdings were grouped into two demonstration group farms, the remaining holdings being retained as examples of consolidated individual family holdings.}\textsuperscript{410}

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\textsuperscript{408} The Seconded Assistant Agricultural Officer on his arrive at Siriba to take up his new assignment indicated that “it will be of necessity to concentrate on a mass effort to prevent destruction of the land by misuse before it can be possible to plan for individual farmers on their own holdings.” See ibid. also see the Annual Provincial Agricultural Report of 1950.


With the state providing the opportunity for the African peasants to take control of their own destiny, the African peasants in Kakamega seized the opportunity and flocked Bukura Farm Institute in large numbers to acquire vital agricultural skills which they went out not only to disseminate but also to apply on their own farms that resulted in the communal ethics towards soil conservation. These the study affirms signified the epitome of collective and communal self-agency among the African peasants of Kakamega. The educating of African peasant farmers in Kakamega was carried a notch higher from 1950 when the District Education through the Agricultural Department assumed responsibility for agricultural education in all schools in Nyanza Province. The agricultural education was based on small farms at secondary schools and primary level on a series of plots demonstrating rotations, soil conservation, etc adequate to the needs of the locality. What this translates to is the fact that the state in its capacity gave soil conservation a holistic family and household approach.

Crowning the sensitization of farmers to soil conservation and progressive agricultural practices were the Agricultural Shows organized by the Location Advisory Councils. In Kakamega, for instance, a highly successful show was held at Idakho, with over 600 exhibits staged and attracting large crowds to each single exhibition shade in September 1950. The study maintains that such locational shows were not only educative to the African peasants in Kakamega but also created competitive spirits among the Africans to engage in the best agricultural practices to be showcased resulting in sustained peasant efforts in soil conservation and agriculture in general, in Kakamega.

With all the efforts directed towards soil conservation in North Kavirondo/Nyanza after the Second World War, the Provincial Commissioner acknowledged that the efforts were eventually paying off in his Annual Agricultural Report of 1951, when he wrote:

... in the districts of North Nyanza and Central Nyanza a great advance was made at focal points in each location with the system of grass strips with live markers in the lower wet areas or backed by live was stops of aloe or Euphorbia in the drier areas, replacing the narrow base terracing and making the responsibility for construction and maintenance individual rather than communal. All this work is still in the focal stage, it is too early to estimate land protected except for the 50 per cent protection achieved in Bunyore.  

From the Provincial Commissioner’s report, it is evident that the collective communal approach to soil conservation was paying off with Kakamega having attained at least 50 per cent of the soil rehabilitation cover. With this achievement more specialized attention by the African peasants in Kakamega was directed to the individual household farms so that each individual household could chart its prospective agrarian target. By the end 1951, Bukura Farm Institute had taken the initiative in producing progressive African peasants in the agricultural sector. By this time, 20 African farmers from Nyanza Province with their wives took the one year course, of whom 15 were successful. In addition, in 1951, refresher courses were held for 98 Agricultural Instructors from the area and 11 teachers while in all 831 persons visited Bukura.  

The overwhelming pressure on Bukura Farm Institute made the Provincial Commissioner to recommend the development of farm institutes in each district of Nyanza Province.

The ever increasing number of Africans in Kakamega seeking training at the Bukura Farm Institute affirms the self-invoked interest of African peasants in agriculture in

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414 Ibid.
415 Ibid.
their area. With this recommendation from the Provincial Commissioner Nyanza and the increasing need by Africans from all over province seeking skills on how to improve their agriculture and become progressive farmers, the state sought to have standardised approach with regard to African agriculture thereby producing the Swynnerton Plan of 1954 on the intensification of African agriculture.

5.3 The 1954 Swynnerton Plan and the African Perspective

With the end of the Second World War, the return of the ex-soldiers and the menace of soil deterioration in the African peasant areas impacted negatively on the African peasant agricultural production sector in the reserves like Kakamega. The situation was further complicated by the African peasants’ nationalistic enlightenment and the general socio-economic situation in the country. With this complicated situation and the dire need by the state to boost its financial base, a strategy was sought to develop African peasant agriculture in the reserves while at the same time streamlining the country’s economic sector on the same African peasants. The Swynnerton Plan was an agrarian economic blueprint that was produced by the state to guide progressively the process of improving and transforming the already promoted African peasant production, especially in the African reserves. The plan broadly categorized Kanyan lands into four major categories, but of concern is the category in which Kakamega falls. Kakamega was the plan falls in what Swynnerton refers to as:

Those lands which are suitable for balanced mixed farming, more or less intensively, with greater or less specialization in cash crops or livestock, giving them a relatively high potential productivity if correctly farmed but subject to the evolution of a satisfactory system.

Fitting in this category, Kakamega occupied a very unique position and offered a classical case in point in relation to how a balance can be draw between animal husbandry and crop production given that the district had proved enigmatic productively in both sectors of the agrarian economy as orally narrated by Philip Shiholo, Anyende Muyeka and Saul Bunyali and indicated in the table below.

**Table 5.1: Agricultural Exports from North Kavirondo 1941-1945**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Product</th>
<th>1941</th>
<th>1942</th>
<th>1943</th>
<th>1944</th>
<th>1945</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Maize and Maizemeal (200 lb. bags)</td>
<td>309718</td>
<td>287116</td>
<td>182646</td>
<td>333607</td>
<td>316264</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Simsim (200 lb. bags)</td>
<td>9424</td>
<td>14763</td>
<td>1353</td>
<td>170</td>
<td>1401</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sorghum (200 lb. bags)</td>
<td>______</td>
<td>17160</td>
<td>25508</td>
<td>33459</td>
<td>5371</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Eleusine (200 lb. bags)</td>
<td>______</td>
<td>______</td>
<td>491</td>
<td>397</td>
<td>196</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ghee (tins)</td>
<td>2248</td>
<td>1885</td>
<td>549</td>
<td>890</td>
<td>1059</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hides (numbers)</td>
<td>34777</td>
<td>42679</td>
<td>24403</td>
<td>30761</td>
<td>30195</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cattle heads purchased by Livestock Control</td>
<td>4790</td>
<td>4819</td>
<td>5870</td>
<td>8162</td>
<td>6413</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Source:** Norman Humphrey, (1947). The Liguru and the Land

The table 5.1 evidently shows that the North Kavirondo aptly produced on a balanced scale both animal products as illustrated by ghee, hides and the number of heads of cattle purchased in the area by the Livestock Control Board and farm produce exemplified by maize and maize meal, simsim, sorghum and eleusine. As informed by

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the research participants and captured by the table, this form of balanced production has gone on for years even before and beyond the captured duration, this is equally echoed by the fact that it was the unique case that Humphrey used to launch his classical study “The Liguru and the Land.” In his preparation of his proposal, Swynnerton acknowledges the sound foundation laid in the previous eight years, covering soil conservation efforts (which has been detailed already), and experiments into farming systems, livestock improvement, methods of cultivation and fertilizer use. All of these, as already discussed, were heavily embedded in Kakamega courtesy of the giant Bukura Farm Institute and the Department of Veterinary and Agriculture at Siriba Combined Training Centre.

In its applicability to Kakamega, the Swynnerton Plan recommended the consolidation of the already fragmented land holdings in addition to the enclosure of communal lands into economically viable units. This recommendation the study established went against the tradition land tenure system in Kakamega which was solely responsible for the continuous fragmentation and subdivision of the communal lands amongst the ever increasing number of male family members as noted by Philip Nabwangu, Saul Bunyiali (et al) as research participants. According to the Philip Nabwangu and Saul Bunyiali, and as affirmed by Chavasu and Maxon, with the return of the Ex-soldiers and the increasing household population, plus the rise of a class of African petty bourgeoisie in areas like Maragoli and Idakho, members were forced to migrate to settlement schemes in Lugari in order to intensify their agrarian ventures. Moreover, the plan advocated for the security of tenure over an African peasant’s land in order to safeguard his labour as well as the money to be invested in the land for development purposes.

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The security of tenure to the African peasant farmers came through an indefeasible title which oral interviews noted with concern that it was a private document that either women never saw as it fall within the province of male custody. Acknowledging the significance of the document, women respondents as demonstrated by Noel Nabwangu, Jones Liaka and Sulumena Indushi noted that by the mere mention of possessing the title by their husbands, they were encouraged and the African peasants by large to invest his labour and profits into the progressive development of the African peasant farms. The security of tenure therefore, as noted by Anne Thurston required the registration of the enclosed parcel of land for the African peasant to have a land title deed which apart from providing psycho-security to the African peasant in Kakamega, the African peasant was to use the tittle deed as asurety to access agricultural credit that would be adequate enough to meet the requirements of the agricultural venture one was to be engaged in reality the land registration process rendered the traditional land authority that was vested in the traditional council of elders redundant.

At this point the communal land ownership and the power of the council of elders (abakofu) to distribute alwangerekha diminished as the people engaged directly with the state to register their pieces of land. In addition, the plan proposed technical assistance to be extended to the African peasants to enable them develop and model their farms on sound professionally technical lines which bear in mind the ecological conditions of Kakamega in mind. The plan with regard to technical assistance went further to propose an agricultural bias to the education of the African peasants children whom the study affirms gave them the progressive skills to assist in the technical

production and management on the land. With these recommendations again Kakamega had ahead start in matters of provision of sound technical assistance to the African peasant.

In 1951, for example, Bukura Farm Institute had dispatched 98 African peasant instructors to provide technical assistance to the people in their localities. At the moment, the institute was training more African instructors among them 20 women. The study holds that the involvement of women in agricultural training went to the core pillar of the agricultural sector in Kakamega, for as research participants led by Noel Shiholo, Jones Naliaka and Sulumena Shitendesa affirmed the position held by Gavin Kitching most of the agrarian production was women dominated with men occasionally coming to clear the virgin land and do ground breaking of the land at the beginning of the agricultural season. Therefore, by training women, they would not only disseminate the information more accurately to fellow women in their localities but also were eager to put to effective and efficient practice whatever they had learned on their farms. Besides the extension services provided by the African Instructors trained at Bukura and Siriba, the institutions equally were open to farmers for visits which they could learn a thing or two to apply on their farms. In 1951 alone for instance over 931 African peasant farmers visited Bukura Farm Institute to gain skills that they then were to apply on their farms. In the spirit of providing agricultural education to the children of the African peasants, Bukura Farm Institute trained an additional 11 teachers in 1951.

The training of teachers came on the back drop of the introduction of agricultural

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422 Ibid.
423 Gavin Kitching, Class and Economic Change in Kenya
education to both secondary schools and primary schools with demonstration plots by
the Agricultural Department through the District Education office.424

With the Swynnerton masterpiece in place, henceforth, African peasant agrarian
trajectory was projectily transformed. From the late 1950s, the research participants led
by Philip Nabwangu, Winston Wekesa and Upande Omusia affirmed most family units
started reverting back to the oluanyi housing system which permitted the committing
and consolidation of the family land under the entitlement of the family head.425 This
system allowed the small and minute scattered and subdivided family land units to be
blocked together into one farming economic unit that permitted the application of the
best farming practice as per the master plan like rotational farming, application of
manure and permitted tending to crops in a satisfactory manner as learned from Siriba
and Bukura.426 With these practices the research participants affirmed improved and
satisfactory crop yields to the land units, which not only met the home food demand
but at the same time yielded satisfactory cash returns to the households.427

In the context of the Kenyan case, the Swynnerton Plan was an economic strategy
prescribed by the London metropolitant authorities to tranquilize the ensuing Mau Mau
through an invigorated resuscitation of the African peasant economy particularly in the
reserves. For the African peasant petty bourgeoisie, the plan allowed non-restriction on
the number of land acreage an African peasant could hold.428 Saul Bunyali an oral
interviewee who eventually ended up owning expansive farms in Kakamega and Trans
Nzoia noted having started from a small portion of land back in Maragoli before

425Norman Humphrey, The Liguru and the Land
426Noel Shiholo, Jones Naliaka and Sulumena Shitendesa. See also, R. J.M Swynnerton, (1955). A Plan
to Intensify the Development of African Agriculture in Kenya
427R.M. Maxon, Fantastic prices
Nairobi: Government Printers.
accumulating by buying out his neighbors and venturing out into Bungoma and Trans Nzoia initially as a group of three and finally breaking away from the trio to acquire his current possession, what Chavasu terms as the Maragoli diaspora.\(^{429}\) Saul Bunyali further indicated having relied on credit facilities from friends, limited credit companies and eventually Agricultural Financial Cooperation which aided people like him and other land lords like Ambwere to arrive at their present destination.\(^{430}\) The same explanations were replicated by Philip Nabwangu in reference to Thomas Itemere and Francis Andabwa of Idakho. The study maintains its position that the self-agentive spirit among the African peasants was intandem with the plans proposal that the African peasant farmer was to have access to medium and or long-term agricultural credit by offering his land as security to authorized bodies.\(^{431}\)

With the rising political temperatures in the colony and laced with the state of emergency, a political prescription was required as a matter of utmost urgency in order to blend well with the Swynnerton Plan. At this time the colonial office in London injected the Lyttelton Constitution concurrently with the Swynnerton Plan in the ailing colony with the intended effect of rapturing Mau Mau. The intersection of the Swynnerton Plan and the Lyttelton Constitution in 1954, only but provided palliative measures to Kenya’s ailing colonial status permitting the British an exit strategy both

\(^{429}\) Onzere Chavasu, The Making of the Maragoli diaspora
\(^{432}\) The Lyttelton Constitution was a proposed new constitutional arrangement for the Kenyan colony by the then Secretary of State for Colonies, Oliver Lyttelton. The proposal came amid the state of emergency with the state on a mission to defeat the Mau Mau revolt. The proposed Constitution was an attempt to attain inclusivity of the political system by crafting a multiracialism. The constitution provided for a council of ministers that comprised of two Asians and an African to be unofficial members to the Legislative Council. It further provided for an electoral system for African members to the Legislative Council. The Constitution’s life term was short lived as it ended up producing not the state hoped for moderates but radicle Africans who advocated for rapid progress towards majority rule. See Robert Maxon & Thomas Ofcansky, (2000). (2nd ed). Historical Dictionary of Kenya. London: The Scarecrow Press.
economically as per the Swynnerton Plan and politically as per the Lyttelton constitution. For the case of Kakamega, the intersection of the two produced a proto-capitalist class represented by Itemere, Wetiba Were, Ambwere, Andabwa and Bunyali, who expropriated the political power to their economic advantage with them particularly accumulating land and affirming the continuation of the capitalist system.

Affirmatively in Kakamega, the brand of African peasants who extorted political power were the ones who consolidate and accumulated lands both within and without Kakamega as per the Swynnerton plan. With the dual dosage of the Swynnerton Plan and the Lyttelton Constitution, the manifesting political economy temperatures failed to subside in the colony. The state of emergency and the general dissatisfaction by the general population in Kenya prompted Her Majesty the Queen to establish a commission to investigate and recommend the measures to be taken to improve the living standards of the people in the colony. Therefore, the Royal Commission was instituted to accomplish this mission.

5.4 The East African Royal Commission

In 1952, the governor of Kenya Sir Evelyn Baring declared a state of emergency in the colony which lasted through 1959. This declaration was as a result of the African peasant rebellion against the British colonial capitalist rule publicized as the Mau Mau rebellion. Although the state of emergency was a political situation, it warranted Her Majesty to establish the East African Royal Commission to investigate the problem. The study affirms that the problem witnessed at the time was not entirely political as the state of emergency per se, but, the deep-rooted economic and social issues which
underlie the political problem as affirmed by Kanogo.\textsuperscript{433} The East African Royal Commission was appointed in October 1952 which coincided with the state of emergency and its appointment was assented to on the 1\textsuperscript{st} of January 1953. The commission met for the first time on 4\textsuperscript{th} of February 1953 and travelled to Nairobi on 25\textsuperscript{th} February 1953 arriving the next day.\textsuperscript{434} While in Nairobi, the commission toured the East African region for three months; March, April and May, departing for London on the final day of May. As the commission indicated in its report they spent more time in Kenya due to the state of emergency:

\begin{quote}
“In our first tour we had thought it best to start with Kenya, which appeared to present the most serious problems and was in a disturbed state owing to the emergency,”\textsuperscript{435}
\end{quote}

This statement in the preface is an affirmation that the intention of Her Majesty’s appointment of the commission was neither Tanganyika nor Uganda, but Kenya as occasioned by the state of emergency. In the commission’s own perspective, it sought to examine the measures necessary to be taken to achieve an improved standard of living, including the introduction of capital to enable peasant farming to develop and expand production with reference to among others:

\begin{quote}
the economic development of the land already in occupation by the introduction of better farming methods; the adaptations or modifications in traditional tribal systems of tenure necessary for the full development of the land; the opening for cultivation and settlement of land at present not fully use; ...\textsuperscript{436}
\end{quote}

These points of reference by the commission confirms the deep-rooted socio-economic causes of the prevailing political scenario in African peasant areas like North Nyanza

\textsuperscript{436} Ibid.
and Kikuyuland. The bedrock of the state of emergency was majorly in the African zones, with Kakamega providing the classic example that swung the commission into action. In describing the situation in African areas Kakamega alike, which prompted the political agitations in the 1950s, Sir Philip Mitchell in his “The Agrarian Problem in Kenya” noted:

... they had no tools except small hand hoes, axes, wooden digging sticks and the like; no commerce as we understand it and no currency, although in some places barter of produce was facilitated the use of small shells; they had never heard of working for wages. They had no means of numbering except by their fingers or marking notches on a stick or knots in a piece of grass or fibre ...

While the study acknowledges that this was the case in Kakamega with the advent of colonialism the African peasants in Kakamega gradually transformed their agrarian sector and adapted the agrarian practices that were beneficial to them while restructuring their existing agrarian economy to accommodate the modifications as attested to Upande Omusia, Winston Wekesa and Philip Nabwangu. For instance as indicated by Maxon and Ochieng’ the replaced the wooden hoe with the iron one and as noted by Kitching by 1928 the people of Kakamega had already bought ox-drawn ploughs which revolutionized their agriculture, a position affirmed by the oral narrations by Sulumena Indushi Noel Shiholo and Winston Wekesa. As the Royal Commission report indicates, the African peasant in areas like Kakamega was of necessity a cultivator or a pastoralist or both. For Kakamega, the study notes that the people were both cultivators and pastoralists which affirms Kitching’s purchasing of ploughs as early as the 1920s and echoed by a research participant, Philip Nabwangu, Saul Bunyali and Upande Omusia, who noted that their plough pulling oxen were
requisitioned during the Second World War compelling them to resorting to the use of abullock.\textsuperscript{437}

Therefore, the African traditional system of agriculture in Kakamega was gradually being transformed as Saul Bunyali indicates land in the late 1950s was enclosed by hedges.\textsuperscript{438} According to Saul Bunyali and Upande Omusia the introduction of the enclosure system affected many communal aspects of rural Kakamega, for example the communal grazing of stock on uncultivated land. In addition, the late 1950s witnessed further lessons beneficial to the African peasant agriculture in Kakamega, as the African peasants from the area working on European farms in the adjacent highlands, they came into contact with a fixed system of farming which was much more yielding as compared to the traditional shifting cultivation, they further learnt as noted by the male research participants Saul Bunyali, Muhambi Muyeka and Upande Omusia that land is in itself a saleable asset as they witnessed it being bought and sold.\textsuperscript{439}

The Royal Commission raised concerns regarding the land policy in Kenya. In its report the commission points out; the highlands policy and the general tribal approach to the land question adopted in Kenya have introduced a rigidity which had affected the distribution of the population and has resulted in some people like Itemere, Wetiba Were, Ambwere, Andabwa and Bunyali as alluded to by Philip Nabwangu and Winston Wekesa, having more land while some were comparatively having less.\textsuperscript{440} The highland policy had seen Kakamega relegated to the later position which had seen most people with less land than they could productively use occasioned by the fact that Kakamega

\textsuperscript{437} Research participant Philip Nabwangu, Saul Bunyali and Upande Omusia


\textsuperscript{439} Oral research participants; Saul Bunyali, Muhambi Muyeka and Upande Omusia

was an African peasant reserve and it was generally characterized by geometric population growth rate resulting into an overcrowded area as ponted out by Chavasu and Maxon. However, the pressure of the late 1940s through 1950s saw the peasants migrating to other areas like Lugari where land was more.\footnote{Chavasu, the making of the maragoli diaspora} In equal measure, the group of people with more land was also present within Kakamega, oral informants confirmed that people like Andabwa, Bunyali and Ambwere had bought land from their neighbours and had more land while their neighbours had limited land. As the commission pointed out, the highlands policy had encouraged a widespread belief that security in the land can only be ensured on a racial or tribal basis. This was compounded by the fact that the circumstances of the early alienations of land to Europeans caused African grievances which, despite the subsequent attempts to put matters right, had coloured the whole outlook of a large section of the African population towards land matters.\footnote{East Africa Royal Commission 1953-1955 Report. Presented by the Secretary for the colonies to Parliament by Command of Her Majesty. June 1955, London: Her Majesty’s Stationary Office.} In Kakamega, the rise of African petty bourgeoisie engendered suspicion with regards to land in relation to other community members. As Sir Philip Mitchell describes in his written submission to the commission; there is already occurring in most congested areas a process of enclosure and purchase of land in Kakamega by the more prosperous Africans, and this process seems likely to increase in speed and extent as economic replaces subsistence agriculture.\footnote{Sir Philip Mitchell describes as these ‘complex and recalcitrant problems’ are briefly indicated in the Royal Commission’s terms of reference, and are set forth in more detail in the commission’s report as his despatch No. 193 of 16th November, 1951} He further recommends that for areas like Kakamega; it is inevitable that tribal systems of tenure be profoundly modified under the combined impact of cash farming and pressure of population, both of which it is ill-designed to cope.\footnote{Ibid.}
the Royal Commission report, this caused some resistance to better land use in Kakamega even when the African peasant was to benefit from the same.

The Royal Commission noted in respect to the accessibility of credit to the African peasants like those in Kakamega; there was a considerable degree of misunderstanding among many African peasants about the conditions under which loans to them were normally made. This indicates the failure on the part of the many peasant Africans in Kakamega to understand the negotiable nature of any acceptable security. The commission indicates that the peasants like those of Kakamega must realize that they can only expect to borrow on the security of land iff the land is a negotiable asset.\textsuperscript{445}

While the study concurs with the commission on the need to commercialize land as an asset to be utilized as security in accessing credit, the study maintains that the small portions of land held by peasants in Kakamega in the 1950s could not guarantee any meaningful credit to invest in the peasant agrarian sector. Moreover, traditional land tenure system in Kakamega did not permit the commercialization of land and its subsequent registration in order for the title deed to be utilized as a security to accessing credit by the peasants in Kakamega.

These, the study believes warranted the Royal Commission to recommend the removal of customary forms of land tenure system which had restricted the negotiability of land,\textsuperscript{446} although the study holds that this alone would not be sufficient in ensuring that new capital would be forthcoming to improve African peasant agriculture in Kakamega. The removal of the restrictions for the case of Kakamega the study affirmed went hand in hand with the introduction of legislation that provided for chattels mortgages and

\textsuperscript{446} Ibid.
crop and as rightfully put by the commission, the existing legal restrictions on the
granting of credit to African peasants like in Kakamega had to be revised. In the same
breath, the government in Kakamega to established and extended the scope of the Land
Banks with attempts made to enlist cooperatives into long-term lending. 447

On the African labour frontier, the Royal Commission hinted to concealed
unemployment or under-employment in the congested areas. 448 Kakamega being one
of such congested areas of colonial Kenya, the study indicates that most of the
population was dispersed in the various productive sectors within and without
Kakamega viz; gold mining, worked in the neighbouring Uasin Gishu, Trans-Nzoia,
and the Lumbwa, 449 yet the population that remained worked on the household land and
produced for both consumption and sale of the surplus as evidenced by the 1951 Annual
Report. As acknowledged by the commission, however, low as it appeared, subsistence
farming in areas like Kakamega provided the real incomes to the peasant farmer. The
commission aptly recommended the solution to African peasant agricultural problem
to be important not merely as a means of achieving better land usage but also raising
the real income of the cultivator. The African labour force in reserves like Kakamega
needed the stabilization of the labour within Kakamega. Although the African peasant
in Kakamega was blamed for low productivity even in the reserves due to the lack of
technical skills, the study established a variety of factors that contributed to this
situation; poor physique, endemic disease, under-nourishment, 450 among others.

447 Ibid.
448 Ibid.
449 Native Affairs Report 1951
450 KNA:PC/NZA/3/2/8. Senior Medical Officer Nyanza Province to the Provincial Commissioner
Nyanza Province
The study affirms the position held by the Commission that for motivation and effective use of African labour in the adjacent highlands, the state purchased, or if necessary compulsorily acquired, in the highlands that enabled farm workers to have village dwelling plots on which they built houses for their families as labourers made significant contributions to their subsistence requirements.\footnote{East Africa Royal Commission 1953-1955 Report. Presented by the Secretary for the colonies to Parliament by Command of Her Majesty. June 1955. London: Her Majesty’s Stationary Office.} By recommending that government must either purchase or compulsorily acquired land in the white highlands for the sake of the African peasants, the Commission essentially recognized the two most significant troubles that potentially limited the effective and efficient utilization of labour in Kakamega. First, the Commission admits that the African peasant reserves like Kakamega were too congested and therefore there was no land for the expansion of African peasant agriculture hence the under-utilization of labour; second, though African peasant subsistence production produced a class of petty bourgeois, majority of the peasants did not afford the amounts of monies required to purchase land for African peasant use in the highlands. Equally, the racial restrictions placed on labour did not permit the African utilization of the highlands for their own subsistence use.

These, the study acknowledges provided a coordinated and systematic approach to sound African peasant agricultural trajectory in Kakamega, where economical land usage then depended on the rational application of labour, capital, knowledge and skills to the available natural resources assessed in terms of inputs and the returns. This was after the African peasants in Kakamega realized that customary agricultural systems were already untenable in such crowded areas owing to the increased population and declining yields necessitated by soil erosion, hence the African peasants in Kakamega restructured their agriculture to achieve increased productivity from their land by
partially commercializing their traditional agricultural system. The study attributes the partial commercialization of African peasant agriculture in Kakamega in the 1950s to the fact that memories of famine were always with them and they were reluctant to change the ways of life unless a better one was demonstrated to them, as failure may mean not only loss of wealth but starvation.

For the peasants in Kakamega, any new methods which were demonstrated were, therefore, to have been proved in conditions similar to the peasants’ and which they can imitate with the means at their disposal which rendered Bukura a vital institution in the area. While the African peasant desire in Kakamega was to move from a communal to the western individual society which of course was a gradual process, the study maintains that the objective of the state was to teach the African peasants in Kakamega not only to appreciate the need for the gradual changes taking place, but also to bring them about themselves, and to regard the agrarian transformation as their own affair to be achieved by themselves with the state assistance where need be.

The general agricultural trend in peasant agriculture in Kakamega is shown through the Gross Domestic Product in agriculture country wide. Peasant subsistence production in the area increased by an average of 7 percent between 1954 and 1960\(^{452}\). Revealed by the 1960 Economic Survey and as tabulated below

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Table 5.2: Gross Domestic Agricultural Product, 1954-1959

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>1954</th>
<th>1955</th>
<th>1956</th>
<th>1957</th>
<th>1958</th>
<th>1959</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>£ million (Agriculture)</td>
<td>73.96</td>
<td>75.46</td>
<td>82.28</td>
<td>85.23</td>
<td>87.34</td>
<td>89.25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>£ million (Total Government Services)</td>
<td>158.2</td>
<td>181.06</td>
<td>193.38</td>
<td>205.91</td>
<td>208.01</td>
<td>215.28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Percentages</td>
<td>46.8</td>
<td>41.7</td>
<td>41.3</td>
<td>41.4</td>
<td>42.0</td>
<td>41.5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Source:* Economic Survey, 1960

With an average percentage that was almost constant between 1954 and 1959, agricultural production in Kakamega took the largest share of the domestic product; this therefore, reflected the high agricultural production in kakamega. The study attributes this agricultural grow in the period to the receptiveness of the African peasants in Kakamega to the government efforts to revamp agriculture in the mid and late 1950s. The high level of agricultural production in Kakamega was in line with both the provisions of the Swynnerton Plan and Royal Commission Report. For instance, in Kakamega which was part of the larger Nyanza province, 350, 594 acres of land had been enclosed and consolidated, with 2512 farm layouts completed by the end of the year 1960. This observation was echoed by Saul Bunyali who indicated in the oral interview of people having “beautiful” fenced farms and they were given titles which went hand in hand with farm planning. Expert advisory was also advanced in Kakamega which crowned the utility of the Swynnerton Plan and the Royal Commission Report in Kakamega. The fruits of the two committees for the peasants

Kakamega were visible between 1958/59 when they realized 19.5 percent increase value of maize which resulted in £9.1 million of their marketed out put.\textsuperscript{455} Maize was the single largest cash crop that benefited the peasants in the area most to realize the 19.5 percent increase.

\textbf{5.5 Peasant Agrariculture, 1945 to 1963}

The year 1945 as already discussed was a year of mixed blessings. Although the January to April rains were not substantial, the May to September rains were of immense agricultural value to Kakamega.\textsuperscript{456} Although the quantity of maize crop produced by the African peasants in Kakamega dropped to 316, 264 bags compared to the 333, 607 bags in 1944,\textsuperscript{457} what Maxon termed the “fantastic prices” assured the African peasants’ production in the area of staying afloat. In the year 1946, crop production by the African peasants was more than satisfactory. The Department of Agriculture Annual Report for the year indicated that apart from crops largely consumed at home the district always exported its, produce and the study affirms that the year 1946 was no exception. As evidenced by the Native Affairs Report and affirmed by the oral research interviews, the main African peasant crops exported were maize, mtama, wimbi, simsim and cassava.\textsuperscript{458} The study maintains that despite the satisfactory production, unfortunately it did not correspond to satisfactory outcomes in the care for the land. While the District Agricultural Officer blamed this on getting the African peasants to participate in the field maintenance activities like terracing, the African peasants as indicated by chief Agoi and acknowledged by both the oral interviews and the 1946 Annual Report

\textsuperscript{455} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{456} Department of Agriculture, Annual Report, 1945. Nairobi: Government Printer
\textsuperscript{457} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{458} North Kavirondo district, Native Affairs Report, 1946
blamed the state for using propaganda\textsuperscript{459} and when the African peasants knew the propaganda peddled by the state, the study affirms the peasants’ withdraw to invest in soil conservation measures.

While the year 1946 was satisfactory, the year 1947 was far much worse. According to G.W Anderson the District Agricultural Officer ventilated in the report as the year being wholesomely very poor,\textsuperscript{460} as African peasant agricultural activities in the first quarter were hampered by the wet weather. Equally, severe hailstorms badly damaged African peasant crops coupled with extensive weed growth.\textsuperscript{461} With the above, the study foresaw food shortage in 1948. Anderson while talking about soil conservation lamented of lack of co-operation between the indigenous land elders, \textit{olugongos} and chiefs, which according to Anderson, naturally hindered the work.\textsuperscript{462} This confirms chief Agoi of Maragolis’s position although not indicated by Anderson; the position was that the state’s propaganda was not selling to the African peasants in Kakamega to maximally engage in soil conservation. In his Handing Over Report, Mr. C.H. Williams in 1948 acknowledged the establishment of \textit{Shikusa} experimental farm prison which he indicated was to aid Bukura in the area. Further, Williams the outgoing District Commissioner in his Handing Over Report confirmed that the year was bad and the district was experiencing food shortage. He called upon the incoming District Commissioner Mr. C. Campbell to help the administration to ensure the attitude of the African peasants towards soil conservation changes.\textsuperscript{463}

\textsuperscript{459}Department of Agriculture, Annual Report, 1946. Nairobi: Government Printer. See also, R.M Maxon, \textit{Going their separate ways}.
\textsuperscript{461}Ibid.
\textsuperscript{463}North Nyanza District handing over report, with Mr. C.H. Williams the outgoing D.C. giving a general picture of all activities in the district and updating the incoming D.C. Mr. C. Campbell in 1949.
In his first Annual Report in 1949, Campbell pointed out that although the long rains delayed, delaying the sowing of crops by one month, the short rains were adequate and on time.\textsuperscript{464} As a result, crops did very well especially sorghum, cassava, simsim and sweet potatoes. The study emphasize the agency of the African peasants in Kakamega given that they turned to drought resistant crop having gone through a difficult 1948.

The District Commissioner noted that from May 1949, the African peasants seemed to have engaged in a self-invoked campaign as they planted maximum quantities of root crops in order to consume while selling a greater portion of the grain crops to the hunger-stricken coast and central province as well Tanganyika.\textsuperscript{465}

The year 1949 was even a better year to the African peasant in Kakamega according to the evaluation made by the D.C., the D.C noted an impressive improvement in the farming methods of the African peasants and rightly accepted the marked consciousness with which the African peasants adapted to knew farming methods; \textit{...for a serious mistake might cost him his family’s food supply for the year.}\textsuperscript{466} This position was reinforced by Sulumeta Indush and Jones Liaka in oral interviews who stressed the fact that their families were of priority as they engaged in agricultural production before thinking of the market.

The African peasant agrarian production situation in Kakamega continued looking up as production in 1950 was more than satisfactory. In 1950, adequate supplies of food existed in the district. However, towards the end of the year, the peasants were histant to sale their produce owing to the fact that the short rains were not as expected. The annual report noted that the 1950 harvest had considerably increased and there was still

\textsuperscript{464} Department of Agriculture, Annual Report, 1949. Nairobi: Government Printer
\textsuperscript{465} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{466} Ibid.
more than ample room for further increases.\textsuperscript{467} The increased African peasant production in Kakamega the study accredits to contour ploughing and the fair cover of grass filter strips which conserved the soil for satisfactory productivity.

In 1951, the crop production in Kakamega hit another climatic and natural challenge. Crops were greatly damaged by excessive rainfall and hailstorm which made the African peasants in the area to avoid selling the produce they had harvested. The situation was even absolved by the fact that the short rain crops did well and they slightly offset the shortage.\textsuperscript{468} With the destructive long rains, the African peasant farmers resorted to planting more of the root crops that not only matured with a comparatively shorter time but were also famine resistant. For instance the Native Affairs Report for the year of very large areas of sweet potatoes and cassava having been planted knowing that they will be urgently needed in 1952 owing to the substantial failure of other food crops.\textsuperscript{469}

Confirming the fears in 1952, Mr. Pound the then District Agricultural Officer noted that the planted crops were a partial or complete failure and the estimate for exportable surplus reduced. While the climate was to blame for the 1952-53 crop failure, oral evidence adduced by Winston Wekesa, Upande Omusia and Philip Nabwangu blamed the failure on the visit by Rt. Hon. Oliver Lyttelton (the secretary of State for the Colonies). The oral participants noted with much concern that while at Mumias, Mulama Shiundu (the then president of the Appeal Tribunal) presented the curved golden stool to Oliver Lyttelton which according to them was an abomination as the

\textsuperscript{467}Department of Agriculture, Annual Report, 1950. Nairobi: Government Printer  
\textsuperscript{468}Department of Agriculture, Annual Report, 1951. Nairobi: Government Printer  
\textsuperscript{469}Ibid.
stool was a preserve of the paramount chief Mumia.\textsuperscript{470} The ancestors according to Saul Bunyali and Philip Nabwangu were angry with the people and punished them with the bad agricultural cycle. The so called bad omen in the year 1952 according to Winstone Wekesa, Philip Nabwangu and Saul Bunyali began with the visit by the Rt. Hon. A.T. Lennox Boyd (minister of state for colonies) accompanied by a member for Agriculture and Natural Resources Major F.W. Cavendish-Bentinck.\textsuperscript{471} The complications according to Philip Nabwangu was testified the unfortunate happenings of that year like the passing on of His Majesty King George the VI noting that it happened just a few days after the arrival of Her Majesty the Queen and His Royal Highnesses in Nairobi in January.\textsuperscript{472} These happenings the study notes were political factors that contributed to the poor harvest considering their coincidence with the declaration of the State of Emergency. All these happenings were laced by the \textit{omuimo} ceremony (the mourning of the late Paramount Chief Mumia). Notable during \textit{omuimo} was Shitawa’s adornment of \textit{Isindu} (a quail). The interpretation by Upande Omusia of the presence of the \textit{isindu} at the \textit{omuimo} ceremony was fundamental concern. To him, the \textit{isindus} signified like the piercing cry of the bird, his voice was to be heard everywhere in the district, but he further noted that the piercing cry of the bird was sounding an alarm to the region of something bad going to happen and since the bird is an agrarian one, something bad was to happen to their agricultural sector which the study affirms was marked with the total crop failure in 1952-3. The study maintains that these, were the peasants’ oral traditions way of explaining the the agricultural problems at the time and correlating them within the overall happenings in the country at the time.

\textsuperscript{470}Oral research participants Winston Wekesa, Upande Omusia and Philip Nabwangu. See also, Department of Agriculture, Annual Report, 1952. Nairobi: Government Printer

\textsuperscript{471}Department of Agriculture, Annual Report, 1952. Nairobi: Government Printer

\textsuperscript{472}Ibid.
The year 1954 equally witnessed a significant tour by Sir Evelyn Barring accompanied by the Acting Chief Native Commissioner, Mr. Turnbull to access the natives state of affairs\(^\text{473}\) after which the East Africa Royal Commission Report was released and the economic prescription of the Swynnerton Plan injected into the African peasants’ agricultural sector in Central and Western Kenya which Kakamega was part of. Generally the year 1954 was favourable for agriculture as the rainfall and the seasons were normal throughout the district and conducive to good crops.\(^\text{474}\) The food situation and the African peasant production in Kakamega was entirely satisfactory throughout the year with a large surplus available for export. The agricultural officer noted an increase in maize production and an increase in the acreage of cassava planted as an insurance against locust invasions should they occur.\(^\text{475}\) At this particular point, the North Kavirondo District Annual Report justified the provisions of the Swynnerton plan by indicating as a concern that the fragmentation of the land and uneconomic subdivision of holdings was a major obstacle holding up the introduction of better farming methods in Kakamega.\(^\text{476}\) This problem the study affirms was brought about by the increasing population with limited land expansion for African peasant agriculture in Kakamega.

The year 1955 was a divisive year for North Kavirondo district as plans were formulated to divide the district into two; Elgon Nyanza (containing the entire district north of the River Nzoia except for North Wanga Location) and North Nyanza (containing North Wanga Location and all the locations south of the River Nzoia). The division took place on 1\(^\text{st}\) January 1956 and was inaugurated by the Governor at

\(^{473}\text{Department of Agriculture, Annual Report, 1954. Nairobi: Government Printer}\)
\(^{474}\text{Department of Agriculture, Annual Report, 1954. Nairobi: Government Printer}\)
\(^{475}\text{Native Affairs Report, 1954}\)
\(^{476}\text{The Swynnerton Plan, 1954. See also, Department of Agriculture, Annual Report, 1954. Nairobi: Government Printer}\)
Bungoma on 10th January 1956.\textsuperscript{477} This division was well welcomed with high yields as the agricultural officer stated; good crops of finger millet and sorghum were harvested and most was kept for home consumption due to the unattractive price offered by the Produce Control.\textsuperscript{478} This confirms the fact that the African peasants in Kakamega were not exclusively influenced by the markets in their production as rightly noted by Peter Ndege and R.M. Maxon.

As Kenya approached independence, the independence fever was equally witnessed in Kakamega’s agricultural sector as the pre-independence harvests were poor. In 1956 for instance very wet January and February prevented the land preparations and the continuous heavy rains interfered with the weeding. On the contrary, June and July witnessed a prolonged dry spell which was immediately followed by widespread and violent hailstorms in August.\textsuperscript{479} With such a bad weather, a worst harvest in Kakamega was witnessed in the pre-independence period. By 1961, the African peasants in Kakamega were accepting the wake up calls for land consolidation and enclosure system, even with this the African peasants in the area were keen to ensure that they applied improved methods of production like the use of manure and line planting.\textsuperscript{480} In reality a total of 9800 farms in Kakamega were enclosed which translated to 70,998 acres in 1961.\textsuperscript{481} At independence therefore, the state was to deal with the challenge of land consolidation and enclosure which the study maintains as already discussed was the province of the rising petty bourgeoisie in Kakamega.

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\textsuperscript{477}Department of Agriculture, Annual Report, 1955. Nairobi: Government Printer\\
\textsuperscript{478}Department of Agriculture, Annual Report, 1955. Nairobi: Government Printer\\
\textsuperscript{479}Department of Agriculture, Annual Report, 1956. Nairobi: Government Printer\\
\textsuperscript{480}Department of Agriculture, Annual Report, 1961. Nairobi: Government Printer\\
\textsuperscript{481}Ibid.
\end{flushleft}
The period 1954 to 1962 witnessed a population growth rate of over 3 percent.\footnote{Government of Kenya (1964), National Development Plan for the period from 1\textsuperscript{st} July, 1964, to 30\textsuperscript{th} June, 1970. Nairobi} This was significant for the agricultural sector in Kakamega such that it increased the size of the agricultural labour force. This ensured a guaranteed increase in agricultural production. The prosperity of the agricultural sector in Kakamega was when the sector increasingly becoming market oriented. The trends in agriculture and livestock production in the peasant farms in Kakamega increased at an average rate of 7.5 percent.\footnote{Ibid.} This was attributed to the state’s high investments in the agricultural sector since 1958. For instance in the financial year 1962/63, the state invested £13.49 millions in agriculture and almost 40 percent of that amount went to western Kenya Kakamega included.\footnote{Government of Kenya (1964), National Development Plan for the period from 1\textsuperscript{st} July, 1964, to 30\textsuperscript{th} June, 1970. Nairobi} For Kakamega, experienced continued growth just like in most parts of Kenya. Peasant agriculture in the area grew at a rate of 4.2 percent from independence to 1970.\footnote{Kakamega District Development plan, 1964-1970} Although this growth was below what had been witnessed in the previous years as indicated in the earlier chapters, it was a fairly high production rate compared to the general agricultural growth rate in the country of 4.5 percent.\footnote{Peter O. Ndege, (2000), Modernisation of the Economy, 1964-1970. In B.A. Ogot & W.R. Ochieng’ (eds) Kenya: The Making of A Nation. A Hundred Years of Kenya’s History, 1895-1995} As indicated by Hazlewood Arthur\footnote{Hazlewood Arthur, (1979), The Economy of Kenya: The Kenyatta Era. Oxford: Oxford University Press} and echoed by Saul Bunyali in oral interviews, the agricultural sector was booming in the 1960s and it contributed to the 40 percent GDP while employing way over 68 percent of the African peasants in the study area. In Kakamega, the growth between 1963 and 1970 was attributed to the 1965 expansive settlement scheme that was rapidly shaping up in the soy, Lukuyani and Lumakanda and Turbo areas of Kakamega.
Anyende Muyeka indicated having encouraged his sons to go to the schemes with only one intention; to increase family production which back in Isukha, land for agricultural production was shrinking by the increasing number of sons in the families affirming this point, Sulumen Indushi indicated that the lwangelekha were no long there as the families expanded rapid to take up such lands. The study notes that the 1965 policy by the state of the settlement scheme enabled the state accomplish the one million acre dream for the state while for the peasants in Kakamega it increased their agricultural productivity until the early 1970s when they gradually moved towards sugarcane farming. Besides these, Noel Nabwangu notes that when the people of Isukha and Idakho were allowed to freely engage in the production of tea and Bukura Agricultural College together with Siriba advanced to the people even more advanced maize seeds, agriculture became the darling of most women as food shortage in the area became a thing of the past. 488 This point is corroborated by the Kakamega District Development Plan 1974-1978, which affirmed that in the previous planning period the primary objective of intensification of agriculture had been achieved. 489 With the liberalization of agricultural production in Kakamega, the study maintains, that it did not only increase the acreage under agrarian small scale production, but, also increased the yield production per hectare in Kakamega which quranteed an upward agricultural trend in Kakamega then. The classical example that shows an increase in production in the area is the increase in the areas stable food which equally doubled up as a commercial commodity; maize. The table below shows the production trend of maize in the out put value in Kakamega between 1964 and 1970

488 Ol Noel Nabwangu
489 Kakamega District Development Plan, 1974-1978
Table 5.3: Value of maize marketed output from 1964 to 1970

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<tr>
<td>Amount in millions</td>
<td>1.90</td>
<td>1.85</td>
<td>2.40</td>
<td>5.22</td>
<td>5.41</td>
<td>3.86</td>
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The table 5.3 indicates an ascending trend in the amount marketed in value, which the study holds was proportional to the quantities produced given that the peasants in Kakamega mostly treaded in their surplus. However, the region experienced a sharp decline from the 5.41 millions in 1968 to 3.86 millions in 1969 and eventually to 2.83 millions in 1970. The study attributes the decline to two principal factors: First, as revealed by Winestone Wekesa and Zaina Nasaka in the oral interviews, Mumias Sugar was taking root at the time most people moved to cultivated their with sugarcane in order to cash in from the new venture. The point is reinforced by Mukhwana Duncan in his M.A thesis producing sugar to buy hunger, 1970-2010. Second, as Noel Nabwangu and Sulumena Indushi indicated in the oral interviews, towards the end of the 1960s, most families relaxed their production efforts as they anticipated their sons who had gone into the schemes to produce for the families back home. The study therefore, affirms that the engagement in sugarcane production and the withdrawal by families to wait for food from scheme not only affected the amount of land under food production in Kakamega, but also the quantities of food produced as exemplified by maize in table 4.3.
5.6 Summary of Chapter Five

The chapter analyzed the Post-World War Two pre-independence period demonstrating how the war impacted on the African agrarian ethics in Kakamega and how the pre-independence dynamics influenced peasant production in Kakamega. As illustrated in chapter four, the policy biases during the Second World War had seen the state favour increased African peasant agrarian production in Kakamega at the expense of soil conservation.

In the post-war period as evidenced by this chapter, the state shifted the priorities in state policies and soil conservation in pre-independent Kakamega received the pride of place. The 1949 famine situation was a wakeup call for the African peasants in Kakamega to cooperate with state regarding soil conservation. The use of propaganda for soil conservation was highly detested by the African peasants led by one critical colonial chief, Chief Agoi. The political happenings in the state in 1952 had a bearing on the African peasant agricultural sector in Kakamega, the declaration of the state of emergency coincided with the visit of both Lennox Boyyd and Oliver Lyttelton to Kakamega which laid the foundation for the constitution of the East Africa Royal Commission,

The Swynnerton Plan and the Lyttelton constitution. The significance of the *Omuimo* in Lureko was equally underscored as well as the role of the handing over of the Wanga golden stool by Shiundu to Oliver Lyttelton and the symbolic presence of the *Isindu* in the functionary of Shitawa. With the Swynnerton Plan in place, the sub-division of the district politics took center stage which culminated in the division of North Kavirondo District into North Nyanza (Kakamega) and Elgon Nyanza. In the pre-independence period, the 1959 dry spell marked the end of the state of emergency and the state’s concentration on land consolidation and enclosure just before independence laid the
foundation to the independence period as the next chapter will detail. At independence, the study maintains that land consolidation was the primary responsibility of the state as enshrined in Sessional Paper Number 10 of 1965, the Independence Constitution and the KANU Manifesto. These policy documents will be scrutinized with the subsequent chapter relating them to their respective relevance to African peasant production in Kakamega. Chapter six hereby examines the agrarian trajectory in Kakamega between 1963 and 1970 affirming that land consolidation and the enclosure system as per the session paper no. 10 of 1965 was on a preserve of the few African peasant petty bourgeoisie like Andabwa, Ambwere and Bunyali in Kakamega.
CHAPTER SIX
THE INDEPENDENCE PERIOD, 1963-1970

6.1 Introduction

Prior to independence as examined in the previous chapter, soil conservation and emancipation politics were pivotal in the interpretation of African agrarian trajectory in Kakamega during the study period. Towards the liquidation of colonialism, the state policies revolved around enclosure system of agriculture and land consolidation as advocated for by the Agriculture and Land Development (ALDEV), the Swynnerton Plan and the East African Royal Commission of 1954. All these policies as discussed earlier favoured the bourgeoisie class in Kakamega as opposed to the ordinary African peasant farmer in the area. The present chapter therefore affirms that with independence the status quo was to continue through 1970. When political independence from the British was achieved in 1963, the new Government initiated programmes of affirmative action and social reform aimed at engendering improved agrarian opportunities for the previously disenfranchised peasant African Kenyans.

This chapter sets out to examine how changes in political ‘ideology’ at the national level induced critical change in the organisation and constitution of the African peasant agrarian sector with specific reference to Kakamega. The chapter investigates the pivotal role of the new state in reversing exclusionary closure in the agrarian sector and facilitating the entry of Africans through the introduction of new agrarian policies and programmes. Such affirmative action policies and programmes were instituted as restitution for the injustices suffered by African peasants in Kakamega under colonialism and in anticipation of the agricultural productive shortages in the wake of departing settlers in post-independence. The chapter draws attention to the consequences of such action policies and programmes and demonstrates that although
the growing participation of African peasants in agriculture between 1963 and 1970 indicates success in reversing exclusions, their acceptance and integration remained a more mainstreamed objective.

6.2 Kenya’s Agrarian Economy at Independence

The attainment of independence in Kenya in general is viewed from two parallel philosophies; first, Marxist and Radical historians exemplified by Jaramogi Oginga Odinga and Bilddad Kagia have perceived the history of Kenya as a tale of neocolonialism.\textsuperscript{495} To these scholars, there hasn’t been any meaningful structural and economic transformation since the attainment of independence which created a loophole that permitted as research maintains the colonial policies of the late 1950s and the colonial institutions to thrive in the absence of an African/Kenya ideology/philosophy.\textsuperscript{496} The second philosophy which is the exact opposite of the first is the ‘Kenya nationalism’\textsuperscript{497} philosophy which retraces its roots in the colonial hegemony. According to this philosophy and as demonstrated by Jomo Kenyatta, Daniel Arap Moi and Thomas Joseph Odhiambo Mboya, Kenya was concerned with the eradication of colonial barriers to its transformation within the trade structures rather than changing the structure itself. With the overthrowing of the colonial state,

\textsuperscript{495} Neocolonialism is the policy and practice of using capital and other resources to influence economic and political hegemony over the independent nation (in this case Britain over Kenya) without necessarily reducing Kenya to colonial status. The neocolonialist scholars aver that independent Kenya’s economy has been distorted by the continued imperialism after independence by Britain which abnormally developed economic tentacles through industry and agriculture which were essential in complementing Britain’s complex economy. On Kenya it distorted the country’s independence dreams by instigating a dangerous continuation of specialization in raw materials production inherent with the hunger threat to all Kenyans. See William Ochieng’, “Independent Kenya, 1963-1986” in Ochieng’ W.R (1989) (Eds) A Modern History of Kenya 1895-1980. Nairobi; Evans Brothers Limited.

\textsuperscript{496} Kenya’s independence economic narrative is one perceived as a narrative of betrayal of pre-independence hopes and aspirations of the Kenyan people. See Oginga Odinga, (1967) Not Yet Uhuru

\textsuperscript{497} Nationalism is a multidimensional socio-economic construct reflected in a common identification with one’s ‘nation’. It maintains that nations should govern themselves free from unwarranted outside interference enshrined in self-determination. Kenyan Nationalism therefore was apolitical ideology oriented towards attainment and maintenance of self-governance from the British colonial masters. The primary objective of Kenyan Nationalism was political independence and no concern thereafter.
Kenya was left ideologically desolate as witnessed by lack of national interest, sense of nationhood and dignity after independence,\textsuperscript{498} as maintained by Upande Omusia, Winston Wekesa and Philip Nabwangu they expected that when the Europeans go their people especially their sons who fought during the war would take the lands that Europeans were sitting on but this never happened. This chapter maintains that to launch the analysis of the African peasant agrarian economy in Kenya on either of the two philosophies will not only be obscuring the African peasant agency which essentially operated beneath these philosophies but also be rather simplistic and general and by extension disregarding the peculiarity and specificity of the African peasant agrarian economy in Kakamega in the wee years of independence in Kenya.

6.3 Land Consolidation

At independence Kenya being an agricultural state, land for agrarian production became an emotive concern by the state. With the already contesting philosophical camps, the approach to the land question took a political twist especially when the independence constitution pronounced itself to the extent that the Africans peasants must pay for the land that they were to receive.\textsuperscript{499} For the case of Kakamega, although the settler lands were non-existent, this constitutional requirement provided an avenue for the petty bourgeoisie in Kakamega to venture out and purchase land for they had the means. Saul Bunyali narrated of how he took an opportunity to approach the first president through his ‘in-law’ Mbiu Koinange and managed to be given a loan by Agricultural Financial Corporation and the president saw to it that he got his expansive land in Trans-Nzoia. On the other hand, Philip Nabwangu and Anyende Muyeka acknowledged being informed by the Andabwa and William Shibaji that there were shambas available for


\textsuperscript{499} The Independence Constitution
sale but they could barely afford the minimum requirement of twenty percent down payment. They noted that the shambas were only meant for the bourgeoisie like, Andabwa, Bunyali, Itemere, Agoi and Ambwere. This position is affirmed by Chavasu in his work, the making of the Maragoli Diaspora and echoed by Ndege in his inaugural lecture on land kleptocracy in Kenya and evidenced by Saul Bunyali a beneficiary of the same citing his contemporaries like Ambwere and Agoi. Philip Nabwangu another oral interviewee indicated that prominent businessmen like Andabwa and Ashiono bought land immediately after independence both from their neighbours back in the villages and in the schemes, especially Lugari scheme.

The land question at independence, however, was rather a tag of war between the landless and the bourgeoisie. At independence for instance, Bildad Kaggia then a voice of the landless as exemplified by Kakamega noted that;

*Given the widespread landhunger that has existed among Africans as a result of the robbery by the British colonial Imperialists, the logical method to resolve the problem was to hand them to the cooperatives formed by landless Africans.*

In reality these would have solved the landless problem in Kakamega caused by the high population as Kaggia directly advocated for the free distribution of land to the many landless African peasants in areas like Kakamega. However, oral evidence pointed to the fact that the African peasants in Kakamega were reluctant to settle on the lands outside their ancestral homes, Philip Nabwangu and Saul Bunyali for instance recollected of how many people refused to go and settle on the farms outside Kakamega noting that they could not leave their grandfathers’ graves for any other land. To them, it was perceived as an abomination. The study maintains that this accounts for the

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reason why Kakamega has been congested till the 1970s as demonstrated by Booker Tate and Priscilla Shilaro.\textsuperscript{501}

The African petty bourgeoisie were opposed to the idea of distributing free land, led by Kenyatta and writing to Kaggia who was fighting for the landless, the bourgeoisie wanted land consolidation to continue in the capitalist manner which the landless could afford. In a letter addressed to Kaggia on 22 May 1964, Kenyatta expressed his serious concerns with Kaggia’s frequent attacks on the ministry of land and settlement’s policies and in particular Kenyatta was more concerned with Kaggia’s interference with land consolidation.\textsuperscript{502} As already indicated only the petty bourgeoisie in Kakamega had the financial power to consolidate land and other property which the study affirms remains the reason why most of the African peasants in Kakamega remained engaged in peasant production in the area. In general the state after independence dealt with the land issue by a massive resettlement of African peasants on the formerly European owned farms\textsuperscript{503} a program which the African peasants of Kakamega as illustrated by the oral interviewees were apprehensive about.

6.4 Independence and Agricultural Production in Kakamega

For the case of Kakamega, despite the presence of metropole agencies in the area and the multinational companies in Kakamega’s vicinity, the African peasant agrarian economy of the area remained predominantly controlled and guided at most times by the African peasant household subsistence ethos. This, the study holds was what guided Kenyatta in his address to the nation during the independence celebration ceremony when he noted:

\textsuperscript{501} Booker Tate, The Mumias Sugar Project. See also. Priscilla Shilaro, Failed Eldorado
\textsuperscript{502} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{503} Gavin Kitching, Class and Economic Change in Kenya
“Fellow countrymen, many people may think that, now that there is uhuru, now that I can see the sun of freedom shining, riches will pour down like manna from heaven. I tell you there will be nothing like heaven. We must all work hard, with our hands, to save ourselves from poverty, ignorance and diseases ... HARAMBEE!!!”

From this statement by Kenyatta on December 12, 1963, it is clear that the state was to pursue an economic path that had already been demonstrated by the African peasants of Kakamega in their peasant agrarian economy. Kenyatta’s use of the term ‘riches’ the study believes referred to the needs of the people and not necessarily to wealth in its simplistic definition. For the people of Kakamega as demonstrated by the earlier African peasant agrarian cartographies had employed the self-agency theory in their agrarian economy to acquire their ‘riches’. In the pursuit of their ‘riches’, the African peasants in Kakamega did not only work hard with their hands as indicated by the president in his speech but as demonstrated by Sulumena Indushi and Jones Liaka, they did so collectively as household and clan as well as family members which made Kenyatta to call it harambee meaning working hard collectively to attain riches and eliminate the three enemies of the day.

Kenyatta’s words we must work hard, with our hands in the case of Kakamega, signified the continuum of the self-agency by the people of Kakamega but more importantly, working with our hands signified the need for the rest of the country to mirror the African peasants of Kakamega and engage more in agrarian production which symbolize working with our hands in order to increase productivity and guided by self-agency and togetherness Kenya would be able to devour her independence enemies. However, for the rest of Kenya to replicate the African peasant agency in Kakamega which Noel Nabwangu, Jones Liaka and Sulumena Indushi indicated they had done over the years, the state needed a blueprint which was to not only guide the

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504 Norman Humphrey, The Liguru and the Land. See also. H.W.O. Okoth-Ogendo, Tenants of the Crown
process but also to harmonize the divergent philosophies, class conflicts and socio-economic interests that were a colonial legacy. This happened in 1965 with the production of Sessional Paper No. 10 of 1965: *African Socialism, and its Application to Planning in Kenya*. The primary objective of this guideline was to ensure ‘Africanization’ of the independence economy without harming the economy while preserving the society. The aim of the paper guaranteed the preservation of the African peasant Society like of Kakamega while empowering them in an agrarian economic sense.

6.5 The Coherence of African Socialism with African Peasant Production in Kakamega

Although at independence Kenya’s agricultural problems were acute, agriculture was a crucial springboard on which the state’s economic transformation was launched. For positive economic transformation to be realized, the state sought to harmonize the divergent and conflict viewpoints with regard to the economic direction the country was to take. The harmonization of the views came in form a policy document published by the government on 27th April 1965 popularly name Sessional Paper No. 10 of 1965, otherwise titled *African Socialism and its Application to Planning in Kenya*. The policy document set out guiding principles for Kenya’s progressive development strategies. The policy paper espoused in writing that Kenya was to develop on the solid basis of the concepts and philosophy of Democratic African Socialism. However, in

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505 Gavin Kitching, *Class and Economic Change in Kenya*

506 Sessional Paper No. 10 of 1965 was the states masterpiece plan that was meant to guide the embryonic state on its social-economic development path after Kenya attained independence. The policy paper was produced by Joseph Thomas Odhiambo Mboya who was the minister in charge of Planning and Economic Development, assisted by Emilio Mwai Kibaki who was an Assistant Minister in the same ministry. The policy paper emphasized the states commitment to the Africanization of the economy calling for equal opportunity; the right to private property ownership and advancing a mixed economy as the most ideal. See Robert Maxon and Thomas Ofcansky, (eds), *Historical Dictionary of Kenya*. London; Scarecrow Press Inc.
practice the study affirms that capitalism was fundamentally pursued by the state notwithstanding the socialist approach to life in general and to the African peasant agrarian economy in Kakamega. The policy paper’s applicability to the African peasants in Kakamega was well captured in Kenyatta’s president’s statement in the paper’s preamble in which Kenyatta wrote: Let all the people of our country roll up their sleeves in a spirit of self-help to create the true fruits of *uhuru*. This is the true meaning of *harambee*.\(^{507}\)

From the president’s statement the study affirms two fundamental positions; first from a philosophical point of review, the president’s call on the people to embrace the spirit of self-help simply affirms the applicability of the agency theory which guided the study in the analysis of the agrarian transformation in Kakamega. It therefore, confirms that the persistent resilience of African peasant agriculture in Kakamega was hinged on self-agency and as such Kenyatta wished to extrapolate the same guiding ethics in what he termed self-help. According to the Sulumena Indushi, when the president visited Kakamega in the late 1960s, the only thing the president gave them after dancing for him was to tell to go and work for themselves in groups that would benefit them.\(^{508}\)

Second, the president’s call upon the people to roll up their sleeves if they ever dreamt of enjoying the fruits, from a literal point of view, implied the need to intensify agrarian production just like the African peasants in Kakamega had done and realized improved yields over time as demonstrated by the earlier chapters. To Kenyatta, only self-devotion by the people of Kenya to agriculture would allow them to enjoy the fruits which are

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\(^{508}\) Oral participants; Rosa Tabasi, Mary Luwoyero and Angelina Shitendesa.
the increased agricultural yields the way the peasants in Kakamega have enjoyed over time.

In the spirit of Sessional Paper No. 10 of 1965, the African peasant agrarian economy of Kakamega had gradually transitioned from pure subsistence household economy to a balanced monetary economy guided by the needs of the people Kakamega in realizing their potential while at the same time properly punctuating themselves in the global economic sphere as indicated by the annual exports of maize and other food crops over the years. This was evidenced by the need of the policy paper as a matter of condition to draw on the best of African peasant traditions and practices like the self-agency like the African peasants in Kakamega had demonstrated. The policy document borrowed heavily from the African peasants in the agrarian sector in Kakamega the concepts of African socialism and Mutual social responsibility. Socialism as defined by Jones Liaka, Sulumena Indushi, Upande Omusia and Winston Wekesa and as enshrined in the agrarian traditions of the Kakamega peasants is the extent to which every member of the household was both important and equal.

Upon borrowing this concept, the policy anticipated that the people would contribute willingly and without being forced to the economic development of the state which the people of Kakamega had done over time instanced by food loaning. Equally, mutual social responsibility was a crucial guiding principle of the African peasant agricultural economy in Kakamega which ensured that their agricultural economy thrived resiliently during the 1960s. In the traditional agro-economic sense in Kakamega, mutual social

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509 See the annual agricultural reports and native affairs reports as evidenced in the preceding chapters
511 Mutual Social Responsibility implies the efforts being made and strategies being put in place by a given social-economic group to maximize on the social-economic wellbeing of all the members of the group collectively and individually. Ibid.
512 Gideon S. Were, History of the Abaluhya
responsibility as explained by Saul Bunyali and Anyende Muyeka intrinsically commanded each and every member of the household and the clan to do their best in their individual and collective agricultural tasks for each other with the full knowledge and understanding that when the clan and family prospered agriculturally by way of increased yield,\(^5\) then as illustrated by Antony Avukuse and Norah Amayi, the members will share in that prosperity and as such the household cannot realize increased yields without the full co-operation of all its members.

The Sessional Paper, therefore, in loaning this concept as the study indicates envisaged a scenario where the all Kenyans must contribute to the success of the state’s economy by willingly engaging in productive activities a position visible in Norman Humphrey’s The Liguru and the Land. The contribution by individuals just like in the agricultural sector of Kakamega was to the degree of one’s ability and capability, in essence the state on its part had the power and duty to impose sanctions on those who refused to contribute their share of hard work to the state’s common endeavor. With the aim of ensuring that economic production is realized in independent Kenya, the need to harmonize the land usufructs with those of the traditional African peasant systems of production was inevitable, to this extent, the Sessional Paper No. 10 of 1965 sought to strike a balance between the traditional land rights and the ensuing progressive requirements like registration of land.

**6.6 Harmonization of Land Usufructs with Sessional Paper No.10 of 1965**

In any agrarian based economy, land is the most central factor of production that the population must not only ensure its availability, but also guarantee it is properly used to the benefits of all just like in the traditional African economy where ones land

\(^5\) William Ochieng, A History of Kenya
allocation was purely determined by both his ability to work the land and the allegiance out of the same. According to the Independence Constitution and as manifested by the KANU manifesto:

...we aim to build a country where men and women are motivated by a sense of service and not driven by a greedy desire for personal gain.

In the wisdom of the independence constitution and the KANU manifesto, theoretically, the state was not about to pursue a kleptocratic form of administration over the means of production as it anticipated to forge a productive society especially by robbing in the traditional land ethics. As detailed by Philip Nabwangu, Anyende Muyeka and Saul Bunyali, women never owned land but had usufructs which motivated them to work extra hard to sustain the resilience of the African peasant agrarian economy of Kakamega. In reality however, the opposite was practiced, just like the Ambweres, the Bunyalis and the Andabwas of Kakamega accumulated land the ruling capitalist elite appropriate land to themselves under the provisions of the Sessional Paper No.10 of 1965, guided by the independence constitution and professed by the KANU manifesto which maintained that:

"Every farmer must be sure of his land rights (and to this end) consolidation and registration of title will be encouraged wherever people desire."

The KANU manifesto even went further to declare that

the KANU government will not tolerate holding of large underdeveloped tracts of land by any one ... there must be controls to

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515 The Independence Constitution of Kenya. See also. KANU Manifesto, 1964
516 Kitching, Class and economic Change in Kenya. Were, A History of the Abaluhya. See also. Ochieng’ A History of Kenya
ensure that property is used in the mutual interest of the society and its members.518

While the constitution and the Sessional Paper guaranteed as a matter of surety every person land rights the documents went further to place a clause that hedged off the peasants of Kakamega and which was not only in contradiction with the African peasant traditional practices in Kakamega, but also contravened the collectiveness with which the African peasants in Kakamega approached agrarian production in the area. By calling for consolidation and registration of the land, the constitution, the sessional paper and the KANU manifesto deviated from African socialism as practiced by the peasants in Kakamega and bred individualistic capitalism as practiced by people like Saul Bunyali and protected by the constitution and the sessional paper which did not only call for consolidation which only the petty bourgeoisie could afford against the peasant in Kakamega but also called upon the petty bourgeoisie as a matter of utmost urgency to register their consolidated lands.

Furthermore, the KANU government’s policy of non-tolerance to large underdeveloped land holdings spelt doom to African peasants in Kakamega who would have wished to or even had some power to consolidate land. As a matter of fact, the study affirms that most peasants in Kakamega lacked the required finances to purchase large tracts of lands, and for those who had the financial power that they purchase and consolidate land, lacked the productive capacity to engage the consolidated and registered land and sort the fear of losing the land was real as corroborated by Philip Nabwangu and Jones Liaka.

To the opposite of the Sessional Paper, African peasants in Kakamega communally owned land as a means of production. As noted by Kitching and echoed by Jones Liaka and Shitendesa, individual land ownership did not really exist in any modern context among the people of Kakamega, as ownership was not an absolute indivisible bundle of rights. As affirmed by H.W.O. Okoth-Ogendo, the ultimate rights of land disposal outside the “tribe” were essentially “tribal” and as such the land was “tribally” owned as every mature member of the “tribe” would have a say in such a decision. With regard to land usufructs which the study affirm guide the African Socialism in the Sessional paper, land usufructs among the African peasants in Kakamega were perpetually assigned to various households within the “tribe” as captured by Norman Humphrey, Odinga, Kitching, Kanogo and Okoth-Ogendo and reinforced by the research participants, on the understanding that the land must be properly used and its benefits appropriately distributed, not merely held idle, abused or misused, or the benefits from the land hoarded. The study notes that with the wave of land consolidation and registration in Kakamega the latter was the case as individual capitalism set in the words of David Anderson to erode the collectiveness of the commons or “tribes”. The concept the sessional paper was keen on borrowing from the African peasant agricultural sector to guide agrarian production of the state in independent Kenya was the fact that no matter who managed or owned land as a means of production, it was envisaged to be used for the general welfare of all. This was clearly summarized up in the word the minister for Economics and National Planning, Joseph Thomas Odhiambo Mboya when he addressed parliament in 1965:

519 Gavin Kitching, Class and Economic Change in Kenya
520 H.W.O. Okoth-Ogendo, Tenants of the Crown
521 J. O. Odinga, Not Yet Uhuru. See also, Okoth-Ogendo, Tenants of the Crow. See also, Norman Humphrey, The Liguru and the Land
Many acres of idle land could be producing crops if farmers would put in more effort. If every person on the land cultivated one extra row, the output of the nation would be substantially larger. If people who are unemployed in the cities would return to their land, further increases in output could be achieved. Idleness, whether of land or labour cannot be countenanced in a nation that needs every ear of maize, grain of wheat and pound of cotton. Self-reliance and independence means the ability and willingness to do things for ourselves.\footnote{The KANU Manifesto of 1964. See also, Sessional Paper No. 10 of 1965: African Socialism and its Application to Planning in Kenya.}

Even though the minister advocated for non-idleness of both land and labour, the study avers that what the minister failed to realize was the fact that land and labour are co-joined twins. While calling upon the unemployed people of Kakamega to return home, the minister presumed that these people owned large tracts of land back in Kakamega but the reality on the ground as articulated by the research participant was that with the calls for land consolidation and registration, the capitalist petty bourgeoisie of Kakamega had accumulated the land and as such dictated when the land should be worked on, what should be produced and how it should be produced.

The study maintains that people from Kakamega were idle for they lacked the lands on which to work on as people had consolidated the lands living them with nothing to work on facilitating their movement to towns for waged labour. As the Sessional Paper put: Africanization in agriculture has taken the principal form of land settlement which is based primarily on the transfer, reorganization and development of some of the land formerly European owned. This approach has been necessary for political reasons to ensure that areas formerly closed to Africans were opened to them.\footnote{Sessional Paper No. 10 of 1965: African Socialism and its Application to Planning in Kenya.} The study maintains that and political solution to an economic problem is what failed to spur renewed agency among the peasants on Kakamega making them to start gravitating
towards sugarcane production in the late 1960s and by early 1970s, sugarcane production was deep rooted among the African peasant households in Kakamega.

6.7 Summary of Chapter Six

The chapter examined agrarian history of Kakamega from 1963 to 1970. The study maintained that the independence period saw a continuation of the colonial policies on agriculture which affirmed the position held by the petty bourgeoisie in Kakamega at the time. The contenting philosophical conceptualization of Kenya’s agrarian economy by large and specifically for Kakamega, were also examined and two camps emerged. The first one favoured the African peasants in Kakamega led by Odinga and Kagia, which affirmed that due to the hunger for land in areas like Kakamega the African peasants there was to receive the former settler lands for free if the state made good its policy of Africanization of the economy.

On the contrary, led by Kenyatta and Mboya, Kenya nationalist wing maintained that independence was only but about over throwing the colonial rule. The state at independence was guided by Sessional Paper no. 10 of 1965 as the blueprint which advocated for land consolidation, registration and enclosure system. The chapter did not only assert that the policy favoured the rising petty bourgeoisie in Kakamega, but also dismembered the traditional concept of mutual co-operate social responsibility in the area.

Analyzing the applicability of the concept of mutual social responsibility, the chapter analyzed the coherence between African Socialism and the traditional African peasant agrarian economy in Kakamega which proved that only usufructs were initially available to all members but in the spirit of land consolidation, registration and enclosure, selfish capitalism was gradually entrenching itself. The chapter further
revealed the gender parity in land ownership as women never owned land and merely provided labour for agrarian production. The chapter finally indicates the African peasants adapting and adopting sugarcane farming as the 1970s approached, which signified the agency of the African peasants in Kakamega. The subsequent chapter therefore summarizes the African peasant agrarian trend in Kakamega between 1930 and 1970 and in a synopsis way affirms the resilience of the agricultural sector in the study period. The chapter further provides a general conclusion to the study to the effect that; while the African peasants in Kakamega were sensitive to the markets and the state policies advanced, they were strongly guided by subsistence self-ethos in their agrarian journey from 1930 to 1970. At times however, African peasants in Kakamega succumbed to state pressures through policies while on other occasions they punctured and restructured them same to suit their needs at the time. Finally the chapter concludes by way of recommending areas for further study.
CHAPTER SEVEN
SUMMARY, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

7.1 Summary
This chapter summarizes the study from its foundational chapter to the tail end of the study in the independence period. Chapter one laid the foundational wedge on which African peasant agrarian transformation in Kakamega between 1930 and 1970 was pursued. The chapter premised the study on the fact that African peasant agriculture in Kakamega remained resilient in the face of the multiple challenges the sector faced. In addition, the chapter provided the theoretical linkages that held the study; the agency and simple reproduction squeeze link which provided the African peasant perception of the agrarian trajectory in the area while the articulation and expropriation link provided the official state’s position of the same. The chapter defined the study area in brief, laying the basis for chapter two which tackled three broad thematic areas; first, the historical geography of Kakamega was examined with the focus on how the geography of Kakamega influenced the agrarian choices of the African peasants evidenced by the people’s migration and choice of settlement in the area. Second, the study detailed the African peasant pre-capitalist mode of production and it not only discussed the traditional African peasant mode of production, but also revealed the concept of self-agency in that mode of production. Equally, the traditional agrarian annual production cycle was detailed with the aim of displaying the self-reliant and sufficiency nature of the African traditional mode of production. Finally, the chapter tackled the pre 1930 state articulation, in which the state penetration was analyzed illustrating how it re-structured the traditional peasant mode of production at the same time introducing the capitalist mode of production. The chapter affirmed that the Africans were not at any given point in time mere victims of the state but, they
actively and innovatively adapted, re-structured and adopted the colonial capitalist mode of production to suit their interest. Moreover, the impact of the First World War and the 1920s on the African peasant agriculture were evaluated. The study avered that the crises that ensued worked in favour of the state to re-consider entrenching African peasant agriculture at all cost which chapter three discussed.

Before 1930, Kenya’s colonial history in general and Kakamega’s agrarian trajectory in particular was more pro-settler and anti-African peasant. From the onset of its articulation the state punctured and penetrated the African peasant pre-capitalist mode of production to deeply entrench the capitalist mode. During the First World War, the state passed punitive ordinances which devoid the African peasant agriculture in Kakamega relegating them to mere labourers on the settler farms. However, in the 1920s the effects of the war and the politics of the day compelled the state to re-orient African agriculture in Kakamega as propagated by the Dual Policy.

Despite the pressure exerted by the state, the African peasant innovatively circumnavigated the demands to claim his rightful place in the agrarian trajectory of Kakamega from 1930 to 1970. The global economic slump witnessed in the late 1920s significantly affected Kakamega with the prevailing African peasant agrarian production in the area compounded by natural calamities which succeeded the economic depression necessitating the study to start from 1930. Chapter three examined the agrarian trajectory in the 1930s, and with the effects of the Great Depression raging on in the early 1930s, the state was faced with the difficult situation of ensuring the economic stability of the state. The chapter evidenced that with the effects of the depression the Kenyan economy could not singularly depend on the settler economy given that the global market prices for goods had fallen.
In response to the situation, the state deliberately and in a structured manner committed rehabilitated the settler economy as exemplified by the 1929 Colonial Development Act and the 1930 Agricultural Advances Ordinance, the 1931 Land Bank, the 1931 Railways Corporation freight charges reduction and reimbursed, and the 1932 Ottawa Agreement. With the futility of all these measures and the need to cushion the settlers while staying fiscally viable, the state re-engineered African peasant agriculture in areas like Kakamega. The mechanisms instituted to achieve these in Kakamega were; the establishment of Bukura Agricultural Training Institute the distribution of the hybrid seed varieties for free to the peasants, Agricultural extension services and combating soil erosion. The chapter affirmed that African peasant agriculture in Kakamega was rejuvenated not necessarily by the state advances but by the African peasants in Kakamega re-position themselves guided by the self-agency instincts for survival. With the settler economy on the decline, the African labourers in the highlands and the settlers engaged in the blossoming mining industry in Kakamega. Moreover, the chapter assessed how the drought and famine of 1934 influenced and shaped African peasant production in the area. The graphical chronology of the African peasant agricultural trajectory in the 1930s and revealed the resilience of the African peasant agency. In 1939, the state focused on the war at hand away from invigorating peasant agriculture.

Chapter four dealt with the Second World War and how it invigorated African peasant production in Kakamega laced by the *warecha* famine. The chapter detailed how the war disenfranchised the soil conservation efforts in Kakamega, while it lauded the fact that African peasants in Kakamega were not mere victims of the state but they were dynamic self-agents that sort to ensure survival by exploiting the situation to their advantage. The failure of the short rains in 1938, and the excitement of the African peasants to serve in the British army with what the state termed volunteers signified the
The study maintained that the conscription of labour of service men and women as well as the men from Kakamega to serve in the Kings African Rifle, the confiscation of livestock, the engineered demand for increased maize production, the highly priced market demand for maize and the gold mining activities at rosterman in Kakamega catalyzed by the climatic conditions were responsible for the 1943 famine in Kakamega. The study equally affirmed that the over emphasis on crop production in Kakamega for the war efforts was to the neglect of soil conservation efforts which profoundly reshaped the agrarian projectile of Kakamega especially in Tiriki, Maragoli, Bunyore, Isukha and Idakho areas. Fundamentally, the state policies pursued during the Second World War in Kakamega worked to the detriment of African peasant agriculture as demonstrated byinzala ya ekikombo (the 1943 famine). The study affirmed that with the glaring challenges and contradictions that befell the African peasant, they diversified their strategies to circumvent the state exerted pressures. In the long run African peasants in Kakamega invoked their instinctive self-agency to redeem themselves from the 1943 famine in Kakamega and by the end of the war, African agricultural production in the area was bedeviled by soil degradation and the return of the Ex-World War Two soldiers which the state aimed at addressing through elaborate plans like the Swynnerton plan and the East African Royal Commission of 1954.

Chapter five interrogated the extent to which these problems and policies were handled and how the Swynnerton plan influenced African peasant production in Kakamega. As examined, policy biases during the Second World War saw the state favour increased African peasant agrarian production in Kakamega at the expense of soil conservation. In the post-war period the state shifted her priorities policy-wise and soil conservation in pre-independent Kakamega enjoyed the pride of place. The 1949 famine awoke the African peasants in Kakamega to cooperate with state on soil conservation. The use of
propaganda for soil conservation was highly detested by the African peasants led by one critical colonial chief, Chief Agoi. On the other hand, the political happenings in the state in 1952 had a bearing on the African peasant agriculture in Kakamega. The declaration of the state of emergency coincided with the visit of both Lennox Booyd and Oliver Lyttelton to Kakamega which laid the foundation for the constitution of the East Africa Royal Commission, The Swynnerton Plan and the Lyttelton constitution. Additionally, the significance of the *Omuimo* in Lureko equally underscored the role of the handing over of the Wanga golden stool by Shiundu to Oliver Lyttelton and the symbolic presence of the *Isindu* in the functionary of Shitawa. With the Swynnerton Plan in place, the district sub-division politics took center stage which culminated into the division of North Kavirondo District into North Nyanza (Kakamega) and Elgon Nyanza. In the pre-independence period, the 1959 dry spell marked the end of the state of emergency and the state’s concentration on land consolidation and enclosure just before independence laid the foundation for the independence period as examined by chapter six. At independence, the study maintained that land consolidation was the primary responsibility of the state as enshrined in Sessional Paper Number 10 of 1965, the Independence Constitution and the KANU Manifesto. These policy documents were scrutinized in relation to their respective relevance to African peasant production in Kakamega. Chapter six therefore, examined the agrarian trajectory in Kakamega between 1963 and 1970 affirming that land consolidation and the enclosure system as per the session paper no. 10 of 1965 was on a preserve of the few African petty bourgeoisie like Andabwa, Ambwere and Bunyali in Kakamega. The study maintained that the independence period saw a continuation in the colonial policies on agriculture which affirmed the position held by the petty bourgeoisie in Kakamega. The contenting philosophical conceptualization of Kakamega’s economy was examined at two levels;
the first one favoured the African peasants in Kakamega led by Odinga and Kagia, which affirmed that due to the “hunger” for land in African reserve areas like Kakmega the African peasants were to receive the former settler lands for free if the state made good its policy of Africanization of the economy. The second one led by Kenyatta and Mboya, the Kenya nationalist wing maintained that independence was only to overthrow the colonial rule. At independence the Sessional Paper No. 10 of 1965 was the blueprint which advocated for land consolidation, registration and enclosure system. The asserted that the policy favoured the rising petty bourgeoisie in Kakamega while it dismembered the traditional concept of mutual co-operate social responsibility in the area. The affirmed the gender parity on land ownership as women never owned land and merely provided labour for agrarian production. It finally indicated the African peasants adapted and adopted sugarcane farming towards the 1970, which affirmed the agency of the African peasants in Kakamega. The study concludes that; while the African peasants in Kakamega were sensitive to the markets and the state policies advanced, they were strongly guided by subsistence self-ethos in their agrarian production from 1930 to 1970. At times, however, African peasants in Kakamega succumbed to state pressures through policies while on other occasions they punctured and restructured them to suit their needs at the time. This is summarised in the model below.
Objective one set out to examine the role of the state(s) in incorporating the African peasants of Kakamega into the capitalist economy. The study concluded that the state played a pertinent role in incorporating the peasants in the global capitalist economy. However, the role played by the state in the process of incorporation was full of contradictions that the state had to cope with in order to balance between colonial state needs and metroplitant state interests.

Objective two set out to illustrate the role of the African peasantry in petty commodity production. The study concluded that in the struggle for petty commodity production and the market, the African peasants in Kakamega always sought to strike a balance between their subsistence needs and the capitalist market oriented state interests. In the whole process, therefore, the study affirmatively concluded that the African peasants in Kakamega were partially in control of their petty commodity production while partially falling victims of the coercive state.
Objective three sought to establish the consequences between the interplay of state initiatives and the African peasant responses/agency on peasant agriculture. The study concluded that the interplay between the state and the peasants was of mutual benefit although most at time happened without mutual consent.

7.4 Recommendations for Further Research

The study recommends the following three areas for further studies;

1. Grounded in objective one, the study calls for investigations in the relationship between African peasants’ consumption habits and the black markets, with the aim of determining the role played by the state to influence African peasants’ consumption habits in Kakamega.

2. Objective two permitted the study to call for further research on the particular centrality and emphasis on maize production by both the state and the African peasant. The study should provide the point of convergence on maize production while at the same time provide a detailed analysis of the divergence on the consumption and marketing of the same.

3. Based on the third objective, the study recommends an analysis and investigation of influence of traditional belief systems and myth on African peasant production as evidenced by the 1952 scenario.
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APPENDICES

Appendix I: Introductory Letter

TO WHOM IT MAY CONCERN

Dear Sir/Madam,

RE: MUKHWANA M. DUNCAN -SASS/DPHIL/HIS/01/13

The Department of History, Political Science and Public Administration acknowledged Mukhwana M. Duncan as our Doctor of Philosophy in History student. The student is pursuing his PhD research and we wish to kindly request you to accord him any assistance possible to facilitate his effective research.

Thanks in advance for the assistance you accorded to him.

Yours sincerely,

[Name]

DEPT. HEAD, DEPARTMENT OF HISTORY, POLITICAL SCIENCE AND PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION

MOI UNIVERSITY
(ISO 9001:2008 CERTIFIED)
SCHOOL OF ARTS AND SOCIAL SCIENCES
DEPARTMENT OF HISTORY, POLITICAL SCIENCE & PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION
Tel: (053) 43620
Fax No. (053) 43047
P.O Box 39
Eldoret
Kenya

27th October 2016
Appendix II: Research Authorisation – NACOSTI

NATIONAL COMMISSION FOR SCIENCE, TECHNOLOGY AND INNOVATION

Ref No: NACOSTI/P/17/05529/15301

Mukangai Duncan Mukhwana
Moi University
P.O. Box 3900-30100
ELDORET.

22nd February, 2017

RE: RESEARCH AUTHORIZATION

Following your application for authority to carry out research on “Peasant agricultural transformation in Kakamega, 1950-1970,” I am pleased to inform you that you have been authorized to undertake research in Kakamega County for the period ending 17th January, 2018.

You are advised to report to the County Commissioner and the County Director of Education, Kakamega County before embarking on the research project.

On completion of the research, you are expected to submit two hard copies and one soft copy in pdf of the research report/thesis to our office.

DR. STEPHEN K. KIBIRU, PH.D.
FOR: DIRECTOR-GENERAL/CEO

Copy to:

The County Commissioner
Kakamega County.

The County Director of Education
Kakamega County.
Appendix III: Research Permit

THIS IS TO CERTIFY THAT:
MR. MUKANGAI DUNCAN MUKHWANA
of MOI UNIVERSITY, 3900-30100 Eldoret,
has been permitted to conduct
research in Kakamega County
on the topic: PEASANT AGRICULTURAL
TRANSFORMATION IN KAKAMEGA,
1930-1970
for the period ending:
17th January, 2018

Applicant’s Signature

Permit No: NACOSTIP/17/05529/15301
Date Of Issue: 22nd February, 2017
Fee Received: Ksh 2000

Director General
National Commission for Science,
Technology & Innovation
## Appendix IV: List of Interviewees

<table>
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Appendix V: Field Photographs

Jones Liaka, one of the lead research informants at her home in Sengeteti
Some of the agrarian-economic artefacts displayed during the research interviews
Noel and Philip Nabwangu, lead respondents
Some of the agrarian-economic artefacts displayed during the research interviews
Zaina Naska, a lead respondent demonstrating how millet was traditionally harvested
Some of the agrarian-economic artefacts displayed during the research interviews
Some of the agrarian-economic artefacts displayed during the research interviews
Some of the agrarian-economic baskets displayed during the research interviews
Some of the agrarian-economic baskets displayed during the research interviews, plus a demonstration of how millet was sieved