

**THE COLONIAL ECONOMY: PROSPERITY AND DEPRESSION IN KANO
PROVINCE OF NORTHERN NIGERIA, 1899 - 1939**

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ABSTRACT

Kano and its environs came under British rule in the first years of the twentieth century. The British introduced new systems that dramatically transformed the direction of events and the way of life of the people. Scholars have examined the historical development of Kano from multiple perspectives. Thus, the present study is a contribution to the analysis of the historical development of Kano Province under colonial rule with a focus on economic development. Development here refers to economic development, or those features that support it such as railroads, roads, storage facilities, etc.; the "soft" human development, such as education, health, clean water, and electricity; the human capital that supports it; and of course, the social groups that are at the centre of any economic process. The study examines the colonial economy and developments in Kano from its establishment as a province after the conquest of the Sokoto Caliphate between 1897 and 1903, up to the end of the Great Depression and the beginning of the Second World War. The study examines the nature of the economic development of Kano and related issues, which impacted economic activities during the period. These issues include administrative restructuring, the abolition of slavery, the land tenure system, agriculture, taxation, trade, labour, infrastructure development, reform of the legal system, and economic regulating systems. The innovations that the British colonial authorities introduced made it possible for the economy of Kano to become integrated into the global economy, as agricultural products were exported in large quantities, notably groundnuts. Though most of these policies were targeted towards the maximization of the colonial interests, they were nevertheless initiated and implemented with peculiar considerations to the environmental suitability, socio-political setting, and population configuration of the indigenous Kano people. While not denying that the colonial occupation of Kano was deliberately

designed and implemented by the British authorities to serve their imperial interests, the study argues further that the realistic effects of colonial planning also led to diverse economic advancement for the Kano area as well as for the indigenous and foreign population during the period under study. The research is problematized within the context of the factors that influenced the economic boom in Kano during the colonial period. Generally, the research confirms that Kano's colonial economy went through a series of changes from the pre-colonial levels to periods of boom and bust from the first decade of the nineteenth century through the Great Depression and the onset of the Second World War. When the British arrived in Kano, they were not well informed of local conditions. The first resident, Cargill, became embroiled in a policy dispute, but the opening of the railway in 1911 saved the day, which enabled the unprecedented exploitation of the area. The railway linked Kano to international trade, which increased its fortunes until the Global Depression reversed the trend. This thesis establishes that colonial policies had significant consequences on Kano's economy, and the area benefitted from colonialism in many ways which helped to advance its fortunes and development in comparison to its previous state.

DEDICATION

This Ph.D. dissertation is dedicated to my two children David and Eva, I love you more than I can say.

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ABBREVIATIONS

BCGA: - British Cotton Growing Association

Kanoprof: - Kano Provincial Files

KSHCB: - Kano State History and Cultural Bureau

KMA or Kad Min Agric: – Kaduna Ministry of Agriculture

LKTC: - London and Kano Trading Company

MSWC: - Ministry of Social Welfare and Community Development

NAK: - National Archives Kaduna

NNDB: - Northern Nigeria Development Board

SNP: - Secretary of Northern Provinces

UAC: - United African Company

UTC: - United Trading Company

WAFF: - West African Frontier Force

WACB: - West African Currency Board

GLOSSARY

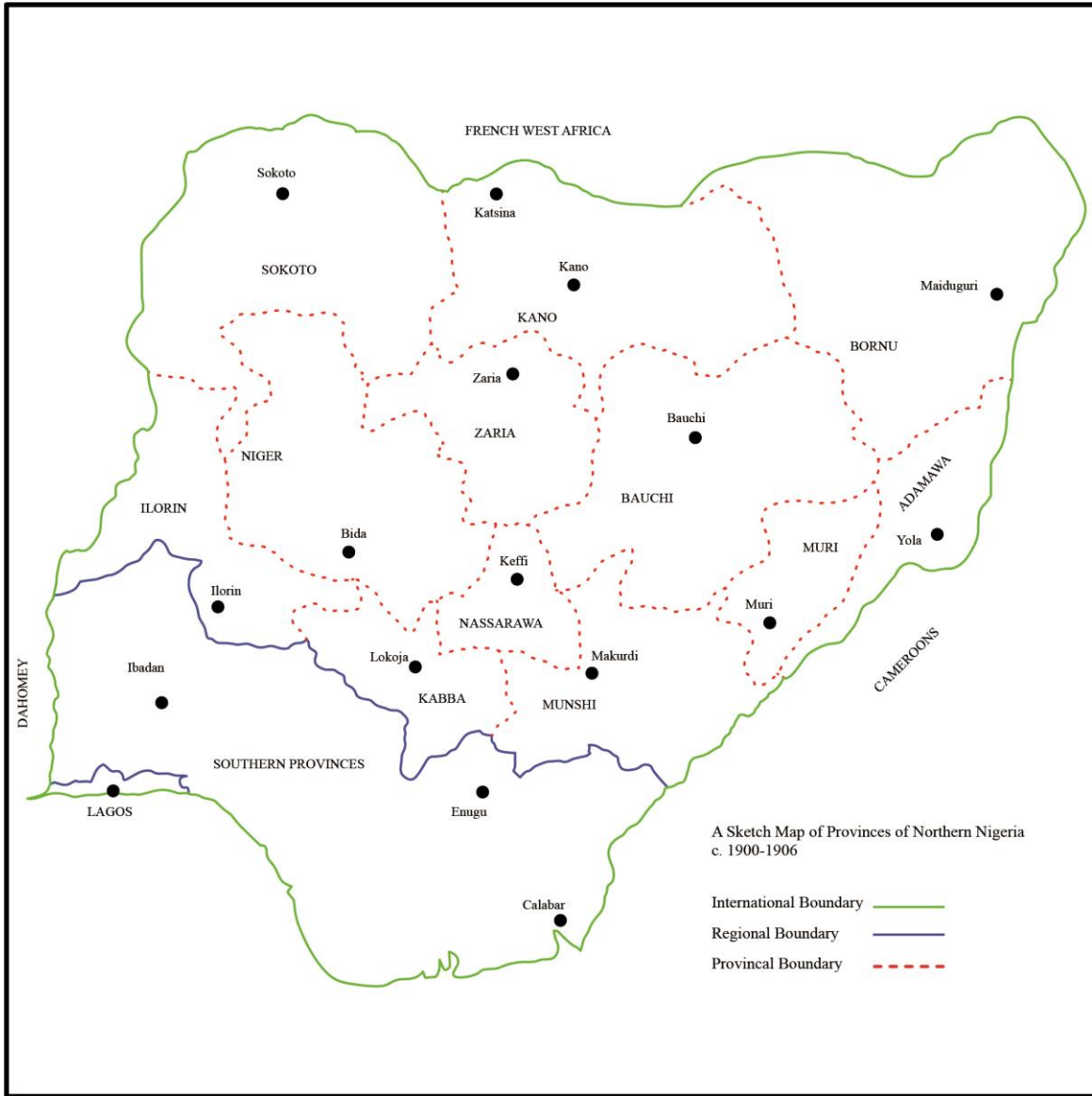
Hausa Word	English Meaning or Translation
<i>aikatu</i> : -	menial jobs
<i>Alkali</i> : -	Judge
<i>attajirai</i> : -	wealthy merchants
Beit – El – Mal: -	Local Treasury
<i>bori</i> : -	spirit possession
<i>caffa (chaffa or chappa)</i> : -	Land grants based on clientage; When a peasant is protected by a landowner, official or aristocrat, who helped him to get tax exception through his estates in return for gifts or certain payments.
<i>Chiroma</i> :	High ranking palace official and usually a Hakimi
<i>cucinawa</i> : -	People born into slavery with slave parents, mostly palace officials.
<i>Dan Rimi</i> : -	A slave official who was the main emissary of the Emir.
<i>dukanci</i> : -	leather production
<i>Dagachi</i> : -	Village Head
<i>fansa</i> : -	ransom
<i>fatauci</i> : -	long-distance trade
<i>fadawa</i> : -	courtiers
<i>Galadima</i> : -	High ranking palace official and usually a Hakimi
<i>gayauna</i> : -	farm plots

<i>ganima:</i> -	war booty
<i>gado:</i> -	inheritance
<i>gunduma:</i> -	districts
<i>Hakimi:</i> -	A District Head
<i>Hakimai:</i> -	District Heads
<i>hurmi or hurumi:</i> -	Lands exempted from tax.
<i>haraji or jizya:</i> -	poll tax
<i>Jakadu:</i> -	Agents
<i>Jakada:</i> -	Agent
<i>jangali:</i> -	cattle or livestock tax
<i>Jakadiya:</i> -	Female Agent
<i>jima:</i> -	leather tanning
<i>kudin gida:</i> -	hut or house tax
<i>Kansheka:</i> -	slave official in charge of the forested part of the emir's palace
<i>kudin taki:</i> -	plot or manure tax
<i>kadi:</i> -	cotton spinning
<i>kudin rafi:</i> -	stream or irrigation tax
<i>kudin shuka:</i> -	plant or planting or sowing or crop tax.
<i>kudin karofi:</i> -	dye pit tax
<i>kudin chiyawa:</i> -	Pasture or grazing or grass tax also known as Jangali.
<i>Kilishi:</i> -	slave official in charge of the royal bedroom
<i>kayan rafi:</i> -	Irrigation farming or irrigated farm products
<i>kudin gona:</i> -	farm tax

<i>kudin kasa:</i> -	land tax
<i>Limamai:</i> -	Prayer leader for mosques
<i>Ma'aji:</i> -	Treasurer
<i>murgu:</i> -	“The payment made by enslaved persons to their masters for the right to work on their account”. Through Murgu, enslaved persons were able to save, purchase their freedom, marry, and live independently among other things.
<i>Masu Anguwa:</i> -	Head of neighborhoods in cities, towns, and villages
<i>Masu Sarauta:</i> -	Office Holders
<i>Mallamai:</i> -	Muslim Clerics
<i>nomijide:</i> -	Absentee Landlord or absentee farming practice
<i>Sarauta System:</i> -	Hausa/Fulani aristocratic ruling system
<i>Shamaki:</i> -	slave official in charge of the emir's palace
<i>Salama:</i> -	slave official in charge of delivering messages or leading a guest to see the emir.
<i>Sarkin Dogarai:</i> -	Head or Chief of the emir's body guards.
<i>Sarkin Gandu:</i> -	Head or Chief Overseer of the emir's and other official farms
<i>Sarkin Kasuwa:</i> -	Market Chief
<i>Sarkin Musulmi:</i> -	Title of the Sultan of Sokoto; head of Muslims
<i>Sarkin Makera:</i> -	Chief of the blacksmiths
<i>Sarkin Awo:</i> -	Chief of grain sellers
<i>Sarkin Pawa:</i> -	Chief of the butchers or meat sellers
<i>Sarkin Dillalai:</i> -	Chief of the business brokers or commission agents

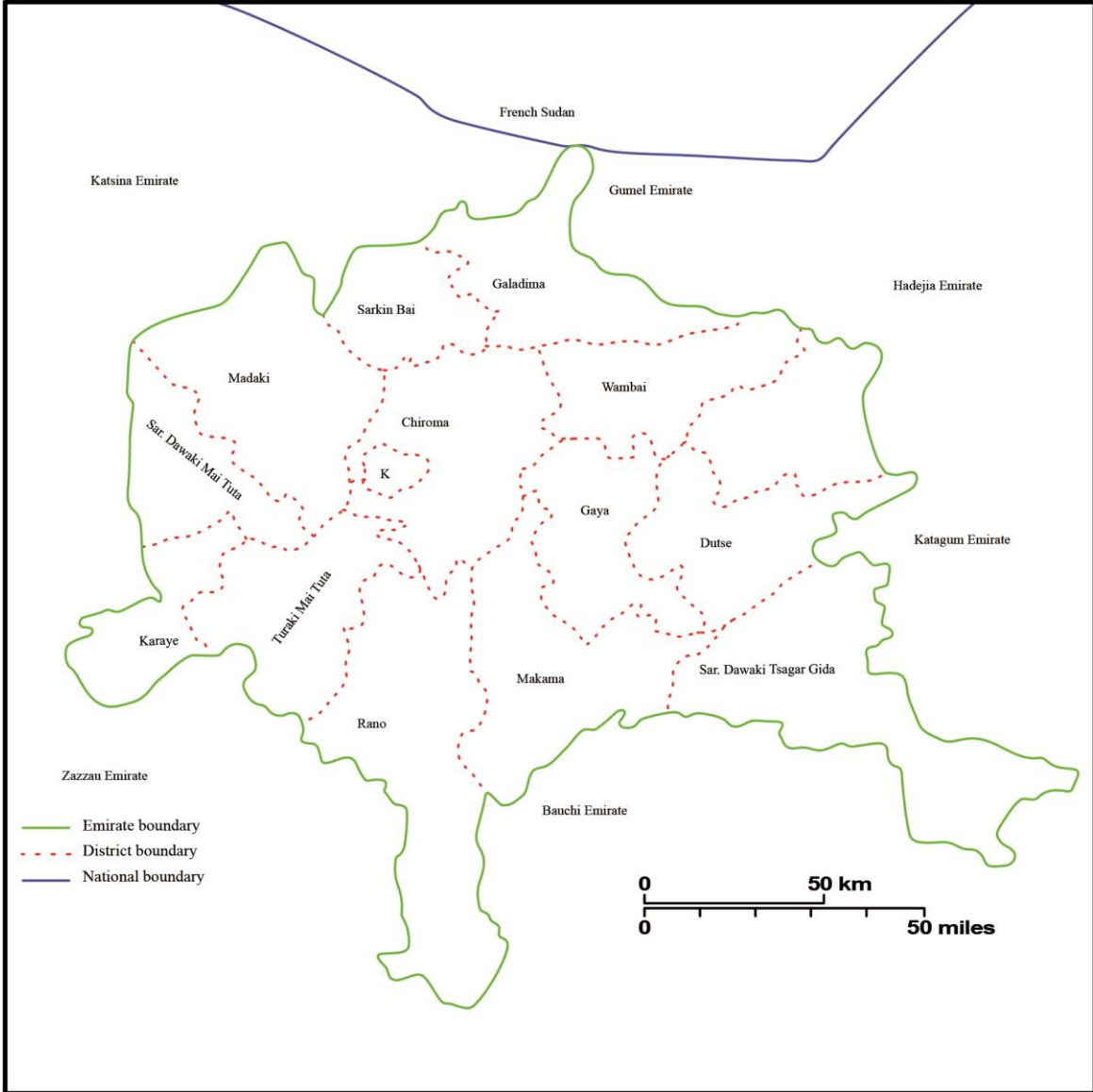
<i>Sokoto Gaisuwa:</i> -	Tributes or gifts sent to the Sultan of Sokoto.
<i>Shari'a (Sharia):</i> -	Islamic Law
<i>Turakin Soro, Zaure:</i> -	slave official in charge of the gate before the emir's living area or apartment
<i>tariqa:</i> -	religious brotherhood such as Qadiriyya and Tijjaniyya
<i>talakawa:</i> -	Commoners or peasants
<i>taki:</i> -	System that redistributed or reallocated land for effective tax assessment and collection
<i>Ulama</i>	learned Islamic clerics.
<i>Waziri:</i> -	Vizier or Prime Minister
<i>Yakin Basasa:</i> -	Kano Civil War
<i>yunwa:</i> -	Famine
<i>Yan Koli:</i> -	Sellers who dealt in antimony, mirrors, needles, European thread, ginger, cloves, black pepper, beads etc.
<i>zakka:</i> -	tithe

Map 1: Provinces of Northern Nigeria, c. 1900 – 1906



Source: Ibrahim Hamza. *"Cargill's Mistakes": A Study of British Colonial Policies in the Madaki District, Kano Emirate, Northern Nigeria, c. 1903 - 1909*, Ph.D. Dissertation, York University, 2009, xix.

Map 2: Kano Districts, 1904 – 1908



Source: Hamza. *"Cargill's Mistakes"*, xx.

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Description of the topic

The focus of this study is an examination and review of British colonial economic policies in Kano province in the Protectorate of Northern Nigeria from 1899 to 1939. This study examines and reviews the economic boom and collapse, the causative agents, and the overall impact of British colonial economic policies. Before the British conquest of Kano in 1903, in terms of revenue and economic activities, Kano was the most economically viable emirate under the Sokoto Caliphate. Murray Last describes Kano as the banker of the Sokoto Caliphate.¹ After Sokoto, Kano was also the most important emirate in the Caliphate. Abdullahi Mahadi describes Kano as the strongest emirate in the Caliphate in terms of stability, economic viability, leadership, population, and defence.² Shehu Usman Dan Fodio established the Sokoto Caliphate between 1804 and 1808 and administered it according to Islamic Shari'a law, which regulates the socio-economic, cultural, and political life of Muslims. Ralph Adeleye and Last demonstrate that the Sokoto Caliphate was the largest and represented one of the best-organized states in West Africa before the advent of colonialism.³

One of the first actions taken by the British colonial administrators after the establishment of the Northern Protectorate was the revision of all pre-colonial economic policies and the

¹ Murray Last. *The Sokoto Caliphate*. London: Longmans, 1967, 199.

² Abdullahi Mahadi. *The State and the Economy: The Sarauta System and its Roles in Shaping the Society and Economy of Kano with Particular Reference to the Eighteenth and the Nineteenth Centuries*. PhD dissertation, ABU Zaria, 1982, 17.

³ R. A. Adeleye. *Power and Diplomacy in Northern Nigeria 1804-1906*. London: Longmans, 1971, 3; Last. *The Sokoto Caliphate*, lix.

introduction of colonial economic policies, including taxation. The British justified their action as the right of conquest, with powers and authority of the Sokoto Caliphate automatically transferred to them.

The colonial administration that started in 1903, after the installation of Muhammadu Abbas as the Emir of Kano, heralded the introduction of Indirect Rule by Lord Fredrick Lugard as High Commissioner, which was successfully implemented in Northern Nigeria because of the maintenance of institutions suitable in the Caliphate. The British Colonial administrators trained the elites in Northern Nigeria to be autocratic aristocrats, which affected the way and manner they politically and economically administered the area.

The first part of the dissertation assesses the economic situation in Kano before the British conquest in 1903. The dissertation also examines the economic changes during the early colonial period in Kano Province under the British Protectorate of Northern Nigeria shortly after the conquest up to 1911. Between 1912, when the railroad from Lagos to Kano started operating, and the start of the Great Depression of the 1930s, the impact of British colonial rule altered existing structures of government on the economy. This analysis critiques the practice of Indirect Rule and explores how colonial economic policy transformed and otherwise altered the economy of the region that became the Protectorate of Northern Nigeria. Gareth Austin argues that “The greatest economic and social transformations of the early colonial period in West Africa, (were) the ‘cash-crop revolution’, and ‘the slow death of slavery’”.⁴ The dissertation reviews the economic changes, such as the introduction of British currency, a new taxation system, the demise of slavery, and the introduction of export crops such as groundnut, cotton, and other commodities. Moreover, the

⁴ Gareth Austin. “Cash Crops and Freedom: Export Agriculture and the Decline of Slavery in Colonial West Africa”. *International Review of Social History*. Vol. 54, Issue. 1, Apr 2009, 1.

dissertation focuses on the labour relations during this period until the Great Depression of the 1930s and the beginning of the Second World War in 1939.

The dissertation assesses what changes occurred in the local economy that facilitated the export of crops such as groundnuts and cotton. The study addresses who and what in Kano facilitated the changes that emphasized the production of crops for international export instead of crops for food production. This specificity is important, especially regarding changes in the organization of labour, the decline of slavery, changes in land tenure, the gender division of labour, the local commercial structure, the impact of the First World War on economic development, and the impact of famine and drought that affected development. The dissertation also addresses what role the existing political structure based on Islamic rule and aristocratic privileges played in this period of economic adjustment to colonial rule.

The hypotheses underlying this thesis are the following:

1. That British Indirect Rule, which some have called "over-rule," was based on an alliance with the pre-existing aristocracy and, to a lesser extent, the pre-existing merchant class.
2. That British colonial policy was conservative and attempted first to understand and then to reform existing patterns of land tenure and taxation, and otherwise facilitated the ending of slavery through gradualism and the emergence of a peasantry.
3. That colonial policy toward economic change was fundamentally regressive rather than progressive. The economic change involved little investment and incentives, other than the construction of a narrow-gauge railroad, which in the 1930s resulted in economic collapse prompted by general international economic conditions and the fall in commodity prices.
4. If British colonialism provided specific measures, they were eroded because of overly conservative economic policies. The measures included the end of internal strife and

cessation of ongoing enslavement of non-Muslim populations, resulting in a Pax Britannica. Thus: while regularizing taxation, altering land tenure arrangements, and facilitating commercial expansion, it also maintained the existing status quo.

5. However, minimum economic investment by the colonial regime effectively slowed economic growth and thereby exposed local producers to the collapse of prices on the international market during the Great Depression.

This dissertation examines the taxes the British colonial administrators introduced and their impact with regards to the building of hospitals, the railway, roads, bridges, and other infrastructure. Furthermore, this dissertation explores whether the development and increased production of crops, particularly cotton and groundnuts, hampered the production of food crops such as maize, millet, sorghum, etc. It explores the debates over the famines of 1914 and 1927, and whether the causes were droughts or the inability to produce food because of the shift to crops such as cotton and groundnuts that were directed to foreign markets. The dissertation contends that one of the positive impacts of the colonial economic policies was the elimination of tax exemptions, which helped to end slavery in the society because of the high cost attached to maintaining enslaved persons regarding paying taxes. The final death of slavery in 1936, even if it had been slow, and the infrastructural development in Kano came because of the reform of colonial taxation and the building of the railway.

Even without any investment other than the building of railways, especially from Lagos to Kano, the railways contributed to the spectacular growth in the local economy, especially with the expansion of groundnut and cotton production. The railway, funded with poor wages and taxes and collected in Kano and other parts of the Northern Protectorate, positively contributed to the general economic situation, and everyone, especially the British, the aristocracy and

middlemen/businessmen, benefitted in this “boom” period of British conquest from 1912. After the boom, the prosperity was undermined, in part because of the collapse in international prices and the deflationary policies of the British. During the boom, lives were better because there was no war and no slave raiding. It is evident, generally in the modern period, that when civil war stops, stability, economic prosperity and rapid growth are more likely to occur. The same was true after the British conquest was secured in 1903.

The revenue from taxes and the export of cotton, groundnuts, hides and skins and tin, which came from the Jos Plateau, became the primary sources of income of the colonial administration. For example, Bill Freund notes that the tin mines of Jos were the primary source of cash in Northern Nigeria for an extended period.⁵ Paul Lovejoy and Jan Hogendorn argue that tin production only “provided an additional stimulus to the colonial economy.”⁶ However, Hogendorn believes that groundnuts provided much more cash. Hogendorn argues that though the British Cotton Growing Association (BCGA) and British colonial officials lobbied for the rail line to Kano to promote cotton production, the groundnut was ultimately the most profitable agricultural export commodity in Northern Nigeria, which was an example of the theory of a “vent-for-surplus.”⁷ Vent-for-surplus is a theory that was advanced by Adam Smith and later propagated by Hla Myint that helps to explain how a surplus is accumulated when a country produces more than it consumes and the surplus is subsequently sold to another country when technological advances suddenly make it possible, which in turn leads to improvements in production capacity as a result of the profits so incurred. In every case, there must be a vent, that is the outlet for surplus production.

⁵ Bill Freund. “Labour Migration to the Northern Nigerian Tin Mines 1903-1945”, *The Journal of African History*, 22, 1, 1981. 73-84.

⁶ Paul Lovejoy and Jan Hogendorn. *Slow death for slavery: the course of Abolition in Northern Nigeria, 1897-1936*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993. 199 – 200.

⁷ Jan Hogendorn. *Nigerian Groundnuts Exports*. Zaria: Ahmadu Bello University Press, 1978. 2.

The vent-for-surplus theory was first applied to Nigeria by Gerald Helleiner in 1966.⁸ The application of the theory to Nigeria was supported by A. G. Hopkins in 1973 when he argues that:

The vent-for-surplus thesis offered an explanation that was relevant to land-surplus regions, where output could be increased by adding inputs of labour to available land. These conditions applied to West Africa, where the decline of slavery combined with new opportunities encouraged migration to areas of suitable land.⁹

Hogendorn further argues, “The vent-for-surplus has found much use among economic historians in analyzing the reaction of West African farmers to the expanded opportunities for international exchange in the colonial period,” and he concludes that the model describes perfectly most parts of West Africa. In the case of Kano, the railroad was the catalyst needed for the rapid incorporation of the region into international trade.¹⁰ Bill Warren, supports the theory of vent-for-surplus and argues that “For such a drain to retard economic development it must be an absolute drain, not simply an unequal transaction that nevertheless leaves both sides better off than before, or better off than they would otherwise have been”.¹¹ Ralph Austen also supports vent-for-surplus cautiously and argues that “The most critical cost faced by any group of rural Africans venturing into export farming was its effect upon domestic food supplies. In many cases, this effect was not very great since the resources allocated to expanding commercial production did not come directly from food-production activities”.¹² Austen believes that the theory cannot be broadly applied to every part of Africa simply because of differences in soil conditions, climatic conditions, the kind of crops involved, both for food and export.¹³

⁸ Gerald K. Helleiner. *Peasant Agriculture, Government, and Economic Growth in Nigeria*. Homewood: Richard D. Irwin Publishing Company, 1966, 55.

⁹ A.G. Hopkins. *An Economic History of West Africa*. (2nd Ed.), London and New York: Routledge, Taylor Francis Group, 2020. 33.

¹⁰ Hogendorn, *Nigerian Groundnuts Exports*, 2.; Jan Hogendorn. “The Vent-for-Surplus Model and African Cash Agriculture to 1914”, *Savanna: A Journal of the Environmental and Social Sciences*, 5, 1, 1976. 15-18.

¹¹ Bill Warren. *Imperialism: Pioneer of Capitalism*. John Sender, (ed.), London: NLB – Verso, 1980, 141.

¹² Ralph Austen. *African Economic History*. London: James Currey Ltd., 1987, 139.

¹³ Austen. *African Economic History*, 139-140.

The vent-for-surplus theory has been challenged by many scholars who believe that it does not fit or describe the situation in Kano, Nigeria, or West Africa in general. For example, Bill Freund and Bob Shenton have countered the assertions of Hogendorn and posit that the vent-for-surplus did not exist in Northern Nigeria and the increased production of cash crops at the expense of food crops was a result of prodding and coercion by the colonial administration and also because the farmers had to pay taxes with the newly introduced currency.¹⁴ John Tosh also disagrees with the success of vent-for-surplus when he argues about the incompatibility of the planting seasons in tropical savanna that essentially forced the farmers into export cropping for cash at the detriment of subsistence cultivation of food.¹⁵ More recently, Gareth Austin's contribution summarized the debate and also criticizes the vent-for-surplus as a theory that could not be applied to Africa in general and savanna in particular because the farmers had to choose between food crops and export crops amid the colonial coercion to produce the later.¹⁶ Although Austin argues that there are few places such as South West Nigeria, South East Nigeria and South Ghana where the vent-for-surplus was applicable in West Africa, Northern Nigeria was an exception because of all the reasons already motioned above.¹⁷

However, when the global depression hit, the impact led to a collapse that caused suffering among the people. One indicator of the economic impact of colonialism is the fate of the indigenous textile industry, which experienced an initial period of expansion during the increased

¹⁴ W.M., Freund, and R. W. Shenton. "Vent-for-Surplus Theory and the Economic History of West Africa." *Savanna*, vol. 6, no. 2, 1977, 191-196.

¹⁵ John Tosh. "The Cash-Crop Revolution in Tropical Africa: An Agricultural Reappraisal." *African Affairs*, Vol. 79, no. 314, 1980, 79 –94.

¹⁶ Gareth Austin. "Explaining and Evaluating the Cash Crop Revolution in the 'Peasant' Colonies of Tropical Africa, Ca. 1890–Ca.1930: Beyond 'Vent for Surplus.'" In Emmanuel Akyeampong, Robert H. Bates, Nathan Nunn and James Robinson, *Africa's Development in Historical Perspective*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2014, 311.

¹⁷ Austin. "Explaining and Evaluating", 312.

prosperity through the early 1920s but could not sustain growth during the Depression because of the collapse of commodity prices and cheap textile imports that undermined prices. Philip Shea argues that the impact of the collapse of the textile industry contributed to the general suffering of the people because the importation of foreign textiles led to the decline of the industry and later unemployment in Kano and Northern Nigeria in general.¹⁸ Lovejoy and Hogendorn support this argument when they conclude that the British expected the indigenous textile industry to collapse because of cheap imports of cloths from Britain when they redirected the farmers to cotton production for export, which happened but not until the 1930s.¹⁹

Much research has been done on colonial economic policies, prosperity, and collapse in Northern Nigeria under British rule. However, almost all studies have concluded that the policies were exploitative and ineffective which caused undue suffering to the people.

Although Adamu Fika's study on Kano covers from 1882 to 1940, it traces the history of Kano from its earliest time up to 1940 during colonial rule. The focus of the study was the 1893 to 1895 Kano Civil War (*Yakin Basasa*) and the impact of the early European activities in the area. Fika analyzes the reasons and developments leading to the Kano Civil War during the period of Muhammad Bello, whose style of leadership created disunity and tensions among the aristocracy that eventually led to the civil war. He gives a detailed analysis of the British conquest of Kano and early administration and concludes that Kano was a testing ground for the conquest of the Sokoto Caliphate and the establishment of Indirect Rule. Fika made a thorough analysis of the economic situation in Kano before the British and the policies of the British, especially taxation

¹⁸ Philip Shea. "Economies of Scale and the Indigo Dyeing Industry of Pre-colonial Kano". *Kano Studies*, New Series, ½ 1974/77. 55-61.

¹⁹ Lovejoy and Hogendorn, *Slow Death for Slavery*, 200.

and revenue allocation. Fika argues that the taxation system and other economic policies of the British in Kano were not only self-centred; but represented an “overrule” of the Kano emirate, at the expense of the people.²⁰

Mahmud Tukur wrote about the British conquest of the Sokoto Caliphate and Borno and the imposition of British rule in Northern Nigeria between 1897 and 1914. He did a complete and detailed analysis of the British conquest by force and coercion and how it impacted the area and the people, cautioning about the need to be careful with the colonial records and seeking a better interpretation of their context. Tukur further criticizes the role of the Emirs and District Heads in the assessment, imposition, and collection of taxes in the emirates. Tukur condemns the involvement and collaboration of local Native Authority officials in economic policies that were unfavourable to the people. He concludes that the colonial economic policies, including taxation, were exploitative, and harmed the economy of Northern Nigeria.²¹ Tukur further argues that:

The economic policies introduced, and the taxes imposed by the British were baseless and arbitrary, some of them having as their primary purpose not the provision of revenue to the colonial administration and the native authorities but the creation of a colonial economy devoid of an indigenous base, geared towards the production, and export of unprocessed raw materials.²²

Chinedu Ubah examines the British administration of Kano from 1900 to 1930. He analyses the administrative mechanisms of Kano before the British conquest and after. He provides a list, roles, and functions of the Emirate officials under British Rule. Ubah argues that the British deliberately modified the administrative structures, including taxation, land, and economic policies, to further weaken the power base of the Emir and his officials for the sake of exploitation.

²⁰ Adamu Fika. *The Political and Economic Re-orientation of Kano Emirate Northern Nigeria 1882-1940*. PhD dissertation, University of London, 1973. 165.

²¹ Mahmud Tukur. *The Imposition of British Colonial Domination on the Sokoto Caliphate, Borno, and Neighbouring States, 1897-1914: A Reinterpretation of Colonial Sources*. PhD dissertation, Ahmadu Bello University, Zaria, 1976. 627.

²²Tukur, *The Imposition of British Colonial Domination*, 627.

This is evident when Resident Cargill created and appointed new district heads without consulting the emir. Ubah concludes that these patterns can be seen in the appointment of new emirs and imposition of officials, even when those appointments were not suitable.²³

Halil Sa'id reviews the Fulani Jihad and its impact on Kano from 1807 to 1919. He provides an analysis of the reaction of the Hausa, the Fulani, and other peoples to the changes and development brought about by the Jihad. Sa'id also discusses the earlier parts of British Rule, the colonial economic policies and the reaction of the Hausa, Fulani, enslaved persons, and the aristocrats to their new overlords. He concludes that the British conquest brought false hope to the Hausa peasants and enslaved persons who thought they found a new saviour but were disappointed when they realized it was not the case. Rather, they had a new overlord for their continuous oppression.²⁴

Mahadi analyzes the administration and economy of Kano in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries and the influence of the Sarauta system, that is the system of royal titles, in shaping Kano. Although his study concentrates on the pre-colonial period of Kano, Mahadi draws some conclusions on the colonial period namely that the colonial economy took advantage of the Sarauta system to exploit and impoverish the people.²⁵

Sule Bello investigates the British Colonial administrative and economic policies from 1894 to 1960 in Kano. He argues that the changes that took place in Kano under the British were more of an imposition rather than a collaboration with the aristocracy. He believes that the British

²³ C.N. Ubah. *Administration of Kano Emirate under the British, 1900-1930*. PhD dissertation, University of Ibadan, 1973. 135.

²⁴ H.I. Sa'id. *Revolution and Reaction: the Fulani Jihad in Kano and its Aftermath, 1807-1919*, Ph.D. dissertation, University of Michigan, 1978. 312-313.

²⁵ Mahadi. *The State and the Economy, The Sarauta System and its Roles*, 201.

colonial fiscal and economic policies and the imposition of taxation in Northern Nigeria were exploitative and impoverished the people. Bello argues that the taxation system, together with the land tenure system and labour policies the British pursued in Kano, essentially benefited only the British and their few collaborators.²⁶

Robert Shenton argues that the British colonial administration opening the markets to international business hindered economic development because of the negative impact on the peasant farmers who were compelled to produce cash crops at the expense of food crops. Shenton posits that the changes Northern Nigeria went through under the British colonial administration largely prevented growth and development in the area.²⁷ Shenton further argues that the increased rate of colonial taxes such as poll tax and cattle tax, the development of cash crops such as cotton and groundnuts, which led to the building of the railways and its extension to Kano in 1912, negatively affected Northern Nigeria. Shenton concludes that the changes the British introduced eventually led to the collapse of the economy of Northern Nigeria, which caused the people untold hardship during the Great Depression.²⁸

Tijjani Garba studied taxation in some emirates of Hausaland from 1860 to 1939, which covers both pre-colonial and colonial periods. Garba believes that colonial taxation did not impede existing entrepreneurship, trade, and accumulation of wealth, but it discouraged the involvement of the people in new commercial ventures because of fear of using the banking system and exposing their wealth to the British for tax assessment. He argues that taxes gave social and political control of Hausaland to the British. Garba believes that the taxes were regressive because

²⁶ Sule Bello. *The State and the Economy of Kano, 1894-1960, a Study of Colonial Domination*. PhD dissertation, Ahmadu Bello University, Zaria, 1983.

²⁷ Robert Shenton. *The Development of Capitalism in Northern Nigeria*. London: James Currey, 1986. 136-137.

²⁸ Shenton, *The Development of Capitalism in Northern Nigeria*, 136-137.

they imposed high rates on low-income people and low rates on wealthy people in Hausaland. In his analyses of the economic policies and imposition of colonial taxation by the British in Northern Nigeria, Garba concludes that the effect was adverse and detrimental to development in the area.²⁹

Ibrahim Jumare argues that the introduction of colonial economic policies, including British taxation in Northern Nigeria, “entrenched British supremacy over the caliphate.” Jumare further argues that both the ruling elites and commoners resisted the modification of the taxes because they were largely against the principles of Shari’a law, which governed the caliphate before the British conquest and went against the agreement with the British not to interfere with any religious laws of the caliphate. Jumare concludes, however, that the colonial economic policies might have some benefits but were largely detrimental and caused much hardship on the people.³⁰

Muhammadu Gwadabe’s study on land, labour, and taxation in Kumbotso, a district in Kano Province from 1903 to 1953, focused on how the policies of the British changed the way of life of the people except for their religion. Gwadabe argues that the British did not care about the development and welfare of the Kano people, and the introduction of the new taxation system, land tenure system, and organization of labour, was solely to cater to their imperialist interests.³¹

Moses Ochonu examines the political and economic situation in Northern Nigeria during the Global Depression and argues that the policies of the British colonial administrators were desperate and increased the suffering of the people. Ochonu posits that though the Global Depression was responsible for the colonial meltdown, the colonial policies did not prepare for

²⁹ Tijjani Garba. *Taxation in Some Hausa Emirates, c. 1860-1939*. PhD dissertation, University of Birmingham, 1986. 312.

³⁰ Ibrahim Jumare. “Colonial Taxation in the Capital Emirate of Northern Nigeria”, *African Economic History*, 26, 1998. 83.

³¹ Muhammadu Gwadabe. *Land, Labour and Taxation in Kano Native Authority: The Case of Kumbotso District 1903- 1953*. PhD dissertation, Ahmadu Bello University Zaria, 2008. 106.

such eventualities and further made things worse. Ochonu, who mainly concentrates his research among the Idoma of Northern Nigeria, concludes that the colonial economic policies, especially taxation, were callous, harmful, and responsible for hardship among the people.³²

Michael Watts argues that the relationships between famine, climate, and political economy were very evident in Northern Nigeria under colonial rule. Watts posits that the climatic conditions and the colonial economic policy of the British, including the establishment of new taxes, caused the famines in Northern Nigeria before 1936. Watts blames the suffering of the peasant farmers squarely on the British colonial administrators, and their policies, which he described as inhuman. Watts also made in-depth analyses of the climatic conditions in Northern Nigeria, which caused the several famines witnessed at that time. Watts concludes that the imposition of new taxes, which was part of the political and economic policy designed by the British colonial administrators, largely contributed to the famine, and impoverished the poor peasants in Northern Nigeria.³³

Lovejoy and Hogendorn make a comprehensive analysis of slavery in Northern Nigeria and how the institution continued to exist despite the imposition of British rule. They argue that the two-way approach to the question of slavery by High Commissioner Lugard made the institution last longer than necessary at the pain and expense of the enslaved persons. The authors demonstrate how the institution of slavery became gradually and systematically eradicated over a long period because of the introduction of economic policies, which forced slave owners to pay taxes on them. They demonstrate one good impact of colonial economic policy. The authors

³² Moses Ochonu. *Colonial Meltdown: Northern Nigeria in the Great Depression*. Athens: Ohio University Press, 2009. 64-70.

³³ Michael Watts. *Silent Violence: Food, Famine, & Peasantry in Northern Nigeria*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1983. 180-184

conclude that the reorganization of British taxation had its own merits and demerits and one of the extreme values is that it helped to end slavery in an area where the institution was endemic.³⁴

Lovejoy and Hogendorn further argue that the adversarial impact of colonial taxation is exaggerated. British colonial administrators instituted reforms in tax assessment that eliminated numerous exemptions, especially related to *chaffa* and *hurmi* privileges, and with those resulting from political appointments. They further argue that the aristocracy of the Caliphate used disputes over colonial taxes to strengthen their control over the peasantry because of their loss of revenue from traditional sources, such as the share of war booty, succession fees, inheritance taxes, and tributes from the subordinate jurisdictions.³⁵ Lovejoy and Hogendorn link colonial economic policies to the reform of taxation, the institution of slavery, and estate agriculture. The colonial economic policy, which depended mostly on raising revenue through taxation, contributed to the collapse of slavery and plantation agriculture run by the aristocrats of the Caliphate because enslaved persons who had previously received an exemption from taxation were later forced to pay taxes. Since slave owners were expected to pay taxes for their enslaved persons, this gradually undermined slavery because slave owners found it unprofitable to keep enslaved persons if they had to pay for them.³⁶

In this dissertation, I contend that the economic policies of the British colonial administrators benefited Kano far more than is usually represented. This is fully discussed in chapters four, five and six. Like Lovejoy and Hogendorn, the dissertation explores the good effect of the taxation ending slavery in Kano Province under the Northern Protectorate. It also reviews

³⁴ Lovejoy and Hogendorn, *Slow Death for Slavery*, 159-162.

³⁵ Lovejoy and Hogendorn, *Slow Death for Slavery*, 178-180.

³⁶ Lovejoy and Hogendorn, *Slow Death for Slavery*, 178-180.

how colonial taxation raised the needed revenues for infrastructural development and the promotion of agricultural export crops that were mostly responsible for the economic boom. It also demonstrates how during the Global Depression; some British administrative policies and climatic conditions contributed to the economic decline.

The study is critical because of the need for a review and reassessment of the impact of the colonial economy on Kano and the necessity of disentangling the historical reconstruction of the period from the anti-colonial rhetoric that has dominated the historiography. The study is also essential for a better understanding of economic change in Kano in the early part of the colonial administration through to the Great Depression. The dissertation hypothesizes that there were more good impacts of colonialism from 1899 to 1939, such as ending slavery, the economic boom, the development of infrastructures like the railway and the road system, the introduction of Western Education, the healthcare system, the introduction of social amenities such as piped water, electricity, and cash flows, which boosted entrepreneurship. The study examines the economic boom, the burst, which was caused by climatic conditions, the Global Depression, the collapse of international commodity prices, the deflationary policies of the British administrators such as the exploitation of the farmers through price-fixing, the little investment in the welfare of the people and stagnation of wages.

1.2 Structure of the study

In this first chapter, the thesis has provided an introduction of the topic and a summary of the arguments and the historiography. Chapter Two presents an analysis of the state of the economy of Kano in the late nineteenth century, shortly before the British conquest in 1903. The chapter discusses the economy of Kano and its different sectors, such as agriculture, pastoral life, crafts,

industrial production, local and long-distance trade. The chapter also addresses state policy on taxation, land, legal system, non-Muslims, and foreigners. Lastly, the chapter examines the impact of the Kano civil war (*Yakin Basasa*) on the economy and the reaction of the merchant community, which had a considerable economic influence on society.

Chapter Three examines the economic impact of the British conquest on Kano from 1903 to 1911. The chapter addresses the end of Kano as a vassal to Sokoto, the establishment of the Native Authority and Indirect Rule, administrative reorganization, and the economic impact of the 1904 famine. The chapter also explores the impact of the policies of Dr. Featherstone Cargill and Charles Lindsey Temple, who were the two most senior colonial administrators at that time. Here, an analysis is made of the impact of fugitive enslaved persons on the economy and of the colonial policies on the slave trade and slavery. The chapter discusses how British labour, land, and taxation policies affected the economy of Kano. Lastly, the chapter reviews the problems the merchant class encountered when they lost their wealth due to the British policies on taxation and slavery.

The fourth chapter discusses colonial economic policy in the boom period of development from 1911 to 1929. The chapter examines the impact of railway transportation in Kano, the increase in export of groundnuts, cotton, and tin, together with the revenue generated. It scrutinizes the impact of the emphasis on the production of export crops such as cotton and groundnuts and the 1914 and 1927 famines on the economy of Kano. The chapter also reviews who introduced the idea to shift from food to export crops. This period also discusses the amalgamation of Northern and Southern Nigeria in 1914 under Lord Lugard, and its impact on Kano until 1929, when the Great Depression started.

The fifth chapter concentrates on developments in Kano's colonial economy during the Global Depression from 1929 to 1939. The chapter addresses how the economic failure triggered by the Global Depression from 1929 to 1939, led to the crash of commodity prices and caused famine, regression, and human suffering. Here, an analysis is made of the British policies and their reaction to the global economic depression, which flattened the economy of Kano. Additionally, the chapter investigates the aspects of continuity and emerging issues in Kano's economy and its environs from the 1930s to the Second World War period.

The sixth chapter is the general conclusion that critically appraises the impact of British economic policies in Kano. These include the impact on the aristocratic ruling class, the merchants, the peasant farmers, and enslaved persons. The chapter examines the colonial legacy of the British in Kano, what they did and what they did not do, and how it impacted the province at that time. British economic policies had both a good and bad impact on Kano. The restructuring of the administration, taxation system, land tenure system and labour led to more revenue, an economic boom, and the end of wars and slavery. The global economic depression and climatic conditions that caused famine reversed this development. This dissertation concludes that overall, Kano benefitted from colonial rule far more than what the literature says thus negating the anti-colonial scholarship that argues otherwise.

1.3 Sources

This dissertation builds on a careful analysis of colonial documentation. It relies heavily on archival sources, especially archival materials found in the Nigerian National Archives Kaduna and Arewa House Archives in Kaduna, Nigeria. Some of these archival materials are on Northern Nigeria, some on Kano and the Sokoto Caliphate, and others on the economic policies in Northern Nigeria. The dissertation also uses materials from the Kano State History and Cultural Bureau, and

National Archives, Kew, in London, UK. Most of these primary sources, which this research utilized extensively, are also found in Lovejoy's Digital Archival Collection at the Harriet Tubman Institute for Research on Africa and its Diasporas, York University. The dissertation also makes use of secondary sources, which consist of dissertations, books, and articles, some directly on colonial economic policies in Kano Province, some on Northern Nigeria, and some on Nigeria and Africa in general.

The dissertation used archival documents on economic policies, taxes, land tenure, mining, annual reports, half-year reports, quarterly reports, monthly reports, assessment reports, reassessment reports, labour, and agricultural reforms found in Nigerian National Archives Kaduna, Arewa House Archives, Kano State History and Cultural Bureau, and National Archives, Kew, in London. The dissertation used the files from the Secretariat of Northern Provinces (SNP), Kano Provincial Files (Kanoprof), Ministry of Social Welfare and Community Development Files (MSWC), Kaduna Ministry of Agriculture Files (Kad Min Agric), Africa West, European Civil Establishment 1903 to 1940, Nigerian Annual Reports 1903 to 1940, Nigerian Gazette Supplement, Nigerian Custom and Trade Journal, Northern Nigerian Annual Reports 1903 to 1940, British Cotton Growers Association (BCGA) files and many others.

1.4 Methodology

The study is based on a thorough analysis of the facts and evidence available. This study uses primary and secondary sources and the descriptive method of analysis. The views and opinions of experts and scholars on Kano are carefully examined concerning the facts and evidence available through primary sources. This is the basis of the framework of the study. This study is situated within a revisionist framework. It seeks to revise the bias towards a scholarship of blaming colonial administrators for what went wrong in Africa, in this case, in the Kano Province in

Northern Protectorate, which later became part of Nigeria. The methodology of data collection and writing this dissertation consist mainly of primary sources and secondary sources.

The dissertation attempts a thorough analysis of the archival documents, including annual reports, half-year reports, quarterly reports, monthly reports, assessment reports, reassessment reports on economic policies, taxes, land tenure, mining, labour, and agricultural reforms. Analyses of different annual reports are made to compare and find the economic changes during this period of study. This is supported by a thorough analysis of secondary sources. In total, 26 tables and charts are generated mainly from the primary sources and included for proper analysis and understanding of the economic situation and the changes brought by colonial policies and the impact on Kano. There are five maps in total: two for Kano, two for Northern Nigeria and one for Nigerian Railway lines. These maps are adequately utilized for an understanding of the area of study, its geography, including landmass, rainfall, weather, waterways, and topology, at this time in history.

Chapter One is based on general knowledge, formulated ideas, secondary sources, and the descriptive method of analysis. This is the introduction that highlights what is coming in the rest of the chapters. Chapter Two, which is on the economy of Kano at the end of the nineteenth century, is based on mainly secondary and primary sources and the descriptive method of analysis. Chapter Three is based on the analysis of primary documents supported by secondary literature. Eight tables were utilized to analyze the impact of the British conquest of Kano from 1903 to 1911. Chapter Four is based on the detailed analysis of the primary sources supported by secondary sources. Five tables are used to analyze further and assess the information. Chapter Five is based on a thorough analysis of secondary sources such as to support primary sources. Thirteen tables are used for a thorough analysis and a better understanding of the facts. Chapter Six is the

conclusion, which is based on the analyses and arguments presented in the previous chapters. This is mostly drawn using primary records from the previous chapters and secondary literature.

A glossary of Hausa words used in this study is provided for a clear understanding of the arguments.

CHAPTER TWO

ECONOMY OF KANO AT THE END OF THE NINETEENTH CENTURY

Introduction

To understand the impact of the British conquest on Kano in 1903, it is necessary to present an overview of the economy of Kano at the end of the nineteenth century. In this way, it will be possible to examine what colonial occupation meant for the people of Kano. This chapter explores Kano's local economy and its trade relations with Arabs, Tuaregs and other peoples of Central Sudan, Western Sudan, and the Mediterranean. It also analyses the administration, state policy on taxation, labour, land tenure, the legal system, and how they affected the economy. A brief analysis of the administrative mechanism is made for a better understanding of how the ruling class controlled the economy. In addition, the chapter discusses the state policies with regards to non-Muslims, foreigners, and the impact of the Kano Civil War (*Yakin Basasa*) on the economy.

2.1. Sectors of the Kano's Economy

Fika has shown that Kano, “since the Jihad of Uthman dan Fodio early in the nineteenth century, has been the pre-eminent commercial and industrial centre of its economic region.”³⁷ The economy of Kano by the end of the nineteenth century was diversified and was significantly shaped by environmental factors as well as the adaptive trends of the people for personal survival and the overall development of their societies. The Kano emirate by the end of the nineteenth century was under the vast Sokoto Caliphate, which covered most of present-day Northern Nigeria and beyond in the post-Usman Dan Fodio Jihad of 1804 until the British conquest of the area in 1903. To a

³⁷ Fika, *The Political and Economic Re-Orientation of Kano*, 10.

high degree, the economy of Kano was vibrant before the British incursion into the area. It was an unparalleled centre of excellence in agricultural, commercial, and manufacturing activities throughout all the emirates of the caliphate.

Geographically, the Kano Emirate was bordered by Borno on the north-east, Bauchi on the south-east, Zaria on the south-west, Katsina on the north-west, and Sokoto in the west.³⁸ By the end of the nineteenth century, Kano city alone had a population of about 80,000 people.³⁹ In terms of its topography, Kano Emirate falls mostly within the Sudan Savannah grassland vegetation zone and consists mainly of flat or gently undulating plains sloping to the northeast and presenting a uniformly park-like appearance. The vegetation is characterized by orchard-bush common to the Savanna lands, though some of the more humid areas are well-wooded with forest vegetation.⁴⁰ While its rivers dry up for seven to eight months every year, they flow in almost hidden valleys, in sandy channels and drain into Lake Chad.⁴¹

Food crop production was the primary source of revenue for the people of Kano followed by textile production, leather works and the production of groundnut were vital in the economy of Kano because they were the primary sources of revenue to the emirate as well as the Sokoto Caliphate.

The climatic conditions in Kano were favourable for farming with an adequate supply of rainfall over a relatively long period—dotted at times with draught during cases of insufficient rainfall. Studies have observed that, together with fertile soil, the favourable climate not only

³⁸ Provincial Gazetteer 2568/1933, Vol II, Kano Gazetteer: General Description of the Province, 1.

³⁹ Paul Lovejoy, *Jihad in West Africa during the age of Revolutions*. Athens, Ohio: Ohio University Press, 2016. 107.

⁴⁰ Fika, *The Political and Economic Re-Orientations of Kano*, 30.

⁴¹ Provincial Gazetteer 2568/1933, Vol II, Kano Gazetteer, 2; Fika, *The Political and Economic Re-Orientations of Kano*, 10.

supported the cultivation of crops and other economic activities over a very long period but also encouraged the settlement of migrants in large numbers.⁴² Moreover, the economy of the Kano area before colonial domination was characterized by various types of activities, which will be broadly discussed below, including several sectors of the economy such as agriculture, pastoralism, crafts and industrial production, and commerce.

2.2. Agricultural Sector

Like most parts of the pre-colonial African societies, agriculture was the dominant economic activity of Kano towards the end of the nineteenth century, employing the majority of the people.⁴³ The agricultural activities in Kano were carried out both during the rainy and dry season, though the majority of crop production was done in the rainy season from May to September. Most of the land was under cultivation, the farmers practised fallowing, and only a small portion was left uncultivated, depending on the location and texture of the soil.⁴⁴ The soil was mainly loamy and fertile. Also, in most cases where domestic and farm animals were available, the farmers used cow, sheep, and goat dung to further enrich the soil.

Because the soil was light, it was suitable for the cultivation of cash and food crops. The main export crops were indigo, cotton (*auduga*), and groundnuts (*gyada*), and the main food crops were guinea corn (*dawa, kaura* and *farfara*), millet (*gero, maiwa*), beans (*wake*), maize (*masara*), rice (*shinkafa*), and wheat (*alkama*). The people also practised irrigation farming (*kayan rafi*). Besides the crops already mentioned, the people of Kano also cultivated root crops such as *rizga* (kaffi-potatoes), *gurjiya* (voandzein subterranean, the Bambara groundnut), yam (*doya*), cocoyam

⁴² Mahadi, *The State and the Economy*, 67; Gwadabe, *Land, Labour and Taxation in Kano*, 25.

⁴³ Nura Isah Zubairu. *A Study of the Colonial Economy of Wudil District, Kano Province, 1907-1960*, Masters Dissertation, Department of History, Ahmadu Bello University, Zaria, November 2015, 51.

⁴⁴ Gwadabe, *Land, Labour and Taxation in Kano*, 31.

(*makani*), cassava (*rogo*), sweet potatoes (*dankali*), and onions (*albasa*). In addition to all these, the people also cultivated chilli (*yaji*), peppers (*tattasai*), okras (*kupewa*), and pigeon peas. The people planted their crops according to the soil types available in different areas and used manure and fallowing to get the best yield.⁴⁵ These agricultural products were grown everywhere in the emirate.⁴⁶ The cultivation of these crops followed some regularised and professional stages from the beginning period of land clearing to the culminating stage of crop harvesting. Imam Imoru, for instance, has shown the stages involved in varieties of land cultivation and crop production in Hausaland, and the particular case of Kano, during the nineteenth century to include farmland clearing, burning, tilling, planting, weeding in series until crops maturity, and the eventual reaping or harvesting of crops.⁴⁷

Most agricultural production at the end of the nineteenth century was for internal consumption and not for export, except to the desert edge.⁴⁸ However, the people also grew other crops such as cotton, groundnut, and many others for sale in the market. The people of Kano before colonial rule concentrated on the production of food crops and cotton. The British later emphasized the production of export crops such as groundnut and cotton. The issue of food crops versus export crops is thoroughly discussed in chapters three, four, and five. Also, in terms of labour, Kano's people during this period were farmers who farmed their lands with personal and family labour, except for aristocrats, officials, wealthy merchants, and leading clerics (*mallamai*) who made use of enslaved persons to cultivate their lands and to perform all the labour required. Many of these enslaved persons were settled in plantation-like settlements in Kano. Amongst others, scholars like

⁴⁵ M.G Smith. "Exchange and Marketing among the Hausa". in Paul Bohannon and G. Dalton, eds. *Markets in Africa*. Evanston, Illinois: 1960. 300.

⁴⁶ Kanoprof c.111, Confidential Preliminary Report, Kano Province, March 1909.

⁴⁷ Douglas E. Ferguson. *Nineteenth Century Hausaland: Being a Description by Imam Imoru of the Land, Economy and Society of His People*. PhD dissertation, University of California, Los Angeles, 1973, 59-65

⁴⁸ Kanoprof 26/18 Economic Activities in Kano 1916.

Polly Hill, Lovejoy, Ibrahim Dantiye, John Philips, Ibrahim Hamza and Mohammed Salau all demonstrate in their various studies the importance of ribats and plantation settlements in the Sokoto Caliphate.⁴⁹ Lovejoy, in his studies of plantation slavery in the Sokoto Caliphate, argues that the practice of slave labour was the chief sustenance of the large agricultural output in the caliphate.⁵⁰ Lovejoy and Hogendorn also noted that all the titleholders from the emir to the lowest village official had at least one plantation that was cultivated by enslaved persons.⁵¹ Hamza's study of Dorayi, a slave plantation settlement in the Kano emirate, attests to the fact that the emirate engaged in large-scale agricultural projects that depended largely on slave labour.⁵²

Similarly, Salau further used Fanisau in the Kano emirate to demonstrate the importance of plantation slave settlements for agricultural production.⁵³ Salau also argues that plantation slave settlements were used for both agricultural purposes as well as military purposes.⁵⁴ Both Temple and Imam Imoru also attest to the large number of plantations that enslaved persons cultivated in Kano Province and the accumulation of a large number of enslaved persons by officials and wealthy merchants for labour purposes in Kano and the rest of Hausaland⁵⁵

⁴⁹ Polly Hill. "From Slavery to Freedom: The Case of Farm Slavery in Nigeria Hausaland". *Comparative Studies in Society and History*. 8, 3, 1976. 395-426; ⁴⁹ Paul E. Lovejoy. "The Characteristics of Plantations in the Nineteenth Century Sokoto Caliphate, Islamic West Africa". *American Historical Review*, 74:4, 1979: 1267-1292; Nasiru Ibrahim Dantiye. *A Study of the Origins, Status and Defensive Role of Four Kano Frontier Strongholds (Ribats) in the Emirate Period (1809 – 1903)*. PhD dissertation, Indiana University, 1985. ix; John E. Philips. *Ribats in Sokoto Caliphate: Selected Studies, 1804 – 1903*. PhD dissertation, UCLA, 1992, 223-226; ⁴⁹ Ibrahim Hamza. "Slavery and Plantation Society at Dorayi in Kano Emirate." In *Slavery on the Frontier of Islam*, Paul E. Lovejoy (ed.), New Jersey: Markus Wiener Publishers, 2004, 125-147; Mohammed Bashir Salau. "Ribats and the Development of Plantations in the Sokoto Caliphate: A Case Study of Fanisau". *Africa Economic History*, 34, 2006. 23-34.

⁵⁰ Paul E. Lovejoy. "The Characteristics of Plantations"; Lovejoy. *Jihad in West Africa*, 113.

⁵¹ Lovejoy and Hogendorn, *Slow death for slavery*, 130-131.

⁵² Ibrahim Hamza. "Slavery and Plantation Society at Dorayi" 125.

⁵³ Mohammed Bashir Salau. "Ribats and the Development of Plantations" 23-24.

⁵⁴ Mohammed Bashir Salau. *The West African Slave Plantation: A Case Study*. New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2011, 1 and 47-49; Mohammed Bashir Salau. *Plantation Slavery in the Sokoto Caliphate: A Historical and Comparative Study*. Rochester: University of Rochester Press, 2018, 115 and 118-120.

⁵⁵ SNP 7/10 6415/1900, Annual Report of Kano Province; Ferguson. *Nineteenth Century Hausaland*, 233.

It is important to note that guinea corn and millet were the main food items of the Kano people, in comparative terms with the other cultivated food crops, and these dominant crops were cultivated by every farmer both for subsistence and for exchange at the market.⁵⁶ On average, guinea corn and millet were produced at about three-quarters of a ton per acre, while cotton from 100lbs to 150lbs per acre.⁵⁷ After the rainy season and the commencement of the dry season, the people of Kano harvested the crops, gathered wood and grass for fuel, built and repaired homes, made thatch, baskets, and mats. During the dry season, the people also hunted, fished, repaired their homes, and prepared the land for the next raining season.

Nonetheless, the Kano emirate experienced occasional harsh drought, which affected agricultural production and general economic activity. Drought occurred partly because of the arid and desert nature of some parts of the emirate and because of a localized lack of rainfall. Notable drought and famine occurred in 1847, 1855, and 1890.⁵⁸ Regardless of these droughts, agricultural production in Kano was boosted all through the pre-colonial period up to the end of the nineteenth century. The yields from the various crops cultivated during the period were enough to satisfy the domestic needs of the inhabitants of the component communities. Also, the surplus production boosted the commercial exchanges of local crops with other needed items from near and distant neighbours in the mutual satisfaction of the traders and farmers' economic interests, as well as the sustainability of wealth creation in different parts of the emirate.

2.3. Pastoral Sector

⁵⁶ Kanoprof 2/31 and 32 Rural Land Tenure System, 1902.

⁵⁷ Kanoprof /26/18 Economic Activities in Kano 1916; Paul E. Lovejoy and Stephen Baier. "The Desert-Side Economy of Central Sudan". *The International Journal of African Historical Studies*. Vol. 8, No. 4, 1975, 551-581.

⁵⁸ William Gowers SNP 17/K 2131, 1926; H.R. Palmer. "Kano Chronicle." in *Sudanese Memoirs*, London: 1928, III, 116-130.

The rearing of various domestic and farm animals was also significant economic activity in the Kano area by the end of the nineteenth century. In terms of specialization, rearing and herding cattle and other livestock was the occupation of the pastoral Fulani who possessed the expertise in this sector in Kano and other parts of Hausaland and beyond where their settlements spread. Fulani nomads were found everywhere in the farming and rural settlements of Kano, where they uninhibitedly grazed their herds. Some migrated from place to place in search of favourable and new grazing sites for their livestock. In addition to the main Fulani herders, some notable sedentary Hausa farmers also kept cattle in Kano. Besides cattle, the people of Kano also raised horses, donkeys, goats, sheep, chickens, turkeys, and guinea fowls. Goat keeping itself was another pastoral sector in Kano, which, unlike cattle, was dominantly the activity of women. Women also took care of large numbers of guinea fowl and chickens. Despite the indigenous participation, the keeping of larger flocks of sheep was commonly identified with the pastoral Fulani, who grazed them along with cattle.⁵⁹ A good number of camels were maintained in Kano for the transportation of commercial and household wares. The Tuareg were the only camel rearing group in Central Sudan.⁶⁰

Livestock rearing of cattle, goat, sheep and other animals was a prevalent occupation in Kano and various parts of Hausaland, so much so that the written accounts of Europeans and non-Europeans who visited the territory before and during these periods such as Heinrich Barth, Paul Staudinger, and many others bore testimonies to the presence of these animals.⁶¹ Apart from the occupational preferences of the Fulani herders and other indigenous keepers of livestock which

⁵⁹ A. G. Adebayo. "The Production and Export of Hides and Skins in Colonial Northern Nigeria, 1900-1945." *The Journal of African History* 33, No. 2, 1992, 275.

⁶⁰ Smith. "Exchange and Marketing among the Hausa", 307-308.

⁶¹ Heinrich Barth. *Travels and Discoveries in North and Central Africa*, Vol. 2. London: Frank Cass Centenary edition, 1965, iii, 98; Paul Staudinger. *In the Heart of the Hausa States*, Vol. 2 (Athens, Ohio, 1990), ii, 159-222.

have attracted much attention, A.G Adebayo has shown amongst others that the predominance of livestock rearing in most parts of Hausaland – including the specific case of Kano has been as a result of suitable environmental factors. According to Adebayo:

The primary determinant in this livestock farming [in Kano] was the availability of pasture and water, which was complemented by the openness of the savannah, the relative absence of tsetse fly and an environment generally favourable for mixed farming.⁶²

Significantly, the pastoral sector served several important economic purposes in Kano and its environs by the end of the nineteenth century. For instance, the various animals served as ready sources for the supply of meat, which complemented the various food crops obtained from farming in the diets of the Kano's residents.⁶³ It was also a prospective avenue for symbiotic development and satisfaction of economic needs for the Fulani nomads and the indigenous people of Kano. In this regard, the pastoral Fulani usually supplied and sold meat, milk, and butter to the Kano people in exchange for foodstuffs for the personal consumption of the former as well as for the granting of adequate land for them to graze and quarter their livestock for a period. Through the specialty in livestock trade and the recurrent migration of the Fulani herdsmen, livestock was among the significant articles of export trade to many southern neighbours of Hausaland and other hinterland communities of the forested zones in the supply of meat and additional sources of food to them as well. Aside from regular meat supplies, livestock keeping also promoted the specialization of the Kano people in the production and export of hides and skins, and other valuable articles of international trade, which is discussed under the next section.

2.4. Craft and Industrial Production

The economy of Kano by the end of the nineteenth century was also very vibrant with many indigenous craftworks and industrial productions. Thus, besides the agriculture-related activities,

⁶² Adebayo, "The Production and Export of Hides and Skins," 275.

⁶³ Adebayo, "The Production and Export of Hides and Skins," 274.

many persons during the pre-colonial period specialized in several skills that contributed to the overall development of society. It is important to note that most craftworks were practised during the dry season as an alternative or a complementary job because most Kano people were farmers. The types of craftworks and indigenous industrial occupations in Kano point to the level of economic and technological divergence in the skill sets of the people. For example, there were hunters, fishers, builders, thatchers, tanners, leatherworkers, saddlers, weavers, dyers, woodworkers, blacksmiths, brass-smiths, silversmiths, calabash-workers, pot makers, drummers, musicians of various types, praise-singers, barbers, surgeons, tailors, embroiderers, washers, porters, commission agents, traders of various kinds, specialists in long-distance overland trade (*fatauci*), makers of sweetmeats, makers of baskets and mats, tobacco grinders, specialists in herbal medicines, bonesetters (traditional orthopedics), clerics, rulers, officials and their agents, courtiers (*fadawa*) or intermediaries or agents (*jakadu*). This list attests to the variety of factors and skill sets necessary for economic stability and prosperity in the late nineteenth century.⁶⁴ It should also be in evidence that throughout the periods, the crafts and other related specialized works of Kano were produced from the available raw materials derived from the area.⁶⁵

Because of their non-involvement in regular farming, women had much time to practice crafts and trade most of the year. Accordingly, women specialized in some vital non-farming occupations such as making and selling sweetmeats, cooking, and selling food, carding cotton, spinning thread for weaving, making pots, weaving *gwado* (cotton blankets) and raising goats and poultry. Some women were full-time traders of grains and other indigenous products in the market,

⁶⁴ Kanoprof /26/18 Economic Activities in Kano, 1916.

⁶⁵ Ibrahim Hamza. *Dorayi: A History of Economic and Social Transformations in the 19th and 20th Centuries Kano Emirate*. Masters thesis, Uthman Dan Fodio University, Sokoto, Nigeria, 1994, 32-34.

and some engaged in house trading and menial jobs for payment (*aikatau*).⁶⁶ This involved winnowing, pounding, grinding of grain, and spinning of cotton (*kadi*). Some women, especially older ones, sold ornaments and clothes, while others did hairdressing and midwifery.⁶⁷ Some women sold medicines, vegetable oils and tobacco and maintained the cult of spirit-possession (*bori*) and were its main devotees and exponents.⁶⁸ Some women, especially the single ones, engaged in praise-singing or worked as female messengers or agents (*jakadiya*) or prostitutes who, according to M.G. Smith, were the main exponents of *bori* traditions.⁶⁹ John Paden has argued that “Much of the contemporary *bori* practice in urban Kano is linked with prostitution, although some of the Muslim secluded wives are reputed to hold occasional *bori* ceremonies.”⁷⁰ On their part, the men were normally responsible for blacksmithing and ironworks, which made tools, implements and weapons, such as sickles, hoes, cutlasses, bows, arrows, swords, machetes, needles, knives and axes.⁷¹ This is fully discussed in the section on blacksmithing.

Cotton and Textile Industry: In the case of the textile industry, this was a highly specialized industry with multiple sections, which created a centre of excellence for Kano’s economy up to the late nineteenth century and beyond. With the expertise in the utilization of both the vertical and the treadle looms, Colleen Kriger argues that the industry developed a highly skilled labour force that produced high-quality textiles comparable or better than products from other parts of the world”⁷² The textile industry depended largely on the availability of cotton, which

⁶⁶ Smith, “Exchange and Marketing among the Hausa”, 307-308.

⁶⁷ Smith, “Exchange and Marketing among the Hausa”, 307-308.

⁶⁸ H. R. Palmer. “Bori among the Hausas”. *Man*, 14, 1914. 113–117.

⁶⁹ Smith, “Exchange and Marketing among the Hausa” 311-312.

⁷⁰ John Paden. *Religion and Political Culture in Kano*. Berkeley; Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1973, 47.

⁷¹ Smith, “Exchange and Marketing among the Hausa”, 307-308.

⁷² Colleen E. Kriger. *Cloth in West African History*. Lanham: Altamira Press, 2006, 91-92, 125-126.

according to Kriger “has an ancient history in West Africa going back over a millennium.”⁷³ And “transformed more than the West African landscape and farmers agricultural practices.”⁷⁴ Leo Africanus in 1896 noted the mass production of cotton in Kano.⁷⁵ The availability of indigo contributed immensely to the development of the textile industry in Kano. Shea argues that indigo-dyeing in Kano goes back at least five hundred years.⁷⁶ Imam Imoru provided a detailed explanation on indigo cultivation, processing, and utilization, both industrial and medicinal ⁷⁷ and he concluded that Kano produced the best indigo in the Hausaland.⁷⁸ In textile production, both men and women were engaged in various processes. Men also engaged in silk embroidery, which they combined with the studies of the Quran.⁷⁹ The availability of cotton made weaving to be among the premium indigenous industries up to the end of the century and in the subsequent period. Women spun the cotton for weaving done by both males and females. The literature largely concentrates on the contribution of men at the expense of women to the Kano textile industry, however, Kriger argues that “women contributed in the same capacity as men as weavers, dyers, tailors, and entrepreneurs”.⁸⁰ Iman Imoru states that “when girls lose their milk teeth, they were taught to spin thread.”⁸¹ This goes to show that women were involved from an early age in the textile industry and their contribution should not be underestimated.

⁷³ Colleen E. Kriger. “Mapping the History of Cotton Textile Production in Precolonial West Africa 1”. *African Economic History*, 2005, Vol.33, 2005, 108.

⁷⁴ Kriger. “Mapping the History of Cotton”, 88.

⁷⁵ Leo Africanus. *The History and Description of Africa and of the Notable things Therein and Contained*. 1896, Repr. New York: B. Franklin, 1963, 829 and 831.

⁷⁶ Philip Shea. *The Development of Export Oriented Dyed Cloth Industry in Kano Emirate in 19th Century*. PhD dissertation, University of Wisconsin, Madison, 1975, 58.

⁷⁷ Ferguson, *Nineteenth Century Hausaland*, 81-82.

⁷⁸ Ferguson, *Nineteenth Century Hausaland*, 60.

⁷⁹ Smith, “Exchange and Marketing among the Hausa”, 307-308.

⁸⁰ Colleen E. Kriger “Textile Production and Gender in the Sokoto Caliphate,” *Journal of African History*, 34, 1993, 361.

⁸¹ Ferguson, *Nineteenth Century Hausaland*, 260.

Some of the woven cloths were used as clothing for men and women and the lighter ones were used as blankets and in some places as a medium of exchange. It is noted by Smith that “the availability of cotton made weaving industry of importance before and during the early years of colonial administration with about 1,291 employed in Kura and Bunkure alone. Dyeing ranked second with about 509 people employed, using over 327 dye pits in the same vicinity. It was noted that those engaged in these practices were also farmers.”⁸² Shea provides figures of about more than 300 dye pits in the area of Kura and Bunkure towns.⁸³ and more than 1200 men working in the industry.⁸⁴ According to Kriger, “estimates are that there were 15,000 to 20,000 dye pits in Kano Emirate alone by the end of 19th Century.”⁸⁵ Lovejoy also argues that the numbers of dye pits at the end nineteenth century were more than 15,000.⁸⁶ Kriger’s and Lovejoy’s numbers are close and likely accurate given the importance and prevalence of the textile industry in Kano. For centuries, Kano men had developed the skills to grow and process indigo for dyeing. A very important component in the textile industry indispensable to the dyeing of the cloth was the different chemicals used to prepare the indigo. Lovejoy has noted the importance of the use of the sulphate salt, which, though not readily available in Kano, was procured from Muniyo and Mangari in Borno.⁸⁷

The nineteenth century was a time of prosperity for Kano, and the cotton and textile industry were vital in that success, where the emirate was producing more than enough for local use and the rest for export. Barth, for instance, states that textiles production reached one of its

⁸² Smith, “Exchange and Marketing among the Hausa”, 320-321.

⁸³ Philip Shea, “Responses to Changing Economic Conditions in the Indigo-Dyeing Industry in Kano in the Nineteenth Century”, *African Economic History Review*, Vol 2, No 1 Spring, 1975. 31

⁸⁴ Shea. *The Development of Export Oriented Dyed Cloth*, 60.

⁸⁵ Kriger “Textile Production and Gender”, 391.

⁸⁶ Paul Lovejoy, *Jihad in West Africa*, 127.

⁸⁷ Lovejoy, *Salt of the Desert Sun*, 27.

highest levels in the nineteenth century with an annual production of about 300 million cowries.⁸⁸ Barth also attributed the wealth and success of Kano to its industrial manufacturing of cotton cloth.⁸⁹ Shea argues that even the Kano emirate had to import enslaved persons with specialization in the textile industry to increase production because of demand from buyers of the finished and unfinished products.⁹⁰ Shea also demonstrates that the introduction of more giant pits by Kano cloth dyers reduced the cost of production and time spent on production, thereby increasing profits for the dyers and revenue for the emirate.⁹¹ Lovejoy observes that the specialization attained by Kano in the manufacture of textile products was more developed than other emirates, which increased profits and revenue.⁹²

Hides, Skins and Leather: The hide, skin and leather trade from Kano went to the entire Sudanese areas and northwards to distant territories such as Cairo, Tripoli, and Morocco via the long-distance caravan route of the Sahara Desert.⁹³ Kano was renowned for the industrial production of leather works and textiles, which not only served the local economy but were also exported to many near and far away places from the emirate. The leather industry was labour intensive, and the Kano people developed the necessary skills and specialization. According to Fika, the hide and skin industry was next in importance to the cloth-dyeing industry as a revenue generator in the Kano emirate.⁹⁴ By the late nineteenth century, Barth states that Kano was making more than 15 million cowries per year from exports and sales of leather goods.⁹⁵ C.H. Robinson,

⁸⁸ Barth, *Travels, and Discoveries*, 150.

⁸⁹ Barth, *Travels, and Discoveries*, 510-511.

⁹⁰ Shea. *The Development of Export Oriented Dyed Cloth*, 271-273.

⁹¹ Philip Shea. "Economies of Scale and the Indigo Dyeing Industry of Pre-Colonial Kano." *Kano Studies: New Series*, ½, 1974/77. 61.

⁹² Paul E. Lovejoy. "Plantations in the Economy of the Sokoto Caliphate". *The Journal of African History*, 19, 3, 1978. 358.

⁹³ Marion Johnson. "Calico Caravans: The Tripoli-Kano Trade after 1880," *The Journal of African History* 17, No. 1, 1976, 113-115.

⁹⁴ Fika, *The political and Economic Re-orientation of Kano*, 86.

⁹⁵ Barth. *Travels and Discoveries*, 306.

in his studies, also agrees with Barth's assertion on Kano's generation of revenue.⁹⁶ Adebayo argues that hides and skin or the leather industry was the primary source of income for Hausaland for many years before cotton and groundnuts came to the limelight.⁹⁷ According to Gwadabe, the activities of leather making went through various production processes such as tanning (*jima*) and later into leather production (*dukanci*).⁹⁸ Also, Mahadi has shown that different chemicals used in animal skin's tanning, such as Acacia Arabica (*gabaruwa*) and wood-ash, were available in large quantities in the Kano area.⁹⁹ Lovejoy also has demonstrated the importance of industrial salt in leather production in Central Sudan, which included Kano, and he argues that "Leather goods, textiles and livestock production were three of most important sectors in the economy of Central Sudan and each has a need for salt."¹⁰⁰ The tanning salt, sodium sulphate, identified by Lovejoy as (*kanwa*) or (*gwangwarasa*) was "essential to the central Sudan economy" because of its use in leather works, so also was natron used in dyeing the leather.¹⁰¹

Leatherworkers produced loincloths, shoes, aprons, containers, sandals, horse trappings, saddles, sheaths, quivers, satchels for the Koran, buckets, snuffboxes, cushions, bags, furniture, and other useful products that were used internally and were also circulated to various parts of Africa and the Middle East. As far back as the period of the European Renaissance, leather made in Kano had started making its way to Europe through the Trans-Saharan trade routes. However, Adebayo observes that in Europe, these leather works were mistakenly tagged "Moroccan leather"

⁹⁶ C.H. Robinson, *Hausaland or, Fifteen Hundred Miles through the Central Soudan*. London: Cambridge University Press reprint edition, 2011. 114.

⁹⁷ Adebayo, "The Production and Export of Hides and Skins," 273-300.

⁹⁸ Gwadabe, *Land, Labour and Taxation in Kano*, 59.

⁹⁹ Mahadi, *The State and the Economy*, 615.

¹⁰⁰ Paul E Lovejoy. *Salt of the Desert Sun: History of Salt Production and Trade in Central Sudan*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1986, 27

¹⁰¹ Lovejoy, *Salt of the Desert Sun*, 27.

because they were mainly exported to Europe through Morocco.¹⁰² Over the years, these leather works continued to play a vital role in the economy of Kano until and after the nineteenth century. For example, Barth's documented account of the Kano's leather market gives credence to the booming nature of this industrial sector:

The chief articles of the native industry [in Kano], besides cloth, which has a wide market, are principally sandals. The sandals are made with great neatness, and, like the cloth, are exported to an immense distance... I estimate this branch at ten million (cowries). It is very curious that the shoes made here by Arab shoemakers, of Sudan leather, and called '*belgha*,' are exported in great quantities to North Africa. The '*nesisa*,' or twisted leather strap, is a celebrated article of Kano manufacture, and '*jebiras*,' richly ornamented, are made by Arab workmen. ... (T)anned hides (*kula-bu*) and red sheepskins, dyed with a juice extracted from the stalks of the *holcus*, are not unimportant, being sent in great quantities even as far as Tripoli. I value the amount of export at about 5 million [cowries].¹⁰³

Groundnut Production: Groundnuts was another significant source of revenue for Kano and third in terms of importance after the cotton/textiles industry and hide/skin/leather industry. Both Hogendorn¹⁰⁴ and Salau¹⁰⁵ have demonstrated the importance of groundnuts in Northern Nigeria and Kano and how its cultivation increased towards the end of the nineteenth century and became the principal export product in the twentieth century. The groundnut is eaten as food, used for cooking, lighting, soap-making, and sold or exchanged for cash in the market. These and many other examples attest to the fact that the indigenous craft and industrial productions in Kano contributed immensely to the overall economic development of the area up to the late nineteenth century.

Blacksmithing: Blacksmithing was very important as a craft in Kano even before the advent of colonialism. It was the blacksmiths who produced the farming implements such as hoes and cutlasses; domestic utensils such as spoons, plates, knives, pots etc.; weapons such as swords,

¹⁰² Adebayo, "The Production and Export of Hides and Skins," 276.

¹⁰³ Barth. *Travels in Nigeria*, ed. A. H. M. Kirk-Greene (London, 1962), 116-117. (Cited in Adebayo, "The Production and Export of Hides and Skins," 276).

¹⁰⁴ Hogendorn, *Nigerian Groundnuts Exports*, 5-12.

¹⁰⁵ Mohammed Bashir Salau. "The Role of Slave Labour in Groundnut Production in Early Colonial Kano". *The Journal of African History*. Vol. 51, No. 3, 2010. 147-165.

knives, arrows, and chain mails; horse equipment such as bridles, bits, ring snaffle, and tack. H.R. Palmer noted the existence of blacksmithing as a craft in Kano as far back as the eleventh century.¹⁰⁶ Bath also attests to the prevalence of iron craft which is a very important part of the craft industry.¹⁰⁷ According to Philip Jagggar, blacksmithing and other important crafts have been fully developed in Kano as far back as the fifteenth century.¹⁰⁸ Jagggar argues that the blacksmithing industry in Kano was well developed, organized and complex which survived the onslaught of colonialism due to the importation of iron material and farming implements from Britain.¹⁰⁹ Jagggar noted that “By the time the British arrived in 1903 there were fifteen separate groups of blacksmiths located within the old walled city of Kano”¹¹⁰ with the largest concentration at Kwarin Mabuga near Kurmi Central Market.¹¹¹ Blacksmithing as a craft in Kano was indispensable because most industries and other crafts depended on it.

2.5. Trade

Marion Johnson demonstrates how Kano in the nineteenth century was deeply involved in many kinds of trades, which can be grouped into domestic trade and long-distance trade and involved other territories outside its domain.¹¹² Throughout the nineteenth century, Kano was recognized as a leading centre of commerce among the emirates under the Sokoto Caliphate. Mahadi demonstrates the importance of Kano in trade and its leading role in the Sokoto Caliphate in the nineteenth century.¹¹³ Like the agricultural sector, many people in Kano— both indigenes

¹⁰⁶ Palmer, “Kano Chronicle”, 116-130

¹⁰⁷ Bath, *Travels and Discoveries*, 519 -522.

¹⁰⁸ Philip Jagggar. *The Blacksmiths of Kano City, Nigeria: Tradition, Innovation and Entrepreneurship in the Twentieth Century*. Cologne: Köppe Verlag, 1994, 15.

¹⁰⁹ Jagggar, *The Blacksmiths of Kano City*, 8.

¹¹⁰ Jagggar, *The Blacksmiths of Kano City*, 21.

¹¹¹ Jagggar, *The Blacksmiths of Kano City*, 25.

¹¹² Marion Johnson. “Periphery and Centre – The Nineteenth Century Trade of Kano”. In Bawuro Barkindo. ed. *Studies in History of Kano*. Ibadan: Heinemann Educational Books. 1983. 127.

¹¹³ Mahadi. *The State and the Economy*, 17.

and foreigners – participated in internal and external trading as full-time economic activities. Kano was the nerve centre of trade and commerce in the Sokoto Caliphate before and during colonial rule.¹¹⁴ Trade consisted of local trade of staple foods, enslaved persons, articles and trade in foreign goods, which included kola nuts and sale of cattle¹¹⁵ Long-distance trade, especially in kolanuts as Lovejoy shows, involved getting the kolanuts from Asante and transporting them for exchange with different kinds of goods not available in Kano and Hausaland.¹¹⁶ Most people in Kano obtained their revenues from the sale of cotton, groundnuts, indigo, livestock, forest products, craft products, services, and trade, while most of them practised subsistence farming. The revenues obtained were used for the satisfaction of household needs, which they were incapable of producing. Official British reports show that in Kano, during this period, about ninety percent of household need was self-produced, the remainder was acquired through an exchange.¹¹⁷

The Hausa system of exchange in Kano can be categorized into three distinct levels. The first one was an intricate pattern of gift exchange at kinship ceremonies such as naming, circumcision, wedding, or funerals, at the main Muslim Festivals: *Id el Fitr*, *Id el Kabir*, *Id el Maulid* and at harvest with the collection of *zakka* (tithe). Gift exchanges confined to males tended to be uneven in value. The second was commercial exchanges. Commercial exchanges proceeded at two levels, within and beyond the community. While the third was intracommunity exchanges: for the most part, they involved cash crops, meat, and imported goods.¹¹⁸ Trade within the Kano community never ceased; children hawked cooked foods around the village from dawn till dusk;

¹¹⁴ Adulkarim Umar Dan Asabe. *Comparative Biographies of Selected Leaders of the Kano Commercial Establishment*. MA Thesis, Bayero University, Kano. 1987. 16.

¹¹⁵ Kanoprof c.111, Confidential Preliminary Report, Kano Province, March 1909.

¹¹⁶ Paul Lovejoy. *Caravans of Kola: The Hausa Kola Trade 1700 – 1900*. Zaria: ABU Zaria Press Limited. 1980. 75-76.

¹¹⁷ Kanoprof c.111, Confidential Preliminary Report, Kano Province, March 1909.

¹¹⁸ Smith, “Exchange and Marketing among the Hausa”, 311-312.

petty traders kept tables laden with kolanuts, tobacco, matches, soap, oil at their entrance hut while carrying on some craft or conversation. Paul Clogh argues that in Hausaland, “participation in trade is probably the single most important factor” when it comes to wealth creation.¹¹⁹ Participation is integral because “Trade is the main sphere in which profits were made, and the farmers exploited.”¹²⁰ The vast bulk of exchanges took place at the regular market meeting. The marketing arrangements at the end of the nineteenth century were in two major parts, namely the internal or local trade and the external or long-distance trade.

2.6. Markets and local trade

Paul Zeleza notes that “West African trade dates back to antiquity”.¹²¹ and this was the case with Kano before colonial conquest. In Kano, several internal markets existed in the different communities for the day-to-day commercial transactions of the people. The central Kurmi Market in Kano City founded during the reign of Sarki Muhammadu Rumfa 1463 - 1499, was and is still opened daily and sometimes at night. The Kurmi Market was one of the largest of its kind in the Sokoto Caliphate and was the centre of most long-distance trade within the emirate. The market “became the most important market in Hausaland and Borno in the nineteenth century.”¹²² Notable rural market towns also had a daily market, but mostly opened weekly. Smaller towns and villages had a regular market once or twice weekly. The market days of nearby communities were arranged to form a cycle so that the market met at a different village every day. Adjacent market cycles tended to overlap partially but attracted the same group of outside traders, who moved quickly among them since their price structure appeared much the same.¹²³ Zeleza has argued that

¹¹⁹ Paul Clogh. “Farmers and Traders in Hausaland”. *Development and Change*. Vol 12, 1981. 275.

¹²⁰ Clogh, “Farmers and Traders”, 280.

¹²¹ Paul Tiyambe Zeleza. *A Modern Economic History of Africa: Vol I, The Nineteenth Century*. Dakar: CODESRIA, 1993. 274.

¹²² Dan Asabe, *Comparative Biographies*, 43.

¹²³ Smith, “Exchange and Marketing among the Hausa”, 306 -307.

“Periodic markets were generally concentrated in rural areas where settlements were dispersed, and effective demand was rather weak”.¹²⁴

Village markets often stood on the village perimeter, in an open site with rows of sheds to accommodate traders. In rural areas, the market assembled at about ten in the morning, reaching its peak around two in the afternoon and breaking up at dusk. Fulani pastoralists also participated, and their women sold milk and butter. Hausa girls in their best clothes also attended in bebies, some hawking foodstuffs and cotton thread or kola nuts while others waited for the young people’s dance when the market was over.¹²⁵ In and around the sheds, vendors grouped themselves by commodities. For example, the ‘*yan koli*’ who dealt in antimony, mirrors, needles, threads, ginger, caps, cloves, black pepper, beads, sat in one place and potters in another. Other specialists had their separate places. Commission agents or brokers, and young folks hawking snacks or kolanuts and roasted meats kept moving throughout the crowd. If the tax was overdue, the village chief or his representative attended to remind late payers.¹²⁶

Underlying the noise and movement in the market system was a defined organization. Each market had a chief (the *Sarkin Kasuwa*) who was appointed by the city, village, or town head. He, in turn, had some assistants such as the *Sarkin Awo* (chief of the grain sellers), *Sarkin Pawa* (chief of the butchers), the *Sarkin Dillalai* (chief broker), *Sarkin Makera* (chief of the smiths), *Sarkin Zango* (chief of the caravan settlement), *Sarkin Yanka* (chief of the slaughterhouse), and *Magajin Kasuwa* (market chief security officer). Each craft official knew the group he represented, and its members regarded each official as their market leader. Accordingly, craft headsmen remained with their various groups to settle minor disputes about payment or quality of goods, price and the like,

¹²⁴ Zeleza. *A Modern Economic History of Africa*, 274.

¹²⁵ Smith, “Exchange and Marketing among the Hausa”, 308 -309.

¹²⁶ Kanoprof c.111, Confidential Preliminary Report, Kano Province, March 1909.

before these become serious matters, or to bring them to the market chief, who can refer them to a higher authority if he was unable to resolve the issues.¹²⁷ Although there was an overall *Sarkin Dillalai*, Abdulkarim Dan Asabe observes that every trade had its *dillalai* who negotiate sales between buyers and sellers and the markets rotated among the towns and villages to make sure there was continuous economic activity.¹²⁸ Trading and market administrative positions were dominated by men, however, Kriger argues that “despite restrictions and differences in technologies they use, individual women could and did compete with men in the marketplace.”¹²⁹ This is evident, especially in the textile trade. M.B. Duffill, Lovejoy and Zeleza have confirmed that women were employed as porters in the long-distance caravan trade.¹³⁰

The market organization was a major social event for many who attended it, while others derived pure pleasure from trading, irrespective of profit or turnover, and still, others attended out of necessity to earn the money with which to buy articles they urgently needed. The markets provided the largest regular assembly of most Hausa and few Fulani traders and are scarcely visited by the ruling Fulani, who nonetheless, through the market organization, ensured that these assemblies meet and disperse peacefully, insulated from political agitation.¹³¹ Thus, in addition to their primary functions as centres for the buying and selling of goods and services, markets in Kano also served significant socio-political purposes in the associated development of the area up to the late nineteenth century and beyond. Foodstuffs for local consumption were readily available and cheap in Kano in the nineteenth century, largely due to the entrepreneurial spirit of people.

¹²⁷ Smith, “Exchange and Marketing among the Hausa”, 307-308.

¹²⁸ Dan Asabe, *Comparative Biographies*, 37.

¹²⁹ Kriger, “Textile Production and Gender”, 382.

¹³⁰ Paul E. Lovejoy and M. B. Duffill. “Merchants, Porters, and Teamsters in the Nineteenth-Century Central Sudan”. in Catherine Coquery-Vidrovitch and Paul E. Lovejoy, eds. *The Workers of African Trade*. Beverly Hills: Sage Publications, 1985, 145-150; Zeleza. *A Modern Economic History of Africa*, 288.

¹³¹ Smith, “Exchange and Marketing among the Hausa”, 308-309.

People exchanged goods and services at all levels, which ensured adequate circulation of necessities. Johnson observes that food was cheap, and Kano was a net exporter of grains to other markets outside the emirate.¹³² Hill attests to the fact that the rural population of Kano was very prosperous because of their trading activities both within and outside the emirate.¹³³

Within the context of local trade, there was trade in the market, which was discussed above, and there was house trade. House trade was a vital aspect of economic activity in the nineteenth century Kano emirate. The house trade involved both men and women who traded various goods and services. Families, men, and women exchanged food items such as millet, sorghum, maize, spices, salts, pepper, and many others. Men and women also provided services, some as serious as working on farmland and some menial, which mostly involved women. Hawking of various items was also done at the house level. Only women or children went from house to house, selling clothing and food items because most Hausa and Fulani practiced *purdah*. The inability of women to move around freely without restriction encouraged house trade in the emirate. Hunters also exchanged their games with other neighbours for grains and other food items. House trade flourished mostly during the dry season when the harvest was completed, and people were involved in extra economic activities to generate income for themselves and their families. The house trade, although not very visible and taxable in most cases, unlike market trade, represented a vital economic activity within the emirate.

An essential aspect of trading in the Kano Emirate was bargaining. Kano people bargained for everything. They haggled over the prices of everything. The nature and way of Kano people were not to give the exact value of the item they wanted to sell. The price of an item was usually

¹³² Johnson, *Periphery, and Centre*, 142.

¹³³ Polly Hill. *Population, Prosperity and Poverty: Rural Kano 1900 – 1970*. Cambridge: University Press, 1977.12-13.

inflated based on the prevailing market circumstances, availability of the item, and the number of available buyers and sellers. The buying power and the selling power of the traders also determined how much was paid for an item during a trade. Johnson observes that regardless of who got the best bargain, everyone gained something except the enslaved persons who had no control over their situation.¹³⁴

2.7. Long-Distance Trade and the Caravan System

Kano traders in the nineteenth century engaged in three different types of long-distance trade. The first was the trans-Saharan trade; the second was the trade southwards into other parts of the forest region, especially Yorubaland and the third was the trade into Asante territory of Gonja. Kano also occupied an important position in the international network of trade and commerce of Central Sudan, Western Sudan, North Africa, and the broader Muslim world. Among others, this was made possible through the connectivity of the trans-Saharan trade routes, which linked the area northwards to other parts of the world. Lovejoy has identified four principal routes that connected the trans-Saharan trade with various commercial terminals.¹³⁵ According to him, “these routes were those between Ghadames and Timbuktu, between Ghadames and Kano, between Murzuk and Borno, and from Kufra to Wadai.”¹³⁶ However, in the specific case of Kano, the main corridor here was the route from Tripoli through Ghadames and Ghat to Agades, Zinder, Kano, and other cities in Central Sudan.¹³⁷ Generally, through the long-distance Saharan Desert routes, several articles of trade were exported from and imported to the various destinations. For instance, Lovejoy observes:

¹³⁴ Johnson, *Periphery, and Centre*, 142.

¹³⁵ Paul E. Lovejoy. “Commercial Sectors in the Economy of the Nineteenth-Century Central Sudan: The Trans-Saharan Trade and the Desert-Side Salt Trade.” *African Economic History* 13, 1984, 85-116.

¹³⁶ Lovejoy, “Commercial Sectors,” 86.

¹³⁷ Lovejoy, “Commercial Sectors” 86.

The major commodities of the north-bound trade across the Sahara were slaves, ostrich feathers, ivory, gold, and tanned skins, although commodities also included African textiles, senna, civet, Arabic gum, wax, indigo and other goods. (While) the major imports were textiles, but beads, mirrors, paper, spices, perfumes, tea, sugar, copper, and many other goods (which) were also traded.¹³⁸

Accordingly, for many centuries and continuing in the nineteenth century, caravans crisscrossed the Sahara Desert routes through which merchants bought and distributed the leather, textiles, and other specialized products of Kano to the distant destinations of Tripoli, Cairo, Morocco and other prominent trading centres in Africa, the Arab world and even exported to Europe via Hausaland and the Mediterranean seaports. Through these channels, valuable products of other territories were imported into Kano for sale within the area and redistribution to the southwards linking routes. In her study, Johnson has described the operations of the trans-Saharan Desert trade between Kano and Tripoli during the nineteenth and twentieth century, thereby showing the changes that were witnessed with the latter European intervention into these areas of trade.¹³⁹

According to Fika, by the end of the nineteenth century, “Kano was the major distribution centre for imports into Hausaland.”¹⁴⁰ Fika also demonstrates the importance of the three main trans-Saharan Trade routes that emanated from or terminated in Kano as well as the sub-routes that transverse most of Hausaland to Yorubaland. In the Kano area, the Trans-Saharan networks also separated into different routes. Lovejoy and Steven Baier describe the Trans-Saharan Trade and its routes as the Desert Side Economy of Central Sudan, which consisted of arid and savannah areas of Northern Nigeria and Niger.¹⁴¹ Trade and other economic activities were integrated into Central Sudan, so also were the peoples in the area because the Hausa were closely intertwined

¹³⁸ Lovejoy, “Commercial Sectors,” 87.

¹³⁹ Johnson, “Calico Caravans,” 95-117.

¹⁴⁰ Fika, *The political and Economic Re-Orientations of Kano*, 86-87.

¹⁴¹ Paul E. Lovejoy and Steven Baier, “The Desert -Side Economy of Western Sudan”, *International Journal of African Historical Studies* 8, 4, 1975,551-581.

with the Fulani and the Tuaregs and, in some cases, challenging to differentiate them. The main vehicle of the trans-Saharan trade was the camel. Only the camel was suitable for the hardship of the desert and the main camel rearing people were the Tuareg, and their importance to the Kano trade cannot be overemphasized. The Tuareg were mostly the camel drivers, guides, security, and knew all the routes that transverses Central Sudan to Western Sudan and North Africa.¹⁴²

By the middle of the nineteenth century, Kano had established itself as the commercial and industrial nerve centre and the metropolis of the Sokoto Caliphate and the main entrepot for trade with the rest of the world. By the end of the nineteenth century, commercial and industrial activities via the Trans Saharan routes were greatly stimulated because peace and order reigned in most parts of the emirate, in contrast with the continuous wars that had engulfed and characterized the history of the Hausa States in the eighteenth century. According to Lovejoy and Duffill, the Sokoto Caliphate and Borno witnessed tremendous success in long-distance trade, and the trading community was made up of several groups of people, which included the merchants, porters, guides, security, enslaved persons, teamsters, brokers, caravan leaders, and even landlords.¹⁴³ Dan Asabe also provides a list of functionaries similar to Lovejoy and Duffill that were important during the long-distance trade.¹⁴⁴

A majority of the wealthy merchants (*attajirai*) did participate in the long-distance trade, following their caravans from places to places and took control of the real trading while some that were sedentary delegated trusted lieutenants to represent them in the long-distance trading activities.¹⁴⁵ The long-distance trade was very lucrative and a great source of revenue to Kano

¹⁴² Lovejoy and Baier. "The Desert Side Economy of Central Sudan", 551 – 581.

¹⁴³ Lovejoy and Duffill. "Merchants, Porters, and Teamsters", 137.

¹⁴⁴ Dan Asabe, *Comparative Biographies*, 64.

¹⁴⁵ Lovejoy and Duffill, "Merchants, Porters, and Teamsters"139.

because of the taxes that were obtained from the goods that came into the city and the ones that were exported. Zeleza notes that in West Africa “Toll fees and taxes on trade and traders offered states an important means of raising revenue”.¹⁴⁶ There were many groups involved, including the Tuaregs as guides and camel breeders, Hausa as traders and agents, Kanuri as traders and agents, but the Wangara and Agalawa were worthy of note because of their versatility as traders, agents, guides, and guards while trading in Central Sudan. The contributions of Wangara traders or merchants to trade and commerce in Kano are addressed in one of the sections in this chapter.

As mentioned earlier, there also existed the southward links from Kano to the hinterland areas of the Oyo Empire, and other territories in the international exchange of goods and services. This trade mainly involved trade in kolanuts, ivory, cloth, and enslaved persons. Johnson noted that the only long-distance trade that was entirely in the hands of the Kano people was the trade southwards into Yorubaland and the rest of the forest hinterland.¹⁴⁷ However, Dan Asabe demonstrates that Kano traders had a lot of influence and control over the trade into Asante.¹⁴⁸ Except for gold, the items of trade, which the Kano traders took into Asante, were very similar to what they took into Yorubaland. However, the kolanuts, which was the main item of trade with the Yoruba, also happened to be the main item of trade with the Asante. At the close of the nineteenth century, the Agalawa merchants largely dominated the long-distance trade in Kano. Although there were other trading groups such as the Tokarawa, Kambarin Beriberi, Nupawa, Yoruba, and Kanuri in Kano, Lovejoy¹⁴⁹ and Dan Asabe¹⁵⁰ demonstrate the preponderance and

¹⁴⁶ Zeleza, *A Modern Economic History of Africa*, 277.

¹⁴⁷ Johnson, “Periphery and Centre”, 138.

¹⁴⁸ Dan Asabe, *Comparative Biographies*, 27.

¹⁴⁹ Lovejoy, *Caravans of Kola*, 75.

¹⁵⁰ Dan Asabe, *Comparative Biographies*, 20, 23, 26.

control of the Agalawa merchants in long-distance trade and commerce in general. The impact of the Agalawa traders will be discussed in one of the following sections in this chapter.

It is crucial here to mention the traders' means of transport. Dan-Asabe mentions camels, donkeys, pack oxen or bullocks, mules, horses, and hinnies as the primary method of transporting goods and humans, but the camels were the best for the desert into North Africa, while the donkeys were more suitable for the forested south-bound kola nuts trading into Yorubaland and Asante.¹⁵¹ The trans-Saharan trade into North Africa relied heavily on camels because they were the only animals able to endure the hardship of the journey into the desert. On record, many European explorers and imperial authorities that visited the area during the nineteenth century witnessed that Kano was a significant entrepot of the long-distance Trans-Sahara trade routes. For instance, Barth's description of Kano in the 1850s observes:

The cotton cloth woven and dyed was the main export material. The great advantage of Kano was that commerce and industrial production went hand in hand, and almost every family had its share in them. There was really something grand in this kind of Industry, which spread to the north as far as Murzuk, Ghat and even Tripoli; to the West, not only to Timbuktu but in some degree even as far as the shores of the Atlantic, the very inhabitants of *Arguin* dressing in the cloth woven and dyed in Kano; to the east, all over Bornu and to the South it maintained a rivalry with the native industry, besides cloth, which have a wide market, were principally sandals... tanned hides and red sheepskins, dyed with a juice extracted from the stalks of the *holcus*.¹⁵²

Also, according to this official British report of 1891, Kano was one of the main resting places for the caravans. Kano levied taxes on trading items and collected tolls for providing a resting place for the merchants and traders.¹⁵³ Thus, Bello argues that Kano was able to introduce all forms of taxes and levies because of its vantage and strategic location. It also became a wealthy and most prosperous city in Hausaland through its excellence in the international trade of the trans-Saharan routes and the internal commercial networks.¹⁵⁴ Also, the expanding interests of

¹⁵¹ Dan Asabe, *Comparative Biographies*, 45 - 47.

¹⁵² Barth, *Travels in Nigeria*, 116-117.

¹⁵³ Kanoprof 376/1898, Annual Report on Kano Economy.

¹⁵⁴ Bello, *State and Economy in Kano*, 28-29.

Europeans intensified the demands for raw materials from Kano and its environs, which were later exported to Europe to feed the home-based industries. Therefore, in this regard, the local control of the Sahara Desert trade routes declined considerably as the nineteenth century came to an end.¹⁵⁵ This trend continued until the first years of the twentieth century when the British conquered and incorporated the Kano area into the colonial economy with a massive impact on the overall indigenous economy.

Traders: There were different types of traders in the Kano emirate, and they included Arabs, Yoruba, Nupe, Kanuri, Igbira, Kambarin Beriberi, Tokawara, Wangarawa, Bugaje, Tuaregs, Agalawa, and other minority groups.¹⁵⁶ Dan Asabe argues that economic growth and business opportunities attracted these foreigners to Kano.¹⁵⁷ Of great advantage was that most of these traders specialized in one trade or the other. They contributed to the economic activities and growth of the emirate by paying taxes, which was essential to the emirate as a primary source of revenue. Thus, within a short period, the traders in Kano's closed and settled zone transformed into an essential economic bloc and revenue source for the Kano main town, by being involved in several economic activities, especially trading, crafts, and scholarship. In as much as they were residing or participating in the economic activities of Kano, the traders abided by the various policies of the host communities. Up to the late nineteenth century, these traders without exemption and exception paid all the taxes that were stipulated in the emirate.

Out of all the groups of traders in Kano at the end of the nineteenth century, it is important to mention the Wangara and the Agalawa traders. According to Lovejoy, the Wangara, who were both traders and Muslim clerics, came to Kano from Mali and Songhay empires between the 1480s

¹⁵⁵ Johnson, "Calico Caravans," 100-104; Adebayo, "The Production and Export of Hides and Skins," 277-278.

¹⁵⁶ Dan Asabe, *Comparative Biographies*, 20.

¹⁵⁷ Dan Asabe, *Comparative Biographies*, 16.

and 1490s under their leader Shaik Abd al-Rahaman Zagaiti, who settled at Madabo ward.¹⁵⁸ Lovejoy also argues that “The Wangara founded the Muslim commercial diaspora in the Hausa and Bariba states and contributed significantly to the development of Central Sudan Economy”.¹⁵⁹ The Wangarawa were severally credited with the introduction and spread of Islam in Kano in the fifteenth century. The Wangara dominated long-distance trade in Central Sudan until the invasion and destruction of Songhay by the Moroccans under Judar Pasha in 1591. In Kano, they traded in kolanuts, enslaved persons, gold, and ivory, and contributed immensely to its economic and commercial development. They also engaged in industrial activities such as leather and cloth production. The Wangara supported the Habe Rulers of Kano during the Jihad, and their wrong choice made their commercial influence to decline when the Jihadists took over, and the Agalawa traders replaced them.¹⁶⁰ Wangarawa still maintained a very nominal influence in the Kano trade by the end of the nineteenth century and they later became assimilated into Hausa customs and traditions and ultimately lost their identity as a group in Kano.

The Agalawa replaced the Wangarawa as the most influential and dominant group of Kano trade. They supported the jihadist during the jihad and benefitted immensely because of the change. The Agalawa were involved in both long-distance and local trade, but overland, long-distance trade was their specialty. The Agalawa migrated from the Sahara area into Katsina and gradually moved and settled into the Kano area. They became assimilated into Kano customs and traditions, and later they lost their language and identity. They settled in Kano at the beginning of the nineteenth century. Lovejoy observes that Agalawa originally came from Adar or Air in the

¹⁵⁸ Paul Lovejoy. “The Role of Wangara in the Economic Transformation of Central Sudan in the Fifteen and Sixteen Century”. *The Journal of African History*. Vol. 19, No. 2, 1978. 183-184.

¹⁵⁹ Lovejoy. “The Role of Wangara” 158.

¹⁶⁰ Dan Asabe, *Comparative Biographies*, 23.

Sahara area, gradually moved to Katsina, and then Kano through Bebeji.¹⁶¹ The migration was gradual both into Katsina and Kano and most settled around Madabo and Koki wards within the walled city. The Agalawa were also involved in agriculture. They acquired capital through trading and accumulated wealth, which enabled them to obtain land and buy enslaved persons to work on their plantations.

Lovejoy notes that for diversification, the Agalawa established slave plantations and used hundreds of enslaved persons to produce agricultural products to feed their families, dependents, and workers.¹⁶² Dan Asabe mentions Haruna Kundila, one of the leading Agalawa traders in Kano, who owned more than one thousand enslaved persons, to be the wealthiest trader in nineteenth-century Kano.¹⁶³ There were other Agalawa traders, such as Madugu Indo Adakawa, Muhammadu Agigi, Abdu Dan Sarki, Madugu Dandagomba, Umaru Sharubutu, Adamu Jakada, Mahammad Nagoda, Maikano Agogo, Alhassan Dantata, and many others.¹⁶⁴ Among them all, Dantata turned out to be the wealthiest after the death of Kundila, and his descendants happen to be among the richest in present-day Nigeria. The Agalawa supported the Jihadists, who were members of Quadriyya, but all of them, except for Dantata, were members of Tijjaniyya.¹⁶⁵ They put their business interest before religious beliefs, which aided their survival and guaranteed them wealth, power, and influence in Kano. The Agalawa were the most prepared group in Kano when the British conquered Kano. Besides the aristocracy, they were also the most adaptive group to colonial rule, which changed the economic situation in Kano. The exploits of the Agalawa under

¹⁶¹ Lovejoy, *Caravans of Kola*, 83-84.

¹⁶² Lovejoy, *Caravans of Kola*, 92.

¹⁶³ Dan Asabe, *Comparative Biographies*, 84-87

¹⁶⁴ Dan Asabe, *Comparative Biographies*, iii-iv.

¹⁶⁵ Dan Asabe, *Comparative Biographies*, 30.

colonial rule are discussed in the following chapter. They also played a prominent role in the Kano civil war, which is the next section in this chapter.

To a great extent, internal and external trade, together with the other activities which took place in the various economic sectors of Kano by the late nineteenth century, not only helped to shape the surviving and wealth-creating systems of the people, but also extended to other associated developments concerning the state's affairs within and outside the Kano's area.

2.8. State Policies of Kano

Up to the late nineteenth century, the Kano area had established political structures that coordinated the administrative systems of the society and, by extension, the economic sectors. Although this study is not on the political history of Kano, it examines the aspects of indigenous state policies that had a direct bearing on the socio-economic development of the component communities before the establishment of colonial rule over Kano; these relate to taxation policy, land and labour policy, the legal system concerning the economy, as well as policies concerning non-Muslims and foreigners.

2.9. Taxation

Taxation was a fundamental feature of the state policies of Kano before the era of the British conquest of the area. The collection of taxes served two principal purposes, namely, first, as a significant source of revenue to the government in its multiple administrative and developmental functions, and second, as a natural adoption of the control of a superior authority (the government) over the subjects through their regular payment of such imposed taxes. The centralized political system of pre-colonial Kano, like many parts of Hausaland, had an established

system of taxation.¹⁶⁶ Nevertheless, this was made more reinforced under the Sokoto Caliphate, which revolutionized the taxation system during the nineteenth century by infusing some significant aspects of the Shari'a practices into the existing indigenous arrangements of the Kano people.

The fact is that the economy of Kano emirate by the late nineteenth century was administered using the revenue obtained from taxes, some of which were according to Shari'a laws and some according to inherited Habe laws, and the most important was the tithe (*zakka*), or one-tenth, in this case, of grain harvests, cattle, and other livestock.¹⁶⁷ Later, the official Kano Gazette referred to Barth's observations of 1851, that the tribute levied by the Emir of Kano amounted to 100 million cowries (£8,500 at the then rate of exchange with silver) of which nine-tenths came from the *kudin kasa*, which he translated as "ground rents", though he said that it was levied at the rate of 2,500 cowries on every head of a family (i.e. about 4s in then exchange rate).¹⁶⁸ In particular, Lord Frederick Lugard acknowledged the existence of different types of taxes before the British conquest of the Sokoto Caliphate. However, he recognized the *zakka* (tithe), *kudin kasa* (land Tax), *kudin shuka* (planting tax) and *jangali* (cattle tax) as the most important.¹⁶⁹ Lovejoy and Hogendorn state that only the *zakka* was mandatory for all males in the caliphate regardless of class and position and was the only tax that had its roots in Quranic principles.¹⁷⁰ Cargill described the *zakka* as the private store of the emirs on which they subsisted.¹⁷¹ The cattle or livestock tax,

¹⁶⁶ Fika, *The Political and Economic Re-Orientations of Kano*, 37.

¹⁶⁷ Kanoprof 960/2578 Assessment Report on Dawakin Kudu District 1937-1943; C.K. Meek. *Land Tenure and Land Administration in Nigeria and the Cameroons*. London: H.M.S.O.: Colonial Office: Colonial Research Studies, 1957. 165.

¹⁶⁸ Provincial Gazetteer 2568/1933, Vol II, Kano Gazetteer: General Description of the Province, 13-14; Barth, *Travels in Nigeria*, 213-214.

¹⁶⁹ Sir Fredrick Lugard. "Taxation in Northern Nigeria". *Journal of Royal African Society*, 5, 9, 1906. 314-315

¹⁷⁰ Lovejoy and Horgendorn, *Slow Death for Slavery*, 163 – 164.

¹⁷¹ F. Cargill. Resident Kano, *May 27, 1908, in File 7173, "Kano Province Economic Survey 1909"*.

known as *jangali*, targeted the nomadic Fulani, who were not sedentary.¹⁷² Another vital tax was the *haraji*, the land tax levied on all adults of a conquered territory regardless of acceptance of Islamic faith or not.¹⁷³ In Kano, the *haraji* was collected as *kudin kasa* (land tax) or *kudin gona* (farm tax) based on the size of the land or farm but was later levied as *jizya*, a poll tax on heads of households, to avoid complicated estimations in evaluating farms and properties.¹⁷⁴

It is important to note that only Sokoto, Gwandu and their metropolitan districts (which were the initial dual established divisional headquarters of the vast government under the Sokoto Caliphate after the successful war of Usman dan Fodio over Hausaland)¹⁷⁵ were exempted from *haraji*, but all other emirates were forced to pay because they were regarded as conquered.¹⁷⁶ Major Arnold Festing reported that the *kudin kasa* was almost half of the land revenue in Kano and represented a very significant source of money for the emirate.¹⁷⁷ Another critical tax was the *kudin shuka* (crop tax) which was estimated before harvest.¹⁷⁸ The fourth relevant tax was the *kudin karofi* (dye-pit tax), which was five pence or 1,000 cowries per pit. This tax, with taxes on blacksmiths, was the only industrial tax in the emirate.¹⁷⁹ The taxes except *jangali* were collected based on districts, and the *hakimai* (district heads) were responsible for the collection. The *jangali*, otherwise known as *kudin chiyawa* (pasture tax), was collected based on the number of cows, the

¹⁷² Fika, *The Political and Economic Re-Orientations of Kano*, 76; A. G. Adebayo. "Jangali: Fulani Pastoralists and Colonial Taxation in Northern Nigeria," *The International Journal of African Historical Studies* 28, No. 1, 1995, 113-150.

¹⁷³ Meek, *Land Tenure and Land Administration*, 116.

¹⁷⁴ Fika, *The Political and Economic Re-Orientations of Kano*, 74; Garba, *Taxation in Some Hausa Emirates*, 91.

¹⁷⁵ Murray Last. "The Sokoto Caliphate and Borno." In *UNESCO General History of Africa-VI: Africa in the Nineteenth Century until the 1880s*, ed., J. F. Ade Ajayi. Paris: United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization, 1989, 556-566.

¹⁷⁶ Meek, *Land Tenure and Land Administration*, 165.

¹⁷⁷ Kanoprof c.111, Confidential Preliminary Report, Kano Province, March 1909.

¹⁷⁸ Kanoprof 960/ 2578 Assessment Report on Dawakin Kudu District 1937-1943; SNP 472 1909 Annual Report Kano Province 1908 by Major Festing.

¹⁷⁹ Fika, *The Political and Economic Re-Orientations of Kano*, 75; Garba, *Taxation in Some Hausa Emirates*, 126.

Fulani groups and in this case, the head of the group was responsible for the collection and onward transfer to the authorities.¹⁸⁰

According to Lovejoy and Hogendorn, the colonial tax policy was nothing but a reorganization of the existing taxation before the conquest, which “led the masters and enslaved persons into the new economic relationship.”¹⁸¹ This suggests that the pre-colonial tax system in Kano might not have been perfect but was good enough for the British to adopt and reform. It is important to note that most of the officials and members of the aristocracy did not pay any of these taxes, except the *zakka*, and their estates were not affected in any way. Many wealthy men who owned plantations with slave labour engaged in a tenure system that exempted them from paying the *kudin kasa* and some only partially paid what was expected of them. The *gayama* (farm plots) worked by the enslaved persons were also exempt from *kudin kasa*.¹⁸²

Apart from these essential taxes, there were other taxes relevant as sources of revenue to the emirate. For example, Garba mentions taxes on trade and wares.¹⁸³ There were other taxes like *ganima* (war booty), *kudin shuka* (sowing), and *kudin rafi* (stream), hence irrigation tax. This tax application depended mainly on the crop and the district and depended on the size of the land and the ridges. *Kudin shuka* was used when the crops were not irrigated and *kudin rafi* when the land was irrigated.¹⁸⁴ These were the various kinds of taxes collected in Kano until the establishment of British rule in the area.

¹⁸⁰Fika, *The Political and Economic Re-Orientation of Kano*, 76-77; SNP/7/8/1851/1907 Jangali Tax.

¹⁸¹ Lovejoy and Hogendorn, *Slow Death for Slavery*, 159.

¹⁸² S. Adamu. “Rural Economy and Society in Nigeria since 1900”. *Seminar on Nigerian Economy and society since the Berlin Conference*, Ahmadu Bello University Zaria, 1985. 3; Garba, *Taxation in Some Hausa Emirates*, 368.; Tukur, *The Imposition of British Colonial Domination on the Sokoto Caliphate*, 200., Bello, *The State, and the Economy of Kano*, 104; Mahdi. “The State and the Economy, 315, 433,434,464,494.

¹⁸³ Garba, *Taxation in Some Hausa Emirates*,139.

¹⁸⁴ Lovejoy and Hogendorn. *Slow Death for Slavery*, 159-161.

2.10. Land and Labour Policy

The land and labour policy under the Kano emirate were firmly related to the taxation policy because of the impact of the administrative and tax policy on them during the nineteenth century. In the case of land, under the indigenous Hausa setting, the land was always readily available when needed, and was controlled by a council of village elders. Gwadabe observes that though the rulers were in control of the land, the system was flexible such that free subjects could acquire and utilize any portion of land that was not in use and that they could also expand their portions of land under cultivation to any limit within their cultivation strength. Such expansion did not entail encroaching on land cultivated by another person.¹⁸⁵ Bello points out that the right of ownership of land was transferred through inheritance, gift, loan, pledge, or a debt settlement.¹⁸⁶

The nineteenth-century structure of the Sokoto Caliphate introduced new policies of land usage and control for the Kano emirate. According to Fika, under this arrangement, Kano was organized in such a way that land was owned or controlled almost in every town and village by one of the emir's appointed officials, usually the *hakimai*.¹⁸⁷ These *hakimai*, dispensed land as they wished with the approval of the emir. Hill argues that small farmers held most of the land, although there was significant land organized into plantations.¹⁸⁸

Studies have shown that the emir, his officials, and wealthy merchants, owned and controlled lands that were slave plantation settlements. These plantations are referred to under several names: *rinji*, *gandu* and *bado* in Hausa, *rumde* in Fulfulde, and *tunga* or *tungazi* in Nupe.

¹⁸⁵ Gwadabe, *Land, Labour and Taxation in Kano*, 41.

¹⁸⁶ Bello, *The State, and the Economy of Kano*, 28.

¹⁸⁷ Adamu Fika. *The Kano Civil War and the British Over-rule 1882 – 1940*. Ibadan: Oxford University Press, 1978. 37.

¹⁸⁸ Polly Hill. *Population, Prosperity and Poverty: Rural Kano, 1900 and 1970*. London: Cambridge University Press, 1977. 4.

The names were interchangeable depending on the community referred to, but in Kano, *rinji* and *gandu* were commonly used.¹⁸⁹ Lovejoy observes that the emir of Kano had many plantations within the emirate which were cultivated solely by enslaved persons.¹⁹⁰ Colonial records show that the emir had about thirty-nine plantations with a total acreage of 4,808.77.¹⁹¹ However, Lovejoy argues that the number was far more than that because there were many plantations unrecorded.¹⁹²

Until the end of the nineteenth century, the use of land for various economic purposes, especially in the agricultural sector, depended upon a servile labour force, and the trend in other productive sectors of the Kano's economy also increased demand for an adequate labour force. According to Nura Zubairu, the Kano emirate had an established policy that regulated the acquisition and use of labour based on the established laws for the overall administration of the Sokoto Caliphate.¹⁹³ Among others, Mahadi has also shown that there was a state policy of the encouragement of immigration into the Kano area.¹⁹⁴ Aside from the elites and merchant class who took advantage of the prospective environment of Kano to settle and participate in the economy, the immigration incentive also encouraged many foreigners to settle and acquire land for cultivation with the permission of the authorities.

The use of land in the Kano area was largely dependent on family labour unless families were able to acquire one or more enslaved persons. The aristocrats and the wealthy merchants extensively used enslaved persons for agricultural production on plantations. Hamza analyzed a royal plantation in Dorayi, where he concluded that it was “a microeconomic unit within what

¹⁸⁹ Lovejoy, “The Characteristics of Plantations in the Nineteenth Century Sokoto Caliphate” 1279-1280.

¹⁹⁰ Lovejoy, *Jihad in West Africa*, 116.

¹⁹¹ Kanoprof 1708/Vol. 1, 1936, Revenue Survey Assessment.

¹⁹² Lovejoy, *Jihad in West Africa*, 116.

¹⁹³ Zubairu, *A Study of the Colonial Economy*, 51-52.

¹⁹⁴ Mahadi, *The State and the Economy*, 269-270; Zubairu, *A Study of the Colonial Economy*, 52.

might be called *rinji* or plantation complex in which slavery shaped the relations between the city and the surrounding areas of Kasar Kano.”¹⁹⁵ Similarly, Salau analyzes one slave plantation complex at Fanisau, north of Kano city. The complex was centred on one of the large *rinji* owned by the Emir of Kano and the surrounding plantations that were owned by merchants who lived in the city. Salau concluded that the Fanisau plantation represents a good example of land policies pursued by the emirate, whereby enslaved persons were organized as a labour force for both defensive duties and agricultural purposes.¹⁹⁶ Salau also observes that plantations had been significant in the economic development of Kano before the Jihad as well as after the Jihad.¹⁹⁷ He further argues that besides providing financial benefits for the owners, plantations like the one owned by the emir of Kano at Fanisau were used as defensive mechanisms in preparation for war and during the war as garrisons and sources of food for the metropolis.¹⁹⁸ Lovejoy asserts the importance of plantations in the land policy of the Emirates and concludes that “throughout the Caliphate, plantations were associated with economic and political consolidation and with the maintenance of an active front line for defence and annual campaigns.”¹⁹⁹ As earlier mentioned above Haruna Kundila, the wealthiest commoner in Kano in the nineteenth century, had close to one thousand enslaved persons working on his various plantations, which further attests to the prevalence and importance of slave labour in the emirate.²⁰⁰

According to Lovejoy, the characteristics of these agricultural holdings included:

- (1) The pre- dominance of slave labour, often organized in gangs;
- (2) the presence of merchants and aristocrats who had access to land and labour or who commanded the capital to acquire them;
- (3) the availability of cultivable land that could be farmed in large aggregates, in contrast to small, peasant

¹⁹⁵ Hamza, “Slavery and Plantation Society at Dorayi in Kano Emirate”, 126.

¹⁹⁶ Salau, “Ribats and the Development of Plantations in the Sokoto Caliphate”, 8

¹⁹⁷ Salau. *The West African Slave Plantation: A Case Study*. 28.

¹⁹⁸ Salau. *Plantation Slavery in the Sokoto Caliphate*, 122, 125-126.

¹⁹⁹ Lovejoy, “Plantations in the Economy of Sokoto Caliphate”, 353.

²⁰⁰ Lovejoy and Hogendorn, *Slow Death for Slavery*, 133. C. N. Ubah. *Government and Administration of Kano Emirate, 1900 – 1930*. Nsukka: University of Nigeria Press, 1985. 57; Dan Asabe, *Comparative Biographies*, ix.

holdings; and (4) the operation of a distributional system for agricultural output, both through the market mechanism and other means of redistribution.²⁰¹

In the use of slave labour, the plantations were often organized in gangs under an overseer (*sarkin gandu*). The farming of a common field for the master was defined from the division between large fields and small garden plots (*gayama*) for enslaved persons. There was separate housing for enslaved persons specifically during designated times when enslaved persons worked for the master or on their own with well-defined rights concerning religion, marriage, and other social institutions. Except for the output of slave gardens, masters controlled the distribution of crops, which were either sold or used within their households. The main crops included groundnuts, cotton, indigo and grains, especially millet and sorghum, but numerous irrigated crops, particularly rice. Tobacco, onions, cowpeas, peanuts, wheat, and sugar cane were also important.²⁰² According to Lovejoy and Hogendorn, absenteeism, called *nomijide*, was common for the big plantations, which belonged to the aristocracy and wealthier merchants. Some estates were attached to political positions, which meant that influential slave officials benefited from plantation output and the enslaved persons working the lands were transferred from an individual to another when new officials were appointed.²⁰³

Hugh Clapperton provided the following description of plantation slavery when he travelled in Kano and Sokoto in 1827:

The domestic slaves are well treated. The males who have arrived at the age of eighteen or nineteen are given a wife and sent to live at their villages and farms in the country, where they build a hut, and until the harvest are fed by their owners. When the time for cultivating the ground and sowing the seed comes on, the owner points out what he requires, and what is to be sown on it. The slave is then allowed to enclose a part for himself and family. The hours of labour, for his master are from daylight until mid-day; the remainder of the day is employed on his use, and he may dispose of it as he thinks proper. At

²⁰¹ Lovejoy, "Characteristics of Plantations", 1277.

²⁰² Jan Hogendorn and Paul E. Lovejoy. "The Reform of Slavery in Early Colonial Northern Nigeria," in Suzanne Miers and Richard Roberts, eds., *The End of Slavery in Africa*, Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1988. 391-411.

²⁰³ Lovejoy and Hogendorn, *Slow Death for Slavery*, 128 – 129.

the vacant seasons of the year, he must attend to the calls of his master, whether to accompany him on a journey or go to war, if so ordered.²⁰⁴

In Kano, most large slave owners, especially the aristocrats, officials, clerics, and wealthy merchants, were exempted from paying taxes apart from the *zakka*, which was mandatory according to Islamic principles. Plantations, farms, and other estates belonging to the emir, the emirate, his family, and other officials were also exempted from paying taxes. Also, enslaved persons who held official positions were exempted from paying taxes.²⁰⁵ According to Cargill, the exemptions also applied to “sons living and working with their fathers, and *mallams* holding special dispensation.”²⁰⁶ Lovejoy and Hogendorn argue:

The tax exemptions were of importance to the health of the slave economy in the pre-colonial period, and their withdrawal under colonial rule was rather slow. As long as they were maintained, to that degree, slavery was promoted. Eventually, all were withdrawn, marking the end of the last major government policy that encouraged the retention of slaves.²⁰⁷

Further, the authors demonstrate how the emirate administered estates. Slave estates were of two types. The first type was the ones own by officials whose offices had enslaved persons and land attached to them. The second type was based on *hurmi* and *chaffa* arrangements and dependencies.²⁰⁸ According to Garba *hurumi* (*hurmi*) and *caffa* (*chaffa*), were the most important tax exceptions,²⁰⁹ while Lovejoy and Hogendorn state:

Hurmi exemptions arose from the fact that land was acquired from a political official who was responsible for the administration of waste or abandoned land that technically belonged to the state. The right to land could be communal, as in grazing lands, cemeteries, forest reserves for fuel, and other common lands, or it could be individual, as in the case of farms that were allowed tax exemptions. Official farms attached to political office were also declared *hurumi*, but unlike private farms, could not be alienated.²¹⁰

²⁰⁴ Hugh Clapperton. *Journal of the Second Expedition into the Interior of Africa*. London: John Murray, 1829. 213-214. Cited from Jamie Bruce Lockhart and Paul Lovejoy (eds.), *Hugh Clapperton in the Interior of Africa: Records of the Second Expedition, 1825-1827*. Leiden: Brill, 2005. 311

²⁰⁵ Lovejoy and Hogendorn, *Slow Death for Slavery*, 168 – 169.

²⁰⁶ F. Cargill, Resident Kano, May 27, 1908, 7173; Kano Province Economic Survey, 1909.

²⁰⁷ Lovejoy and Hogendorn, *Slow Death for Slavery*, 178-180.

²⁰⁸ Lovejoy and Hogendorn, *Slow Death for Slavery*, 168-170.

²⁰⁹ Garba, *Taxation in Some Hausa Emirates*, 174.

²¹⁰ Lovejoy and Hogendorn, *Slow Death for Slavery*, 169.

On his part, Cargill noted that “*hurumi*” farms were the perquisites of *jakadas* and local *Sarkis*; they paid no taxes but benefited from the production of the people on the land, to whom they maintained control as sort of official estates.²¹¹ G.P. Bargery defines *caffa* as “attaching oneself to a person of influence for the advantage of his protection, and in return being to a certain extent at his call: volunteering one’s allegiance to that person,”²¹² while Cargill describes *caffa* as being “under the special protection of some powerful man in Kano, who uses his influence to procure his exemption from taxation in return for an annual present.”²¹³ Absentee farmers, usually aristocrats and wealthy merchants, practised these exemptions, and clerics who rented this land out to farmers and commoners and protected them from paying the usual taxes. Major Festing notes that *hurumi* and *caffa* were “the system under which villages, hamlets, farms, or individuals pay a little or a large sum to some influential protectors in Kano (and nothing to the official Revenue) in return for various exemptions.”²¹⁴ Thus, these multiple patterns of slave labour were fully institutionalized in Kano and its environs until the era of colonial occupation.

2.11 The Administrative and Legal System as it Relates to the Economy.

Like the general practice of the Islamic religion, the people of the nineteenth century Kano believed that Islam was a way of life, as well as a set of beliefs in Allah, his Prophet, and the five pillars. Also, the courts administered Muslim law modified by Hausa customs, and the traditional schools taught Muslim texts. Much of Hausa folklore has been of Islamic origin, together with urban house types, dress, script and other cultural forms, and the standard Islamic injunctions and taboos are regularly observed in the country, in the towns and cities. Before the nineteenth century,

²¹¹ Cargill, Kano Province Economic Survey, 1909 in Paden, *The Influence of Religious Elites*, 1302 – 1304.

²¹² G.P. Bargery. *A Hausa - English Dictionary and English - Hausa Vocabulary*. London: Oxford University Press, 1934. 146.

²¹³ F. Cargill, Kano Province Economic Survey, 1909.

²¹⁴ SNP 6/4 2/1908, Report of Kano Province for Quarter ending, A. Festing Report, September 30, 1907,

Islam was present for centuries in Kano and many parts of Hausaland.²¹⁵ However, the nineteenth century was revolutionary for the revival of the religion in Kano and all parts of the Hausaland, particularly in the aftermath of the Uthman dan Fodio Jihad (1804-1810).²¹⁶

For Kano, the direct impact was in the introduction and permanence of the emirate system of government under the umbrella of Sokoto Caliphate, the governance of the area through the institutions and regulation of the Shari'a laws, and the redirection of the economic policies in line with adopted Islamic laws and practices. Hausa also aligned themselves either with the Tijjaniyya or Qadiriyya *tariqa*, even when they did not practice it personally. Even in rural areas, men of middle status eagerly attended visiting clerics (*mallamai*) to learn Islamic lore and tradition more deeply. Expeditions for this purpose were a standard dry-season activity of their juniors. Thus, whatever Islam might have been to the learned outsider, it was the dominant theme of life to the Hausa themselves.

In the judicial sector, the Islamic courts and Shari'a laws held sway in all parts of Kano throughout the nineteenth century. The highest judicial court was the Emirate Judicial Council, which was also the court of appeal headed by the Emir and his senior officials where they adjudicated severe cases on land disputes, estates, fiefs, towns, and villages. The (*alkali*) judge, provided judgements with the help of some palace officials and lower-ranking officials on other cases, such as business disputes, murder, arson, and other criminal and civil offences.

As noted in most works on Kano, the emirate was ruled by a confederation of Fulani clans (Sullubawa, Dambazawa, Yolawa and Jobawa) who played a prominent role in the Jihad in Kano.

²¹⁵ Islam in Kano." *Kano Emirate*, www.kanoemirate.org/indexdc5d.html?option=com_content&view=article&id=47&Itemid=57/html. Retrieved 08-12-2018.

²¹⁶ Last, *The Sokoto Caliphate*, 555-600; Lovejoy, *Jihad in West Africa during the Age of Revolutions*.

The leading title-office holders resided at the capital, administering their fiefs through visiting or resident *jakadu*. The political structure within Kano was such that the Emir remained the head of the hierarchical organization. He was indeed the spiritual and temporal or religious leader guided in his action by the revealed law (Shari'a) and the traditions of the classical Caliphate as interpreted by the Ulama of the Sokoto Caliphate.

Because the principal place occupied by the Shari'a legal system as a method of governance, the ruler had regulated functions. The whole administrative system was such that the ruler was only expected to respect and enforce those principles that governed the social setup. The emir had complete control of appointments to the offices of the State, though certain specific positions were reserved for some clans. The point was, therefore, clear that the system of governance was based on a constitution, which had to be observed as a check against the absolution of the political head.

Sa'id argues: "The way the jihad was fought in Kano complicated the issue of leadership".²¹⁷ The jihad was not well-coordinated, and there was so much misunderstanding among the leaders initially on how to govern and appoint officials. By the end of the nineteenth century, the issue of leadership, governance, and appointments of officials were streamlined. The emir was assisted by the palace officials like *Waziri (Vizier)* and senior *Hakimai* (district heads) such as *Galadima, Turaki, Dan Isa, Sarkin Dawaki Mai Tuta, Sarkin Dawakin Tsakar Gida, Dan Iya, Ciroma, Ma'aji, Magajin Gari, Madawaki, Makama, Barde, Sarkin Fada, Sarkin Yaki* and other lower-level *hakimai* at emirate levels with a well-defined order of precedence. Each *hakimi* had below him a hierarchy of subordinates corresponding on a lower scale. Each political office

²¹⁷ Sa'id, *Revolution and Reaction*, 157.

holder in Kano Emirate controlled a territory. Dan Isa was among the oldest political offices together with *Dan Buram*, *Dan Kududufi*, and *Dan Aksan*, dating back to Habe times.²¹⁸

Following in status were the junior *Dagatai*, with the most senior among them in charge of walled towns in the outlying districts of the emirate. The powers of some of them were such that they transcended their territories. For example, Sarki Jahun had authority over all the Jahunawa Fulani in eastern and southern Kano; administratively, therefore, those respective *Dagatai* also served as heads of their respective clans. The third rank order in the political administration of the Kano Emirate was that of the positions of the slave functionaries, collectively called *Cucinawa*. They include *Shamaki* (in charge of the King's palace), *Rimi* (an emissary between the emir and the Resident or the council members), *Sallama* (in charge of keeping messages or leading a guest to see the King), *Kasheka* (in charge of the forested part of the king's residence), *Turakin Soro* in charge of *Zaure* (the gate before the apartment of the king), *Kilishi* (in charge of the royal set and the carpet used by the king to pray), *Sarkin Dogarai* (in charge of the king's bodyguards), Galadiman Garko (in charge of the king's palace in Garko town—Garko was where Ciroma Yusufu, the rebel leader in the Kano Civil war, camped and planned for the eventual takeover of Kano), and *Galadiman Fanisau* (in charge of king's palace in Fanisau).²¹⁹

A chain of subordinates also followed each of those three main categories of officialdom. To complement the political segment of the administrative setup, the emir headed a judicial arm as the highest court of appeal where cases were heard and treated by the emir. Appeal from the emirate ended at this court, though in theory, one could appeal to the Caliph in Sokoto through the office of the vizier who supervised the emirates' administration on behalf of the Caliph. However,

²¹⁸ Ubah, *Administration of Kano Emirate under the British*, 44.

²¹⁹ Ubah, *Administration of Kano Emirate under the British*, 44.

no record shows any attempt at appealing to the Sultan from Kano Emirate. According to the arrangement, the vizier was to attend court sessions whenever on a tour of the emirates, so those with an appeal could do so before him. It was also one of those mechanisms used by the Caliph to check tyrannical emirs in the Caliphate. Therefore, in the case of Kano, there was no court beyond the Emirate Judicial Council Court.²²⁰

Amongst its other exclusive functions, the Emirate Judicial Council also looked at matters relating to disputes over the boundaries of farms, estates, fiefs, and towns. An *Alkali* court adjudicated at the lower levels. The *Alkali* court dealt with capital punishment; like other segments of the administration, the *Alkali* court was also assisted by a team of assessors who were learned jurists in their own right and more often aspirants to the judgeship. The *Masu Unguwa* (ward heads) served as the last stratum in the administrative system. Being very close to the people, they served as a link between the emir and the *talakawa* (the commoner class), both in the villages and the capital city. *Liman na gari* also played some significant role in that respect, especially in settling disagreements between people within the communities or in hearing those cases that were settled out of court. Looking closely the emirate of Kano before the British conquest was administered based on a structured political set-up represented by the emir at the highest level, the *Hakimai*, *Dagatai*, *Cucinawa*, and *Masu Unguwa*, in addition to the religious (*Limamai*) leaders of the emirate.²²¹

It was this structure (based on reference to the Holy Quran and the traditions of the Prophet) that controlled and administered economic, political, legal, and social life. The administration of land, labour, and taxation was under its control. Significantly, the administration of the people was

²²⁰ Ubah, *Administration of Kano Emirate under the British*, 44-45

²²¹ Ubah, *Administration of Kano Emirate under the British*, 45-46.

based on a written document (Shari'a), just like a constitution. The status of Kano was then more of the vassalage of Sokoto administered by the Amir-al-Mumin through the office of the Vizier. This, however, did not involve the day-to-day activities of the emirate but was more involved in issues such as boundary disputes between Kano and its neighbours. Muslim law and the traditions of the Sokoto Caliphate sanctioned a relation of vassalage between the emirate of Kano and Sokoto. Therefore, Kano remained under theocracy internally, but sent tribute and gifts to Amir-al-Mumin and other Sokoto officials, especially the Vizier. However, Sa'id argues that only Emir Suleiman, the first emir of Kano after the Jihad, truly followed and observed the Shari'a in terms of governance and observance.²²² The successors of Suleiman reintroduced most of the non-Islamic traditions, such as some taxes of the Habe rulers, which the Jihadists had used as campaign slogans to justify the uprising during the holy war.

2.12 Non-Muslims

Almost the entire population of Kano was Muslim, with few non-Muslim settlements, mostly around Wudil, Rano, Gaya and Jahun. Before the advent of Islam, the non-Muslim pagan rites were in vogue, including some form of tree and serpent worship, the sacrifices of animals, and spirit possession (*bori*).²²³ Legend states that the grove of trees that formerly existed around the Jakara pool in Kano City where the market is located was especially sacred. These non-Muslim Hausa were referred to by different names such as Maguzawa, Azbinawa, Warjawa, Ningawa, Kudawa, Butawa, Kulukawa, Kulawa and Anyokawa. These non-Muslim Hausa, according to Paul Clough, were different because they were traditional worshippers and economically self-sufficient due to the availability of labour where both men and women cultivated the land, which

²²² Sa'id, *Revolution and Reaction*, 163-164.

²²³ H. R. Palmer. "Bori among the Hausas". *Man*, 14, 1914. 113-117.

was not the same with the Muslim Hausa.²²⁴ Sa'id also argues that since the Jihad, Kano has been getting its enslaved persons from non-Muslim areas.²²⁵ The economic importance of these non-Muslim Hausa was that they served as a source of enslaved persons for the Fulani ruling class. Most of the slave raids within the Kano emirate were done into the territories of the non-Muslim Hausa. The importance of enslaved persons in the economy of Kano has been addressed previously, especially concerning plantation labour. Therefore, the non-Muslims were an essential and integral part of the Kano economy regardless of their religious beliefs.

Meek states that the Kano Emirate did not distinguish between Muslims and non-Muslims when it came to tax collection because the non-Muslims paid the same amount of taxes the Muslim Hausa had to pay.²²⁶ However, reality showed that non-Muslims were expected to pay more taxes. Although non-Muslims were not part of the political elites, they were an essential part of the economy and contributed to economic activities and development in terms of paying taxes and buying and selling. The non-Muslim communities were also the primary source of enslaved persons of the Muslim Hausa,²²⁷ who raided their communities because Islam supported the enslavement of non-Muslims.²²⁸

2.13 The Impact of the Kano Civil War – (*Yakin Basasa*) on the Kano Economy, 1893-1895

The last decade of the nineteenth century was a remarkable period of political turbulence that culminated in a civil war between 1893 and 1895. Fika gives detailed attention to the causes, courses, and consequences of the civil war to the Kano emirate.²²⁹ Sa'id, who criticized Fika for

²²⁴ P. Clough. "Farmers and Traders in Hausaland." *Development and Change*, 12, 1981. 274.

²²⁵ Sa'id, *Revolution and Reaction*, 228.

²²⁶ Meek, *Land Tenure and Land Administration*, 166.

²²⁷ Fika, *The political and Economic Re-Orientation of Kano*, 75.

²²⁸ H. I. Sa'id. "Notes on Taxation as a political issue in Nineteen Century Kano" in Bawuro M. Barkindo, ed. *Studies in the History of Kano*. Ibadan: University of Ibadan Press, 1983. 118 – 119; Sa'id, *Revolution and Reaction*, 232.

²²⁹ Fika, *The political and Economic Re-orientation of Kano*, 88-162.

not using Sokoto papers and showing the view of the Sokoto leaders on the civil war, also provides an insight from a different perspective on the civil war.²³⁰ Lovejoy also provides a very critical addition to the causes and courses of the civil war and its aftermath.²³¹ In its significant highlight here, the remote background to the war revolved around issues of political domination, succession, and rivalry among the descendants of Ibrahim Dabo, the second Fulani emir of Kano after the Jihad.

The last Habe Ruler of Kano, Muhammad Alwali, was defeated and killed by the jihadists in 1807, and Shehu Usman Dan Fodio appointed Suleiman as the first Fulani Emir of Kano in 1809. Suleiman died in 1819 and was succeeded by Ibrahim Dabo, who reigned till 1845 and was succeeded by his son Usman Maje Karofi. Usman a son of Dabo, reigned till 1855 and was succeeded by his brother Abdullahi who reigned till 1883.²³² Abdullahi died in 1883 and was succeeded by his full brother Muhammad Bello, who reigned till 1893 and was tyrannical and persecuted his nephews and his cousins by refusing to appoint them into notable positions while removing the ones that already had good positions. Bello's leadership style caused disharmony among the Kano ruling elites that eventually led to the civil war.²³³ Bello dismissed all the previous officials and replaced them with his sons and other loyalists and slave officials who supported him.²³⁴ Tukur succeeded his father, Bello, in 1893. Yusufu, the eldest son of the late Emir Abdullahi, according to the decision of the council of electors should have been appointed, but the

²³⁰ H.I. Sa'id. "Kano and the British - Adamu Fika, The Kano Civil War and British Over-rule, 1882-1840". *The Journal of African History*. Vol. 24, Issue 1, January 1983. 123-124.; Sa'id, *Revolution and Reaction*, 233.

²³¹ Paul Lovejoy. "Alhaji Ahmad El-Fellati Ibn Dauda Ibn Muhammad Manga and the Kano Civil war, 1893-1895". In eds., Femi James Kolapo and Kwabena O. Akurang-Parry. *African Agency and European Colonialism: Latitudes of Negotiation and Containment: Essays in Honor of A.S. Kanya-Forstner*. Lanham, Maryland: University Press of America Inc, 2007. 45-57.

²³² M. D. Last. "A Solution to Problems of dynastic Chronology in Nineteen Century Zaria and Kano." *Journal of Historical Society of Nigeria*, III, 3, 1966. 461-469.

²³³ Fika, *The Kano Civil War and British Over-rule*, 50.

²³⁴ Sa'id, *Revolution and Reaction*, 236.

Waziri of Sokoto was in Kano when Bello died. The Waziri, based on the decision of the council of electors, recommended the appointment of Yusufu, but the Sarkin Musulmi, Abdurahaman, overruled and ordered him to appoint Tukur.²³⁵

Lovejoy has argued, “That the civil war involved a confrontation in which adherents of Tijjaniyya *tariqa* backed one of the contestants for the emirship that reflected the spread of the brotherhood to Kano in the 1880s.”²³⁶ The nineteenth-century Fulani Jihadists were members of the Quadriyya *tariqa*, however, according to Lovejoy, Alhaji Ahmad El-Fellati Ibn Dauda Ibn Muhammad Manga had a substantial influence on both Bello and his son Tukur who later became a member of the Tijjaniyya.²³⁷ Essentially, the civil war was a *tariqa* war between the Yusufawa who were members of the Quadriyya and the Tukurawa, who were members of the Tijjaniyya.

The immediate effect of the conflict led to the outbreak of the civil war in 1893. Yusufu left Kano town and went to Takai, where he collected his adherents, and then returned to attack Kano. Before he left Takai, Yusufu sent letters to all the district and village heads pleading with them to support him.²³⁸ He entered the “Kofar Mata Gate” after some fighting but was driven out.²³⁹ Yusufu then retired from the city and for three months confined himself to conquering most of the towns and villages to the east and south-east of Kano, especially those unwilling to recognize his authority. He died in 1894 at Garko, and his brother Aliyu Babba took his place. Aliyu returned to the siege of Kano, and after unsuccessfully attacking Dan Agundi Gate,²⁴⁰ entered the town by breaching the wall between that gate and the Nassarawa Gate. In March 1895, Tukur fled to Kamsi,

²³⁵ Fika, *The Kano Civil War and British Over-rule*, 59 -61.

²³⁶ Lovejoy. “Alhaji Ahmad El-Fellati” 45.

²³⁷ Lovejoy. “Alhaji Ahmad El-Fellati” 46.

²³⁸ Smith, *Government in Kano*, 342.

²³⁹ Smith, *Government in Kano*, 346.

²⁴⁰ Smith, *Government in Kano*, 346-347.

and thence to Tafashiya, northwest of Kano. Aliyu later followed Tukur and took him as a prisoner. On the way back to Kano, Tukur died from his injuries at Gulum, forty miles northwest of Kano on March 16th, 1895, after a reign of eleven months.²⁴¹ The death of Tukur, the last rival in the Kano civil war, eventually led to the ceasing of hostilities and the creation of an environment of internal stability for the emirate under the reign of Aliyu as Emir of Kano.

The civil war had multiple impacts on Kano society. At first, for the period it lasted, the prosperity of Kano suffered immensely. As a result, the war paralyzed and disrupted economic and business activities.²⁴² Sa'id argues that the civil war caused an economic setback not only on Kano, but on the whole Sokoto Caliphate because Kano was the main centre of trade, the main artery of trans-Saharan trade, and the main distribution centre of Mediterranean goods to other parts of the caliphate.²⁴³ Sir William Wallace, a representative of the Royal Niger Company and an eyewitness to the impact of the Kano civil war described the situation as holding the emirate in its grasp, disrupting economic activities and causing the cessation of the caravan trade across the land.²⁴⁴ The civil war severely damaged the economy of Kano and disrupted its commercial links and needed a considerable amount of time to recover.²⁴⁵ Lovejoy supports this argument when he concludes that the civil war disrupted the economy of Kano, but it was able to recover quickly and continue to be the centre of trade in the Sokoto Caliphate.²⁴⁶

²⁴¹ W. F. Gowers. *Gazetteer of Kano Province*. London: Waterlow and Sons, 1921, 14; Fika, *The Political and Economic Re-orientation of Kano*, 126-130.

²⁴² Sa'id, *Revolution and Reaction*, 94.

²⁴³ Sa'id, *Revolution and Reaction*, 259.

²⁴⁴ Smith, *Government in Kano*, 347-348.

²⁴⁵ Last. *The Sokoto Caliphate*, 1967, 137.

²⁴⁶ Paul E. Lovejoy. "Polanyi's Ports of Trade: Salaga and Kano in the Nineteen Century". *Canadian Journal of African Studies*, 16, 2, 1982. 250.

The civil war weakened Kano economically, and according to Fika, “the disruption caused by the civil war exposed Kano to raids by its enemies²⁴⁷” such as Hadejia, Maradi and Damagaran, which disrupted commerce and other trading activities. Sa’id concludes that the only thing that made Damagaran give up the attack on Kano was the French invasion of their Capital, Zinder.²⁴⁸ Sa’id also argues that the Yusufawa won the war but they did not win the peace, and Kano was in perpetual fear of Damagaram, Maradi, Hadejia, and the possible invasion of Rabeh Fadallah from Borno.²⁴⁹ Damagaram, Maradi, Hadejia, and Borno, had a direct and indirect interest in the Kano civil war. Another impact of the civil war on the economy of Kano was the reaction of the merchant community, which was very influential in Kano. The merchant community became divided and supported different factions of the civil war. The Arab merchants supported the Yusufawa while the Agalawa merchants supported the Tukurawa.

Johnson noted that merchants enjoyed an excellent relationship with the aristocrats and greatly had economic influence in the emirate because of their wealth and involvement in local trade and the trans-Saharan trade.²⁵⁰ At the beginning of the civil war, the Arabs fled the city, which negatively affected trade in Kano. The Arab merchants mostly showed their support for Yusufu and later Aliyu, his brother, who became the Emir. They provided financial resources, helped to procure horses, firearms, supplies, food and provisions for the rebels.²⁵¹ Aliyu was initially assigned by his brother Yusufu the responsibility of communicating as an intermediary with the Arab merchants.²⁵² The Arab traders supported Yusuf and later Aliyu, his brother because

²⁴⁷ Fika, *The Kano Civil War and British Over-rule*, 75.

²⁴⁸ Sa’id, *Revolution and Reaction*, 262

²⁴⁹ Sa’id, *Revolution and Reaction*, 263.

²⁵⁰ Marion Johnson. “Periphery and the Centre – The Nineteen Century Trade of Kano.” In Bawuro M. Barkindo, ed. *Studies in the History of Kano*. Ibadan: University of Ibadan Press, 1983, 127.

²⁵¹ Fika, *The Political and Economic Re-orientation of Kano*, 116-117.

²⁵² Fika, *The Kano Civil War and British Over-rule*, 67.

Emir Tukur had been hard on them by increasing their taxes and demanding a very high bride price from those that wanted his daughters in marriage.²⁵³ The intensity of the civil war and disruption of savanna trade and trans-Saharan trade routes made the Arabs flee Kano. The departure of the Arab traders added more to weaken the economy of Kano by the end of the nineteenth century.

On the other hand, the Agalawa, who were mostly Tijjaniyya, supported the Tukurawa and, after losing the war, it affected their business and caused them a temporary setback, which made them lose power and influence in the emirate briefly.²⁵⁴ However, Lovejoy notes that the Agalawa regained their influence in the early part of the twentieth century when British rule was introduced and turned out to be the most beneficial of the colonial economy after the British and the aristocrats.²⁵⁵ Although the civil war adversely affected Kano, the emirate had largely recovered before the British took over.

2.13 Conclusion

An analysis of the nature of, and developments in, Kano's economy reveals that the emirate had a powerful, stable, and robust economy towards the end of the nineteenth century, despite the brief civil war. Amongst others, the various sectors of the economy, such as agricultural, pastoral, indigenous craft, and productive industries, as well as trade and commerce of both internal and long-distance settings, contributed immensely to the development and vibrancy of the economy of Kano during this period. Furthermore, through the different policies in aspects of taxation, land, and labour relations, and Shari'a system and non-Muslim affairs, the study here examined the significant roles of the political, judicial, and social forces in the economic development of Kano over the years. Thus, it could be stated that the Kano emirate at the end of the nineteenth century

²⁵³ Lovejoy. "Alhaji Ahmad El-Fellati" 54.

²⁵⁴ Dan Asabe, *Comparative Biographies*, 69.

²⁵⁵ Lovejoy. "Alhaji Ahmad El-Fellati" 45.

shortly before the British conquest had an established system of taxation, labour policy, a land tenure system, and a legal system all organized under a stable political system. The peaceful environment also provided avenues for non-Muslims and foreigners to have lived and flourished in the emirate side by side with the local people for centuries. As a result of Kano's impressive status as the most robust economy and the wealthiest emirate in the Sokoto Caliphate, it attracted traders, scholars, explorers, and diplomats from all over the world who served as catalysts in contributing to the growth of the emirate.

Nevertheless, the closing years of the nineteenth century were gloomy because of the Kano civil war, which had a cataclysmic impact on the hitherto prosperous economy of the emirate. Although the civil war weakened Kano politically and economically, Kano fully recovered before the British conquest in 1903. The external role of the British in the conquest and establishment of colonialism in Kano and its environs in the early twentieth century will be the focus of the next chapter.

CHAPTER THREE

ECONOMIC IMPACT OF THE BRITISH CONQUEST OF KANO 1903 TO 1911

3.1. Introduction

This chapter examines Kano's economic development in the first decade of the twentieth century, specifically from 1903-1911. The British conquered Kano in 1903 and established colonial rule over the emirate. This ended any formal control of Sokoto over Kano, which had gone on for nearly a century. The chapter thus covers the end of Kano as a vassal of Sokoto and the emergence of British rule, the establishment of the Native Authority and Indirect Rule, and the administrative re-organization that was carried out in the first decade of the twentieth century. The chapter also explores the impact of the policies of Cargill and Temple, who were the two most senior colonial administrators in Kano at that time. Here, an analysis is made of the impact of fugitive enslaved persons and the colonial policies on the slave trade and slavery. This chapter also discusses how the British modification of labour, land, and taxation policies affected the economy of Kano. Lastly, the impact of the British policies on trade and the activities of the merchant class in the Kano area are analyzed.

3.2. British Conquest of Kano

Kano was the most populous, wealthiest, and important emirate in Sokoto Caliphate and continued to be the same as a Province under the British after its conquest on February 3rd, 1903. As a result, it was among the strategic places of special attention in the advancing British imperial influence over the Nigerian area from the last quarter of the nineteenth century, especially after the conclusion of the Berlin Conference of 1884-1885, which emphasized the principle of effective

occupation alongside other policies of territorial claims by the European powers.²⁵⁶ To this end, Gwadabe argues that the rationale for the British conquest of Kano has a deeper root as it was premeditated on European powers' capitalist expansion and domination of overseas territories in Africa for exploitation during the period.²⁵⁷ This facilitated Britain's approach, to the exclusion of other European powers, in carving out the present-day area that is Nigeria under its colonial control.

Also, among many other reasons, the British - French rivalry in the area accelerated the declaration of a Protectorate of Northern Nigeria on December 27th, 1899 with Sir Frederick Lugard (later to be known as Lord Lugard) appointed as the High Commissioner in charge of its administration.²⁵⁸ This happened after the revocation of the Royal Charter in 1899, which granted the Royal Niger Company authority to trade and administer the area on behalf of the British. By January 1st, 1900, the Protectorate of Northern Nigeria had begun formal operations with various legislations and regulations declared under the seal of Lugard as the High Commissioner.²⁵⁹ Thus, aside from legal pronouncements, the British designed and implemented several actions to carry out the effective occupation of the northern and other parts of Nigeria in the proper context of colonialism.²⁶⁰ Such actions were demonstrated in the official taking over of control of the component territories under the Protectorate through the instrumentalities of force and active diplomacy as the case may be. For Kano and its environs, the new turn of events from the first

²⁵⁶ *General Act of the Berlin Conference on West Africa, 26 February 1885*, Article 34-38.

²⁵⁷ Gwadabe, *Land, Labour and Taxation in Kano*, 69-70.

²⁵⁸ Fika, *The Kano Civil War and British Overrule*, 8; Lovejoy and Hogendorn, *Slow Death for Slavery*, 19; F. D. Lugard, A Proclamation Enacted by the High Commissioner of Northern Nigeria. *The Northern Nigeria Gazette*, 1903.

²⁵⁹ F. D. Lugard, *A Proclamation Enacted by the High Commissioner of Northern Nigeria*. *The Northern Nigeria Gazette*, 1900, No. 10, 35.

²⁶⁰ Abdullahi Mahadi. "The Military and the Economic Nerve of the Sokoto Caliphate: An Examination of the Position of Emirate of Kano within the Caliphate". Paper presented to the Second *International Conference on History of Kano*, 1985, 7.

years of the twentieth century by the British authorities had so much impact on all aspects of the society, particularly the economic sector. These were officially manifested with the British invasion and conquest of Kano in 1903, and the subsequent establishment of colonial rule in the area.

Significantly, like many other towns and cities in Northern Nigeria, the British used military force to conquer Kano. Lord Lugard and some top officials of the British authorities orchestrated this through the instrumentality of the West African Frontier Force (WAFF). At first, the Kano Civil War (*Basasa*), which lasted from 1893 to 1895 and its negative impact on Kano, discussed in Chapter Two, shows that the civil war indicated that the Caliphs had lost total control over the emirates and there was a lack of unity, which meant that Sokoto could not muster a joint force to resist the British encroachment.²⁶¹ Lugard already had plans to occupy Sokoto, Gwandu, Kano, Zaria and Katsina under the pretexts of stopping the slave trade and slavery.²⁶² Partly as a result of the slave trade excuses, the British forces conquered the territories of Kontagora, Bida, Ilorin and Yola between 1900 and 1902.²⁶³

However, the British conquest of Kano was regarded as a critical stage in the eventual and overall occupation of the Sokoto Caliphate and, by extension, of Northern Nigeria because of its premium economic significance and military strength in the entire Caliphate. Hence, Lugard considered the fall of Kano significant to implementing and protecting British interest in Northern Nigeria because of its strategic military and economic position.²⁶⁴ As such, before the occupation, Lugard had sent several correspondences to the Secretary of State for the Colonies, through which

²⁶¹ Sa'id, *Revolution and Reaction*, 259.

²⁶² Lovejoy and Hogendorn, *Slow Death for Slavery*, 24.

²⁶³ Lovejoy and Hogendorn, *Slow Death for Slavery*, 20-22.

²⁶⁴ Ibrahim Hamza. *Cargill's Mistakes, a study of British Colonial Policies in the Madaki District, Kano Emirate, Northern Nigeria, 1903-1919*. PhD dissertation, York University, Toronto Canada, 2009, 46; Mahadi, "The Military and the Economic Nerve of the Sokoto Caliphate" 8; Gwadabe, *Land, Labour and Taxation in Kano*, 71.

the latter convinced the British Cabinet to approve a military option for Kano.²⁶⁵ For instance, according to the official memorandum from the Secretary of the Colonies to the British Cabinet dated December 28th, 1902, it was stated among others that:

Sir Frederick Lugard has telegraphed to the Secretary of the State for the Colonies to the effect that he has found it necessary to prepare an expedition against the Emir of Kano, which will start in the first days of January. The force he proposes to employ consists of 1,000 native troops, with 50 Europeans; they will have with them seven Maxim guns, and five 75mm. guns. In reserve, Sir Frederick will have 680 native troops in three places; these will be armed with six Maxims, five 7-pr, R.M.L guns, and one 75mm. gun. The force likely to oppose him are estimated at 4,000 horsemen and a large number of rabbles. ... It has been determined to send a Commission to delimit the boundary between our territory and that of the French. This Commission must be secured from attack and communication must be maintained with it, in order to furnish it with supplies. Sir F. Lugard is of the opinion that this can only be accomplished by the occupation of Kano. The occupation of Kano was no part of the original plan for the protection of the Boundary Commissioners, but has been forced on us by the attitude of the Emir, which makes it unsafe to commence the delimitation under the conditions at present existing...²⁶⁶

With military invasion in mind, during this period, Lugard had been looking for the perfect pretext(s) to launch an attack on the rulers of Kano as an inroad towards extending the British dominance over the territories of the Sokoto Caliphate. He did this by labelling several allegations from intelligence reports to give justification for the launching of the attack on the Emir of Kano, Aliyu Babba—whose position Lugard considered as standing against the British interests.²⁶⁷ However, the immediate reason for the invasion and conquest was because Emir Aliyu gave refuge to Magajin Garin Keffi, Mahammadu Dan Yamusa, who, in October 1902, killed Captain Maloney, the Resident of Nasarawa Province.²⁶⁸ Lugard then regarded the assistance to the Magajin Garin Keffi as an act of aggression against the British. Lugard also received intelligence

²⁶⁵ The National Archives Kew London (TNA), African West No.713, “Northern Nigerian Correspondence December 10, 1902 – January 28, 1903 Relating to the Expedition to Kano 1903,” Nos. 1-14.

²⁶⁶ TNA, African West No.713, “Northern Nigerian Correspondence December 10, 1902 – January 28, 1903 Relating to the Expedition to Kano 1903,” No. 15, Memorandum for the Cabinet, 53142.

²⁶⁷ Adeleye. *Power and Diplomacy in Northern Nigeria*, 262-263.

²⁶⁸ Lovejoy and Hogendorn, *Slow Death for Slavery*, 24.

reports from Adamu Jakada, an Agalawa trader and a British informant,²⁶⁹ which mentioned that Kano was preparing for war against the British.²⁷⁰

On January 29th, 1903, the British forces under the general command of General Kemball, the Inspector General of the WAFF, and the field command of Colonel T. N. Morland²⁷¹ with his deputy, Lieutenant Colonel A. N. Festing, set out from Zaria to Kano.²⁷² Fika, citing official records, notes that the military contingent “was composed of twenty-six officers, thirteen non-commissioned officers, two doctors, eight hundred African rank and file, four 75 mm. guns and five Maxim guns.”²⁷³ After defeating the walled town of Bebeji some few kilometres from Kano, the forces immediately penetrated the city of Kano in full swing and occupied it on February 3rd, 1903.²⁷⁴ Surprisingly, at the time the British forces entered Kano, the Emir, Aliyu Babba, with about 2,000 horsemen, travelled to Sokoto to pay his condolences for the deceased Sultan, Caliph Abdurrahman, who died on October 9, 1902, and the installation of a new one, Caliph Attahiru, who came to power on October 12, 1902.²⁷⁵ Thus, the absence of the Emir Aliyu during the invasion of Kano in early February 1903 caused the emirate’s trusted officials to be in charge and rally up forces to repel the British attack.²⁷⁶ However, the city was taken after resistance from some of the city’s officials.²⁷⁷ After the military force’s successful occupation of and victory over Kano,

²⁶⁹ Dan Asabe, *Comparative Biographies*, 105-113.

²⁷⁰ Adeleye, *The Overthrow of the Sokoto Caliphate*, 392-393.

²⁷¹ Tukur, *The Imposition of British Colonial domination*. 57.

²⁷² Richard Dugate. *The Conquest of Northern Nigeria*. London: Frank Cass, 1985. 174; Adeleye, *The Overthrow of the Sokoto Caliphate*, 404.

²⁷³ Fika, *The Political and Economic Re-orientation of Kano*, 151.

²⁷⁴ Fika, *The Kano Civil War and British Over-Rule*, 92; Gwadabe, *Land, Labour and Taxation in Kano*, 74.

²⁷⁵ Smith, *Government in Kano*, 383.

²⁷⁶ Dugate, *The Conquest of Northern Nigeria*, 175.

²⁷⁷ Fika, *The Kano Civil War and British Over-rule*, 92; Tukur, *The Imposition of British Colonial Domination*, 58-62.

Lugard himself soon arrived on February 20th and took over the overall political direction of the city.²⁷⁸

For Emir Aliyu Babba, he and his party decided to return to Kano when he heard of the British occupation. However, during the journey back home, the Emir deserted his troops at Birnin Goga during the night of February 24th, 1903.²⁷⁹ He was later captured by the British and exiled to Lokoja, where he died in 1926.²⁸⁰ The departure of Aliyu Babba made the accompanying troops be divided into several parties, of which some decided to return to Sokoto while others resorted to continue onwards to Kano. Among them, the Wambai of Kano, Muhammadu Abbas from the Yusufawa lineage of the Sullubawa clan, led a large section of the remaining Kano troops back to the city and surrendered to the British on March 6, 1903, and the British later appointed him the acting Emir of Kano.²⁸¹ Subsequently, on March 7th, Lugard appointed Dr. Featherstone Cargill as the Resident of Kano before he later joined up with the troops under the command of General Kemball and Captain Merrick in the march against Sokoto – which the British forces conquered on March 15th, 1903.²⁸² The conquest officially brought the Kano area under the authority of British colonialism with unfolding consequences.

3.3 Economic Impact of the British Conquest

The British conquest of Kano in 1903 had a series of immediate and long-term consequences for the area and, by extension, other parts of Northern Nigeria. However, because of the subject matter of this study, emphasis will be laid mainly here on the economic impact. To

²⁷⁸ Fika, *The Political and Economic Re-orientation of Kano*, 155.

²⁷⁹ Rhodes House MSS Afrs 1531, Provincial Correspondence Jacket, Notes on the History of Kano, 1909, 22, pp. 114.

²⁸⁰ Fika, *The Political and Economic Re-orientation of Kano*, 157.

²⁸¹ Adeleye, *Power and Diplomacy in Northern Nigeria*, 275-279.

²⁸² Smith, *Government in Kano*, 397-398.

start with, the immediate impact of the British conquest of Kano was that it caused severe turmoil among various sections of Kano's population. Sa'id describes the situation in Kano after the British conquest as "very uncertain"²⁸³ because of the upheaval it created. It caused dislocation and the flight of many enslaved persons, especially in rural areas.²⁸⁴ For instance, peasants and enslaved persons used the opportunity to settle old scores and avenge misdeeds against their enemies, oppressors, and masters. Fugitive enslaved persons and some peasants rampaged the outskirts of town and looted the properties of officials. Some enslaved persons used the opportunity to flee from their masters. The jail was broken, and the prisoners who were freed joined the looting and caused more chaos in Kano.²⁸⁵ Dr. Cargill, the new British Resident, reported that the peasants and enslaved persons, who wanted both economic freedom and personal emancipation from the exploitative nature of their relationship with the Fulani overlords, directed most of the unrest and attacks at aristocrats and owners of enslaved persons.²⁸⁶ Lugard notes that:

Fulani rule, in fact, had never (says Dr. Cargill) been fully accepted, even in the Kano Province, the very heart of Hausaland, and the Emir stated that the talakawa had always been truculent, and rebellious, and that it had been necessary for the Emirs to tour round their country annually, with all their forces to ensure payment of taxes.²⁸⁷

Also, the rebels, joined by the fugitive enslaved persons, refused to pay taxes, and disturbed the peace until the WAFF contingent brought back some order by force.²⁸⁸

In the same vein, with the ousting of Emir Aliyu Babba, the conquest provided the opportunity for rival claimants to the Kano throne to take advantage of the existing vacuum. For

²⁸³ Sa'id, *Revolution and Reaction*, 306.

²⁸⁴ Northern Nigeria Annual Report, 1902.

²⁸⁵ Northern Nigeria Annual Report, 1902-03; 1903 – 04.

²⁸⁶ Northern Nigeria Annual Report, 1903.

²⁸⁷ Northern Nigeria Annual Report, 1903.

²⁸⁸ Northern Nigeria Annual Report, 1904.

instance, the return of Chiroma Lele, the eldest son of the deposed and late Emir Tukur of the Tukurawa lineage of the Sullubawa clan to lay claim to the throne, further caused chaos in Kano. Then, his followers and supporters started looting and ransacking the houses of former officials' who lost their lives during the conquest or those who left the city to migrate with the Sultan of Sokoto (*Amir-al-mumin*), Attahiru I (1902-1903). Lugard solved the problem by expelling Lele and his supporters out of Kano.²⁸⁹

Another immediate impact of the conquest was that the emirate ceased to be a vassal of Sokoto and became a direct part of the British Empire under the Northern Nigeria Protectorate. It should be recalled that by the British authorities' revocation of the Charter of the Royal Niger Company and a formal declaration of a Protectorate of Northern Nigeria on December 27th, 1899, Sir Frederick Lugard became the High Commissioner to effectively expand the scope of the colonial administration to various parts of the new Protectorate. Hence, having arrived and taken the surrendering of Kano in February 1903, and appointed Cargill Resident, Lugard thereby transferred the premium control of political and overall powers from the indigenous Kano ruling houses to the imperial control of the British authorities.²⁹⁰ Also, Lugard met the Wambai of Kano, Mahammadu Abbas, appointed him acting Emir and clearly explained to him and his followers about the official end of Sokoto powers over them, as well as the end of payments of tributes to the Sultan.²⁹¹

Lugard, among other instructions, read out the following to the newly appointed Emir Abbas and the Kano aristocracy:

1. Every Emir and the principal officers of the state will be appointed by the High Commissioner.

²⁸⁹ Northern Nigeria Annual Report, 1902.

²⁹⁰ Dugate, *The Conquest of Northern Nigeria*, 186.

²⁹¹ Fika, *The Kano Civil War and British Over-rule*, 93-95.

2. All land and mineral rights were vested in the British Crown.
3. The coinage of the British will be accepted as Legal tender.
4. Taxation was to be levied and collected on behalf of the colonial state. Traders were not to be taxed by the Native Authority but only the colonial government.
5. Capturing and transacting in slaves were forbidden. Domestic slavery was left to continue.²⁹²

The above proclamations of Lugard and other policy issues of Resident Cargill established British suzerainty over Kano's rulers and their subjects. Hence, the British forced the new emir into stopping tribute to the Sultan in Sokoto, which Abbas willingly obeyed out of loyalty to the British and out of resentment for Sokoto because of the meddling that had caused the civil war and also out of a desire to be independent. On April 2nd, 1903, Lugard finally installed Abbas as the substantive Emir of Kano (1903-1919).²⁹³ Aside from focusing on the associated development of Kano city for the economic interest of the British, further measures were put in place to incorporate the neighbouring settlements and to link rural environments together for effective colonial exploitation. In this regard, Zubairu argues that:

Following this, the colonial officials put up a series of measures that essentially enabled them to have total control over the towns, villages, and hamlets of the emirate. This was aimed at extending their control to the rural areas of the emirate, in order to adequately exploit the available resources of the area, both human and material.²⁹⁴

Moreover, in order for the British to take maximum advantage of Kano and its environs under the colonial setting, specific new political and economic policies were introduced and implemented, while some existing ones were modified from 1903 onwards until the end of the colonial period. During the early years of colonialism from 1903 to 1911, some significant features that had a direct and indirect effect on the economy of Kano, particularly under the Native Authority and Indirect Rule System that were now established for the area are addressed below.

²⁹² Lugard, F. Protectorate of Northern Nigeria 1906-1913, Northern Nigeria Annual Reports

²⁹³ Fika, *The Kano Civil War and British Over-rule*, 98.

²⁹⁴ Zubairu, *A Study of the Colonial Economy*, 70.

3.4 Native Authority and Indirect Rule

The British established The Native Authority, otherwise known as the NA, for Kano in 1904 to properly administer the province and control the Emir and his officials. Under this arrangement, Emir Abbas was the head of the Native Authority and reported directly to the British Resident Cargill. This was based on the Indirect Rule system which in theory Lugard introduced for Northern Nigeria during his period in office as the High Commissioner of the Protectorate of Northern Nigeria (1899-1906) and for the entire country when he assumed office as the Governor-General of Nigeria (1912–1919). Indirect Rule was a system of government whereby pre-existing indigenous power structures were used to govern a people on behalf of the colonial overlords. In essence, under the Indirect Rule, the British administered the people indirectly through the traditional and religious institutions already established in Kano, which Fika argues was an “overrule”²⁹⁵ and Margery Perham described as a “suzerainty of a more powerful, intimate and exacting kind than that of Sokoto.”²⁹⁶ In his own words, Lugard speaking of the administration mentions that the British “...must utilize the existing machinery and endeavour only to improve it.”²⁹⁷ Also, Charles Lindsey Temple, the second Resident of Kano after Cargill, states, “the native cannot be ruled by the white man, but he can be ruled by another native acting under the guidance of the white man.”²⁹⁸ The General Guidelines of Policy on Native Affairs states:

The policy with regard to the natives and their affairs has followed the general lines laid down in the memoranda, in the theory and in practice. The Emirate of Kano is ruled by the Emir of Kano... acting through his own executives, on the advice given to him by the Resident. The guiding principle adhered to in every on the advice given to him by the Resident has been the recognition of the fact, it is neither expedient, political, or even possible for the European Political staff acting through any native executive obtainable to rule the people directly: that consequently the Native Administration must be assisted and

²⁹⁵ Fika, *The Kano Civil War and British Over-rule*, 105.

²⁹⁶ Margery Perham. *Native Administration in Nigeria*. London, Cass, 1937 and 1962. 87.

²⁹⁷ Lugard, *Political Memoranda: Revision of Political and Administrative 1913-1918*. 3rd. with a New Index compiled in 1919 by G.W. Izard. Ed. (London: Frank Cass, 1970).265.

²⁹⁸ Charles L. Temple. *Native Races and their Rulers: Sketches and Studies of Political Life and Administrative Problems in Nigeria*, 1st ed. London: Cass, 1968, 58.

strengthened as well as criticized and of the fact that the first essential if the Native Administration is to be efficient is that its members should be loyal to each other.²⁹⁹

The administration of Kano was decentralized, and according to Fika, “Lugard desired the decentralization of executive authority which has hitherto been concentrated in the hands of the emirs and their royal enslaved persons.”³⁰⁰ Thus, based on the practice of the Native Authority and Indirect Rule, Emir Abbas and his indigenous officials were in physical charge of the administration of Kano, while the British Resident and other principal officers acted as coordinators in vital aspects of political and economic sectors towards the smooth functioning of the colonial project. Abbas realized that he had to be loyal to the British, and he used the opportunity to fill all the vacant positions with his loyalists from the ruling aristocratic families and enslaved persons. For example, Abbas appointed Husseini, a brother of the fugitive Kwairanga, also a relative, to the position of Galadima; he appointed his two brothers Salihi and Umaru as the Turaki and Wambai, respectively. Also, he awarded his eldest son, Abdullahi Bayero, the esteemed title of the Ciroma of Kano. Bayero would later become the Emir of Kano from 1926 to 1953. The vital position of Alkali was conferred on Gidado, a close personal friend to Abbas.³⁰¹ The majority of the other principal officers appointed into the different sections of Kano’s indigenous administration followed this trend of Abbas's excessive influence during the first decade of the twentieth century. These made the Emir and his choice supporters control the political and economic affairs of Kano in the Native Authority system, which was under the overall coordination of the British colonial authorities.

²⁹⁹ Rhodes House MSS Afrs S. 230, Bruce-Smith Papers, Reports on Kano Province, 1909, “Annual Report for of the Year Ending 31st December 1909, by Resident C. L. Temple,” 41, pp. 48.

³⁰⁰ Fika, *Kano Civil War and British Over-rule*, 110.

³⁰¹ Fika, *The Political and Economic Re-orientation of Kano*, 176, 181; Hamza, *Cargill’s Mistakes*, 74-75.

The relationship between Resident Cargill and Emir Abbas started on a good note, which made both Cargill and Lugard believe so much in the Emir and write positive reports about him in the early years of his reign.³⁰² Hamza elaborately discusses the dynamics of the relationship between Cargill and Abbas from the climax to crisis periods in “Cargill’s Mistakes.”³⁰³ However, the relationship between Resident and Emir later became terrible, mainly because of the resulting actions of Cargill in the province. For example, he wanted to know every detail of what was happening in Kano, including the appointment of minor village heads, but Abbas did not like such close supervision and preferred to inform the Resident only of occurrences he thought significant.³⁰⁴ Cargill, among other things, reduced the power of the Emir by removing him as head of the judicial court of appeal, which administered capital punishment. The friction between the Resident and the Emir turned many Kano people, especially the aristocrats, against Cargill and regarded him as someone hostile to the Fulani. The peak of the crisis was a confrontation over Cargill’s promotion of Muhammadu Allah bar Sarki, a high-ranking slave official with the title of Dan Rimi, to the position of Waziri in 1908 against the outspoken objections of Emir Abbas and other members of the Fulani aristocracy.³⁰⁵ There were two major objections to Cargill’s appointment. First, he had to remove Abdullahi Bayero, the emir’s son and who himself would eventually become emir in less than twenty years. Second, Allah bar Sarki was a slave official and could not legally hold the position of Waziri, which was reserved for a free aristocrat, such as the son of the emir and heir apparent to the throne.

³⁰² Lugard, Annual Reports, 1903, 40; Lugard, Annual Reports, 1904, 5; Fika, *The Political and Economic Re-Orientation of Kano*, 176, 181-182.

³⁰³ Hamza, *Cargill’s Mistakes*, 87-147.

³⁰⁴ Sa’id, *Revolution and Reaction*, 310.

³⁰⁵ Paul E. Lovejoy, Abdullahi Mahadi and Mansur Ibrahim Mukhtar, “C.L. Temple’s ‘Notes on the History of Kano 1909: A Lost Chronicle on Political Office.’” *Sudanic Africa* Vol. 4, Special Issue on Kano (1993), 10.

The build-up of the tension and the overriding desire of the British authorities to maintain the full cooperation of the Kano ruling class forced Lugard's successor, Percy Girouard, as Governor of Northern Nigeria Provinces (1906-1912), to send Cargill on a compulsory leave of absence from office and subsequently replacing him in 1908. Major Arnold Festing was appointed Acting Resident until Charles Lindsay Temple was posted as the substantive Resident of Kano from January 8th, 1909 for one year to January 4th, 1910.³⁰⁶ Allah bar Sarki was removed from office in disgrace, which was for public display, while in private he was re-appointed to manage the emir's finances. The change in the administration of the British Resident of Kano and the accompanying rearrangements smoothed the relationship with the indigenous political authorities of the Native Authority and the concomitant continuity of the Indirect Rule system in the decades that followed.

The British administration, which was based on the Native Authority and Indirect Rule, changed to a great extent the system of governance, which affected the economy of Kano. The significant changes included: taxation and administrative reforms, altering of the status and conditions of enslaved persons, restructuring of the land tenure system, new patterns of trade and production strategies, and the emerging problems concerning the merchant class.

3.5 Taxation and Administrative System

The British focused on taxation, which was among the few sources of direct revenue generation from the Kano area. It should be noted that before the British conquest of 1903, people were accustomed to paying different types of taxes, which have been addressed in Chapter One. The primary existing taxation forms in Kano and many other parts of Northern Nigeria that the

³⁰⁶ Hamza, *Cargill's Mistakes*, 161-166; Lovejoy et al, "C.L. Temple's 'Notes on the History of Kano'", 8.

British inherited and adopted were *Zakka* (tithe), *kudin kasa* (land tax), *kudin shuka* (plantation tax), and *jangali* (cattle tax).³⁰⁷ Others included taxes paid by market vendors, merchants, traders and brokers included, *gado* (death duties), and the *Sokoto Gaisua*— which used to be a varying form paid by all emirates to Sokoto and Gwandu, the then imperial headquarters of the Sokoto Caliphate.³⁰⁸ Moreover, with the British conquest of Kano, the *Sokoto Gaisua* was abolished, and the payment of all taxes was directed to the colonial treasury and regulated by the Resident and other designated officers on behalf of the Governor of the Northern Provinces and the British home government. Significantly, the collection of taxes in the early years of British colonialism in Kano until 1907 was based mainly on the pre-conquest assessment system,³⁰⁹ which, although with some reforms, was under the influence of the emir and his select officials/agents known as *Jakadu*.

Official sources describe the nature of the hitherto taxation system as follows:

... The main taxes of the country were those recognized by the Koran, viz, a tithe of the produce of the land, and of cattle and flocks, and an impost of the pagan vassals which varied in severity chiefly in proportion to the ability of the suzerain to collect.³¹⁰

However, with the turmoil and chaos that followed the British conquest of Kano, it was initially difficult to effectively collect any taxes since most of the peasants were not willing to pay taxes and thought the British had come to finally free them from their Fulani oppressors. In this case, the British had to forcefully restore normalcy with the WAFF contingent stationed in the city, which cost many lives. Because there was no external funding from London, Cargill needed the revenue from taxes to run the administration. However, the refusal of peasants to accept their Fulani village and district heads made it impossible to collect taxes for some time. 1903 and 1904 were difficult years for the collection of taxes because of the chaos caused by the conquest, but

³⁰⁷ Lugard, "Taxation in Northern Nigeria", 314.

³⁰⁸ Lugard, "Taxation in Northern Nigeria", 314-315.

³⁰⁹ Smith, *Government in Kano*, 426.

³¹⁰ SNP 15, ACC 374, 16, "Memorandum on Land Tenure and Land Revenue in Nigeria," 5 July 1907.

normalcy started to return in 1905 when the peasants finally realized that the taxes were not going anywhere. Instead, the British planned to tax them even more, which at times made them turn their resentment towards the British.³¹¹

The tax revenue started to increase from 1905 and stabilized by 1906 because of regained normalcy and some practical steps Resident Cargill and other principal officers of the Province took. Among such was the Resident’s imposing duty on any political staff to visit every town and hamlet under their immediate authority to ascertain “what the taxes consist of and to whom they are paid.”³¹² Even during the year 1905, it is on record that Cargill personally visited “every town and village, numbering upwards of 1,100; while those of Katsina and Gumel were also visited by the Assistant Residents.”³¹³ Among others and aside from the issues of revenue, the results of these personal visits and enquiries by the top British administrators were far-reaching. It brought the administrators closer to the communities in assessing the available people in their revenue bases, including population configuration and other aspects of critical information that would help future tax assessment and other development plans. Nevertheless, the Resident gave clear instructions about the non-interference in the natives’ indigenous tax assessment systems, which were judged to be ‘singularly well-organized and not unjust’ to the Kano Emirate and its environs.³¹⁴

Table 1: Population Summary of Northern Nigeria Provinces, 1905

Provinces	Males	Females	Total	Non-Natives (Exclusive of European Officials)

³¹¹ Northern Nigeria Annual Reports, 1903 and 1904.

³¹² F. D. Lugard, Northern Nigeria Annual Colonial Reports, No. 516, 1905-6, 374-375.

³¹³ Lugard, Northern Nigeria Annual Reports, 1905-6, 374.

³¹⁴ Lugard, Northern Nigeria Annual Reports, 1905-6, 375.

Sokoto	270,569	307,931	538,500	-----
Kano	1,165,000	1,165,000	2,330,000	-----
Borno	443,000	663,000	1,105,000	28
Nupe	72,175	79,715	151,890	21
Kabba	123,660	157,990	281,650	217
Ilorin	112,000	138,000	250,000	17
Bauchi	460,000	460,000	920,000	-----
Zaria	98,000	134,000	232,000	98
Kontagora	46,269	44,409	89,678	-----
Borgu	12,296	13,021	25,327	1
Bassa	253,068	272,070	525,138	42
Muri	250,000	293,000	543,000	20
Nasarawa	555,000	954,000	1,500,000	3
Yola	106,600	143,400	250,000	-----
Total	3,965,637	4,816,546	8,782,183	447

Source: F. D. Lugard, Northern Nigeria Annual Colonial Reports, No. 516, 1905-6, 413 & 479-480.³¹⁵

³¹⁵ F. D. Lugard, Northern Nigeria Annual Colonial Reports, No. 516, 1905-6, 413 & 479-480.

Significantly, in the Northern Protectorate, Kano remained a prime province of attraction in all ramifications owing to its high population and density and the diversity of features of economic development in comparative terms relative to other provinces within the Protectorate. For example, the above table describes the population of the various Northern Nigerian Provinces after the pioneering 1905 census. These demographic and economic features made Kano advantageous for the British authorities' interest and made for a greater focus on the area as a significant revenue base through taxation and other associated levies from the first decade of the twentieth century until the latter end of colonialism.

The British coordination of the taxes also ensured more accountability as the Emir and his principal officers did not have unfettered access to the native treasury. Moreover, the indigenous tax collectors continuously explored various avenues of exploiting the system too. In this regard, the existing tax collectors (*jakadu*), who were considered corrupt, in collaboration with the titleholders and officials, deliberately understated the amount of taxes collected. The Emir and some of his senior officials (*hakimai*) also tried as much as possible to dip their hands into the coffers of the native treasury, which further frustrated the efforts of the British to increase the tax revenue. Although the tax revenue was still not at the level of the pre-occupation era, in 1906, there was a considerable improvement.

Another essential feature of the British taxation policy in the Kano area and other parts of Northern Nigeria was that it was used to promote the spread of the foreign currency through the use of the British pound, while at the same time discouraging the popularity of the local currency system of cowries. After the official launch of the Northern Nigeria Protectorate, Lugard ensured

that the British pound sterling was introduced as a major currency of exchange in the various provinces where their interests were established. Thus, from 1901, coin currency has gradually but effectively been in circulation, but once Kano had fallen under British control by 1903, British currency was also introduced to the area. The coin currency was being supplied mainly by the Royal Mint through importation from London, as well as by its subsidiary mints in Lagos. The table below shows the recorded number of various coins supplied to Northern Nigeria, which covered the Kano area in the opening years of the twentieth century.

Table 2: Distribution of British Foreign Currency (in Coins) to Northern Nigeria Protectorate, 1901-1905

Coins' Varieties	Years				
	1901 £	1902 £	1903 £	1904 £	1905 £

Gold	3,000	-----	1,000 (From Lagos Bank)	1,000 (From Lagos Bank)	1,000
Silver	90,000	145,000	184,000	198,000	152,000
Bronze	350	-----	-----	300	50
Total	93,350	145,000	185,000	199,300	153,050
From Local Firms	2,110	11,426	18,206	13,929	3,000

Source: F. D. Lugard, Northern Nigeria Annual Colonial Reports, No. 516, 1905-6, 414.³¹⁶

³¹⁶ F. D. Lugard, Northern Nigeria Annual Colonial Reports, No. 516, 1905-6, 414

Writing in 1906, Lugard, highlighted the value and facial descriptions of the British coins' currency to include that:

The coins... will consist of two denominations, one being one-tenth of a shilling and the other one-hundredth with an inscription in English on the face and in Arabic on the obverse. The coins will have a circular hole in the centre for stringing, and it will be without any pictorial design in deference to the Mohammedan prejudice. Such coins will, I hope, speedily oust the cowrie as a token for exchange of lesser values.³¹⁷

At the beginning phase, the coins were chiefly limited as a form of exchange between the Europeans and natives, and the bulk of the currency in circulation was being paid back as taxes. This allowed the economic transactions among the indigenous people to still carry on with the cowries during the first decade of the twentieth century until the increasing expansion of European economic interests in the subsequent period later entrenched the broad circulation of the foreign currency to all sections of the population in Kano and its environs. Although the spread of the foreign currency was limited at the initial period, the policy of direct taxation soon helped in its distribution.

Cargill did not initiate any tax reforms until 1907 after he had studied the situation. Only then did the Resident decide to reform tax law in Kano. The British did not introduce new taxes in Kano. They modified the existing ones and tried to change the methods of collection and the tax rates. The tax reforms were tried and tested in some districts before extending them to other parts of the province. The peasant farmers who initially resisted the tax reforms gradually adjusted to the new reality of dealing with a new master or even two masters, the Fulani and the British. More than the taxes, famine concerned the farmers and was a regular occurrence in Kano. Notable were the famines of 1904 and 1907, which devastated the farmers because of low yield due to insufficient rainfall. Some scholars like Michael Watts argue that the famines in Northern Nigeria

³¹⁷ Lugard, Northern Nigeria Annual Colonial Reports, 1905, 413.

were because of the introduction of the world capitalist system into an African area.³¹⁸ Despite the famine, revenue continued to grow tremendously and increased by 32.2 percent.³¹⁹

To effectively collect and monitor how the taxes were accessed, Cargill created thirty-four (*gunduma*) districts in 1907. Under the new tax reform, some adjustments were made in terms of its administration. Unlike the former pattern where powers were highly concentrated in the authority of the Emir and his few selected men on the one hand and the Resident's Office, on the other hand, the reform encouraged decentralization, especially regarding the collection of taxes in the various communities. As part of the new arrangement, each Province was then restructured into three or four administrative divisions according to its size and the staff available. Each of these divisions was placed under the direct supervision of an Assistant-Resident, who was under the control of the Province's Resident-in-Chief.³²⁰ The whole Province was also divided into several 'districts'—each of which had a District Headman in charge. The District Headman was responsible for the collection of taxes from the community/village headman and was also in charge of distributing the tax imposed on the village among the component individuals in proportion to their wealth and ability to pay. Also, in the Kano Province, a written statement in Hausa and Arabic of the amount imposed on the community was served to each village head.³²¹ It was also stated that in the case of excess demand, the community head and the peasantry alike had a right of appeal to the Assistant-Resident of the Division.

Furthermore, concerning the assignment of taxes, the system adopted in Kano was introduced to other Provinces of the Northern Nigerian Protectorate. Here, the proceeds of the

³¹⁸ Watts, *Silent Violence*, 1983, 276-278, 285-297, 305-312.

³¹⁹ Lugard, *Northern Nigeria Annual Colonial Reports*, 1905.

³²⁰ SNP 15 Acc. 374, "Memorandum on Land Tenure and Land Revenue in Nigeria," 1907, 15.

³²¹ SNP 15 Acc. 374, "Memorandum on Land Tenure and Land Revenue in Nigeria," 1907, 15.

general tax and *jangali* were shared between the British and the Native Administration in such a manner that the government was meant to take half, while the other half was assigned to the Native Administration. The only exception was the case of the Sokoto, where in consideration of the esteemed position of the Sultan as the Sarkin Musulmi (Head of Muslims), the colonial government was meant to take only a quarter of the collected taxes, while the remaining three-quarter went to the Native Administration.³²²

Although Cargill implemented the tax reforms, Lugard provided the conceptual framework immediately after the conquest. Lugard knew that he had no source for local funds to run the administration because the British practiced this system in India, South Africa, and other places they had colonies and protectorates. The obvious thing for Lugard to do was to modify the present taxation system to suit the British and to maximize every opportunity to raise money for the colonial administration. Lugard's original plan was "...to retain the ancient taxes, modified and simplified, and to insist on these being paid as heretofore to the Chief, while he handed over to Government a proportion of the tribute thus obtained through its agency."³²³ Both Lugard and Cargill knew that they had to work closely with the new Emir Abbas and his officials to effectively collect these taxes. Despite the suspicion that was evident between the British and the local administrators and titleholders, both worked together to archive the increase in revenue. With time, especially from 1909, both the British and the emirate council worked together for a common cause, although the suspicion was never eliminated because the British were also perceived to be conquerors and oppressors by the peasant, the aristocrats, and other officeholders.

³²² SNP 15 Acc. 374, Memorandum on Land Tenure and Land Revenue in Nigeria," 1907, 18.

³²³ Northern Nigerian Annual Report, 1904.

Despite all the challenges he faced, Cargill successfully implemented Lugard's policies in Kano. He successfully put down the unrest in 1903 and 1904 that came up after the British conquest. He carried out surveys and made reports of every district, town, and village in Kano. Specific reports and assessments were made on slavery, land tenure, trade, industrial production, taxation, population, farms, markets, geography, threats, local traditions, origins of the people and even the politics and intrigues of the courts of the Emir, district heads, and others lesser officials. Cargill visited almost all the major towns and districts in Kano, which helped him in his report and assessment in determining what rate and level of taxation were to be applied.³²⁴

Cargill implemented all Lugard's policies even when it was apparent that some of them would cause a problem for the colonial administration from the indigenous peoples' perspectives. For example, the instructions that all taxes should be thoroughly assessed and paid in Sterling Pounds were ill-advised, but he went ahead to experiment in Chiroma District. The district's tax rate was increased to 300% and later to 1000% within a year, 1906 to 1907.³²⁵ This led to an uprising that was quelled with military force.³²⁶ While referring to official reports on the new Resident's tax assessment, Smith observes:

For Kano, in 1907-08 it is reported that 'the average incidence per head of Land Revenue or Cattle Tithe is approximately per adult male 3s; per adult male-female, 1s' Thus, at the prevailing exchange rate for cowries, *Kudin Kasa* has apparently risen from its pre-colonial level of 3,000 cowries per male householder to 5,000 per adult male in the past five years. It is, therefore, easy to appreciate the grounds for (the) public unrest.³²⁷

For example, the amount accruing to the Colonial Government Treasury of Kano based on the increasing rate of taxes from 1903 to 1908 is represented in the next table.

³²⁴ Ubah, *Administration of Kano*, 105.

³²⁵ Kanoprof 2/22 Annual Report, 1909.

³²⁶ Kanoprof 2/22 Annual Report, 1909; Ubah. *Administration of Kano*, 107.

³²⁷ Smith, *Government in Kano*, 426; *Northern Nigeria Annual Report, 1907-1908*, 612. E. P. C. Girouard,

To some extent, the taxation assessment policy was one of the worst decisions Cargill took during this period, as it also gave room for conflict between the Emir’s Council and the Resident. In this regard, the establishment of new districts (*gunduma*), attempted removal of the *jakadu*, and the forced relocation of *hakimai* to their districts did not go down well with the Emir, his officials, and all the personnel affected. Cargill introduced the *Taki* system, which was just a means to redistribute land and give access to the landless peasants.³²⁸ The *Taki* system was also controversial; though it was equally introduced to remove the royal enslaved persons and the supposedly corrupt *jakadu* from the collection of taxes, it was resisted by the Emir and his officials.³²⁹ Despite the opposition to these changes, Cargill, with the support of Lugard, believed that those changes introduced were necessary for effective administration, collection of taxes, fiscal reorganization and control. On the *Taki* system, Hamza argues that it was revolutionary,³³⁰ and concludes that “Cargill’s reforms were not haphazardly implemented but conceived and adopted gradually.”³³¹

Table 3: Accruable Amounts to the Colonial Government Treasury of Kano Based on Taxation Rates, 1903-1908

Years	Total Government Share of Land & Cattle Taxes (in British Pounds)	Increase/Decrease (in British Pound)	% Increase/Decrease
1903-1904	£2027. 0. 0.	None	None
1904-1905	£6418. 0. 0	+ £4391. 0. 0	+217

³²⁸ Fika, *The Political and Economic Re-orientation of Kano*, 187.

³²⁹ Obaro Ikime. “The British and the Administration of Finance in Northern Nigeria, 1900-1934.” *Journal of Historical Society of Nigeria* VII, No. 4, 1975, 675.

³³⁰ Hamza, *Cargills’s Mistakes*, 102.

³³¹ Hamza, *Cargills’s Mistakes*, 121.

1905-1906	£5161. 0. 0	- £1257. 0. 0	- 19
1906-1907	£9170. 0. 0	+ £4009. 0. 0	+ 78.8
1907-1908	£14496. 0. 0	+ £5326. 0. 0	+57

Source: SNP 1538 Kano Annual Report 1918.³³²

Even Lugard had considered the tax collection issues. He argues:

The aim of the administration is to abolish the intermediate *Jakada* and *Ajele* and to allow the district head man, who was formerly overridden by him, to collect as of old, from each village headman, who in turn collects the assessed amounts from the individual, of his village and to bring in the tribute to the emir, who will pay the agreed proportion to the government.³³³

However, some scholars have criticized the British Resident' new interventions in tax-related matters. Among these scholars is Ubah, who contends that the introduction of the *gunduma* (district) system by Cargill was “administratively sound but quite unpopular”³³⁴ because the main aim was to destroy the system of collecting taxes by the *Jakadu* and to create administrative machinery that was fiscally responsible. As it turned out, not only did the Emir and his officials resist the *taki* and *gunduma* policies, also the *talakawa* (commoners), who struggled with the unduly tinkering with their land tenure system. Although the land tenure system was suitable for the colonial administration, it was quite different from the pre-conquest system to which the indigenous people of Kano were accustomed. Besides, Cargill wanted the *Hakimai* to be strictly in charge of collecting the revenue in their districts without the services of the *Jakadu*, whom everyone believed operated illegally and hindered the effective collection of taxes.

³³² SNP 1538 Kano Annual Report 1918

³³³ Lugard, “Taxation in Northern Nigeria”, 316.

³³⁴ Ubah, *Government and Administration of Kano*, 50.

Besides some disturbing reactions concerning the tax reforms, as noted above, many people in the Emir's Council regarded Cargill's decision in 1908 to appoint Dan Rimi Allah Bar Sarki, a man of slave origin to the position of Waziri,³³⁵ the second position to the Emir and a position only reserved for the freeborn, as ill-conceived, and ill-advised. The fact that Cargill would remove Abdullahi Bayero, the first son of Abbas, from the position of Waziri and replace him with a royal slave not only appointed a slave to a position that could only be held by someone who from the freeborn aristocracy, but Cargill also effectively demoted the chosen successor to the emirship who happened to be the first-born son of the emir and who would one day have a prosperous and lengthy reign. Lovejoy et al have argued, "Dr. Cargill made the appointment to tighten colonial control over the emirship."³³⁶ The development truly upset Abbas and his kin because they saw this choice as humiliating. The appointment undermined Abbas as emir, but in so doing the appointment of Allah Bar Sarki caused more problems for Cargill since he had seen Allah Bar Sarki as a high official who was willing to work closely with the British without realizing that the emir's instructions were that Allah Bar Sarki do exactly that. On the surface, as Ibrahim Aliyu Kwaru has noted, the colonial administration appeared to have increased its influence at the emir's court, but the incident negatively affected the relationship between the Protectorate and the emir. Kwaru writes that "The Waziri [Allah bar Sarki] became more powerful than the emir and this had never been experienced, not only in Kano Emirate but in the whole of Sokoto Caliphate."³³⁷ Cargill effectively undermined his position by imposing tax reforms and by appointing an enslaved person a *Waziri*. Accordingly, Hamza, who has done much work on Cargill, argues that "Cargill's style of adjusting to administrative challenges made him one of the most innovative Resident

³³⁵ SNP 7/9/5141, 1908, Position of Waziri Kano.

³³⁶ Lovejoy et al "C.L Temples Notes" 10-14.

³³⁷ Ibrahim Aliyu Kwaru, *Wazari Allah Bar Sarki, 1865 – 1917: A Neglected Personality in the Political History of Kano*. MA thesis, Usman Danfodio University, Sokoto, 1991, 84-85; SNP 7/9/5141, 1908. Kano Position of Waziri.

Officers in Colonial Northern Nigeria.”³³⁸ concluding that although many of Cargill’s policies were criticized, successive colonial administrations adopted most of them.³³⁹ However, Ubah questions the sanity of Cargill because of some of the decisions he took as a resident.³⁴⁰ Cargill was irrational and unrealistic based on some of the decisions he took as Resident of Kano but definitely, he was not insane, although he did burn many of his records before leaving Kano.

In 1909, a new Resident, Charles Lindsey Temple was appointed. In many regards, Temple was a different person from Cargill; he was more accommodating and willing to listen to the Emir and the emirate council in his decision-making process. Temple worked very well with Governor Percy Girouard, who replaced Lugard, and Girouard supported Temple’s changes, especially in allowing Abbas to choose his officers within the aristocracy. He also worked well and received support from Major Alder Burdon, who was the Northern Nigeria Colonial Secretary. These two senior colonial officials encouraged Temple to make changes to the unpopular policies of Cargill, especially those that pertained to native authority. Temple practiced and applied the principles of Indirect Rule more than Cargill, who believed that some direct rule was necessary for dealing with the Emir and his officials.

In other words, Temple advanced the Indirect Rule system in Kano and even did “what is needed to shore up the authority of the Fulani emirs, advising them behind the scenes rather than dictating to them.”³⁴¹ The positive relations between the British and aristocrats that Temple rebuilt led to a general reminder from Lugard himself of the need to ensure a sort of parity with Emirs to

³³⁸ Hamza, *Cargill’s Mistakes*, 105.

³³⁹ Hamza, *Cargill’s Mistakes*, 172.

³⁴⁰ Ubah, *Government and Administration of Kano*, 115.

³⁴¹ Ubah, *Government and Administration of Kano*, 50-69 and 123; Heussler, *The British in Northern Nigeria*, 59-60.

cultivate a good working relationship with them.³⁴² Orders were also given to Provincial, Divisional, and other subordinate officers never to command the emirs or give order to them. Such was reserved only for the Resident and his superior officers. Lugard concluded that “the prestige and influence of the chiefs are upheld by letting the peasantry see that Government itself treats them as an integral part of the machinery of administration.”³⁴³ Armed with all these instructions, the new Resident went to work and reorganized the Province.

As part of his interventions, Temple stopped all the members of the native administration from having direct contact with any British colonial official; they were directed to go through the Emir. The members of the Native Administration were also reminded of the position of the Emir, which they must respect and honour. The position of the Emir was strengthened and given more prestige. Colonial officers were reoriented to have more respect for the Emir. Governor Girouard, on a tour of Kano, warned all the British officers that disloyalty and disrespect would not be tolerated towards the Emir’s position.³⁴⁴ Significantly, Temple reverted the position of Allah Bar Sarki from Waziri to Dan Rimi, a senior palace position that royal enslaved persons customarily occupied. With all these favourable developments and changes under Temple, Abbas fully cooperated with the British and thereby ensured an excellent working relationship for the duration of his reign.

Also, Resident Temple carried out reforms in the taxation sector as he organized a new set of tax assessments and consolidated the taxes into two types: *Kudin Taki*, which was a land tax based on acreage, and *Kudin Gida*, a compound tax similar to poll tax based on the adults in an

³⁴² Lugard, *Political Memoranda*, ‘memo. No. 5: position of the chiefs’, P. 191-192

³⁴³ Lugard, *Political Memoranda*, ‘memo. No. 5: position of the chiefs’, P. 191-192

³⁴⁴ SNP 6/5 44/1909, Report No. 39 for March 1909. Kano Province Report (Preliminary) by C.L. Temple

area.³⁴⁵ These two taxes were the colonial administration's first attempts to restructure the tax for effective revenue generation. To make sure that all the loopholes for tax evasion were blocked, Temple abolished the most common aspects of tax exemptions known as *Chaffa* and *Hurmi*. *Chaffa* related to the indigenous practice whereby a man living in a given village may decide to leave his place of origin to another settlement to do temporary servitude under the lordship of someone else, which will provide the opportunity for him to disown his village of origin and avoid paying taxes there during the period of his temporary external service,³⁴⁶ whereas *Hurmi* "are farms belonging to individuals who are so supremely important or sacred that they cannot be asked to pay any rents or taxes at all."³⁴⁷ These familiar exemption patterns were discussed in detail in Chapter One. Only estates attached to political offices were exempted from paying taxes, and they were allowed exemption on one farm only.³⁴⁸ Taxes were levied at the same rate regardless of ownership or location once it was not part of the ones qualified for exemption, which streamlined the collection mechanism and increased revenue.

Revenue increased considerably under Temple, who developed a good working relationship with Emir Abbas and the members of the emirate council. The revenue increase was primarily because of the removal of most tax exceptions previously enjoyed and exploited by titleholders, wealthy merchants, members of the aristocracy and those associated with the elite. Major Festings observed these exceptions to represent about half of the total expected revenue.³⁴⁹ The completion and opening of the railway to Kano in 1912 saw another surge in increased revenue

³⁴⁵ Rhodes House MSS Afrs 952/6, "Notes on the Kano Taxes: Compound & Shuka Taxes," Arnett 18-8-1909, 1.

³⁴⁶ Rhodes House MSS Afrs S. 230, "Annual Report for of the Year Ending 31st December 1909, by Resident C. L. Temple, Administration & Taxation," pp. 70.

³⁴⁷ Rhodes House MSS Afrs S. 230, "Annual Report for of the Year Ending 31st December 1909, by Resident C. L. Temple, Administration & Taxation," pp. 68.

³⁴⁸ Lovejoy and Hogendorn. *Slow Death for Slavery*, 160.

³⁴⁹ SNP 6/4 2/1908. Report of Kano Province for Quarter ending 30th September 1907

for the colonial administration, which was estimated to be around 500 percent increase. The full impact of the railway on the economy of Kano will be discussed in the following chapter.

Irrespective of the administrative encounters witnessed in Kano during this early period of colonial rule; the area still occupied an unequalled status in the generation of tax revenues to the British authorities at the closing of the first decade of the nineteenth century. For example, the next table shows the comparative rates of taxation and income of the Kano emirate with other close administrative divisions of Northern Nigeria for the year 1908/1909 and 1909/1910.

Table 4: Comparative Taxation and Income of Kano with other Divisions, 1908-1910

Divisions	Emirates	General Taxes £	Jangali £	Total £	Total £	Increase £
		1909-1910	1909-1910	1909-1910	1908-1909	
Kano	Kano	40,690	14,046	54,736	47,033	7,703
Katsina	Katsina	17,483	9,529	27,012	24,675	2,337
„	Daura	1,792	506	2,298	2,321	-----
„	Kazaure	1,853	727	2,580	2,774	-----
	Total	21,128	10,762	31,890	29,770	2,120
Katagum	Katagum	3,356	1,158	4,514	2,383	2,131
„	Hadeja	2,959	461	3,420	1,159	2,261
„	Gumel	244	47	291	133	158

„	Missau	202	123	325	343	-----
„	Jama'are	289	30	319	77	242
„	Dambam	132	15	147	66	81
	Total	7,182	1,834	9,016	4,161	4,855
	Grand Total	69,000	26,642	95,642	80,964	14,678

Source: SNP 15 1, ACC 167, Kano Province Report for the Year Ending 31st December 1910, Acting H. R. Palmer, Enclosure D, 42.³⁵⁰

As pointed out earlier, the tax reform changed the mode of payment by replacing cowries and grains with the British pound sterling. The change to foreign currency as a medium of tax payment compelled the farmers to grow cash crops such as groundnuts and cotton to enable them to obtain the new currency. Groundnuts was the crop of choice because it fetched more money in the market than cotton. The tax policy forced every male, slave or freeborn to pay taxes except the officials and members of the aristocracy. It became difficult for the slave owners to pay these taxes on behalf of their enslaved persons and thereby forced them into *murgu* arrangements, whereby the enslaved persons paid for their taxes in return for a level of freedom from their masters to work independently.³⁵¹ The *murgu* plan also made provisions for the enslaved persons to make periodic payment arrangements to the master as a payment to work and arrange a buyout, redemption, or ransom (*fansa*) of his freedom in the future. *Murgu* and *fansa* arrangements are thoroughly discussed in the next section.

³⁵⁰ SNP 15 1, ACC 167, Kano Province Report for the Year Ending 31st December 1910,

³⁵¹ Paul E. Lovejoy “Murgu: The Wages of Slavery in Sokoto Caliphate”. *Slavery and Abolition*, 14, 1993, 168.

Moreover, in certain areas of administrative reforms, before his exit, Resident Cargill had made some practical efforts in expanding the administrative bases of the Native Authority. Thus, in line with the recommendations from the Office of the Governor of Northern Nigerian Protectorate, Cargill, in his bid, started the designing of a salary-scale structure for members of the Native Administration in Kano, which his successor, Resident Temple, later formalized as part of a modern reform system. For instance, it is on record that Cargill submitted a comparative draft proposal to Girouard, the Governor of Northern Nigeria Provinces, about the

Table 5: Estimates and Proposals of Salary-Scale Structures for the Kano Native Administration, 1907

Governor's Hypothetical Estimates		Resident's Actual Proposed Sum
Emir	£8,000	£6,000
Office - Holders	£1,000	£1,500 (including Alkali of Kano)
District-Headmen	£8,000	£5,700 (including Alkali I)
Village-Headmen	£4,000	£3,500
Native Police	£2000	£500 (inside Kano)
Native Gaol	Nil	£300
Native Revenue	£16,000	£1,800

Source: SNP 15, ACC 376, A10, "Kano: Incomes of Chiefs," by Resident Cargill, 1907, 3.³⁵²

³⁵² SNP 15, ACC 376, A10, "Kano: Incomes of Chiefs," by Resident Cargill, 1907, 3.

obtainable salary to be paid to the various indigenous members of Kano’s Native Administration, ranging from the Emir to other prominent offices, as shown in the table above.

Aside from the previous foundations laid by his predecessor, Temple took further progressive steps by establishing a modern state administrative and treasury system for Kano known as the *Beit-el-Mal*, under which “the Provincial staff could assist and supervise as the emirate counterpart of the Protectorate Treasury.”³⁵³ Under the new system, the Emir and his Council’s powers were reinforced in the Native Administration. For instance, according to the official Report of 1909, it was stated:

The Emir’s Judicial and Executive Council has been reinstated with H.E.’s (His Excellency, the Governor of Northern Protectorate) sanctions under warrant. It consists of the Waziri, the Maji, the Alkali, and five Mallamai of high standing and constitutes the Supreme Court of Appeal for the Kano emirate. It administers the Koranic Law or Traditional Law based on Native Custom or the Government’s Proclamations as the case may require.³⁵⁴

Also, from the *Beit-el-Mal* fund, members of the Judicial Council were all meant to receive fixed salaries. The official salary structures were as follows as captured by the table below:

Table 6: Salary Scales of Judicial Officers of the Kano Native Administration According to the 1909 Reforms by Resident C. L. Temple

S/N	Judicial Officers	Salary Scale Per Annum (in British Pounds)
1	Waziri	£1000
2	Ma’aji	£860
3	Alkali	£600
4	Liman	£72
5	Mallamai	£24

³⁵³ Smith, *Government in Kano*, 427.

³⁵⁴ Rhodes House MSS Afrs S. 230, “Annual Report for of the Year Ending 31st December 1909, by Resident C. L. Temple: Kano Division,” pp. 51-52.

Source: Rhodes House MSS Afrs S. 230, “Annual Report for of the Year Ending 31st December 1909, by Resident C. L. Temple: Kano Division,” 54.

Among others, the new taxation and administrative reforms integrated both the Native and British authorities in an active system of continuous relationship, which the successors of Temple built on throughout the remaining decades of British colonialism in Kano. Thus, among other factors, the policies of Temple during his brief stay as the Resident of Kano, that Girouard and his replacement Hesketh Bell supported by 1910, properly established Indirect Rule. Indirect Rule not only settled the former rivalries but also ensured a cordial relationship between the British authorities and the Kano aristocracy and prepared the ground for infrastructural developments that would boost the economy of Kano during the colonial period.

3.6 Colonial Policy on Slave Trade and Slavery

The issues of the slave trade and slavery were also among the significant areas of focus in the British colonial occupation of Kano and other parts of Northern Nigeria. Lovejoy and Hogendorn demonstrate that the slave trade and slavery still existed within the Sokoto Caliphate before the conquest of Kano and Sokoto in 1903.³⁵⁵ Even after the slave trade and slavery were outlawed in most of the World, the practice persisted in the Sokoto Caliphate and most parts of Africa. George Goldie of the Royal Niger Company had enacted the decree that abolished the legal status of slavery in 1897, but Fredrick Lugard was the one who formulated and executed the policy.³⁵⁶ Lugard’s experiences on slavery and its forms as a colonial officer in East Africa, India, Burma, Ceylon, and Hong Kong influenced his policies in Northern Nigeria. Lugard advocated and implemented gradual emancipation similar to the one in Zanzibar rather than a set-date emancipation like that of the West Indies and most of the Americas because it would cause the

³⁵⁵ Lovejoy and Hogendorn, *Slow Death for Slavery*, 63-64.

³⁵⁶ Lovejoy and Hogendorn, *Slow death for slavery*, 64.

“dislocation of the existing social conditions” which would not be suitable for both the slave owners and the enslaved persons themselves.³⁵⁷ Martin Klein observes a similar situation in French West Africa when he argues, “the story of the emancipation is one of hesitant forward steps coupled to a long period of retreat.”³⁵⁸ Instead of outright emancipation, the British implemented a policy of taxing the enslaved persons, which discouraged their ownership and led to the gradual demise of slavery. Lovejoy and Kanya-Forstner have demonstrated the similarities between the British and the French colonial policies in West Africa and they argue that:

In some respects, French, and British approaches to the abolition of slavery and the slave trade in their colonial empires were quite similar; indeed, it occasionally seemed as if the French were simply following the British lead. In 1807, Britain had been the first major European power to abolish the slave trade (the first to do so has been Denmark, in 1802), and the French decision to follow suit in 1815 had been the result of intense British pressure. The British also abolish slavery in their colonial empire fifteen years before the French. The abolition Act of 1833, however, did not apply to all parts of the Empire. Only slaves in the West Indies, Cape Town, Canada, and Mauritius were emancipated (wherever local legislation has not already done so), subject to a period of apprenticeship which ended in 1838. In British India and Ceylon, as well as in other territories acquired after 1833, the British did not proclaim immediate emancipation; instead, they began by abolishing the legal status of slavery. The policy was first applied in India, in 1843, when enslavement as a judicial punishment was banned and all courts were forbidden to recognize slavery in any form. This model was then extended to Malaya, Ceylon, and Hong Kong, and eventually to British Africa, where it was applied on the Gold Coast in 1874 and imposed on the Swahili domains of the Sultan of Zanzibar in 1897. India also became the model for the British anti-slavery policy in Northern Nigeria. Sir George Goldie of the Royal Niger Company followed Indian precedents after his occupation of Bida and Ilorin, the two southern provinces of the Sokoto Caliphate, in 1897. Sir Frederick Lugard, who had learned about Indian-style abolition in East Africa, continued Goldie’s policies after he became high commissioner for the Protectorate of Northern Nigeria in 1900. In February 1900, Lugard confirmed Goldie’s earlier decree abolishing the legal status of slavery. On 31 March 1901, he decreed the emancipation of all children born to slaves after that date. More surreptitiously, he also made provision for slaves to purchase their own freedom, and to have them ransomed by third parties. At the same time, he enacted a series of measures to eliminate slave raiding and the slave trade, culminating in the slavery proclamation of 1904 which banned all sales of slaves, regardless of the circumstances.³⁵⁹

Lovejoy and Kanya-Forstner further argue that:

The parallels between British policies in Northern Nigeria and French policies in Afrique Occidentale Francaise are striking but not altogether surprising. Both nations had justified their conquest of the West African interior as part of a holy war against slavery and the slave trade. Both governments were bound by international agreements and had to contend with vociferous and occasionally influential anti-slavery

³⁵⁷ Lugard, 1896, 344, cited in Lovejoy and Hogendorn, *Slow Death for Slavery*, 65.

³⁵⁸ Martin A. Klein. *Slavery and Colonial Rule in French West Africa*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998, 15.

³⁵⁹ Paul E. Lovejoy and A.S. Kanya-Forstner (eds.), *Slavery and its Abolition in French West Africa: The Reports of G. Poulet, E. Roume, and G. Deherme*. Wisconsin-Madison: African Studies Program, 1994, 11-12.

lobbies at home. On the other hand, both French West Africa and Northern Nigeria were predominantly Muslim territories with huge slave populations where the embryonic colonial State lacked either the means or the inclination to transform long-established patterns of social and economic organization. Faced with similar problems, the two colonial administrations were naturally interested in each others' solutions.³⁶⁰

Klein also observes similarities in the way British, French and Germans handled the issue of slavery in West Africa:

In spite of surface differences, there were surprising similarities in the policies pursued by colonial regimes in Africa. Throughout the nineteenth century, European officials in Africa were cautious about alienating the powerful slave-owning states with which they did business. In the latter part of the century pressures from missionaries within the colonies and from anti-slavery groups in Britain and France forced changes in policy, but colonial administrators were hesitant about applying anti-slavery laws. Both of these countries and the late-arriving Germans recruited their African armies largely from slaves. The French army actually distributed slaves to their officers, their African soldiers, and their agents. It is probable that the British and Germans sometimes did the same thing. Then, once in firm control, the policy changed, most dramatically in the case of the French. All colonial regimes moved quickly to end slave-raiding and slave-trading. With colonial forces stretched thin, they were not always completely successful, but such raiding as took place was largely on the margins of the colonial state and the trade largely a clandestine trade in children and occasionally in women. They were hesitant about undercutting slavery because slave-owning elites were their allies and agents in the government of colonial Africa. At this point, however, slaves themselves forced the situation by leaving their masters in huge numbers. They were able to do so because colonial regimes would no longer use their police power to reinforce slavery.³⁶¹

One of the first pieces of legislation of the colonial administration in Northern Nigeria was to ban the legal status of slavery, slave trade, outlaw slave raiding and close all the slave markets. In the case of Kano, Colonel Morland immediately closed the slave market after he occupied the walled city.³⁶² In this regard, during the first decade of the twentieth century, the colonial government issued many legislations concerning the slave trade and slavery but the prominent ones were the Slavery Proclamation of 1900, Slavery Proclamation of 1901, The Slavery Proclamation of 1904, The Slavery Proclamation of 1907, and The Anti-Slavery Legislation of

³⁶⁰ Lovejoy and Kanya-Forstner, *Slavery and its Abolition in French West Africa*, 12.

³⁶¹ Martin Klein. "Slave Descent and Social Status in Sahara and Sudan". In Benedetta Rossi, (ed.), *Reconfiguring Slavery: West African Trajectories*. Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 2009, 30.

³⁶² Fika, *The Kano Civil War and British Overrule*, 93.

1908.³⁶³ In summary, these proclamations clearly emphasized the illegality of the slave trade on the one hand, and as well provided for rules on aspects of relations between masters and enslaved persons, which provided opportunity towards the emancipation of enslaved persons, on the other hand. Also, practical steps were taken in emancipating children who were enslaved. After Lugard decreed the emancipation of all children born after March 31, 1901, two Freed Slaves Homes were established at Zungeru and Borno in 1903 and 1904, respectively. Efforts were made to dispatch special forces of the WAFF and other official agents to intercept enslaved persons in transit and free them by taking them to the freed home centres of enslaved persons. Freed enslaved persons who were admitted into these centres came from various parts of Northern Nigeria, including Kano. At the freed home centres, many of the formerly enslaved children were engaged in varieties of apprenticeship training, and they could leave the centres at will for further integration into other aspects of societal living. Though the slave trade was still active underground, the activities of the British in this direction helped to discourage the practice of slavery in the Kano area during the period. The table on the next page shows the statistics of the return of enslaved persons freed in Northern Nigeria from 1901 to 1905.

Table 7: Return of Slaves Freed in Northern Nigeria from 1st January 1900 to 31st December 1905.

³⁶³ The Slavery Proclamation, No. 2, 1901; The Slavery Proclamation, No. 27, 1904; Lovejoy and Hogendorn. *Slow Death for Slavery*, 20, 67-77, 91-96.

Provinces	Sokoto	Kano	Borno	Bauchi	Zaria	Kontagora	Borgu	Kabba	Bassa	Ilorin	Nasarawa	Yola	Muri	Nupe	Total	Disposal of those sent to Freed Homes	
																Zungeru	Borno
Sent to Freed Homes Slaves	4	7	249	8	2	--	1	10	33	23	18	194	421	9	979		
			258												258		
Lodged in Free Village in Borno	--	--	46	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	46	--	2
Allowed to follow their Inclinations	36	13	144	29	88	11	23	8	6	14	72	118	176	2	737	163	36
Restored to Relatives	6	21	234	18	26	3	9	--	8	17	401	51	12	5	511	--	--
Died	--	--	8	--	--	--	--	--	1	--	1	--	8	--	23	216	71
Married	7	--	15	17	52	--	2	--	4	1	4	--	19	13	134	86	12
Allotted to Guardians	5	3	39	52	23	3	10	--	90	1	7	23	79	10	256	313	3
Enlisted in the Northern Nigeria Regiment	--	--	--	--	1	--	--	2	1	3	--	1	9	--	17	2	--
Apprenticed	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	7	--	--	1	2	--	10	38	1
Total	58	44	993	124	190	17	44	20	150	59	313	394	726	39	3071	822	124
Remaining in Freed Slaves Homes on 31 st December 1905																234	146
Total Dealt Freed Slaves Homes on 31 st December 1905																1046	269

Source: F. D. Lugard, Northern Nigeria Annual Colonial Reports, No. 516, 1905-6, Appendix III.³⁶⁴

Taxation played an essential and pivotal role in ending slavery in Kano, especially regarding the relations between masters and enslaved persons. Thus, a combination of changes in tax reforms, land tenure, the legal status of enslaved persons, gradually discouraged slavery and made the evil practice unprofitable. The new tax policy also affected slavery and gradually led to its demise. In this regard, the new taxation system encouraged the slave owners into the *murgu*

³⁶⁴ F. D. Lugard, Northern Nigeria Annual Colonial Reports, No. 516, 1905-6, Appendix III.

arrangement with their enslaved persons as the only way out of the difficult situation created for them.³⁶⁵ According to Bargery, “*Murgu* was a form of *galla*, any kind of tax, e.g. *gallar kasa*, farm tax; payment made by a slave in lieu of work = *murgu*; any money received as rent or for hire.”³⁶⁶ The taxes also compelled the enslaved persons into cash crop production to earn money to pay their taxes to the government and fulfill their *murgu* obligations to their masters and also earn for their redemption, *fansa*. The new tax policies also forced so many enslaved persons into wage earners and artisans to fulfil their financial obligations to their masters and the government. The new tax system gradually discouraged owners from keeping enslaved persons, thereby leading to the gradual emancipation of all enslaved persons in Kano and Sokoto Caliphate in general. The colonial administration introduced the tax and land policy mainly to increase revenue and to gradually eliminate slavery in society. Based on the results yielded, the policies were successful to a large extent because they ensured the gradual demise of slavery and the emergence of peasant economic producers and taxpayers.³⁶⁷

The policies thereby encouraged enslaved persons to buy themselves out of slavery in a practice known as *murgu* by paying a certain amount of money to their masters to freely work, pay their taxes and save in lieu of their freedom. Commenting on the *murgu* system, Lovejoy and Hogendorn state:

Masters thus saw the advantages in allowing slaves to work on their own account in return for paying a regular fee known as *murgu*, and they negotiated suitable self-ransom and rental agreements with the slaves. Masters' income in these forms was either not taxed or was taxed only lightly. Such agreements would allow masters to escape liability for the slaves' taxes while receiving income that would not raise their own tax bills. They would also give the slaves sufficient independence, including more mobility or perhaps the greater mobility of freedom itself to raise the cash to pay the *murgu* ransoms, rents, and

³⁶⁵ Ibrahim M. Jumare. *Land Tenure in the Sokoto Sultanate of Nigeria*. PhD thesis, York University, 1995, 123-124.

³⁶⁶ Bargery, *A Hausa - English Dictionary*, 359.

³⁶⁷ Lovejoy and Hogendorn. *Slow Death for Slavery*, 162.

taxes. In effect, for many masters, the new tax structure encouraged the breakup of large estates and the establishment of financial accommodations with slaves that evolved into landlord-tenant relations.³⁶⁸

The British ordered that all adult males must pay taxes, and it was not profitable for the slave owners to pay these taxes on behalf of the enslaved persons, which the British wanted. This process gradually led to the emancipation of enslaved persons within Kano in an effective but slow process. The first years of colonial rule in Kano witnessed situations whereby enslaved persons abandoned their masters and ran away. An enslaved person's fugitive problem was part of the instability the British had to deal with after the conquest of 1903. According to Lugard, the enslaved persons thought the British conquest would bring freedom from slavery and thereby started to run away from their masters.³⁶⁹ Klein also observes a similar situation in French West Africa, and he reports that “The response of slaves to the disruptions of conquest was to take advantage of the opportunity by fleeing even more than before”.³⁷⁰

The enslaved persons later realized that it was better to acquire their freedom through repurchasing instead of running away, which their owners did not like, and the British never supported. The impact of the tax on farmers with a large number of enslaved persons, the famine of 1907-1908, and the elimination of the tax exemptions in 1909, encouraged the owners of enslaved persons to make payment arrangements with their enslaved persons so they could buy back their freedom.³⁷¹ The introduction of taxes also forced the enslaved persons into crop production such as cotton and groundnuts, favoured because of their ability to earn cash. The new economic system compelled the enslaved persons to fetch for their daily survival, pay for their

³⁶⁸ Lovejoy and Hogendorn, *Slow Death for Slavery*, 160.

³⁶⁹ Northern Nigeria Annual Report, 1905-1906. 371.

³⁷⁰ Martin Klein. “Slavery and Emancipation in French West Africa”, in Martin Klein ed., *Breaking the Chains: Slavery, Bondage, and Emancipation in Modern Africa and Asia*, Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1993, 182.

³⁷¹ Lovejoy and Hogendorn, *Slow Death for Slavery*, 159.

taxes, their *murgu* and *fansa* redemption payments. The tax reforms had more impact on men than on women because of the status of women in Islam and because women were exempted from paying taxes. *Murgu* was an avenue for effective relations between enslaved persons and masters and freedom of enslaved persons that were willing to continue onwards until the late 1930s when slavery was officially abolished in Kano and other parts of northern Nigeria.

Apart from taxation, the proclamation by Lugard that children born after March 31, 1903, were automatically free also dealt a blow on slavery in Kano and Northern Nigeria in general. This as observed by Lovejoy and Hogendorn simply means no new baby was going to be born as an enslaved person and thereby reducing the number of enslaved persons in the society.³⁷² The proclamation banning slave raiding which led to upheaval and unrest also contributed immensely to the gradual death of slavery.³⁷³

3.7 Land Tenure System

Like the experience in many other societies, the land over the years has been recognized as a formidable factor of production in the economy of Kano, in addition to the three other factors of labour, capital and entrepreneurship.³⁷⁴ During the pre-colonial and colonial periods, the land occupied a central position in the shaping of the indigenous people's economic development. Most notably, the economy was dependent on agricultural activities. As such, in the years of the establishment of British domination over the Kano area, the land was prioritized among the sectors which were given prior attention for the British authorities to have further control of the citizenry as well benefit more from their colonialism. Zubairu, for instance, has pointed out that, "the British

³⁷² Lovejoy and Hogendorn, *Slow Death for Slavery*, 67-77, 91-96.

³⁷³ Lovejoy and Hogendorn, *Slow Death for Slavery*, 67-77, 91-96.

³⁷⁴ Mansur I. Mukhtar. *The Impact of British Colonial Domination on Kano: C. 1903 to 1950, A Study of Colonial Change*. Zaria: Ahmadu Bello University Press, 2013, 33.

and their agents were interested in exploiting the people and so they introduced a new policy concerning land ownership and land control.”³⁷⁵

The land tenure in Kano under the Caliphate system was examined in Chapter One, and the system under the British was a modification of what was in existence. However, the British colonial conquest and political domination of Kano meant that the control of land in the Kano emirate had also been shifted from the Sokoto Caliphate to the British. Under the new setting, the British did not make an outright change but modified the system to favour them and to maximize the collection of taxes. The British modified the land tenure system while mainly maintaining the old system, which made it difficult for enslaved persons to acquire land and prevented Europeans from doing the same.³⁷⁶

After assuming office, Lugard’s successor, Governor Percy Girouard, made efforts from 1907 in introducing reforms to the land tenure system. In 1908, he inaugurated a committee known as the Northern Nigeria Land Committee, which was vested with the responsibility of investigating the nature of land tenure and advising the colonial authority on how to go about reforming the pre-colonial land policy in the Northern Protectorate in general.³⁷⁷ The new committee welcomed series of submissions, debates, and presentations from several persons and interest groups, including colonial officers and agents of overseas trading companies, on the most effective land reform that could be instituted for Northern Nigeria. The presentations were later harmonized and compiled by the committee, which was submitted to Governor Girouard in 1910 as the “Northern Nigeria Land Committee Report”. It was this report that the Governor crystallized and proclaimed

³⁷⁵ Zubairu, *A Study of the Colonial Economy*, 89.

³⁷⁶ SNP 17 42367, Land Registry Proclamation No. 10, June 15th, 1901.

³⁷⁷ I. M. Jumare, “Review of the Northern Nigeria Lands Committee Report of 1910.” In *Northern Nigeria: A Century of Transformation, 1903-2003*, eds., A. M. Yakubu, I. M. Jumare, and A. G. Saeed. Kaduna: Arewa House, Ahmadu Bello University, 2005, 304-305; Zubairu, *A Study of the Colonial Economy*, 90.

as the “Land and Native Rights Proclamation of 1910.”³⁷⁸ According to some relevant sections of the new land policy:

1. The whole of the land of the protectorate is under the control and dominion of the government and that no title to the occupation, use or enjoyment of any land is valid without the assent of the Government.
2. That the law should be amended or declared by providing that the control and dominion of the government should be exercised in any particular case with due regard to lawful customs proved to exist in any district or province where the land is situated.
3. That persons or community entitled to the occupation, use, or enjoyment of the land should have the exclusive right thereto against all persons other than the Government.
4. That except in so far as should be specifically provided by the terms of any lease or license, the Government should be entitled for a good cause to revoke the title of any land.³⁷⁹

Girouard’s new effort did not make significant changes from what was in existence, and the modifications under Lugard were that the primary control and administration of land were left in the hands of the traditional rulers. The significant difference in Girouard’s policy was that the land of the entire Northern Province was nationalized, and the British colonial authorities were to act as super lords in issues of land administration through the collection of rent in the form of taxation.³⁸⁰ As reflected in the Land Policy of 1910, the indigenous people had full right to the portions of land they possessed and cultivated in the Kano emirate. Also, the power to modify the inhabitants’ usage of land was vested under the ambit of the Native Administration, which the indigenous political authorities and the Native Court system dominated. Among others, this increased the powers of the Emir of Kano and the ruling aristocratic class in land-related matters and other express authorities under their control. Gwadabe notes that through the land policy:

³⁷⁸ Zubairu, *A Study of the Colonial Economy*, 90.

³⁷⁹ Kanoprof/2/31/LAN/32, ii Land Tenure in Northern Provinces, Provinces, by C. W. Rowling, Commissioner of Lands, Nigeria, 1902.

³⁸⁰ Lovejoy and Hogendorn, *Slow Death for Slavery*, 145.

The Emir (Abbas) remained so powerful over all the districts and villages especially as most of the officials at districts and village levels were either his direct or indirect blood relations and that they owe their appointment to him.³⁸¹

Apart from its general provisions about the imperial government ownership and indigenous control of land through the Native Administration system, to a high degree, the British adopted-land policy, like the hitherto indigenous land tenure system of Kano, continued to prevent enslaved persons from acquiring land, thereby maintaining slavery as a source of agricultural labour for production. The new proclamations further forced the enslaved persons to remain with their masters and sought freedom only by personal redemptions of paying (*murgu*), which enabled them to work and earn money for self-ransoming (*fansa*). The Land and Native Rights Proclamation of 1910 did not change the existing land tenure system that Lugard introduced but rather reinforced it.³⁸²

Thus, the British colonial policy on slavery largely depended on the land tenure system. Agricultural land was critical in Kano and enslaved persons were needed to cultivate the land to sustain the economy. As earlier noted, by Lovejoy and Hogendorn, the British were not ready to abruptly end slavery because of the negative impact it would have on the economy and the society in general, and since slavery was tied to possession of the land, taxes were introduced, which gradually discouraged and eliminated slavery in the long run.³⁸³ Since the agricultural land was difficult to obtain, the enslaved persons were forced to remain with their masters and gradually buy out their freedom. The system discouraged enslaved persons from deserting and fleeing their masters since obtaining land was very difficult. The system worked well for both the owners of enslaved persons and the British colonial administrators because it kept the enslaved persons in

³⁸¹ Gwadabe, *Land, Labour and Taxation in Kano*, 150.

³⁸² Lugard 1918, cited in Lovejoy and Hogendorn, *Slow Death for Slavery*, 153.

³⁸³ Lovejoy and Hogendorn, *Slow Death for Slavery*, 159-161.

their place and provided the necessary labour for the agricultural plantations, which the economy largely depended on. Lovejoy and Hogendorn have argued that even where the enslaved persons wanted to make their way to the cities and be labourers and artisans, economic survival was difficult because Kano people were first of all farmers and working as labourers and artisans were mostly part-time employment opportunities.³⁸⁴

In addition, although the Kano people could use their land under the existing indigenous system, in many regards, the British colonial authorities had absolute control of the land. Because, from the first decade of the twentieth century onwards, the colonial officials were not only collecting regular taxes on the indigenous land, but they were also in charge of the allocation of land for settlements and business quarters to European and non-European foreigners who were trooping into the Kano area to participate in the booming economy even though European settler population was discouraged. Also, large tracts of land, which were hitherto under the usage of the local population of Kano and other parts of Northern Nigeria, were allocated (confiscated) by the British authorities for several colonial projects such as railway, roads, and other infrastructure projects without compensations paid to the indigenous people occupying or cultivating such lands.³⁸⁵ It could be argued here that the land policy and tenure systems of Kano until and after 1910 were operated in such ways that the long-run effect adequately benefitted British colonial interests while at the same provided opportunity for the indigenous people to have access to the usage of land uninhibitedly. These patterns laid the foundation for the continuous expansion of Kano's economy along with other progressive trends in the period after the first decade of the twentieth century.

³⁸⁴ Lovejoy and Hogendorn, *Slow Death for Slavery*, 127-128.

³⁸⁵ Zubairu, *A Study of the Colonial Economy*, 90-91.

3.8 Impact of the British Conquest on the Merchant Class

The British conquest and colonial rule in Kano also had a tremendous impact on the merchant class. Kano's impressive commercial development was among the factors that motivated the British in the conquest and eventual colonization of the area. In fact, in 1904, Lugard, testified to the classic and international nature of the booming commerce in Kano, when he observed:

Kano is the destination of caravans from north, south, east, and west. Goods here exchange hands and are distributed to the countries which require them. The trade in Kano itself—apart from its importance as a distributing centre—consists chiefly of manufactured goods which, from time immemorial have a market throughout the Sudan and Nigeria.³⁸⁶

As such, many merchants flocked into Kano before and after the British colonization of the area. These merchants participated actively in the export and import trade of Kano as well as the distributive networks in the emirate. However, because of the British official presence, many European trading firms began shifting their attention to Kano and its environs. The new policy on trade as a result of the conquest was such that it promoted the diversion of Kano's exports to British factories abroad across the Atlantic Ocean through the Lagos coast, and the flooding of Kano's markets with imports from Europe via the same route. To facilitate easy farm assessment, collection of taxes and trade, the British introduced coin currency into Kano and Nigeria in general. The first non-indigenous currency in Kano was the Maria Theresa dollar which was introduced in 1780.³⁸⁷ The Maria Theresa dollar was used hand-in-hand with other local currencies such as cowries, cloth, iron, etc. The British then introduced the silver coin in 1825, introduced the shilling in 1913 and introduced the first currency notes (pound) in 1915 through the West African Currency

³⁸⁶ Northern Nigeria Annual Report, 1904, 296.

³⁸⁷ A.H.M. Kirk-Greene. "The Major Currencies in Nigerian History". *Journal of the Historical Society of Nigeria*, Vol. 2, No. 1, December 1960, 147; Ayodeji Olukoju. "Nigeria's Colonial Government, Commercial Banks and the Currency Crisis of 1916-1920". *The International Journal of African Historical Studies*. Vol. 30, No. 2, 1997, 279-281.

Board (WACB).³⁸⁸ Also, except for the spread of its use through direct taxation, the European firms and traders were among the major agents of the promotion of foreign currency in commercial exchanges in the Kano area.³⁸⁹ Moreover, the centralization of commerce in Kano and the increasing rates of British foreign currency soon made the area to be not only a destination for the importation of coins but also a major centre for the re-exportation of coins to many other Provinces of the Northern Nigerian Protectorate and some neighbouring French territories.³⁹⁰

Table 8: Records of Exports and Imports of British Coin Currencies from and to Kano, 1909-1910

Silver Exports from the Kano Province to other Centres				Nickel Imports to Kano		
Years	Months/Dates	Destinations	Amounts (in £)	Year	Months/Dates	Amounts (in £)
1909	November 16	Zaria	4,000	1910	February 24	500
„	November 24	Zungeru	10,000	„	April 5	750
„	December 11	Zaria	3,000	„	May 2	125
1910	January 24	„	1,600	„	July 27	1,750
„	February 6	„	3,000	„	August 14	1,690
„	„ 19	„	3,600			
„	March 19	„	3,418			

³⁸⁸ Kirk-Greene. “The Major Currencies in Nigerian History”, 149; Olukoju. “Nigeria's Colonial Government” 279-281.

³⁸⁹ Northern Nigeria Annual Report, 1905-1906. 414-415.

³⁹⁰ Northern Nigeria Annual Report, 1904, 310-311.

„	June 16	„	1,600	
„	September 3	„	750	
„	„ 24	„	930	
„	October 17	„	2,000	
„	November 26	Kaduna	7,000	
„	„	Zaria	4,500	
Total	-----		£45,418	----- £4,815

Source: SNP 15 1, ACC 167, Kano Province Report for the Year Ending 31st December 1910, Acting H. R. Palmer, Enclosure C, 41.³⁹¹

Thus, from the Kano area, too, the recognized British currencies collected through taxes and other economic channels were redistributed to other neighbouring locations for broader outreach. For example, the table above describes the destinations of British coins' exports and imports in the Kano area between 1909 and 1910. These new interventions in commercial policy direction, the practices of trade and the currency models for economic transactions continued to have an impact on the patterns of business activities of the indigenous and other external merchants in the environment from the first years of the twentieth century onwards.

Another significant dimension of British domination over the Kano area was in the considerable number of losses that the merchant class experienced, especially with recourse to the new attitude to slavery in the emirate. For example, the merchant class recorded losses in business

³⁹¹ SNP 15 1, ACC 167, Kano Province Report for the Year Ending 31st December 1910

because of the flight of their enslaved persons who served as a primary source of labour on their plantations and some forms of assistance related to trade. It was reported that merchants like Tsakuwa, Yeye and many others reported grave losses due to the flight of their enslaved persons after the British conquest.³⁹² For instance, the wealthiest merchant in the nineteenth century was Haruna Kundila, and the conquest and the new tax policy of enslaved persons greatly affected his wealth. His plantations were abandoned later because of his inability to keep the enslaved persons to work on them.³⁹³ S. U. Grier, a colonial officer, reported that the merchant classes that owned enslaved persons recorded real hardship and significant losses because of the desertion of the slaves who were the primary workforce on their plantations.³⁹⁴ Klein observes a similar situation in French West Africa when he posits that the departures of enslaved persons and slavery “...destroyed the most important form of wealth in many African societies.”³⁹⁵

Generally, the impact of the British conquest on the economy of Kano from 1903 to 1911 has been assessed from both negative and positive perspectives. On the negative side, the initial chaos affected the economy but was later recovered in subsequent decades, thereby also making ways for the positive impact that was registered. From different points of view, scholars have expressed their thoughts on the nature of this impact. For instance, for Lovejoy and Hogendorn, it was a period of economic dislocation.³⁹⁶ The destruction and chaos that followed the British conquest greatly affected the economy of Kano and the economy did not fully recover until the introduction of the railway to Kano in 1912. Despite the introduction of new taxation policies, land tenure policies, and the attempt to end slavery systematically, the economy did not perform beyond

³⁹² Lovejoy and Hogendorn, *Slow Death for Slavery*, 47.

³⁹³ Dan Asabe, *Comparative Biographies*, 84-87.

³⁹⁴ S. U. Grier, cited in Lovejoy and Hogendorn, *Slow Death for Slavery*, 48.

³⁹⁵ Klein, *Slavery and Colonial Rule*, 16.

³⁹⁶ Lovejoy and Hogendorn, *Slow Death for Slavery*, 216.

what was envisaged until the opening of the railway. The enslaved persons did not get emancipated; the new taxation system and land tenure policies further tied them down to their masters. The impact on the enslaved persons was devastating. Equally, the impact on the owners of the enslaved persons and merchant class was devastating because they had to pay more for their enslaved possessions, which they later lost. They lost power and influence and finally lost their lands because they had to abandon them in the long run for enslaved persons to take over due to a lack of free enslaved persons labour to cultivate them.

Fika argues that the British conquest of Kano did affect the trans-Saharan trade to North Africa because the British indirectly discouraged it with the imposition of high tariffs and taxes.³⁹⁷ In this regard, Lugard deliberately encouraged trading with the British companies and representatives through the Southern protectorates and Lagos at the expense of trans-Saharan trade, which largely benefitted North African countries and local merchants. Besides the high taxes and tariffs introduced to the trans-Saharan trade commodities, the British peddled rumours about the insecurity of the routes and encouraged the merchants to look southwards and get involved with cotton and groundnuts as primary trading commodities. The British indirectly killed the trans-Saharan trade. The decline in the trade across the desert, which had been in existence for many centuries, greatly affected the Arab business and merchant class, which further increased their resentment for the British. Both indigenous and Arab merchants were unhappy with the British because they denied them the usage of enslaved persons and later attempted to kill the leading trade they depended on.

³⁹⁷ Fika, *The Political and Economic Re-orientation of Kano*, 315-316.

Also, Hogendorn has argued, “among the traders at Kano, it was the kolanut traders who responded most energetically to the incentives offered by groundnuts.”³⁹⁸ According to Lovejoy, the Agalawa, the Tokorawa and the Kambarin Beriberi were the three main groups that dominated the kolanut trade in Kano,³⁹⁹ and most were able to switch swiftly and easily into the groundnut trade. Alhassan Dantata led the new trade in cash crop commodities like groundnut and cotton, which saw the rise of the new merchant class. He became the most important groundnut middleman and dealer, at this time. Adamu Jakada was also noted to be the principal agent of the Royal Niger Company in Kano. Together with Maikano Agogo, Umaru Sharubutu, Iliyasu Dan Dagomba, Muhammad Nagoda, and many others, these Agalawa traders represented the kolanuts traders who successfully transitioned into groundnut trading and made tremendous wealth.⁴⁰⁰ Nevertheless, it can be concluded that in aspects of labour relations, the British conquest negatively affected the old merchant class that depended on slave labour and favoured the new merchant class that depended on paid labour and collaboration in trade with colonial policies.

Furthermore, Fika notes that “until 1911, the pattern of trade was basically what it has been in the nineteenth century.”⁴⁰¹ As such, there were no significant changes in trading patterns until the intensification of crops made for European markets and the coming of the railway to Kano in 1912. The hitherto trade was divided into three categories: to and from Gonja, to the rest of Hausaland and Yorubaland and despite the decline of Trans-Saharan Trade, it continued to serve as a significant source of commodities from and to North Africa. The British encouraged and planned an export-oriented economy. They planned and executed policies that chiefly made Kano a source of raw material for their factories overseas. The British companies like the Royal Niger

³⁹⁸ Hogendorn, *Nigerian Groundnuts Exports*, 82.

³⁹⁹ Lovejoy, *Caravans of Kola*, 75.

⁴⁰⁰ Hogendorn, *Nigerian Groundnuts Exports*, 84-85; Dan Asabe, *Comparative Biographies*, iii – iv.

⁴⁰¹ Fika, *The Political and Economic Re-orientation of Kano*, 323.

Company initially refused to move to the interior and trade and had no trading posts in Kano but confined themselves solely to the coastal towns. The newly established tin mines of Jos did attract Kano people who went there to make good wages of sixpence a day, which served as a secondary source of wealth to Kano people.⁴⁰² By and large, the impact of the British conquest on the merchant class was drastic in the first decade of the twentieth century, as it brought a series of change in policies and the activities of new players who soon replaced the old players, as well as set revolutionary economic changes in the subsequent decades of colonial rule in Kano and its environs.

3.9 Conclusion

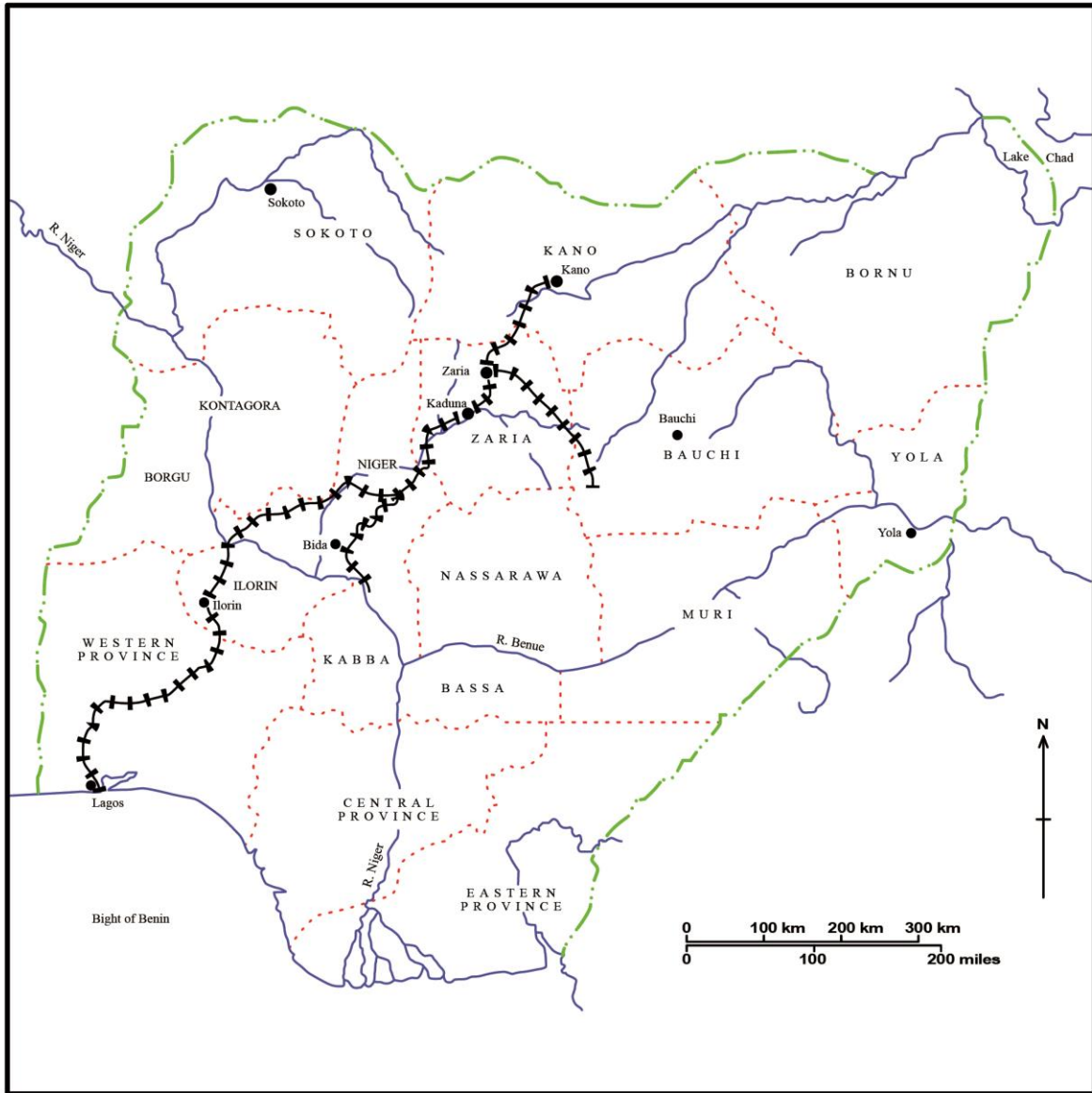
The British conquest of Kano and the establishment of colonial rule over the area and other parts of northern Nigeria during the first decade of the twentieth century was an important event in the history of Kano. Apart from its total influence in the political aspect in placing Kano rulers and citizens permanently under the British control and silencing the suzerainty of the Sokoto Caliphate, it also had a significant impact on the economic sector. The primary aim of British colonialism was the exploitation of the people and resources of Kano for the prosperity of the colonial treasury. Hence, most of the British colonial policy-making, and implementation was focused on economic domination and control directly and indirectly using administrative mechanisms from 1903 to 1911 and in the decades that followed.

The early part of the British conquest witnessed the slowing of economic development because of the chaos, turmoil, and displacement it caused when enslaved persons left their masters and peasants refused to pay taxes. With the introduction of the new land tenure system, taxation

⁴⁰² Annual Report Northern Nigeria, 1906-1907.

system, policy on slavery, policy on trade, and the focus on crops such as groundnut and cotton, the economy was revived to serve the colonial project. The political structure was reorganized, and the decentralization of the administrative mechanism was implemented under the Native Administration and the Indirect Rule system. Moreover, while the administrative and economic foundations were laid for the colonial occupation of Kano from 1903 to 1911, the period that followed opened the Kano economy to specific revolutionary performances and expansions for the colonial authorities, European and non-European actors, the indigenous population, and other participants. Among other variables, a contributing factor to the revolutionary economic development was the extension of the railway to Kano in 1911 and its subsequent opening in 1912, which initiated the boom period of the colonial rule in Kano. The next chapter will examine the nature of the economic boom of Kano during the period from 1912 to 1929 and the factors that influenced it.

Map 3: Provinces of Northern Nigeria, 1916



Source: Lovejoy and Hogendorn. *Slow Death for Slavery*, 4.

CHAPTER FOUR

COLONIAL POLICY AND THE ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT OF KANO, 1912-1928

4.1 Introduction

This chapter examines the British colonial policy and the impact on the economic development of Kano from 1912 to 1929. The latter part of the period is generally regarded as the boom years when the global economy recorded rapid growth before the onset of the Great Depression in 1929. The impressive global economic expansion that took place in the 1920s had a positive impact on the economic development of Kano because of the demand for primary products such as groundnuts, which Kano and its environs produced in large quantities. The chapter also analyzes the impact of the completion of the railway from Lagos to Kano on the Kano economy, which led to the increase in the export of groundnuts and cotton from Kano. The chapters also discuss the revenue Kano received from taxes of its indigenes who worked in the tin mines in Jos, which had an impact on the Kano economy. These developments and others led to higher revenue for Kano and the broader Northern Region. The chapter also explores the implications of the building of other infrastructures such as roads, hospitals, schools, bridges, and dispensaries for the development of Kano during the period under study. Efforts are also made to analyze the impact of the emphasis on the production of cash crops such as cotton and groundnuts, as well as the 1914 and 1927 famines on overall development.

The British colonial authorities that administered Nigeria in the period under study took several important decisions that affected the development of Kano. One of such was the amalgamation of the Northern and Southern Protectorates of Nigeria to form one vast administrative territory on January 1, 1914. There was also the emphasis of the colonial

government on the production of cash crops at the expense of food crops. The emphasis was influenced by the fact that cash crops such as cotton, cocoa, rubber, groundnuts, and palm produce were needed to feed the industries and stimulate the economy of Britain and other European states. The impact of these decisions on the colonial administration was analyzed. It was also during this period that World War I was fought. Because Nigeria participated in the First World War as a British colony, it was affected by the war because of Britain's deep involvement in the prolonged violent conflict. Economic activities in Nigeria as a British colony were negatively affected. According to Akinjide Osuntokun, "The First World War upset the gradual economic development of Nigeria and caused a great deal of dislocation in the internal as well as the external flow of trade of the country".⁴⁰³ The British also embarked on mass enlistment and conscription of Nigerians to fight in the First World War and diverted a considerable number of resources from the colonial possessions, including Kano, to fight the Germans. James Mathews has argued that "The enlistment and conscription of combatants and non-combatants in Nigeria during the First World War represented an unprecedented mobilization of the country's labour force".⁴⁰⁴ The mass enlistment, and mostly conscriptions, which were tantamount to forced labour deprived Nigeria and Kano of its able-bodied men, some of whom died in a war that has nothing to do with them or their country.

Expectedly, the economic development of Kano, a major centre of trade and commerce, was equally affected. It is important to note that the British decided to develop Kano to facilitate the economic exploitation of the area and the developments were minimal. However, it is important to note that these developments were a huge improvement because they were not

⁴⁰³ Akinjide Osuntokun. *Nigeria in the First World War*. London: Longman Group Limited, 1979. 21.

⁴⁰⁴ James K. Matthews. "Reluctant Allies: Nigerian Responses to Military Recruitment 1914-18", in Melvin E. Page, (ed.), *Africa and the First World War*. London: Palgrave – Macmillan, 1987, 95.

available before the coming of the British. Though we can argue that the British exploited the people and stagnated the area, they did introduce some sort of advancement in the life of the people, the detail of which is discussed in this chapter. The analysis will be made of the ramifying consequences of all these economic developments and the rapid improvement in economic fortunes, which took place in the 1920s, before the commencement of the Great Depression in 1929.

4.2 Kano's Economy before the Railway

The economic development of Kano in the first years of the twentieth century was built on the advancement made in the late nineteenth century. However, developments associated with the British colonial occupation of the area acted as a significant catalyst for economic transformation. In the opening years of the twentieth century, subsistence agriculture and the indigenous production of some items, as well as internal and external trade, entirely dominated the economy of Kano. Agricultural practices involved the cultivation of various food and export crops as well as the keeping of livestock. As noted in Chapter Two, the primary food crops include guinea corn, millet, maize, rice, wheat, potatoes, cassava, yam, cocoyam, onions, peppers, and okras. The main export crops were indigo, cotton and groundnuts. Official accounts of the late nineteenth and twentieth centuries confirmed the cultivation and availability of these products in all parts of the Kano emirate.⁴⁰⁵ This trend continued in the early twentieth century and is reflected in the people's local consumption and the pattern of internal and external trade.

Livestock-keeping was also a significant aspect of the economy of Kano during the early twentieth century. Various animals such as cattle, goats, sheep, horses, ostrich, and other kinds of birds were highly domesticated and served as a full-scale occupation for many persons in the area.

⁴⁰⁵Kanoprof c.111, Confidential Preliminary Report, Kano Province, March 1909.

Among these were the Fulani herders who specialized in the art of cattle-rearing in Kano and other parts of Northern Nigeria and the womenfolk who distinguished themselves in rearing goats across Hausaland.⁴⁰⁶ During the early twentieth century, the keeping of livestock served different economic purposes to the people. First, the animals served as a ready source for the supply of meat, milk, and cheese into the food supplements of the indigenous people. Second, they were among the major articles of export trade to many Nigerian communities southward, down to the Lokoja area and beyond to the hinterlands of Yorubaland. Third, by the end of the first decade of the twentieth century, the products of these animals, particularly the hides and skins, continued to be valuable articles of long-distance caravan trade from Northern Nigeria to North African areas of Tripoli and Morocco via the Sahara Desert routes and from North Africa across the Mediterranean Sea to Europe⁴⁰⁷ The availability of livestock served as a prospective avenue of revenue collection for the British colonial authorities in Kano and other parts of Northern Nigeria, especially the popular *Jangali* tax on cattle.⁴⁰⁸ For instance, drawing attention to this reality, Acting Resident E. J. Arnett, in the Kano Province Report of 1911 observed:

The chief contributor to the total increase (of revenue) seems to be the Jangali tax. Mr. Resident Laing went fully into this in his Quarterly Report for September 1910 and pointed out that this increase is to be attributed rather to the improved methods of collection and to the energy and ability shown by the Emir and his headmen than to natural causes...⁴⁰⁹

Also, the economy of Kano during the early twentieth century maintained a peculiar feature of indigenous production of several items. As explained in Chapter Two, there existed an extensive diversity of local industries in Kano, which included cotton-weaving and -dyeing, thatching, tanning, leatherworking, saddling, woodworking, the smithing of various metals, pottery, and other craftworks before the advent of the British in the late nineteenth century. The local industrial

⁴⁰⁶Adebayo, "The Production and Export of Hides and Skins" 273-300.

⁴⁰⁷Johnson, "Calico Caravans" 113-115.

⁴⁰⁸A. G. Adebayo. "Jangali", 113-150.

⁴⁰⁹SNP 7/13/1114/1912, E. J. Arnett, Kano Province Report for the Year Ending, 31 December 1911, 205.

production expanded in the early twentieth century. The prominent production among them was the cotton industry of Kano, which was well developed and absorbed most of the raw cotton materials of the area and its neighbouring communities for a varied range of cloth manufacturing. Among others, this continued to make Kano a major exporter of manufactured cotton products to near and distant territories of Africa through the initial existing Trans-Saharan trade routes until the first decade of the twentieth century and the subsequent southward trade links after the construction of the railway in 1911.⁴¹⁰ Kano's cotton production network was so strong that, as will be shown later, the British and other advancing European merchants found it difficult to displace the indigenous people out of business during the first half of the twentieth century.

Trade was yet another dominant feature that shaped the development of Kano's economy during the early twentieth century and beyond. In comparative terms, Kano was the most prosperous economy in Northern Nigeria at the opening of the twentieth century because of the volumes of trade that continued to take place in it. The commercial relations of Kano during this period were both internal and external and could be subdivided into three major categories. The first was the internal trade of the circulation of goods and services across the length and breadth of the province. The second was the pattern of the external commercial relations between Kano and neighbouring towns. Products from Kano were acquired and taken for sale in different places, just as some products were equally brought into Kano for sale.⁴¹¹ The third factor was the specialized networks of long-distance export and import trade, which the city of Kano was associated with during this period. The articles of trade remained the major and minor ones

⁴¹⁰Johnson, "Calico Caravans"; 97; E.C. Duggan, "The Cotton Growing Industry of Nigeria," *Journal of the Royal African Society* 21, No. 83, April 1922, 199-207; Marisa Candotti. "Cotton Growing and Textile Production in Northern Nigeria, from Caliphate to Protectorate c. 1804-1914: A Preliminary Examination," *Paper for the African Economic History Workshop*, London School of Economics, May 2009, 1-15

⁴¹¹Fika, *The Political and Economic Re-Orientations of Kano*, 323-324; Zubairu, *A Study of the Colonial Economy*, 62-63.

mentioned earlier in Chapter Two. Among others, these trading patterns created a new specialty of numerous indigenous merchant classes which facilitated the commercial exchanges within and outside Kano city. Aside from the indigenous merchants, many foreigners, including North Africans, Lebanese, and Syrians, as well as European traders, were attracted to reside and participate actively in Kano's export and import trade by the early twentieth century.⁴¹²

Another related development by the first decade of the twentieth century was that Kano's external trading route was northward through Zinder and other French-occupied territories via the Sahara Desert, to Tripoli and the Mediterranean Sea, before further exports and imports were carried out to and from Europe and other destinations. Under this arrangement, both the British and French Colonial authorities benefitted from Kano's interconnected external trade routes as they established tolling centres in various strategic places under their domains where merchants and their goods passed through. For instance, Fika records that the "British government revenue from caravan tolls in Northern Nigeria increased from £21,027 in 1903/1904 to £34,459 during 1904/1905."⁴¹³ There were times, though, when obstacles to Kano's international trading routes were recorded in the French-controlled areas in the early twentieth century. For example, while citing official sources, Fika reports of the correspondence between British Consul Justin Alvarez of the Kano Emirate and Governor Sir Percy Girouard of the Northern Nigeria Protectorate in 1909, concerning the petition to the former by a group of Tripoli merchants of Kano on their plight from the French patrol's recurrent attacks along the trading routes from and to Kano in the French-controlled areas of Chad and Niger.⁴¹⁴ In addition, on the British side, the official report of 1909

⁴¹² Dan Asabe, *Comparative Biographies*, 66-69.

⁴¹³ Fika, *The Political and Economic Re-orientation of Kano*, 319; Lord Lugard, Annual Report Northern Nigeria, 1905-1906, 74.

⁴¹⁴ Fika, *The Political and Economic Re-orientation of Kano*, 317; SNP 7/10/2762/1787/Kano Annual Report 1909.

stated, “highway robberies which caused loss of life have occurred in the Wambai District and two of the Ningi’s frontiers.”⁴¹⁵

The pattern of economic activities in Kano discussed above changed drastically at the end of the first decade of the twentieth century. Mainly the establishment of British colonial rule, which altered the direction of the economy, spawned this pattern. The British colonial government’s completion of the Kano railway project in 1911 was also a significant catalyst for economic change.

4.3 Early Railway Development in Nigeria: The Kano Experience

One of the lasting legacies of British colonial rule in Nigeria and the Kano area was the construction of the railway. Osuntokun argues that “Two-thirds of the revenue (of Nigeria) came from railway receipts and custom duties”.⁴¹⁶ The argument of Osuntokun underlines the significance of railway transportation in the economy of Nigeria in the early twentieth century. The railway got to Kano later than some other parts of Nigeria in the early twentieth century but had revolutionary impacts on the economic and socio-political systems of the province and its environs from the second decade of the twentieth century onwards. In addition to other official colonial policies, available sources reveal that the railway transformed the economic fortunes of Kano from 1912 to 1929 and beyond. According to Shehu Tijjani Yusuf:

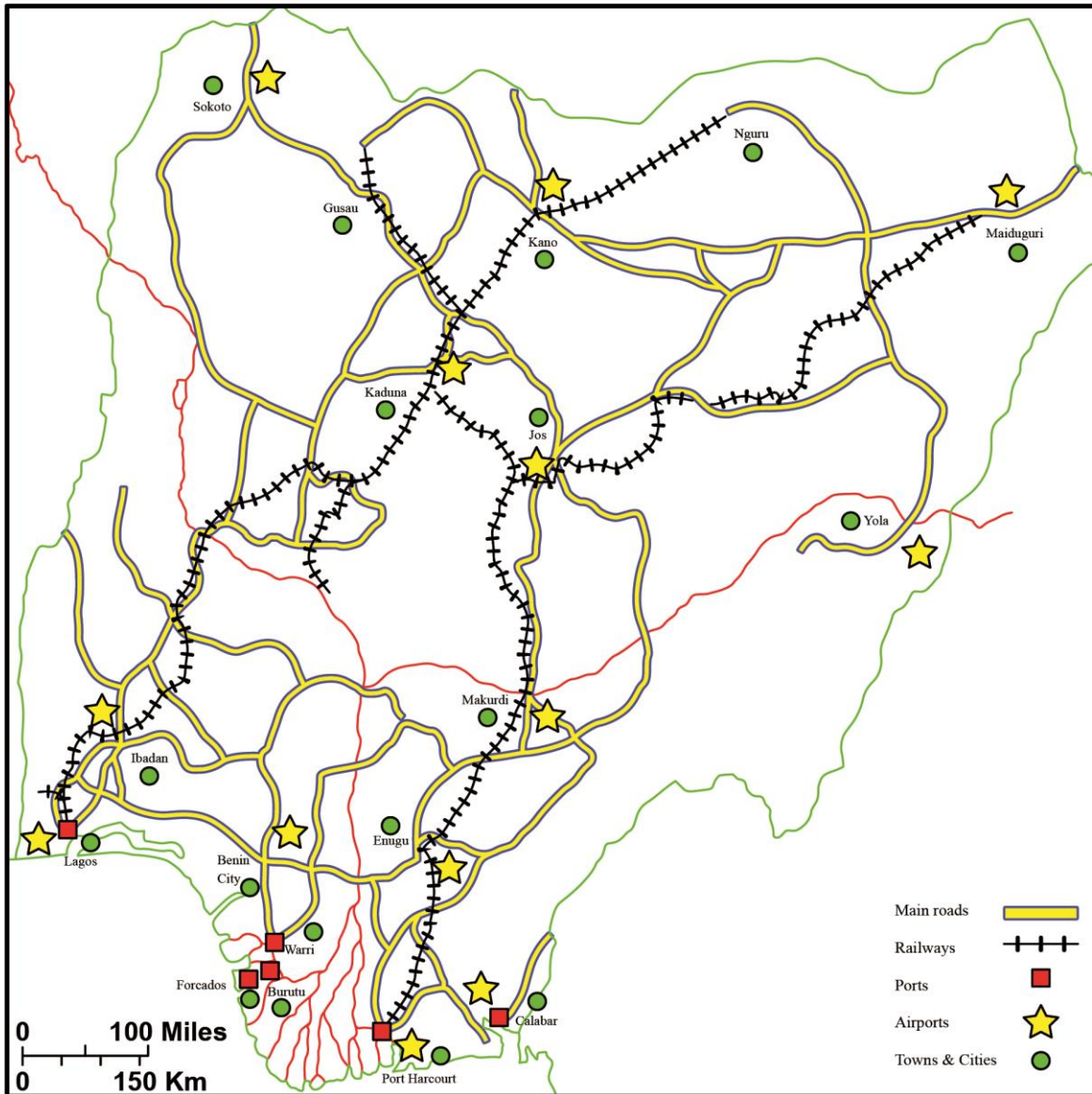
The establishment of British colonial rule in northern Nigeria at the beginning of the twentieth century was accompanied by major economic reforms, characterized by monetization of the economy, the exportation of cash crops and the provision of railway which played a critical role in the transformation of towns and communities along the railway. The new transport system stimulated socio-economic opportunities, the spread of colonial currency and also orchestrated the movement of labour migrants to those railway towns and

⁴¹⁵Kanoprof-C.111, Confidential Preliminary Report; Resident C. L. Temple, Kano Province Report for the Year Ending, 31 December 1909, 241.

⁴¹⁶ Osuntokun, *Nigeria in the First World War*, 21.

communities in search of livelihoods, which contributed to their upward social status.⁴¹⁷

Map 4: A Map of Nigeria Showing Early Railway Lines Connection, 1898 – 1927.



Source: R. O. Ekundare. *An Economic History of Nigeria*. London: Methuen & Co, 1973, 128.

⁴¹⁷ Shehu Tijjani Yusuf, "The Development of Railway Transport: Labour Migrations and Upward Social Mobility In Some Communities Between Zaria And Kano, 1912-1970", *IJOHIS*, Vol. 8, No.2, 2018, P.20.

The desire for railway development in Nigeria, in general, emanated from the interest of the British imperial authorities in seeking avenues for the extensive occupation and exploitation of resources from one of their African colonies. According to M.D. Abdulsalami, “railway construction in Nigeria by the colonial masters was directed at two main targets, namely: ‘commerce and administration.’”⁴¹⁸ This could be traced to the early 1890s when both British government officials and high-class businessmen were thinking of how to effectively implement the principle of ‘effective occupation’ as was first stated in the Berlin Conference of 1884/1885 and as elaborated upon in the Brussels Conference of 1890.⁴¹⁹ In line with this focus, Wale Oyemakinde points out that as early as 1893, the British started to plan how to join the Nigerian coast to its hinterland. The railway was the answer, which was expected to be a reliable means of communication and transportation, which would make possible the tapping of economic resources of the protectorate and facilitate the general development of the area.⁴²⁰

Significantly, Nigeria’s railway project was launched at the insistence of Joseph Chamberlain, the then Secretary of State for the Colonies, who, during his tenure of office between 1895 and 1903, actively pursued the cause of the economic development for the exploitation of British overseas possessions. In the case of Nigeria, the British Government granted a guaranteed interest, thus enabling the colonial Nigerian Government to secure much-needed capital from the London Money Market in 1895.⁴²¹ Furthermore, Chamberlain inaugurated a six-man committee, otherwise known as the Niger Committee to undertake a decision on the start- and the end-points

⁴¹⁸M. D. Abdulsalami. “The Development of the Railway System and its Impact in Offa, Kwara State; 1912-1955.” *Global Journal of Human-Social Science* 14, 5, 2014. 17-33.

⁴¹⁹Wale Oyemakinde. “Railway Construction and Operation in Nigeria, 1895-1911: Labour Problems and Socio-Economic Impact.” *Journal of the Historical Society of Nigeria* 7, 2, June 1974. 303.

⁴²⁰Oyemakinde, “Railway Construction and Operation in Nigeria”, 303.

⁴²¹ Frederic Shelford. “Some Features of the West African Government Railways,” *Minutes and Proceedings of the Institute of Civil Engineering* 189, 1912, 1-80, in Oyemakinde, “Railway Construction and Operation in Nigeria,” 303.

for the railway that was to be constructed.⁴²²As captured in the respective works of Olayide and Danladi, the six men selected to the committee were the following: the Chairman and Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for the Colonies, Lord Salborne (Assistant Under-Secretary of State in charge of West African business at the colonial office), Sir Reginald Antrobus (Governor of Lagos Colony), Sir Henry McCallum (Commissioner and Consul-General of the Niger Coast Protectorate), Sir Ralph Moore (representative of the Foreign Office), Sir Clement Hill, and Sir George Goldie (the Head of the Royal Niger Company).⁴²³ This committee, therefore, reached a consensus that the railway should commence from the Southern seaports and end in the North, with Kano as the terminus for the North.

With all plans on the ground, the construction of the first rail lines began in 1898 in Lagos under the Government Department of Railway. The railway construction in Lagos began from Iddo – the terminus – with links connecting the Lagos Island and Mainland via the Carter Bridge and the Denton Bridge, and another to connect the Lagos coast with the hinterland of Nigeria. Increasingly, the railway project that began in Lagos saw the line extended to Ibadan in 1901 and reached Oshogbo in 1907 and Jebba on the Niger in 1909. In the north, railway construction began in Zungeru in 1901.⁴²⁴ The Northern rail line joined with the Lagos Line linking up to Kano in 1912, at Minna. These culminated in the amalgamation of Lagos and Kano-Baro railways on October 3rd, 1912.⁴²⁵ As part of efforts in linking up the south and north railway lines, the trains were at first ferried across the River Niger at Jebba until 1916, when a railway bridge was

⁴²²Abdulsalami, “The Development of the Railway System”, 19.

⁴²³ S. O. Olayide. *Economic Survey of Nigeria 1960-1975*. Ibadan: University Press 1980,108; A. A. Danladi. *Trade and Transport in The Lower Niger 1830-2011*. Lagos: Adenuga Concept 2012, 176.

⁴²⁴ E. K. Agbaeze and I. O. Onwuka. “Boosting Railway System Infrastructure in Nigeria: The Public-Private Partnership Option.” *Journal of Business Administration and Management Sciences Research* 3, no. 3, March 2014, 39-48.

⁴²⁵Ujam. H. Ujam. “The Eastern Nigerian Railway: The Years of Decline, 1967-1990.” Master of Arts thesis Department of History, University of Nigeria, Nsukka, 1997, 16-17.

completed over the Niger despite serious engineering difficulties experienced in the bridge's construction processes.⁴²⁶ By 1909, coal was also discovered in Enugu, which was used to fuel the trains. This soon made the colonial government initiate the Port Harcourt-Enugu rail line in 1914, which was opened in 1916, and joined with the Northern rail line at Kafanchan in 1926.⁴²⁷ Hence, while Lagos enjoyed the first rail lines, over time, it soon became imperative for other economically important regions in Nigeria, such as Kano. Indeed, by 1930, the railway had extensively covered many areas in both northern and southern Nigeria. This is shown in the table below and the map on map 4.

Table 9: Historical Phases of the Construction of the Early Railway Networks in Nigeria

No	Year	Section	Gauge Type	Distance in Kilometres
1	1898 – 1901	Lagos – Ibadan	Narrow	193
2	1901 – 1909	Ibadan – Jebba	Narrow	295
3	1907 – 1911	Kano – Baro	Narrow	562
4	1909 – 1915	Jebba – Minna	Narrow	255
5	1914 – 1916	Port Harcourt – Enugu	Narrow	243
6	1916 – 1924	Enugu – Markurdi	Narrow	220
7	1922 – 1927	Kaduna – Kafanchan	Narrow	179
8	1922 – 1927	Kafanchan – Bukuru	Narrow	101

⁴²⁶ A. C. Burns. *History of Nigeria, 3rd Edition*. New York: W. W. Norton & Company Inc., 1942, 289-291.

⁴²⁷ O. Abioye, K. Shubber, and J. Koenigsberger. "Evaluating the Role and Impact of Railway Transport in the Nigerian Economy, Options and Choices: Case of Nigerian Railway Corporation." *AshEse Journal of Economics* 2, 4, October 2016, 104-105.

Sources: *Nigerail Magazine* January-June 1987, 10;⁴²⁸ O. Abioye, K. Shubber, and J. Koenigsberger, “Evaluating the Role and Impact of Railway Transport, 104.”⁴²⁹

In the specific case of Kano, railway development was also influenced by the British quest for the maximum exploitation of the resources of the province and the other parts of Northern Nigeria. The British Cotton Growing Association (BCGA), which was formed in Manchester in 1902, officially lobbied for this development to provide supplies to Lancashire cotton manufacturers as an alternative to cotton from the United States.⁴³⁰ Many colonial officers also supported the BCGA’s bid for the opportunity and accessibility into the cotton-growing areas of the interior of Northern Nigeria for the acquisition of raw cotton materials. Historically, as Fika points out, the idea for the construction of a railway in the area was first officially advocated for in the 1890s, when the British traveller, C.H. Robinson, visited Kano, offered several reasons especially economic, in support of the cause of building a railway from the southern coast to Kano.⁴³¹ Also, in 1898, the Niger Committee had incorporated amongst its recommendations a proposal for the construction of a railway linking Kano with the River Niger.⁴³² In support of the advantages of the Kano railway project, Lord Lugard argued between 1899 and 1900 that such a railway would simplify the defence of the British position in Northern Nigeria and bring about the economy in maintaining the colonial garrisons.⁴³³ The railway would facilitate the flow of British capital and investment into the hinterland, and it would enable the British Cotton Growing Association to export cotton cheaply and rapidly from the area.⁴³⁴

⁴²⁸*Nigerail Magazine*. A Publication of the Nigerian Railway Corporation, January-June 1987, 10.

⁴²⁹Abioye, Shubber and Koenigsberger, “Evaluating the Role and Impact of Railway,” 104.

⁴³⁰ Hogendorn, *Nigerian Groundnuts Exports*, 16-28; Duggan, “The Cotton Growing Industry of Nigeria,” 199-207; Candotti, “Cotton Growing,” 1-15.

⁴³¹Fika, *The Political and Economic Re-orientation of Kano*, 332.

⁴³²Fika, *The Political and Economic Re-orientation of Kano*, 332.

⁴³³ William Wallace, *Annual Report, Northern Nigeria 1906-1907*, 6; Fika, “The Political and Economic Re-Orientation of Kano”, 332-333.

⁴³⁴ William Wallace, *Annual Report, Northern Nigeria 1906-1907*, 6; Fika, “The Political and Economic Re-Orientation of Kano”, 332-333.

After feasibility studies had been conducted, the British Parliament in August of 1907 approved the project for the construction of a railway line from Baro, 130 miles from Jebba on the lower point of River Niger, towards Kano—the major commercial hub of Northern Nigeria.⁴³⁵ By January 1908, the Baro-Kano railway work commenced, under the supervision of the government of Northern Nigeria until its completion in 1911.⁴³⁶ The distance covered by the Baro-Kano Railway was 356 miles (about 562km), and the total cost was £1,270,00.⁴³⁷ In its course, the rail line crossed from Baro to Bida, Zungeru, Zaria, and finally to Kano.

Interestingly, the Baro-Kano railway reached Kano by the end of March 1911 and Emir Muhammadu Abbas signalled the first train. About a week after the project's completion, it was reported that the Emir of Kano invited the Emir of Katsina, and both of them were given a ride from the town to the Chalawa River via train amidst joyful celebrations by the majority of Kano's residents.⁴³⁸ However, after some repair works were done to the rail lines due to the damage on the temporary bridges by the rain, on November 20, 1911, Kano's railway was officially re-opened by the Colonial Inspecting Officer, R. E. Thornton (the Director of Railways), John Eages, and a team of British administrative and railway officers.⁴³⁹ By April 1, 1912, the Kano railway was formally opened to commercial traffic.⁴⁴⁰ Moreover, in 1912, a light rail from Zaria reaching Bauchi was built, with further extensions made along the Bauchi rail linking the system with the tin-producing fields along Jos and Bukuru to the Kano area.

⁴³⁵Burns, *History of Nigeria*, 289; Abdulhafeez B. Siyanbola, *A Short History of Nigeria's Railways 1*, Edusounds, 12 March 2017." <https://edusounds.com.ng/short-history-nigerias-railways-1/html>. Accessed 15 October 2018.

⁴³⁶ John Carland. *The Colonial Office and Nigeria, 1898-1914*. Stanford: Hoover Press, 1985. 135-183.

⁴³⁷ SNP361/3546/1911, G. Malcolm, Kano Province Report for Half-Year to June 1911, 87.

⁴³⁸ SNP 7/13/1114/1912, E. J. Arnett, Kano Province Report for the Year Ending, 31 December 1911, 116-119.

⁴³⁹ SNP 7/13/1114/1912, E. J. Arnett, Kano Province Report for the Year Ending, 31 December 1911, 79

⁴⁴⁰ Fika, *The Political and Economic Re-orientation of Kano*, 333.

4.4 The Railway's Economic Impact on Kano

Essentially, the railway development occupied a revolutionary trend, with influence on the economic, social, and political life of Kano city and its environs. At first, railway construction created employment in the form of forced labour to many people from Kano and other parts of Northern Nigeria. During this period, the British instructed the traditional rulers in various provinces to provide able-bodied men to serve as the manual labour force for the construction project. Despite its compulsive nature, also obtainable in some other parts of the country, the railway was a primary avenue for the introduction of wage labour in Northern Nigeria.⁴⁴¹ Hence, for the indigenes of Kano, through railway labour, there was an alternative economic pathway from the existing agricultural and commercial activities. Also, the payment of regular weekly/monthly wages to these labourers enabled many of them to have quick access to resources for basic survival and other economic opportunities. Supporting the positive influence of railway labour, Fika, for instance, points out that the railway provided an avenue for peoples of various backgrounds to work together in the construction projects without recourse to ethnic and religious differences. According to Fika:

Muslims and non-Muslims from all over the Protectorate were recruited for work on the project... The employment of Muslims and non-Muslims on the railway brought the peoples together for the first time without fear of attack or enslavement, and this probably reduced the tension which had hitherto characterized the relationship between Muslims and non-Muslims.⁴⁴²

Second, the completion of the railway witnessed the influx of many European firms to the Kano area to establish their branches there and avail themselves of business opportunities. As such, unlike the earlier tradition of staying mainly in the coastal areas, the European firms quickly ventured into the hinterland commercial city of Kano after the completion of the railway. For

⁴⁴¹O. Omosini, "Background to Railway Policy in Nigeria," in *Topics on Nigerian Economic and Social History*, eds., I. A. Akinjogbin and S. O. Osoba. Ife: University of Ife Press, 1980, 146.

⁴⁴²Fika, *The Political and Economic Re-orientation of Kano*, 333.

example, by 1912, in addition to the earlier existing London and Kano Trading Company which used the opportunity of the railway's opening to expand its scale of commercial activity, other new European companies swiftly moved their bases to the city of Kano by 1912 when the Kano rail line opened. Such new firms included the Niger Company, John Holt, Tin Areas of Nigeria, Lagos Stores, the French Company, and other ones that subsequently followed.⁴⁴³ Representatives of the banks also joined, especially the Bank of British West Africa, administered by Sir Alfred Jones, the magnate who dominated West African shipping through his Elder Dempster line.⁴⁴⁴

Apart from creating the background for new internal and external economic relations in Kano, these emerging companies facilitated the rapid spread of foreign currency – the British Pound – into the area and other parts of Northern Nigeria, thereby killing the trade-by-barter system and other forms of recognized local currency among the indigenous Kano people. In this regard, Shenton and Freund observe that “following the demonetization of the local currency, the Banks imported coinage from Britain into the country to finance the needs of the firms for commercial capital” at Kano or elsewhere after the railway's establishment.⁴⁴⁵ This process involved the demonetization of existing currencies and exchanges that brought little benefit to the African producer. Amongst others, the primary attention of these firms was to promote the export of cash crops and to serve as necessary appendages to the penetration of British merchant capital in Kano. By 1916, the European firms and other trading companies increased dramatically with various areas of focus in the export and import business, so much so that official records captured the scenario thus:

Of the fifteen European Trading Firms at present (1916) in Kano, thirteen are exporters of produce for European markets, while the fourteenth import European goods for local sale and consumption. In

⁴⁴³SNP 7/13/1114/1912, E. J. Arnett, Kano Province Report for the Year Ending, 31 December 1911,91.

⁴⁴⁴Bob Shenton and Bill Freund, “The Incorporation of Northern Nigeria into the World Capitalist Economy,” *Review of African Political Economy*, No. 13, Sep. - Dec. 1978, 8.

⁴⁴⁵Shenton and Freund, “The Incorporation of Northern Nigeria,” 8-9.

addition, there are four Syrian and three African Non-Native firms and 35 Arabs who carry on a local European export and import trade.⁴⁴⁶

Third, the railway shifted the direction of the external trade of Kano from its hitherto northward focus via the Trans-Saharan and other states-link routes to a new era of southward focus towards the Atlantic Ocean. In previous eras, except for the close and long-distance trade between Kano and her neighbours, various animals and caravans were used as significant transporters of goods and services in the northward international trade connecting Kano via the Sahara Desert route to Tripoli and then to Europe. There were also other international trade links across the Sahara Desert running between and Kano and the Arab world. These made North Africa and Arab influence dominate the city of Kano until the second decade of the twentieth century.⁴⁴⁷ However, in contrast to the traditional trade routes, the railway opened the door for easier and faster transportation of human and material resources from Kano and other northern centres downward to the coast, where the goods were exported to Europe via the Atlantic Ocean. This soon made the advancing European trading firms and merchants edge out the influence of the Arab community which had championed the Trans-Sahara and other northern routes. Thus, from 1912 onward, the major exports from Kano were carried mainly to the coast via the railway, from where they were shipped across the Atlantic to Europe and other international markets. In the same manner, the imports were mainly from the coast to the Kano area through the railway facilities.

Also, the railway enhanced communication among the administrative provinces of Northern Nigeria and other parts of Nigeria. Through the railway, Kano maintained a rapid communication network with Zungeru, the capital of the Northern Nigerian Protectorate, and the other provinces under the colonial administrative system. The communication networks were even

⁴⁴⁶SNP 10/4/170P/1916, Kano Province Report (Annual) 1915,2.

⁴⁴⁷Johnson, "Calico Caravans," 95-117.

more elaborate after the amalgamation of the Northern and Southern Protectorates into one as the 'Protectorate of Nigeria' by Lord Lugard on January 1, 1914.⁴⁴⁸ These created the platform for broad accessibility in the administrative and economic systems under British colonialism at all its facets. With the development of the ports in Lagos and Port Harcourt, the railway lines linked Kano to the commercial and administrative nerve centres of the country, including places such as Kaduna, Jos, Ibadan, Abeokuta, Enugu and Lokoja, which were also linked to the port cities. These linkages facilitated rural-urban as well as urban-urban migration as people left their villages and southern towns like Lagos, Enugu, and Ibadan to settle in places like Kano and other northern centres. However, more than others, a major area where the railway's completion in Kano had a revolutionary impact was in its various manifestations in the promotion and entrenchment of the cash crop economy, particularly the groundnut revolution.

4.5 The Intensification of the Export Crop Economy in Kano

In the agricultural sector in many parts of Africa, colonialism dominated with the particular focus on the cultivation and exploitation of cash crops for the maximum benefit of the imperialists' economic interest.⁴⁴⁹ To a great extent, this experience whereby various policies and practices favoured the export crop economy was equally applicable to the situation in Kano from the beginning of the colonial occupation of the area from the early years of the twentieth century, whereby various policies and practices favoured the cash crop economy. While this was partly attainable in the earlier decade, it was nevertheless from the outset of the second decade of the twentieth century upwards, especially between 1912 and 1929, that Kano's export crop economy

⁴⁴⁸Nse E. Akpan. "Colonial Administration in Nigeria," in *Issues in Nigerian Government and Politics*, eds., A. Osuntokun, D. Aworawo N. Akpan and F. Masajawu. Ibadan: Rex Charles Publications, 2003, 39.

⁴⁴⁹J. G. Nkem Onyekpe. "The Integration of the World Economy from Informal Empire to Neo-Colonialism," in *Fundamentals of Economic History*, eds., A. Olukoju, A. Lawal, and K. Faluyi. Lagos: Department of History and Strategic Studies, 2003, 232-236.

became so prominent. This status contributed to the unprecedented boom in the 1910s and 1920s. Groundnut was the first export crop of the period, but the cultivation and export of cotton also contributed to the economic expansion recorded in Kano during the period under study.

4.6 Colonialism and the Cotton Dilemma in Kano

For a long time, cotton was the major export crop that dominated the economy of the Kano area. The cultivation of cotton and the various forms of industrial production and commercial activities that accompanied it in the area by the indigenous people stimulated economic development, and this preceded the advent of colonialism. Fika, for instance, refers to the growing cotton trade in the area by noting that "...before the arrival of the British, Kano's clothes could be found in most markets in West and North Africa."⁴⁵⁰ By the turn of the twentieth century, with the commencement of the colonial occupation in the area, the textile industry made the British look to Northern Nigeria for the supply of raw cotton to boost industrial production at home. Partly as a result of the looming prospect of the cotton trade, the British Cotton Growing Association (BCGA) advocated for the construction of the railway up north to Kano, to benefit from the cotton business of the city.⁴⁵¹ Evidence exists to show that a vibrant cotton industry already existed when British cotton investors arrived in the Kano area in the first decade of the twentieth century. According to the official record, as of 1910, the varieties of cotton cultivated in the area include:

Gandi or Bagwadara – both planted fresh every year; Chukwi or Labair – very similar to the first; Yegari or Yekarifi – grows three or four years; and Matankanawa – which was rarely grown.⁴⁵²

Having had access to Northern Nigeria, the BCGA temporarily opened a cotton buying station at Kano in January 1911, as well as a ginnery in Zaria for the promotion of their specific

⁴⁵⁰Fika, *The Political and Economic Re-orientation of Kano*", 327.

⁴⁵¹Candotti, "Cotton Growing," 7.

⁴⁵²SNP 7/13/1114/1912, E. J. Arnett, Kano Province Report for the Year Ending, 31 December 1911,109.

business.⁴⁵³ To make headway in the already indigenously dominated cotton sector, the BCGA, supported by the colonial authorities of the Northern Protectorate, initiated propaganda targeted towards farmers to explain the value of growing cotton for export. Also, high-quality cottonseeds were made available annually free of charge to farmers to boost their production. The BCGA and the Niger Company planned to buy cotton at various available stations in Kano and other parts of Northern Nigeria. Fixed prices were paid at these delivery points at the rate of 1d per 11b (28.35 g).⁴⁵⁴ The Northern Nigeria government was also significantly involved in promoting policies for cotton growing by urging local rulers to play a role in the propagation of cotton. For example, as Marisa Candotti records, through the influence of the British officials, elsewhere “at Katsina, the Emir had instructed four district heads to get every adult male to put in at least one acre of the (cotton) crop.”⁴⁵⁵ Hogendorn suggested that in 1910 the preferential rate of taxation was applied to farmers who planted the new cotton fiber in all parts of northern Nigeria – including Kano. Also, an experimental cotton farm was started at Maigama near Zaria to promote the new British drive in the cotton business.⁴⁵⁶

Despite these efforts committed towards cotton production, British investors could not make a significant breakthrough from 1911 for several reasons. First, in the early decades of the colonial period, the Kano cotton trade and many parts of northern Nigeria were still mainly in the hands of Hausa middlemen and local textile producers who made a considerable amount of money from the local cotton and textile trade.⁴⁵⁷ Second, there was the availability of so many local textile producers and weavers in the Kano area, which were in perpetual need of the cotton raw materials,

⁴⁵³SNP 7/13/1114/1912,109.

⁴⁵⁴Hogendorn. *Nigerian Groundnuts Exports*, 15; The National Archives (TNA), former PRO (Public Record Office, Kew, London), TNA, C.O. 879/105, no. 15.

⁴⁵⁵Candotti, “Cotton Growing,” 7.

⁴⁵⁶Hogendorn, *Nigerian Groundnuts Exports*, 27.

⁴⁵⁷Candotti, “Cotton Growing,” 8.

thereby justifying the high local demand for the product. The cotton produced in Kano was simply locally absorbed. Also, the overall marketability in addition to high transport costs made Kano's cotton to be higher in price than the lucrative expectations of the BCGA. Also, there were the claims by the foreign businessmen that the local varieties produced in Kano and many areas of the Northern Protectorate were of very short staple, very low ginning percentage, and therefore unsuitable for export.⁴⁵⁸ Regardless of the strength or otherwise of the above reasons, what was however not in doubt was that the Kano cotton business was dominated more by the influence of the indigenous production and circulation than the envisaged export-oriented focus of the British businessmen.

Scholars have shared views on the vibrancy of the domestic Kano's cotton industry during this period. For instance, summarizing the fate of the BCGA, Louise Lennihan notes:

Through integrating already existing forms of commodity production, the BCGA initially tried to break into the existing market. This market, however, was already a vigorous one, supplying the local textile industry for domestic consumption and the famous textile manufacturers located in the environs of the great Hausa cities of Kano and Sokoto, which exported throughout the central Sudan⁴⁵⁹.

Similarly, Candotti argues:

In 1911, the city of Kano still produced more than two million rolls of cloth per year. Although Kano was the most important manufacturing and commercial centre of the region, textile manufacturers were distributed all over the territory, and local cloth began to be exported throughout West Africa.⁴⁶⁰

In addition, available sources have shown that the prices paid for cotton by Kano's businessmen were far higher than what was being offered by the foreign businessmen. For example, Fika, citing official documents, succinctly captured this essence when he observes:

Up until 1913 and for most of the colonial period to 1910, Kano cotton buyers successfully competed against the B.C.G.A. by offering higher prices, notably in Zaria Province where Kano dealers in our

⁴⁵⁸Hogendorn, *Nigerian Groundnuts Exports*, 29; P. H. Lamb. "The Past, Present, and Future of Cotton Growing in Nigeria," *The Empire Cotton Growing Review*, II, 1925, 184.

⁴⁵⁹ Louise D. Lennihan, *The Origins and Development of Agricultural Wage Labour in Northern Nigeria: 1886-1980*, Ph.D. Thesis, Columbia University, 1983, 121.

⁴⁶⁰Candotti, "Cotton Growing," 1.

period offered at least two pence per pound weight of cotton as against the B.C.G.A.'s maximum price of one penny per pound weight.⁴⁶¹

Moving further, Fika, mentioned some flourishing textile production centres under the Kano emirate such as “the towns of Kura (22 miles south of the metropolis), Garko (15 miles to the south-east), and Dawaki-ta-Kudu (15 miles south of Kano),”⁴⁶² where the indigenous Hausa businessmen made quality clothes for local consumption and export to other areas.

While not being successful in capturing the Kano and many parts of Northern Nigerian cotton, the BCGA pushed for colonial government policy, which could work against the prosperous indigenous cotton cultivation and production from 1913 onwards. Lennihan argues, “from this time forward the BCGA’s policy and actions moved away from the competition with the local market and now aimed at destroying it.”⁴⁶³ A significant manifestation of this was in 1916 when legislation was enacted to prohibit the planting of other than ‘improved’ Allen American seed in certain areas. This action was thus justified by the new seed's supposedly higher yields; Agriculture Ordinance 1916 was geared towards the cultivation of cotton varieties that are not susceptible to the local production of the people and to motivate them to sell to the foreign trading firms for export.⁴⁶⁴ Nevertheless, the unpopular nature of the legislation and the unsuitability of these new cotton breeds made the indigenous people stick to their original adaptive cotton varieties.

Consequently, cotton production continued to be a significant economic venture in Kano from 1911 to 1929. The marketing of the product was also more under the control of the indigenous businessmen than British people in the business, despite all the efforts to change the situation. The

⁴⁶¹Fika, *The Political and Economic Re-orientation of Kano*, 330; SNP 354/1538/1908.

⁴⁶²Fika, *The Political and Economic Re-orientation of Kano*, 331.

⁴⁶³Lennihan, *The Origins and Development of Agricultural Wage Labour*, 128.

⁴⁶⁴Lennihan, *The Origins and Development of Agricultural Wage Labour*, 128; SNP 1638/ Cotton Farming, 1920.

relatively better price offered by domestic users of the cotton raw material in Kano contributed to making the European cotton export market less attractive to its producers. Moreover, the booming indigenous Kano clothing industry made cotton exports from Kano and many parts of Northern Nigeria to England insignificant throughout the first half of the twentieth century. In the environment of the unfavourable competition in the cotton trade, the British investment companies in Kano soon shifted their attention toward another viable cash crop: groundnut.

4.7 The Groundnut Revolution in Kano

Unlike cotton, groundnut cultivation and export had a revolutionary impact on the economic development of Kano, especially after the opening of the Kano's railway in 1912. Groundnut had been among the major crops of cultivation in the Kano area and other parts of Northern Nigeria for centuries before the advent of the British colonial administration. People widely ate groundnut in both raw and processed forms, and cake and cooking oil were also extracted from it and used for different things.⁴⁶⁵ With the introduction of British colonialism to the area, groundnut gradually became an important export crop. As the years progressed, groundnut became the prime article of export from Kano and, indeed, Northern Nigeria. Two main factors contributed to this prominence: increased demand for the commodity in Europe and the extension of the railway to Kano, which facilitated the movement of the commodity to the ports in Southern Nigeria for export.

Among the factors that brought in the groundnut revolution, was the influx of various European trading firms and commercial houses into the Kano area after the opening of the railway in 1912. Immediately after they arrived in the city, the agents of trading firms such as Niger Company, the Lagos Stores, the French Company, and a host of other advancing ones began

⁴⁶⁵Hogendorn, *Nigerian Groundnuts Exports*, 29; Fika, *The Political and Economic Re-Orientations of Kano*, 335.

spreading the news to the local populace of Kano and beyond about the economic prospects of groundnut cultivation for the export trade.⁴⁶⁶ Through a thriving competition among the trading firms in the demand and readiness to pay high prices for the product, groundnut cultivation and supply instantly leaped up in Kano at an unprecedented rate. To illustrate, according to official records, while only about “1,917 tons of groundnut were exported from Northern Nigeria in 1912, from the period of 1912 to 1913, the figure had reached an astonishing rate of 19,000 tons—out of which over 16,000 tons came from Kano alone.”⁴⁶⁷

Other facilitating factors include the new British tax system in currency and the workings of indigenous middlemen. By 1910, the British colonial authorities decided to abolish the payment of taxes in kind (through the exchange of products) and by local currencies in favour of the collection of tax strictly in British pound sterling.⁴⁶⁸ Thus, as the payment of tax was a cardinal policy of the colonial occupation, the indigenous people used the opportunity of the new groundnut cash crop economy to have access to the acquisition of the foreign currency and other associated economic advancements from 1912. Again, this brought in the role of the indigenous specialized middlemen who took advantage of the system in making financial provisions for farmers to get the British currency in exchange for their groundnut products, which the middlemen later sold to the European trading firms. It was during this period onward that Kano indigenes such as Alhassan Dantata, Adamu Jakada, Abdu Dan Sarki, Madugu Dandagomba, Maikano Agogo, Umaru Sharubutu, and many others who became commercial middlemen buying and selling groundnut

⁴⁶⁶Fika, *The Political and Economic Re-Orientation of Kano*, 336.

⁴⁶⁷ SNP 369/170/2916, H. R. Palmer, Kano Report 1915, 4; J. S. Hogendorn. *The Origins of the Groundnut Trade in Northern Nigeria*. Ph.D. Thesis, University of London, 1966, 222; Fika, *The Political and Economic Re-Orientation of Kano*, 336.

⁴⁶⁸Lennihan, *The Origins and Development of Agricultural Wage Labour*, 123.

used the avenue to amass wealth, which they subsequently translated into vast business empires.⁴⁶⁹

In this regard, Shenton and Freund argue:

The Groundnut Revolution was a response both to the steady insistence of the regime for tax payments in British colonial currency and the energetic intervention of indigenous commercial agents and bureaucrats.⁴⁷⁰

Amongst others, under the environment of a lucrative international market, increasing prices, and the established networks among the trading companies, middlemen and farmers, the groundnut product continued to be expanding in scale year-by-year from 1913 until the late 1920s when it started experiencing a decline as a result of the global Great Depression. Interestingly, the popularity of the groundnut cash crop was so much in Kano compared to other places in Northern Nigeria that the rate of production in Kano summed up to about 80% of the total groundnut exports in the area during this period.⁴⁷¹ As the production and trading scale of groundnuts expanded in the Kano area, so also did the price increase. Information about the rate of groundnut export and prices are expressed in the next table.

Table 10: Rate of Groundnut railed from Northern Nigeria and the Kano Area to the Coast for Export in Selected Periods from 1913 to 1927

Years	Northern Nigeria	Kano	Prices Per Ton (in British Pounds)
1912-1913	19,000	16,533	6.1.0
1915-1916	50,000	38,000	13.0.0
1924-1925	132,000	111,525	18.15.0
1926-1927	90,000	50,963	11.90

⁴⁶⁹Hogendorn, *Nigerian Groundnuts Exports*, 84-85.

⁴⁷⁰Shenton and Freund, "The Incorporation of Northern Nigeria," 15.

⁴⁷¹Fika, *The Political and Economic Re-orientation of Kano*, 337.

Sources: Kanoprof 1914; Annual Report Nigeria 1916, 1917 & 1928.⁴⁷²

During the period of Second World War and the immediate post-war years, there was a high demand for oil in Europe, which had a direct impact on inflating the price of groundnuts and its supply from Kano. This period could appropriately be described as the boom period in the colonial economy of Kano and the general environment of Northern Nigeria. The condition of the groundnut trade all through this period was acclaimed to be healthy, and the proportion of the price reaching the growers was fair. In the circle of participation in the groundnut production and export, the indigenous farmers of Kano were the cultivators, while a large section of the natives' population occupied the position of middlemen between the planters and the trading/exporting firms. The overall technical activities of the exchange and export trade were coordinated by the top officials of the trading firms. Also, the trading firms engaged the Southern Natives and Native Foreigners as staff in the clerical department and other active sections of the companies because of their average educational attainment.⁴⁷³ This was not surprising because, in the 1920s, the indigenes of Kano and most parts of Northern Nigeria were not interested in the literacy systems of Western education since the Islamic education and Arabic literacy systems were the ones that prevailed and which they adopted.

Thus, by 1925 for instance, the Educational Department of the Northern Provinces was still not firmly established, and the peoples of the region were still behind the Southern Provinces in the aspects of the European pattern of literacy.⁴⁷⁴ The main cause of disparity in educational

⁴⁷² KanoProf-95/1914, Annual Report on Kano Province, No. 46 of 1913, 70a; Annual Report, Nigeria 1916, 8; Annual Report, Nigeria 1917, 6; Annual Report Nigeria 1928,13; SNP 372/179P/1918, W. F. Gowers, Kano Province Annual Report 797, 3; SNP-380/K. 105, Vol. 1, Kano Province Annual Report, 1925, 38; SNP381/K105 vo1.111, 1927, Kano Province annual Report, 34; Fika, *The Political and Economic Re-orientation of Kano*, 337.

⁴⁷³Kanoprof 635/1925, Kano Province Annual Report, December 1924, by Resident E. J. Arnett, 12.

⁴⁷⁴Kanoprof 635/1925, 12.

attainment between the Northern and Southern Provinces in Nigeria is the fact that, while western education and missionary activities were allowed to spread and flourish in the South, such activities were discouraged, especially where Christian missions were involved. The British promised the aristocrats of Northern Nigeria, including those of Kano, not to interfere or do anything that will affect their religious practices and beliefs. So, while the provinces in Southern Nigeria advanced in Western Education, the provinces in Northern Nigeria lagged and the people focused on sending their children to Islamic schools.

However, the variation in terms of knowledge did not affect the business progress of the period, as there existed a comprehensive network of communication among all the actors of the export crop economy. This continued until the late 1920s when the global prices of goods and services were experiencing a decline that culminated in the start of the Great Depression in 1929. Significantly, this upward trend had a significant influence on several aspects of the economic and socio-political life of Kano during this period.

On the other hand, the changes unleashed by the general colonial economy and particularly groundnut export cropping made the Kano economy to be porous and vulnerable to certain adverse developments from 1912 to 1929. First, as part of the effort of taking advantage of the spread of foreign currency among the local population and to secure a steady flow of products for the export trade, the trading firms and the middlemen devised several means of putting the groundnuts (and other cash crops) farmers under pressure and perpetually under the firm control of these businessmen. Although this created deeper intimacy between firms and middlemen-merchants, the

latter class benefited to a higher degree due to their control of the local networks of supply.⁴⁷⁵ For instance, commenting on this, Shenton and Freund observe:

The Groundnut Revolution ... provided both salaried District Heads and commercial agents with an opportunity to develop their incomes through the spread of a serious advanced system. Well before the harvest, commercial agents were lent considerable sums by European firms. These sums were, in turn, advanced directly to the producer who pledged his crop to the agent or paid the producer's tax obligation to the district Head with the same end in view. Some District Heads were keen enough to reverse roles with the middlemen and pay the peasants' tax themselves in order to confront the commercial agents with a monopoly of supply during the produce buying season. Interest rates of up to 100% ensnared cultivators in a permanent debt trap.⁴⁷⁶

Second, in the agricultural sector, the focus of colonial policy on the export crop economy to the detriment of the cultivation of food crops, coupled with the unfavourable weather condition, made the city of Kano and its environs experience famine – known in the indigenous Hausa parlance as the “*babban yunwa*” (great hunger) – during the second and third decades of the twentieth century.⁴⁷⁷ The first major famine broke out in 1914. Owing to the booming financial opportunities of the cash crop and other commercial-oriented economies, especially the groundnut revolution, many farmers in the Kano area shifted their attention from the hitherto sustainable food cropping system of millet, guinea corn, and other grains to the cultivation of mainly export crops of groundnut and cotton. This made the moderate food production scale to be highly inadequate for the teeming population of the city during the famine. However, official colonial sources also reported that the food scarcity occurred as a result of the poor and irregular rainfall of 1913 in Central Sudan – to which Northern Nigeria belongs.⁴⁷⁸ Though climatic factors were fundamental to the outbreak and impact of the 1914 famine, Shenton and Watts argue that “this (famine)

⁴⁷⁵ Ibrahim A. Tahir. *Scholars, Sufis, Saints and Capitalists in Kano, 1904-1974: The Pattern of Bourgeois Revolution in an Islamic Society*, Ph.D. Thesis, University of Cambridge, 1975, 381-382.

⁴⁷⁶ Shenton and Freund, “The Incorporation of Northern Nigeria,” 15.

⁴⁷⁷ Holger Weiss. “Migrations During Times of Drought and Famine in Early Colonial Northern Nigeria,” *Studia Orientalia* 95, 2003: 1-29.

⁴⁷⁸ SNP 10/3/139p/1915/Kano Province Annual Report, 1914, Ag. A. C. G. Hastings, 8.

situation might have been ameliorated had the colonial state been concerned to institute a comprehensive policy of grain reserves. No such policy, however, was considered at this time.”⁴⁷⁹

The conditions were even made harsher with the flocking of thousands of migrants from the neighbouring French territories up north – where the famine was more extensive–into the Kano area searching for food.⁴⁸⁰ In a bid to provide a solution to the increasing scarcity of food, the colonial authorities in Kano embarked on the policy of subsidy, issuance of the reserved corn and the importation of rice into the city for sale to needed persons and for sharing to the destitute in critical situations.⁴⁸¹ The famine had a tremendous negative impact in Kano until 1915 when crop yield improved considerably. Commenting on its implication on trade, the 1914 End-of-Year Report on Kano notes:

The famine was a serious check to commercial progress, and the outbreak of the European war by lowering the demand for and the price of the principal product of Kano and groundnut has further retarded. The trade in the skin, hides, livestock alone continue(s) to progress satisfactorily.⁴⁸²

The second significant report on food scarcity in Kano during this period was in 1927. Like the 1914 experience, the immediate cause of the famine was the drought of 1926, which resulted in a meagre yield of crops. More so, whether in low or high yield periods, the colonial economy was designed for the collection of compulsory currency revenue from people as tax. This had the widespread impact of making Kano indigenes increase the production scale of their export crops for export, while food cropping kept on being discouraged among the people. Shenton and Watts emphasized this point when they reveal:

Aggravating factors (for the 1927 famine) included the increasingly systematic methods of revenue assessment and collection that heightened the impact of the taxation system. The refinement of the taxation system not only increased the tax burden but added to the inflexibility of the system as a whole.

⁴⁷⁹ Bob Shenton and Mike Watts, “Capitalism and Hunger in Northern Nigeria,” *Review of African Political Economy* 6, No.15, 1979, 53-62.

⁴⁸⁰Weiss, “Migrations During Times of Drought and Famine”, 12-13.

⁴⁸¹SNP-10/3/139p/1915/Kano Province Annual Report, 1914, Ag. A. C. G. Hastings, 8.

⁴⁸²SNP-10/3/139p/1915/Kano Province Annual Report, 1914, Ag. A. C. G. Hastings, 9.

These developments brought even more pressure to be on the peasantry to engage in wage labour and increase their output of export crops at the expense of food production.⁴⁸³

Aside from the above, the export-oriented cash crop economy of Kano witnessed a continuous boom after the construction of the railway until the beginning of the Great Depression in 1929. Even in most times, farmers' production of groundnuts and the supply of the products by the commercial middlemen and the trading companies were so much that they usually exceeded the transport capability of the railway from Kano to the coastal areas for export to Europe. This is because, as regards exports, the figures presented for sale do not reflect the actual amount that the traders purchased of the products, as the groundnuts from Kano experienced the challenge of inadequate transportation of both land and sea. The Annual Report of 1916 described the scenario by stating, "of the total amount of groundnuts exported during the year, about 10,000 were sent away because of lack of full coverage transport facilities."⁴⁸⁴ Although some twenty truckloads of groundnuts were dispatched from Kano every day, there were still thousands of tons awaiting transportation from the city at the end of the year. Hence, the report summarised that "at the end of the year, ... an estimate of only half of the products purchased had been exported" from Kano.⁴⁸⁵ Despite this, since the supply from farmers and marketers was high and the price kept rising to the benefit of all partakers of the business, the boom of the export crop economy was still sustained in the area until the late 1920s.

4.8 Colonial Taxation in Kano, 1912-1929

The British colonial administration's modification of taxation was an important policy that affected the social and economic development of Kano from 1912 to 1929. The collection of revenue was crucial to the financing of the administration and the funding of infrastructure

⁴⁸³Shenton; Watts, "Capitalism and Hunger," 58.

⁴⁸⁴SNP-10/3/139p/1916/Kano Province Annual Report of 1915, by Mr. H. R. Palmer, Ag Resident, Trade, 3.

⁴⁸⁵SNP-10/3/139p/1916, 3

development. Taxes had to be modified to ensure direct revenue generation from the controlled territories. For Kano, the previous chapter discussed the taxation system of the beginning years of the British colonial occupation of the area. However, the nature and changing pattern of taxation during the second and third decades of the twentieth century are also worthy of note.

At first, under the auspices of the Government of Nigeria at Lagos (after the 1914 amalgamation) and the Northern Nigerian Government in Zungeru, the administrative mechanisms of the Kano Province placed special priority on the collection of revenue in the form of poll tax from all classes of male adults in the territory regardless of their status and kinds of economic engagements except the aristocrats. With the opening of Kano for the southward and European-based international trade from 1912, during the railway construction, colonial authorities pursued a full-scale taxation policy to increase their revenue collection. The taxation scheme was designed to focus on aspects that included revenue collection from all residents of the Kano Province (in all kinds of the economic venture), rents on European and non-European trading sites, rents from natives, and market rates.⁴⁸⁶ The taxes were categorized into two main types: General Taxation and *Jangali*. The general taxation covered the revenue collected on any business engaged by natives and foreigners except livestock, while the *Jangali* was a second category kind of tax paid on livestock by their keepers to the colonial authorities in Northern Nigeria.⁴⁸⁷

Both taxation and the environment of the booming trade in Kano from 1912 to 1929 acted as major catalysts for the development of the colonial economic policy. On the side of taxation, studies have shown that the paying of taxes through the British foreign currency (pounds) was among the factors that stimulated the interest of many Kano people into the cultivation of export

⁴⁸⁶SNP 103/170p/1916/Kano Province Report (Annual), 1915, by Mr. H. R. Palmer, Ag Resident, Enclosures Trade, 15.

⁴⁸⁷Adebayo, "Jangali," 113-150.

crops and wage labour to have routine access to the currency and to boost their wealth creation system.⁴⁸⁸ On the other hand, the continuous expansion of the post-1911 economy of Kano created increasing revenue for the colonial government through the various taxes collected from all range of persons. These factors, in addition to other associated ones such as the solid structure of the colonial taxation mechanism in Northern Nigeria, shaped an efficient taxation system between the supervising colonial authorities and the indigenous emirate administrative system in Kano. The cooperative spirit of the indigenous and foreign residents of Kano made the British colonial policy witness a prosperous era of revenue collection through taxation until the late 1920s.

The beginning of the successful development of the taxation era for the British authorities started from 1911, and was captured in the official records of 1912, where it was stated in parts that: “the land taxes for the financial year ending 1911, the first time in the history of the emirate was paid in full at the due date.”⁴⁸⁹ All through the period until the late 1920s, the amount of revenue that accrued to the Kano Province through taxes maintained a steady course of increase. This can be seen from the next table, which captures some figures on the increasing tax income across some selected years. Among others, the trend of satisfactory taxation by a colonial official from the Kano area continued all through the boom period so much that in 1926, it was recorded that:

The general tax for 1924-25 is well-advanced £100,000, having been collected already. It is anticipated that tax will reach a total of £183,000, an increase of £16,000 on the previous year.

In a similar vein, the boom in Kano’s overall economy during this period ensured that the revenue generated from the province remained the highest in comparative terms to the other Northern

⁴⁸⁸Lennihan, *The Origins and Development of Agricultural Wage Labor*, 123; Shenton and Watts, “Capitalism and Hunger,” 58-59.

⁴⁸⁹SNP 7/13/1114/1912, 54.

Provinces. For example, the following table on the report of taxation collected in the Northern Provinces from 1914 to 1916 is evident in this direction.

Table 11: Increase in the Rate of Colonial Taxes Collected in Kano in Selected Years, 1914-1926

Years	Amount of Taxes Collected (in British Pounds)
1914	67,090
1915	72,977
1916	79,821
1924	158,257
1925	167,232
1926	183,000

Source: Kanoprof 4/4202/1917/Kano Province Annual Report, 1916, by Mr. W. F. Gowers, Revenue and Taxation, 55; Kanoprof 24/1926/Kano Province Annual Report, 1925, General Tax, 41-42.

Table 12: Reports of Taxes Collected in the Northern Provinces from 1914 to 1916

Provinces	Taxation Type	Years and Amount Collected (in British Pounds)		
		1914	1915	1916
Kano	General Taxes	67090.16.0	72977.18.3	79821.10.11
	Jangali	23239.7.0	25537.10.0	28780.7.0
Katsina	General Taxes	26002.19.8	32999.13.7	36095.1.8

	Jangali	24407.14.0	21801.7.6	22875.15.0
Daura	General Taxes	1842.9.0	2195.18.0	2510.15.0
	Jangali	1375.9.0	1479.0.0	1516.7.0
Kazaure	General Taxes	1609.18.10	1983.16.7	2105.
	Jangali	1389.19.6	1425.5.6	14990.5.0
Katagum	General Taxes	7214.14.6	7114.2.6	7287.7.9
	Jangali	5489.12.0	6084.3.6	7102.13.6
Missau	General Taxes	2863.12.6	2649.7.0	2723.0.0
	Jangali	1591.13.0	1842.3.0	2035.2.0
Jama'are	General Taxes	863.1.0	777.18.6	780.2.6
	Jangali	553.8.6	542.15.6	624.13.6
Hadeija	General Taxes	4646.7.6	4746.1.6	4609.4.0
	Jangali	2368.10.6	2510.0.6	3286.7.0
Gumel	General Taxes	723.8.6	838.18.6	966.16.6
	Jangali	841.14.0	1638.0.0	1589.12.6
Total		£174084.15.9	£189142.1.11	£207318.16.10

Source: Kanoprof 4/4202/1917/Kano Province Annual Report, 1916, by Mr. W. F. Gowers, Revenue and Taxation.

Taxation was a central issue of British colonial policy in Nigeria, and indeed all the other colonial possessions of Britain in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. The implementation of British policy on taxation affected the economic fortunes of Kano from 1911 to 1929. Freund states: “during the Great Depression (of 1929), taxes were still highly charged” by the British colonial authorities in Kano and other parts of Northern Nigeria in the agricultural, trade, and industrial sectors.⁴⁹⁰ Accordingly, officials computed the figures of the various taxes collected from all the regions of Kano and proper reports about them were accounted to the colonial offices of the Northern Province at Zungeru and the administrative capital of Nigeria in Lagos (after the 1914 amalgamation) under the structural arrangements of the overall colonial system in Nigeria. Revenues collected from direct taxation and through other means during this period were remitted to the hierarchical higher offices, while some proportion of the resources was used to finance the payment of the salary of the colonial officials. Northern Nigeria had the challenge of earning enough revenue to meet the cost of administration and provide social infrastructure. This influenced an aggressive drive to collect taxes to meet the region’s financial needs.

4.9 Major Developments in the Economy of Kano, 1912- 1929

Some several factors and issues influenced the economic development of Kano from 1912-1929 in addition to the influence of the cash crop economy, especially the expansion of the production and export of groundnuts discussed above. Some of these important but not very prominent economic activities are examined below.

Hides and Skins: The trade in hides and skins was a significant component of Kano’s economy during the colonial period. Before the opening of the second decade of the twentieth

⁴⁹⁰ Freund, “Labour Migration to the Northern Nigerian Tin Mines”, 981, 82

century, the exportation of the products was channelled through the vibrant caravan trading system via the Sahara Desert routes from Kano to Tripoli and then to Manchester and other European cities.⁴⁹¹ Also, the trade in hides and skins was dominated for a long time by the Arab and North African merchants in Kano, in addition to the various indigenous persons who engaged in long-distance commercial relations with their southward relations such as to Lokoja, Lagos, and other areas in Nigeria.⁴⁹² However, like the other export-based products, soon after the opening of the Kano railway, vigorous attempts were made by both the colonial authorities and the British firms to divert the trade from its hitherto directions to the new southern-oriented route of the Atlantic coast through railway transportation.

At the construction of the railway, the first firm to enter the trade was London and Kano Trading Co. (LKTC), which according to Adebayo “had begun business in Kano in 1905 but did not take significant interest in hides and skins until 1911.”⁴⁹³ In quick succession, other firms that began exporting hides and skins from Kano shortly before the war were Messrs. Ambrosini and the Niger Company.⁴⁹⁴ From Kano, these companies gradually extended their trade tentacles to other provinces. From areas not served by the railway, camels brought hides and skins to Kano and loaded onto the railway to Lagos, from where they were exported to Europe.⁴⁹⁵ Available records show that during this period, the early European firms observed that the available animals for the hides and skins export trade from Kano were highly inadequate for a constant supply. For instance, in a report of 1912:

Mr. Davy, representing a large firm of skin traders – Messrs. Stein Forbes and Company - came to Kano in November (1911) to enquire into the prospect of the of the skin trade in this country... He was disappointed that the number of skin available for the export trade... was not large enough. From the

⁴⁹¹Johnson, “Calico Caravans,” 104-113.

⁴⁹²Fika, *The Political and Economic Re-orientation of Kano*, 324-325.

⁴⁹³ Adebayo, “The Production and Export of Hides and Skins,” 281.

⁴⁹⁴Kanoprof I08/I9I6, Kano Provincial Annual Report, 1915, by H. R. Palmer, Acting Resident, 5-6.

⁴⁹⁵Adebayo, “The Production and Export of Hides and Skins,” 273-300.

information available... the numbers of goats and sheep in the province (were) as follows: Goats 2,950,000 (and) Sheep 1,126,000 (making a total of 4,076,000.⁴⁹⁶

Thus, while Kano was seen as a place where many hides and skins were loaded on the railway wagons to Lagos and other destinations, the majority of the main bulk of these products were supplied from the neighbouring regions of Sokoto and Borno through animal transportation.⁴⁹⁷ They were sold in Kano to the trading firms who later sent them to Lagos through the railway for export to Europe and many other destinations. Nevertheless, next to groundnuts, the hides and skin trade formed part of the favourable exports from the Kano area, so much that the 1914 official report stated: "Of the exports from Kano, the most important, and likely for some time to remain the most important are groundnuts and hides and skins."⁴⁹⁸ The report also put the number of hides and skins exported from Kano in 1912 to be 598 (dressed skins), 200 (undressed skins); and by 1913, to be 459 (dressed skins) and 1059 (undressed skins) respectively.⁴⁹⁹

Among others, the immediate result of the involvement of European firms in the hides and skin trade was an increase in prices from 1912 onwards. This, together with the high demand for these commodities during the First World War, and the competition among the European firms, gave a vent for the supply of hides and skins to the market. In this regard, Adebayo has argued that the hides and skin trade did not necessarily lead to the killing of more animals for consumption but resulted in the slaying of a higher number of the animals killed for the export trade.⁵⁰⁰ The renewed focus of the export of hides and skin from Kano by European firms, with the attendant increase in prices, soon put many local traders and original collectors of the hides and skin in the area out of business. As a result, many indigenous traders with limited access to investment capital

⁴⁹⁶SNP 7/13/1114/1912, 89.

⁴⁹⁷SNP-10/3/139p/1916, 11.

⁴⁹⁸Kanoprof-95/1914, Annual Report on Kano Province, by W. F. Gowers, 70a.

⁴⁹⁹Kanoprof-95/1914, 70b.

⁵⁰⁰Adebayo, "The Production and Export of Hides and Skins," 252.

resorted to becoming agents for European firms. However, the initial wartime increase in prices could not be sustained, as it was followed by fluctuations and a decrease in prices in the late 1920s. For example, Adebayo’s work captured the report that “in Kano Province, hides fetched 5d. per lb in 1914, rose to 10d. per lb in 1916, but fell to 8d. per lb. in 1925 and further to 2d. per lb in 1930.”⁵⁰¹ The situation in Kano during this period also reflected the overall nature of the exports of hides and skin from Northern Nigeria, as will be shown in the next table.

Table 13: Hides and Skin Exports (for Tanned and Untanned Cow Hides, Goat Skins and Sheep Skins) from Northern Nigeria from 1910 to 1930

Years	Quantities (in Tons)	Values (in British Pounds)
1910	175,600	14,899
1911	331,951	38,169
1912	813,138	68,832
1913	1,127,973	197,214
1914	2,763,457	505,786
1915	1,650,618	302,421
1916	3,159,259	538,917
1917	4,119,924	886,986
1918	4,050,596	293,019
1919	5,959,101	1,262,140
1920	2,712,511	774,725

⁵⁰¹Adebayo, “The Production and Export of Hides and Skins,” 282.

1921	1,348,970	297,730
1922	3,022,124	334,618
1923	4,579,457	566,163
1924	N/A	562,171
1925	N/A	660,769
1926	N/A	613,930
1927	N/A	651,621
1928	14,525,925	950,310
1929	14,453,526	929,615
1930	10,860,053	874,822

Source: Adebayo, “The Production and Export of Hides and Skins,” 279.

Therefore, hides and skins featured prominently in the booming business of the colonial economy during the period from 1912 to early 1920, until it also experienced a downward trend by the late 1920s.

Indigenous Economic Networks: While the Europeans and the majority of the Arab traders were primarily focused on the exploitation of Kano’s economic resources for export, the indigenes of the area also participated actively in different economic activities in the early period of British colonialism. With the advent of colonialism, the indigenous people in Kano continued their original economic activities of farming, livestock rearing, trading, and local industrialization in the cotton-related sectors. Despite the foreign over-lordship of the area, the political system in Kano

and many parts of Northern Nigeria did not have a significant bad impact on the ordinary Hausa/Fulani people in the city, as they were still being administered directly by the Emir, *Hakimai*, and other existing indigenous structures under the indirect rule system, which Lord Frederick Lugard introduced on a full-scale in Nigeria.⁵⁰² The significant changes were more apparent in the new setting of the Emir and other sub-rulers being accountable to the regulations of the British Provincial and District Officers in Kano and by extension to that of the overall Northern Protectorate Governor at Zungeru. Also, social, cultural systems were kept intact, in line with the Islamic and obtainable local practices of the people, without the influence of the Western practices of the British people. This was not the case with the Southern parts of Nigeria where Western Education was introduced and spread quickly, and the Christian missionaries were allowed to operate without hindrance.⁵⁰³

The people of Kano were able to adjust to the changes introduced by the British shortly after the introduction of colonial rule. From 1912, when the railway opened new economic opportunities, the Kano people quickly took advantage of the changes that occurred. They established viable networks and strengthened existing ones to expand trade. First, as pointed out above, Kano's cotton trade and the industrial setting were so active that Kano was able to out-rival the advancing European exporters, including the BCGA, after the opening of the railway. Second, during the glorious era of the groundnut revolution in Kano, the indigenous people did not only form the bulk of the planters, but a majority of the expert traders among them were able to key

⁵⁰²Michael Crowder. "Indirect Rule: French and British Style," *Africa: Journal of the International African Institute* 34, No. 3, July 1964, 197-205; N. Hallouch. "British Indirect Rule and Islam in Northern Nigeria, 1900-1940." *People: International Journal of Social Sciences* 4, No. 2, 2018, 249-267.

⁵⁰³Uyilawa Usuanlele. "Poverty and Welfare in Colonial Nigeria, 1900-1954. PhD dissertation, Queen's University, Kingston, Ontario, Canada, 2010, 43-114.

into the middlemen role between the European trading firms and the groundnut growers.⁵⁰⁴ However, the overhead taxes, *jangali* and other rates charged on economic activities were expanded in a manner to cater to both the main colonialists and the offices of the indigenous rulers. The indigenous people cooperated with the British authorities in the payment of taxes, such that until 1929 there were no recorded incidences of conflict between the former and latter on the issues of failed taxation.⁵⁰⁵

However, aside from the above, the economic networks of the indigenous people in Kano created a specialty that transverse the prosperity system within the city to other neighbouring and distant Nigerian areas from 1912 to 1929. These specializations were manifested in various significant areas. First, since the groundnut trade was taken over by the European traders, and the hides and skins business were dominated by the Arab and North African traders (together with the advancing European firms), many of the Kano people resorted to dominate the grassroots sector of the home economy in staple food production and livestock. In this regard, most of them were directly involved in growing food crops and rearing livestock for the survival of the entire residents of Kano and export to other parts of Nigeria. The dominance of the Kano trade by Levantine traders' witnesses during the colonial rule was a result of the capital that they possessed to do business. Most of the Levantine traders had access to capital outside Nigeria. Available records showed the vibrancy of Kano's indigenous food and livestock exports via the railway to many Nigerian areas and as far as to Lagos, which were participated in mainly by the Kano merchants and some Arab traders. For example, a report by Sir Herbert Richmond Palmer, the Acting

⁵⁰⁴Fika, *The Political and Economic Re-orientation of Kano*, 330; SNP-354/1538/1908; Shenton and Freund, "The Incorporation of Northern Nigeria," 15.

⁵⁰⁵SNP 7/13/1114/1912, 54; Kanoprof 24/1926, 41-42.

Resident of the Kano Province, to Sir Charles Lindsay Temple, the Lieutenant Governor of the Northern Protectorate, in 1916, states:

A considerable amount of local produce, such as Eggs, Onions, Beans, Groundnut oil, etc., was also exported to Lagos and intermediate stations by Native, African non-native, and Syrian traders, while the number of cattle and sheep dispatched by rail has been well up to the average. I estimate that some 5000 head of cattle were sent by train to Lagos during the year and between 1,500 and 1,800 sheep, some of the latter, however, being consigned to Burutu via the Baro and Niger River. In addition, a fair number of cattle are “trekked” from Kano to Zaria and are there entrained to Lagos, but it will be difficult, and possibly misleading to give a rough estimate of the cattle exported in this way.⁵⁰⁶

These products continued to be significant parts of Kano’s economy from the 1920s onwards until the end of colonialism.⁵⁰⁷ While these articles were transported southward, the Kano indigenous traders were also notable for importing desired products from the southern parts to Kano and other Northern Nigerian areas during this period. Chief among these southern products imported into Kano was kolanuts. Also, some Arab-based products were brought into Kano via the railway. Thus, it has also been reported that that kolanuts from the south formed the principal import, and well over 1000 tons were brought by rail into Kano. Also, in place of the old caravan Saharan Desert route, the Tripolitan imports through the railway into Kano from 1913 onwards included clothing, turbans, mats, paper, scents, sweets, sugar, burnous, saddle cloths, beads, and cotton goods.⁵⁰⁸

In the same vein, Kano was a major supplier of food to the tin mining areas of Jos during this period and onwards. Freund’s studies have shown that the mining industry had begun at elementary levels in some areas of Kano, Bauchi, Bida and other parts of Northern Nigeria before the incursion of the British colonialists into the area from the late nineteenth century.⁵⁰⁹ Moreover,

⁵⁰⁶SNP-10/3/139p/1916, 7.

⁵⁰⁷Fika, *The Political and Economic Re-orientation of Kano*, 325.

⁵⁰⁸SNP-10/3/139p/1916, 10; Fika, *The Political and Economic Re-Orientations of Kano*, 401-403.

⁵⁰⁹ Bill Freund. “Nigerian Tin Mining and Imperialism: From the Niger Company to ATMN.” *African Studies Seminar Paper*, Presented at the RW 319, University of the Witwatersrand, Johannesburg, on Monday, 23rd August 1982, 3-5.

from the second decade of the twentieth century, tin mining presented another dimension, which attracted British investment companies to the Jos area where the raw tin materials were available in surplus. From 1920, tin mining in the Jos Plateau area became the highest employer of wage employment in Northern Nigeria so much so that by 1928, the mines had average monthly employment of 39,000 workers from various parts of Nigeria and abroad.⁵¹⁰ For our purpose in this study, Kano played a significant role in the development of the tin mining industry of Northern Nigeria because the workers in the various employment schemes in the mines continued to expand, the food for the mining population was mainly drawn from the grain markets of Kano through the railway transportation to the mining fields, in addition to the other local food supply. This made Kano's indigenous merchants play a significant part in the coordination of an inter-regional trade for the supply of corn, millet and other grains, as well as kolanuts, cattle, dried fish, etc., to the miners.⁵¹¹ Thus, through the continuity in the original economies of the area, and the active adaptation to the colonial economic system of international and intra-regional supply, the indigenous people made first imprints on the development of the colonial economy of Kano from 1912 to 1929 and beyond.

4.10 Township Planning in Kano and the Creation of Sabon Gari

The administration of Northern Nigeria by the British involved, as we have seen, local leaders described as native authorities. In practical terms, it meant the involvement of emirs in the governing process. The colonial authorities took measures to promote uniformity in the administration. Initially, from the conquest of Kano in 1903 until the second decade of the

⁵¹⁰Shenton and Freund, "The Incorporation of Northern Nigeria," 15; Stephen J. Mallo. "The Socio-Economic Impact of Artisanal Mining in Kuru (Naraguta Sheet 168) Plateau State, North Central Nigeria." *Continental J. Engineering Sciences* 7, No. 3, 2012, 27-32.

⁵¹¹Shenton and Watts, "Capitalism and Hunger," 57; Shenton and Freund, "The Incorporation of Northern Nigeria," 16.

twentieth century, the British found it very conducive to administer the area using existing indigenous structures. This meant administering the local people together with their mixed Arab and North African trading population along the same lines because of the Islamic practices, which were dominant in the area. However, after the construction of the Kano railway and with the attendant influx of southerners into the area to participate in the many booming economic activities of the area, a deliberate policy was launched and implemented to maintain the existing trend of uniform settlement and socio-cultural practices among the inhabitants of Kano.

According to Gabriel Olusanya, the creation of the Sabon Gari settlement by the British was for the protection of the northern Muslims and their culture against the influence of Christianity and European culture.⁵¹² However, Ahmed Bako disagrees and has argued that “Sabon Gari settlements were created to serve the colonial economic and racial interests and there by ensuring the continued triumph of imperialism in the emirates”.⁵¹³ British colonial administration gave prominence to the Islamic religion (referred to in most colonial documents as the “Muhammadan religion”) in Kano and, indeed, Northern Nigeria in general. This was partly in recognition of Islam as the dominant religion of the people in the area and partly because the Indirect Rule system which the British adopted emphasized the preservation of indigenous political and social institutions.⁵¹⁴ The British were extreme in their efforts to preserve much of the cultures and social institutions of the people of Northern Nigeria in the first half of the twentieth century. In line with this, the colonial authorities prohibited the Christian missions, Western Education and other European-based developments from infiltrating Kano and

⁵¹² G.O Olusanya, “The Sabon Gari System in Northern Nigeria”, *Nigeria Magazine*, No. 9, 1967, 244-248.

⁵¹³ Ahmed Bako, “Colonial Rule and the Residential Segregation: The Sabon Gari Settlements Reconsidered” in eds, A.M. Yakubu; I.M. Jumare and A.G. Saeed, *Northern Nigeria: A Century of Transformation, 1903-2003*, Kaduna: Arewa House, Ahmadu Bello University, 2005, 469.

⁵¹⁴Burns, *History of Nigeria*, 259.

other parts of the Northern Protectorate of Nigeria.⁵¹⁵ This is very unlike the situation in the Southern Protectorate where the models of Western civilization in the establishment of Christian missions and the development of Western education had started spreading before the mid-nineteenth century, and continued apace in the first years of the twentieth century.⁵¹⁶ The pattern of a strict Islamic society was maintained until the 1930s when the agencies of Western civilization began to be permitted to operate in Northern Nigeria.

Second, as various people from the south were migrating to the Kano area to be engaged in many of the booming economic sectors, the colonial authorities of the Kano Province made plans for the continuous township development by issuing out a policy in November 1911 to create a separate location on the outskirts of the city walls of Kano – since most of these foreigners were already converted Christians. This new location is what is known as *Sabon Gari* (a new town).⁵¹⁷ The site for the Sabon Gari Township was chosen to be in the north of the Fagge Village, near the railway line. According to the 1912 report, “the model township laid out in accordance with the plans drawn by His Excellency (was) some 300 compounds, each about 100 x 50 feet in area, have been marked out and a market square.”⁵¹⁸ In his work, A.F. Usman had argued that “Sabon Gari in Kano was first settled in 1913 by veterans of the West African Frontier Force (WAFF) and the labourers who worked on the Lagos-Kano railway line.”⁵¹⁹

From 1913 onwards, the Sabon Gari was continually settled by various southerners who came to the Kano area to participate in the colonial civil service, railway department services,

⁵¹⁵ Andrew E. Barnes. *Making Headway: The Introduction of Western Civilization in Colonial Northern Nigeria*. New York: University of Rochester Press, 2009, 132-137.

⁵¹⁶ Burns, *History of Nigeria*, 255-266.

⁵¹⁷ A. F. Usman. “Implications of Colonial Settlements on Inter Ethnic Relations: Case Study of Sabon Gari Kano.” *International Journal of Humanities and Social Science* 5, No. 10, October 2015, 164-169.

⁵¹⁸ SNP 7/13/1114/1912, 123-124.

⁵¹⁹ Usman, “Implications of Colonial Settlements,” 164.

employment services of the European trading companies, middlemen agents in the booming groundnut trade and other economic activities unleashed in the area after the opening of the railway. Most of these settlers were Yoruba-speaking. For instance, Usman noted further that “of the 2,000 persons in Sabon Gari in 1921, 1,478 were Yoruba.”⁵²⁰ Aside from its main residential spots, a market was established in the Sabon Gari location in 1914. Also, by 1915, an official colonial administrative unit was established for the Sabon Gari Township under the jurisdiction of a British Stationed Magistrate who was meant to govern the area under British laws.⁵²¹ Fika has argued that the location of the Sabon Gari market close to the railway station and with its increasing large concentration soon had the advantages of drawing multiple traders, to the detriment of the city market within the Kano walls.⁵²² Together, with their literacy in English, many of the southern settlers in the Sabon Gari community and the Lebanese and Syrian settlers in Kano were able to fit into the middlemen roles, especially in the groundnut trade, acting between the European trading firms and the indigenous Hausa growers of groundnuts in the city and its other indigenous suburbs.⁵²³ These factors made Sabon Gari increase in population and landmass into a township status in the 1920s.

Within Kano province itself, the locations were structured into different settlements consisting of the European Locations, Non-African Sites, and Native Township.⁵²⁴ The European Locations were reserved strictly for colonial administrators and European officials of the trading firms. The Non-African Sites, known as Kasuwar Kwari, were allotted to Syrian, Arab, Lebanese traders, and other non-African settlers (not including Europeans) in the city of Kano. Lastly, the

⁵²⁰Usman, “Implications of Colonial Settlements,” 164.

⁵²¹ SNP 370/518P/1916, Kano Annual Revised Report, H. R. Palmer, 7.

⁵²²Fika, *The Political and Economic Re-orientation of Kano*, 341.

⁵²³Fika, *The Political and Economic Re-orientation of Kano*, 341-342

⁵²⁴SNP 10/3/139p/1915, 42-44.

Native Township expanded to incorporate all the settlements of the indigenous people of Kano. The restructuring of the settlements was carried out by the ‘Survey School’ of the Kano Emirate which mapped out the district boundaries of the entire areas within the Emirate.⁵²⁵ In this rearrangement, the issues of the Yoruba who had settled or were born in the city long before the second decade of the twentieth century were settled. Then, the colonial officials and the Emir’s Council of Kano agreed that such (Yoruba) persons could be allowed to reside in the Native Township, subject to their full compliance with the Islamic laws and the overall nature of the societal living of the indigenous people.⁵²⁶ However, those that could not be adopted fully under these conditions were permitted to be relocated to the Sabon Gari Township.

According to the census release of November 1924 on the total Europeans in Kano, it was recorded that the population of European Non-Officials was 124; European Officials, 20; and the Sabon Gari residents were put at 3,579.⁵²⁷ The population strength and settlement pattern of the classes of residents within Kano City and those foreigners residing in the Sabon-Gari Township continued to swell until after 1929. Hence, the overall economic system of Kano during this period was a blend of the activities of the settlers within the city walls and the residents of Sabon Gari.

4.11 Infrastructure Development in Kano until 1929

In many regards, the colonial occupation of the Kano Emirate and many parts of the Protectorate of Northern Nigeria was geared more towards the economic exploitation of the various areas rather than their overall welfare and societal development. This statement was evident when one assessed the level of infrastructural development embarked upon in Kano and

⁵²⁵ D. F. H. MacBride. “Land Survey in the Kano Emirate, Northern Provinces, Nigeria.” *Journal of the Royal African Society*, 37, Issue 46, Jan. 1938, 83-85.

⁵²⁶ SNP-10/3/139p/1915, 45.

⁵²⁷ Kanoprof 635/1925, 52.

its environs from the beginning of the colonial period until the late 1920s. Among others, the three main sectors of transportation, health and education will be considered here.

Transportation: In terms of comparison, the transportation sector received prime attention as far as the development of Kano during the early phase of British colonialism in the area. Transportation provided avenues for the unprecedented development of the economy of the province. Also, the more expanded the economic base of Kano, the more it contributed to the overall revenue of the British colonial system. A classic example here was the construction and opening of the Kano railway which linked the area directly to the coast and other prospective centres for the boosting of the exports and imports of the colonial economy. As noted earlier, the railway was a major catalyst in the revolutionary trends of economic boom and structural development witnessed in Kano from 1912 until 1929.

Next to the railway, several roads were constructed during this period to facilitate the accessibility of colonial officials into the various administrative centres of the emirates. Also, these roads were interlinked and connected directly as feeders to the railway stations which made the process of carting goods for exports from Kano's interiors to the railway easier, from where they were transported to Lagos to be shipped abroad.⁵²⁸ Under the supervision of British officials, the majority of the interior roads were constructed by the delegates and labour forces of the Emir. Besides, road projects were initiated to link up the Kano emirate to other provinces under the Northern Protectorate. As early as 1912, it was reported that:

The five main roads have been kept in good order, a new road from Kano to Gadia (New Katagum site) via Dutsi has been made. The road to the town has been improved with the construction of a substantial bridge and an embankment over the Getsi stream. This work was carried out by the Emir and the Beit-El-Mal.⁵²⁹

⁵²⁸Fika, *The Political and Economic Re-orientation of Kano*, 324-335.

⁵²⁹SNP 7/13/1114/1912, 125-126.

In the same vein, commenting on the improvements recorded in the road infrastructure of Kano during this period, Fika noted that, “by 1926, over 1,000 miles of roads have been constructed linking Kano city with the rural areas of the emirate. Similarly, by then, the emirate had been linked with other parts of Nigeria by a road network.”⁵³⁰

However, some scholars have supported the notion that the improved transportation system was mainly for the exploitation of the primary resources of Kano and other parts of Northern Nigeria; and not for welfare services.⁵³¹ Despite the positive status in facilitating the colonial economy, Shenton and Watts drew inferences to the limitations of the transportation schemes in response to the welfare of the indigenous Kano people, with a study of the 1927 famine, when they observed that:

An attempt was made to transport foodstuffs from the Southern provinces to the worst-affected zone; however, it quickly became clear that moving the colossal quantities of food to where they were needed would involve costs well beyond that of the miserly budgets of the colonial state. In this way, improved transportation, one of the possible benefits of colonialism, was rendered impotent.⁵³²

Health: The health sector recorded a very modest level of development in the early phases of the colonial administrative project in the case of Kano, and Northern Nigeria in general. For example, until 1910, the only hospitals located in entire Northern Nigeria were sited in the cantonments of Lokoja and Zungeru.⁵³³ After the extension of the railway and the influx of many Europeans and other people to Kano and the other hinterlands, attempts were made to establish health dispensaries in some centres. Though, there was a practice by the British in allowing the people to adopt their existing indigenous methods of medical treatment and other social services.

⁵³⁰Fika, *The Political and Economic Re-orientation of Kano*, 340.

⁵³¹Shenton, *The Development of Capitalism*, 52; Adebayo A. Lawal. “British Financial Administration in Nigeria, 1900-1960.” *The Nigerian Journal of Economic History*, No.1, 1998, 110-125; Shenton and Watts, “Capitalism and Hunger”, 53-62.

⁵³²Shenton and Watts, “Capitalism and Hunger,” 59.

⁵³³Usuanlele, “Poverty and Welfare,” 119.

This led most of the residents to disregard the Western-oriented medical services introduced by the colonial officials. For Kano, the state of medical infrastructure was pitiful. According to the 1925 report:

With a population of three and half a million, the Province (of Kano) has only three medical officers, and their efforts are still unfortunately hampered by the fear and suspicion by which the mass of the natives regard the European medical profession.⁵³⁴

The insignificant level of the medical facilities in Kano made the area vulnerable to several epidemics and diseases which resulted in the death of thousands of indigenes under the helpless eyes of the colonial officers. For instance, the colonial report of 1914 showed that in 1912 the records of birth rates were 880 to the death rates figure of 1,012; and in 1913, the birth rates were 874 as against 1,118 death rate, respectively.⁵³⁵ The higher death rate than birth rates in Kano during this period was due to the spread of the influenza epidemic. Also, the spread of the Cerebro Spinal Meningitis epidemic in 1924 resulted in the death of over two hundred thousand persons.⁵³⁶

In most cases, the colonial officials had embarked on public enlightenment for the indigenes to maintain proper sanitation rather than building adequate medical facilities for the treatment of their subjects. Thus, Uyilawa Usuanlele has argued that “it was racism, the stringent financial policy towards African welfare, and poor economic management, rather than the fear of resistance that accounted for the Colonial state’s neglect of African health care.”⁵³⁷

Education: Western education was an essential social activity that occupied the attention of the British during the period of colonial rule in Nigeria. However, unlike the example of the Southern Protectorate where elementary and secondary schools – championed by the Christian

⁵³⁴Kanoprof 635/1925, 14.

⁵³⁵Kanoprof-95/1914, 98.

⁵³⁶Kanoprof 635/1925, 13-14.

⁵³⁷Usuanlele, “Poverty and Welfare,”127

Missions – were spreading rapidly from the mid-nineteenth century onwards, the situation of the Northern Protectorate was different. For example, the Protectorate of Northern Nigeria had only one Western-based school in Sokoto, which was started by Resident Burdon in 1905.⁵³⁸ The initial colonial policy on education in the Northern Protectorate was to allow the people to develop along with their indigenous-oriented education, which was based on the structures of the Islamic religion. Also, in 1916, Governor Frederick Lugard articulated a policy of ‘African education’ along ‘native lines.’ While this policy was to ostensibly promote the moral, educational system in line with the peculiar local situation, Usuanlele has argued that “the restriction of education training by locality and social standing in the community was to preserve the communities from feared disintegration and engage people in production activities that served colonial needs.”⁵³⁹

The development of Western Education in Kano followed the same pattern as other parts of Muslim Northern Nigeria. According to different sources, only one Provincial school existed in Kano in 1925, with just about 34 pupils.⁵⁴⁰ The education system in the city at this period was dominated by the existence of numerous Islamic schools – where students were taught in Arabic literacy and that of craft school – where pupils were engaged in the learning of skills that could help them fit into the colonial economic system.⁵⁴¹ However, further proposals were made in 1926 for the establishment of more formal schools. This was gradually implemented in the latter period of colonial rule.

4.12 Conclusion

⁵³⁸Usuanlele, “Poverty and Welfare,”154

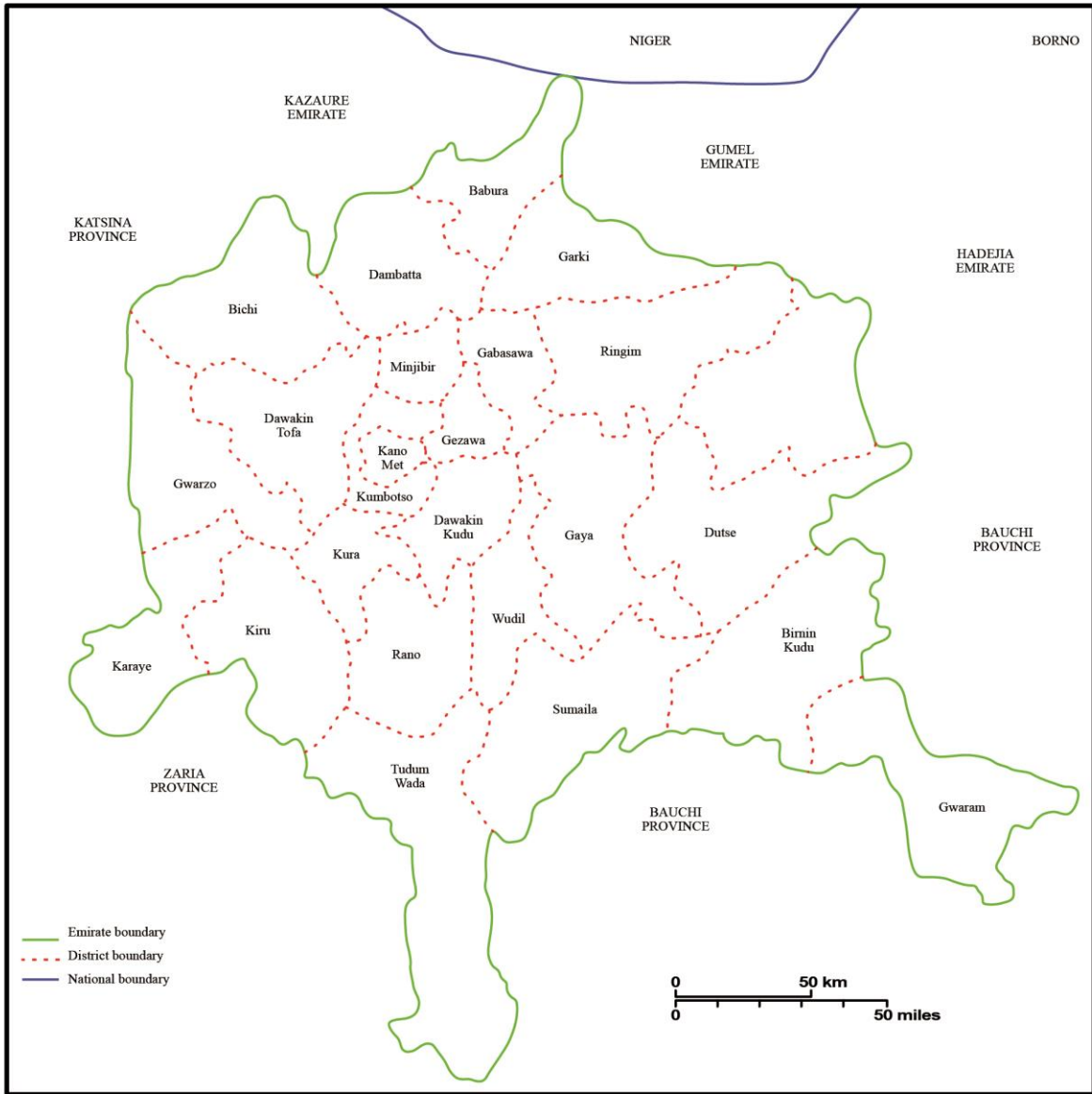
⁵³⁹ Usuanlele, “Poverty and Welfare,”155-456

⁵⁴⁰Kanoprof 24/1926, 106.

⁵⁴¹Kanoprof 24/1926, 108-110.

The period from 1912 to 1929 was critical in the economic development of Kano. This was the period that British colonial rule was taking root, and many changes were introduced in different aspects of the economy. The colonial authorities initiated and implemented several policies that affected the economic development of Kano and its environs in diverse ways. One of the most significant legacies of the British colonial administration in Kano was the construction and opening of the railway in the area which re-channelled the export trade of the city from its original mainly northward route to a southward direction to export destinations of Europe via the Atlantic. This opened the avenue for many European trading companies and other people from different parts of Nigeria to migrate in large numbers to participate in the expanding economy of the province. Arguably, the most significant catalyst for the transformation of the economy of Kano was the construction of the railway which expanded groundnut production and trade. Besides, the expansion of local products such as leatherwork, woodwork, tanning, and pottery stimulated the establishment of indigenous economic networks and contributed to the economic development of Kano in the early twentieth century. Two fundamental problems were not resolved in the period of economic boom after 1912. First, except for the completion of the railway, there was little substantive development in infrastructure of any kind before the outbreak of the Great Depression in 1929. Unfortunately, the steady economic growth recorded in Kano was halted from 1929 onwards up to the late-1930s due mainly to the global economic crisis experienced during the period. Because there had been minimal investment in infrastructure in 1912-1929, there were almost no benefits to the general population, and after 1929 another decade would go in which investment would go to water supply and electricity, but then only in a modest way. The nature and trend of the development of the economy during the depression period and the decade that followed are explored in the next chapter.

Map 5: Colonial Map of Kano Province showing the Component Districts around 1950



Source: M. G. Smith. *Government in Kano, 1350-1950*, Boulder, CO: Westview Press, 1977, xxii.

CHAPTER FIVE

KANO'S ECONOMY DURING THE GREAT DEPRESSION 1929-1939

5.1 Introduction

This chapter analyses Kano's colonial economy during the Great Depression from 1929 until 1939. The chapter discusses the changing fortunes of the economic development of the Kano area from 1929 to 1939. It explores the impact of the global economic depression of 1929 and the early 1930s on the economy of Kano. It also attempts to explain the causes of the crash of commodity prices during the 1930s and the consequences for Kano's economic development. Here, an analysis is made of the British policies and the colonial authorities' reaction to the global economic depression, which had extensive repercussions on the economy of Kano. In addition, it investigates the aspects of continuity and emerging issues in Kano's economy and its environs from the 1930s to 1939.

5.2 Global Economic Depression and the Economy of Kano, 1929-1939

Analysts of the global economy consider the year 1929 as significant because it marked the beginning of the first major global economic depression of the twentieth century. From the main crisis period of 1929-1933, the distressing economic impact of the depression went on for about a decade until the beginning of World War II in 1939. The immediate cause of the economic depression was the New York stock market crash of October 1929 in the United States.⁵⁴² The impact was quickly felt all over the world and, before long, many productive industries, banks and businesses folded up, leading to the loss of jobs by millions of people.

⁵⁴² Harold James. "1929: The New York Stock Market crash." *Representations* 110, No. 1, Spring 2010, 129-144; Nicholas Crafts and Peter Fearon, "Lessons from the 1930s Great Depression." *Oxford Review of Economic Policy* 26, No. 3, Autumn 2010, 285-317.

The interconnectedness of the global economy and the connection of the American import and export trade with other markets of the world and the universal adherence to the gold standard, which joined countries around the world in a fixed currency exchange since the 1870s, amongst other factors, helped to spread the economic woes from the United States throughout the world, especially Europe, in the early 1930s.⁵⁴³ As noted by M. Almunia et al., “the great depression was transmitted internationally through trade flows, capital flows and commodity prices; and under its condition, different countries were affected differently depending on their circumstances and policies.”⁵⁴⁴ Owing to these downward trends associated with the depression, world trade contracted, prices fell, and governments faced financial crises as the supply of American credit dried up. In the same vein, then, many countries adopted various emergency responses to the crisis by erecting trade barriers and tariffs, which worsened the crisis by further hindering global trade.

Undoubtedly, the direct and indirect impact of the depression was so extensive that it affected all parts of the global economy throughout its duration, including Britain, and by extension to various parts of her vast colonial empire. For Britain, the effects of the depression were immediate and devastating, especially on the industrial areas of the country. Among other things, by the end of 1930, the economy witnessed the collapse in demand for British products, falling rates of exports value by 50%, rising unemployment from about one million to 2.5 million, little or no unemployment benefits, impoverishment of a large section of the population, and the

⁵⁴³ R. J. Samuelson. “Revisiting the Great Depression.” *The Wilson Quarterly* 1976- 36, No. 1. Winter 2012, 6-43.; J. Caldwell and T. G. O’Driscoll. “What Caused the Great Depression?” *Social Education* 71, No. 2, 2007, 70-74; “Great Depression History.” <https://www.history.com/topics/great-depression/great-depression-history/html>. Accessed 23 December 2018.

⁵⁴⁴ M. Almunia, A. Be’ne’trix, B. Eichengreen, K. H. O’Rourke and G. Rua. “From Great Depression to Great Credit Crisis: Similarities, Differences and Lessons.” *Lessons from the Great Depression, Economic Policy*, April 2010, 219-265.

contraction of government revenues resulting from the attendant fall in national income.⁵⁴⁵ Although some scholars, such as Nicholas Crafts and Peter Fearon, have argued that Britain had experienced some forms of economic recession since the end of World War I,⁵⁴⁶ and H.W. Richardson's work, for instance, has also provided arguments for a lesser impact of the depression on Britain⁵⁴⁷ they nonetheless all agree that as a result of the "Great Depression", the 1930s stood out in terms of the economic hardship in the country.

However, under the harsh socio-economic conditions of the depression, domestically, the British government undertook the Keynesian model of economic recovery from late 1931 until 1933 and implemented some economic and social policies which, to a great extent, ameliorated many of the worst effects of the profound economic downturn. Some of these economic efforts were related to Britain's withdrawal from the gold standard and the devaluing of the pound sterling, whereby British exports became more competitive in world markets compared with those of countries that remained in the gold standard.⁵⁴⁸ Also crucial in this regard was the second imperial Economic Conference in Ottawa, Canada, in 1932, whereby Britain and her empire formally entered into a period of economic cooperation – with the initiation of specific policy frameworks

⁵⁴⁵ Crafts and Fearon, "Lessons from the 1930s Great Depression" 285-317; William Graves. "The Great Depression and how it Affected Great Britain." Prezi 1 December 2012, <https://prezi.com/okwmkryuqik5/the-great-depression-and-how-it-affected-great-britain/html>. Accessed 27 December 2018.

⁵⁴⁶ H. L. Cole and L. E. Ohanian. "The Great U.K. Depression: A Puzzle and Possible Resolution." *Federal Reserve Bank of Minneapolis Research Department Staff Report 295*, October 2001, 1-40; Crafts and Fearon, "Lessons from the 1930s Great Depression." 289-292.

⁵⁴⁷ H. W. Richardson. "The Economic Significance of the Depression in Britain." *Journal of Contemporary History* 4, No. 4: The Great Depression, October 1969, 3-19.

⁵⁴⁸ Roger Middleton. "British Monetary and Fiscal Policy in the 1930s." *Oxford Review of Economic Policy* 26, No. 3, 2010, 414-441; G. Chouliarakis and T. Gwiazdowski. "Regime Change and Recovery in 1930s Britain." University of Manchester, Preliminary Version - March 2016 <https://www.nbp.pl/badania/seminaria/8iv2016.pdf>, 4-8, Accessed 27 December 2018; John Stepek. "How Britain avoided the worst of the Great Depression." *Money Week* 15 December 2017, <https://moneyweek.com/478523/how-britain-avoided-the-worst-of-the-great-depression/html>. Accessed 27 December 2018.

– which lasted through the depression.⁵⁴⁹ These actions led to a modest economic recovery and a fall in unemployment in Britain from 1933 onwards. To some extent, the pioneering British recovery models were not only applauded, but they also motivated the United States and some other countries in taking several steps to address the gloomy economic atmosphere of the depression.⁵⁵⁰ Regardless of these slight improvements, the general biting effects of the depression at both the immediate British level and the broad global sphere continued for about a decade until 1939.

Significantly, while the leading causes of the economic depression were externally driven, they, however, had a significant impact on the economic development of the Kano economy during and after the years it lasted. At first, the economic depression affected the prices of raw materials all over the world during the 1930s.⁵⁵¹ Since the colonial economy of Kano and most other parts of Nigeria was based on the exportation of raw materials and exploitation of the surpluses, the depression, therefore, resulted in an unprecedented collapse of the prices and supply of the export trade from Kano. The widespread impact of this affected all the major participants and beneficiaries of the hitherto Kano economy, including the colonial administrative authorities, trading companies and the indigenous population.

Even, as the adverse effects of the depression were glaring on all sides, they however also provided certain revealing avenues in understanding the weaknesses of the British authorities' strategies in grappling with the central profit-making motives of their colonial ventures in Kano

⁵⁴⁹ Chouliarakis and Gwiazdowski, "Regime Change and Recovery in 1930s Britain," 6-9; H. W. Richardson. "The Basis of Economic Recovery in the Nineteen-Thirties: A Review and a New Interpretation." *The Economic History Review*, New Series 15, No. 2, 1962, 344-363.

⁵⁵⁰ Forrest Capie and Michael Collins. "The Extent of British Economic Recovery in the 1930s." *Economy and History* 23, No.1, 1980, 40-60, DOI: 10.1080/00708852.1980.10418969; Nathan Perry and Matías Vernengo. "What Ended the Great Depression? Re-evaluating the Role of Fiscal Policy." *Levy Economics Institute Working Paper*, No. 678, July 2011, 1-20; Crafts and Fearon, "Lessons from the 1930s Great Depression." 297-299.

⁵⁵¹ Fika, *The Political and Economic Re-orientation of Kano*, 398.

during this period. For instance, in his work on the economic depression in Northern Nigeria, Moses Ochonu has argued that:

The Great Depression was one period that highlighted the inability of the British to effectively exploit their African colonial subjects, maintain social order, and preserve the myths of British colonial paternalism. The impacts of this momentary colonial inability to exploit Africans were profound. This decade-long failure to exploit, as well as the responses of Northern Nigerians and British colonialists to the resultant economic shifts, were just as serious and instructive as were the consequences of colonial exploitation in years of economic boom.⁵⁵²

In terms of its peculiar nature and impact, Kano's colonial economy during the era of the depression is worth giving attention to. Being a major export-oriented economy, the products of Kano were profoundly affected by the depression, like most parts of Nigeria during this period. For instance, groundnut, which has been the most vibrant among the export products from Kano, experienced a continuous massive downward price trend from the late 1920s to 1930s. Explaining the rapid decline in the production of the groundnut occasioned by the early period of depression, the Kano Province Report of 1930 observed that:

By January 1930, the Kano price of groundnut had fallen from £9.15.0 (October 1929) to £8.10.0 per ton, but by May it had dropped to £6.15.0. The purchase of the 1930 crop opened in October at £4.10.0 and the highest price paid was £5.15.0 by early December ... The price had slumped to £3.10.0 per ton by the close of the year.⁵⁵³

Also, the table below captures the quantity of groundnut exported from Kano and the unfavourable prices from the late 1920s to the 1930s. From the table, one can see that, like the previous periods, as pointed out in the preceding chapter, Kano throughout these years (and until after the end of British colonialism) still maintained the highest supply of Nigerian exports.⁵⁵⁴

⁵⁵² Ochonu. *Colonial Meltdown*, 3-4.

⁵⁵³ SNP 17/2 Northern Provinces Secretariats, Vol. 1, 14686: Kano Province Annual Report for 1930, 41, pp. 168.

⁵⁵⁴ SNP 17/3 25673, Northern Province Secretariat: Kano Province Annual Report, 1935, by H. O. Lindsell, 2; SNP 17/4 R 30847 Civil Secretary's General Office: Kano Province Annual Report, 1938, by E. K. Featherstone, 1, pp. 2-3.

Table 14: Quantity and Prices of Groundnut Exports from Nigeria and the Kano Area from 1928 to 1938

Years	Total Exports (Tons)	Quantity Railed from Kano (Tons)	Average Prices Per Ton (in British Pound)
1928-1929	135,000	88,442	11.0.0
1929-1930	147,000	112,032	8.18.0
1930-1931	154,000	-----	4.17.0
1931-1932	165,000	158,818	5.16.0
1932-1933	197,000	157,000	5.14.0
1933-1934	234,000	-----	2.13.0
1934-1935	199,000	Approx. 2/3	6.19.0
1935-1936	177,000	Approx. 2/3	7.16.0
1936-1937	350,000	300,000	7.17.6
1937-1938	207,000	170,000	2.12.6

Source: Northern Nigeria Annual Reports 1928-1938; Fika, *Kano Civil War and British Over-rule*, 255.⁵⁵⁵

The collapse in prices also affected the supply of hides and skins and the export of cotton from Kano.⁵⁵⁶ Nevertheless, being the mainstay of the area, the slumped prices of groundnut and other export products not only affected the purchasing power of the indigenous people but also

⁵⁵⁵ Northern Nigeria Annual Reports 1928-1938; Fika, *Kano Civil War and British Over-rule*, 255

⁵⁵⁶ SNP 17/2, 14686: Kano Province Annual Report for 1930, 44, pp. 178.

extended to the vested interests of all stakeholders in Kano's colonial economy. For the primary producers and the middlemen, the unprecedented reduction in prices meant that the financial resources available to them were drastically reduced, which to a great extent manifested in their inability to pay adequate taxes, purchase imported products, and live a life of affluence – unlike the booming economic environments of the previous periods. On the part of the trading companies, the depression equally created a discouraging era of lagging profits for both the export and import trades. Moreover, for the colonial authorities, the long-run effects of the depression were resultant shortfalls in the overall accruable resources from the associated economic activities of the various quarters, for the day-to-day running of the administrative machinery and the appropriation of surpluses to the home country – Britain.⁵⁵⁷ These varying experiences thereby necessitated each of these bodies resorting to the adoption of several strategies, which, on the other hand, yielded inevitable repercussions for the immediate Kano society and the broader Northern Nigeria environment.

To begin, the colonial authorities of Nigeria lamented the general economic depression of the period and its attendant consequences on administrative and other imperial projects of the protectorates.⁵⁵⁸ Under the harsh economic conditions which the depression continually unleashed on the revenues and expenditures of the government, the authorities initiated several (emergency) coping strategies at the central level in the early 1930s which to a reasonable degree also had an extended impact on the immediate setting of Kano's economy during this period. Regarding these, in another of his works, Ochonu, for instance, has identified “a four-pronged approach” which

⁵⁵⁷ SNP 17/2 Northern Provinces Secretariats, Vol. 1, 14686, 1930, 169; SNP 17/2 Provincial Correspondence Jacket, 1324: Annual Report – Kano Province 1&2, 1934, by H. O. Lindsell, 1-2; Fika, *The Political and Economic Re-orientation of Kano*, 398-399.

⁵⁵⁸ *The Nigerian Gazette Extraordinary* 18, No. 42, July 1931, 413; SNP 1/12, 307, “Draft Estimates for the Financial Year, 1931-32.”

Donald Cameron – the then Colonial Governor – proposed as a feasible solution to the bleak financial situation.⁵⁵⁹ First among these approaches, was the proclamation that the “expenditure on important infrastructural developments/improvements – such as trade-facilitating railway extension projects – would be charged to a loan account maintained for the government in London financial institutions. The second was the government’s deferment of projects which related mainly to public works that had a bearing on the welfare of Nigerians – which were deemed unimportant by the authorities. The third was the recommendation for government departments to reduce their overheads by retrenching staff, while also reducing the scale of their operations to diminish estimates for recurrent expenditure. The fourth was the encouragements of measures aimed at ‘widening the resources of the revenue’ through the extension and enforcement of the colonial tax regime, as well as in the savings from the cuts in both capital and recurrent expenditures.⁵⁶⁰

Also, earlier, as part of the efforts to react to the global fallen price of tin (which fell to less than half of its hitherto stable price), the colonial government had entered into an international agreement in 1930 to cut tin output in Nigeria to prevent the total collapse of prices.⁵⁶¹ Besides, in terms of importation, the British authorities maneuvered and monopolized most of Nigeria's market for its manufacturers. Hence, during the depression years, the bulk of Nigeria's major textiles’ imports came from Britain. For example, according to the official report, in 1932 about 85 percent of Nigeria's textile imports originated from Britain; while the rest were imported from lumped concessions of trading companies from Japan, Italy, Germany, Holland, France, and

⁵⁵⁹ Moses Ochonu. “Conjoined to Empire: The Great Depression and Nigeria.” *African Economic History*, No. 34, 2006, 103-145.

⁵⁶⁰ *The Nigerian Gazette*, July 1931, 415; Ochonu, “Conjoined to Empire,” 112.

⁵⁶¹ Bill Freund, *Capital, and Labour in the Nigerian Tin Mines*. Essex: Longman Group, 1981, 121-130.

India.⁵⁶² This gave the British colonial authorities and trading companies the optimum advantage to reap the profits of the unequal import trade vis-à-vis the cheap export exchanges of the period.

Moreover, the implementation of these resolutions by the colonial government resulted in further consequences concerning Kano's economic situation. For example, the retrenchment of excess administrative staff in line with Cameron's third policy approach of reducing the scale of operation and saving costs for the government led to continuous mass unemployment as well as the acute reduction in colonial administrative staff salaries in Kano and other Nigerian areas, which added to the economic woes of the period. There was the case of a specific official report about the depression which stated that:

The native administrations, Kano province, was threatened with a serious reduction in revenue, carrying with it, of course, a reduction in staff and salaries and a slowing down of development. Measures were prepared to deal with what looked like a disastrous state of affairs.⁵⁶³

Similarly, the expediency in cutting the output of tin production in Nigeria soon led to the closure of about eighty percent of the tin mines on the Jos Plateau – in which most of the Kano emigrant population were working as paid employees.⁵⁶⁴ These sets of disengaged persons who were not used to the tediousness and delayed income of the agricultural economy – coupled with its exceedingly low revenue yield during this period – found it difficult to cope with the unfriendly economic environment. As a result, many of them resorted to criminal acts such as thefts, armed robberies, and other associated vices as an alternative means of survival.⁵⁶⁵ In this regard, Freund,

⁵⁶² *Report on the Economic and Social Progress of the People of Nigeria 1032*. Lagos: Government Printer 1933, 39; Ochonu, "Conjoined to Empire," 107.

⁵⁶³ SNP 17/2, 1324: Annual Report – Kano Province 1&2, 1934, by H. O. Lindsell, 1.

⁵⁶⁴ Freund, *Capital and Labour*, 121-130; Ochonu, "Conjoined to Empire," 110.

⁵⁶⁵ SNP 1/18/116, 11096, Summary of Intelligence Reports for the Quarter Ending, 2 June 1930, 3; SNP 1/18/116, 11096, Summary of Intelligence Reports for the Quarter Ending March 1931, 3; Ochonu, "Conjoined to Empire," 134-138.

for instance, has argued that the tin mine closures of the early 1930s had profound effects on solvency in and around the tin-producing areas of Northern Nigeria.⁵⁶⁶

Furthermore, concerning the policy of ‘widening the resources of the revenue’ through the extension and enforcement of the colonial tax regime, its implementation increased the rates of revenue collected from trading companies as duties and the indigenous population as taxes, to shore up for the deficiency in government expected resources. For instance, an official report has it that in 1932, taxation yielded an estimated £253,000 to the purse of the British colonial authorities in Nigeria.⁵⁶⁷ To a great extent, the direct and indirect impact of these increasing revenue demands fell on the shoulders of the local population – who were already hamstrung by the low accruable incomes under the pitiable environment of the economic depression. While some of these coping strategies helped in the colonial economic recovery during the depression, they, however, in the long run, had a detrimental impact on the indigenous Kano people. Supporting this thesis, Ochonu has contended further that the central focus of the British in the economic depression and recovery was not Nigerians, but the interests and favours of the British – as the policies were deliberately crafted to impoverish Nigerians for the sake of imperial benefits.⁵⁶⁸

Secondly, concerning the strategies embarked upon by the trading companies, they took advantage of the depression to further increase their gains in the general Nigerian area and Kano’s economy. With specific reference to British merchant capital and British industries, emboldened by the support of the British government, they devised means of expanding their profit bases by creating indirect burdens on the indigenous people. Ochonu, too, observed this phenomenon when he stated that:

⁵⁶⁶ Freund, *Capital and Labour*, 121-130.

⁵⁶⁷ *The Nigerian Gazette*, July 1931, 414.

⁵⁶⁸ Ochonu, “Conjoined to Empire,” 104-105.

The colonial authorities imposed new export duties on palm kernels, cocoa, groundnut, and other Nigerian exports in late 1929. While this was done to increase government receipts at a time of contracting revenue, it inadvertently supplied a platform upon which British merchants, long schooled in the art of manipulating local producer prices, began to exact more monetary concessions from producers. Although some European mercantile firms initially protested the new duties imposed by the government, it soon emerged that their protests were most likely designed to make up for a practice crafted by the mercantile firms that was equally detrimental to the interests of Nigerian producers.⁵⁶⁹

For instance, by the 1930s, in response to dwindling earnings during the depression and the payment of the increasing government duties, the British ship-owning firms combined into Conference Shipping Lines, set uniform to produce buying prices and freight charges throughout West Africa – which was then led by Elder Dempster shipping line. In their notorious operations, these clustered shipping firms usually fixed the prices for export products at conveniently low levels to them, while at the same time setting the freight charges of the products at high levels, to appropriate more profit for themselves. On a general scale, the monopoly arrangements and high charges by the shipping companies attracted reactions from the United African Company (UAC), which complained of the extended disadvantageous influence of such exorbitant rates on the producers, merchants and trading companies; by emphasizing that such could lead to the “penalizing (of) producers and purchasers of African products by causing low prices to be paid for products and high prices to be paid for European goods in (West) Africa.”⁵⁷⁰ While for the specific case of Kano, the increase in freight charges for groundnut was seen as detrimental by the Kano Chamber of Commerce (established in 1922), which wrote several correspondences to the Chief Secretary of the Colonial Government in Lagos in the 1930s, complaining, among others, that, “the nature of cost of haulage to the coast (and high cost of freight charges) of the Nigerian

⁵⁶⁹ Ochonu, “Conjoined to Empire,” 108.

⁵⁷⁰ Ochonu, “Conjoined to Empire,” 108; *The West Africa Mail and Trade Gazette*, 18 January 1930.

Groundnut places Nigeria at a very great disadvantage (in comparative terms) to other countries.”⁵⁷¹

Thus, even when the produce-buying companies from the interior complained about such practices, they had no choice but to comply with the terms of shipping companies with monopolies in Nigeria.⁵⁷² On their part, the produce-buying companies and merchants would deliberately reduce the prices of cash crops and other export products from the primary producers in Kano and other parts of Nigeria, which enabled them to profit along in linking their commercial ventures. These price-control arrangements between shippers and produce-buying merchants had the consequences of reducing the average income of the local producers of groundnuts and the other export products, as the only choices available to the indigenous people were to sell their products at the (give away) prices offered to them, instead of encouraging a viable environment of balanced-profit. The impact was profound, coupled with the fact that the indigenous population needed to pay their taxes to the British administrative authorities in their respective zones from their available meagre income from the sale of their cultivated products.⁵⁷³ Therefore, the lopsided practices of British transportation and commercial firms helped to impoverish the Kano people under the unfavourable economic environment of the depression era.

Lastly, from the angle of the Kano people, they absorbed the challenges of the overall disappointing economy of the depression and embarked on specific strategies which helped them to cope throughout the period. At first, despite the declining prices, the indigenous people intensified their efforts in working hard to produce more products for sale to meet up their

⁵⁷¹ KAD Min of Agric, 21550/13 (2), Secretary, Northern Provinces Secretariat, Kaduna: Groundnut, Reduction of Freight on, by the Kano Chamber of Commerce, Kano, 25 May 1934, 3.

⁵⁷² *The West African Mail and Trade Gazette*. 25 January 1930, 8; “Elder Dempster and Co. and the United Africa Company.” *Nigerian Protectorate Ram*, 22 September 1930, 6.

⁵⁷³ Usuanlele, *Poverty and welfare*, 99-101.

necessities and other economic demands. For example, a study of the table above (Table 14) shows that even with the environment of the continuous fluctuations and falling nature of prices, the amounts of groundnuts supplied from the Kano area were in most times kept at steadily increasing rates. To some reasonable degree, these efforts of maintaining optimum supply depicted the doggedness of the local population in the face of the unprecedented harsh economic conditions from the late 1920s to the late 1930s.

Also, while the export producers of Kano were susceptible to the maneuvering of the British trading firms during this period, they, however, sought ready alternatives from other non-British trading companies in the area to create windows to obtaining higher prices for themselves. For instance, during the 1930s, there was the presence of many trading firms owned by Lebanese, Syrian, Italian, German and other non-British nationalities in Kano and its environs who all operated within the same world market.⁵⁷⁴ The fact was that, at times, the colonial authorities were not fixated on granting monopolies to British firms without allowing room for competition from other foreign participants in the export and import trade. In this regard, M.O. Ijere has argued that “although the colonial administration in Nigeria had reserved the country's trade and commerce to British private companies, the latter was not allowed to enjoy their monopoly uncontested.”⁵⁷⁵ Hence, except for matters of the payment of their rents and duties, the British colonial administration in Kano did not intervene to regulate the marketing practices of these other foreign firms. The presence of these other multiple business bodies ensured that they could not usually come together to agree on a harmonized price-system for products – as there were existing competitions among themselves for influence and expanding the acquisition of raw materials and

⁵⁷⁴ Fika, *The Political and Economic Re-orientation of Kano*, 399-400.

⁵⁷⁵ M. O. Ijere. “Colonial Policy in Nigerian Agriculture and Its Implementation.” *Agricultural History* 48, No. 2 (April 1974), 298-304.

markets for exports and import products.⁵⁷⁶ These renewed competitive environments provided the Kano groundnut and other demanding export-based producers the ample opportunity to switch course in order of preference to obtain fairly higher prices for their primary products from the available buyers. To this end, Fika has submitted, among others, that:

Intense competition among buyers ... in turn nullified the attempts of British-owned firms to organise a cartel or 'pool' in order to regulate prices, and the groundnuts cultivators exploited the maneuvering amongst the firms so as to obtain higher prices.⁵⁷⁷

In the same vein, during the depression, the Kano indigenous people looked inward into the strength of their internal economic and marketing structure as additional survival strategies, without over-reliance on the downward trend of the external export trade and its discouraging impact. Hence, during the 1930s, efforts were made to embark on wider scale cultivation of various food crops – the proceeds of which were consumed at the subsistence level and also traded in the numerous markets in Kano's neighbourhood and to other external near and far Nigerian areas. Also, the kolanut trade from the forested parts of Southern Nigeria into Kano and other parts of northern Nigeria and beyond was sustained by the Hausa traders – many of whom had gained specialization in the trade in the Kano area. Among others, the revenues generated from these indigenous and internally-oriented economies helped to absorb the huge shock of the economic depression – which thereby made many persons live in some level of relative comfort. Official British reports testified that despite the gloomy prices which the global economic depression dealt on the dominant groundnut trade, Kano still thrived economically all through the period. A good excerpt in this regard is the 1938 Report which noted that:

The bright feature in the outlook is that, as long as the local food crops do not fail, the slump in the world prices does not prevent the local population from living in comparative comfort. Her dense

⁵⁷⁶ SNP 395/25673A, H. O. Lindsell, Kano Province Report, 1935, 7.

⁵⁷⁷ Fika, *The Political and Economic Re-orientation of Kano*, 399.

population, productive soil, big markets, and large internal trade made Kano to carry on well without a high demand for groundnuts.⁵⁷⁸

By and large, the economic depression had a series of empirical consequences on the colonial economy of Kano. These were caused mainly by the strong linkages of the Kano economy with the continuous international environment of export and import trades as well as the external colonial domination of the area along with other Nigerian parts during this period. However, the depression elicited several coping strategies taken by the British colonial authorities which had a huge impact in shaping the economic activities of the trading companies and the indigenous people in Kano and other Nigerian areas during this period. In addition to the dominant issues of the depression, other associated activities also helped in understanding the continuities in Kano's economic and socio-political setting during the 1930s and 1940s.

5.3 Continuities and Emerging Issues in Kano's Economy during the 1930s

The economy of Kano witnessed some level of continuity and expansion in the 1930s in certain sectors from the available features of the previous eras. Also, it was adaptive to changes as several novel issues were brought into the picture by the colonialists, which helped in shaping the associated developments in the area during these periods. These will be examined under some major subject matters, which include agriculture, taxation, commerce and trade, and infrastructure development.

Agriculture: Like the hitherto established tradition, agriculture in its various forms occupied the topmost position among the economic sectors of the Kano area during the 1930s, 1940s, and even up to the period after independence. In order of priority, a strong emphasis was continually placed here on the export crop economy – particularly on groundnut and cotton

⁵⁷⁸ SNP 17/4 R 30847, E. K. Featherstone, Kano Province Annual Report, 1938, 2, 8.

cultivation – to sustain the supply of their proceeds as dominant raw materials from the northern region for the Nigerian export trade overseas. However, groundnut remained the major crop which unmatched supply from the Kano area was identified with all through these periods. As pointed out above, groundnuts supply and prices were susceptible to the influence of the global economic depression, thereby reducing the financial benefits to the major stakeholders in the crop's cultivation and distribution cycles – especially the groundnut growers. During the period, the majority of the people of Kano still participated in groundnut cultivation and its related activities and even expended efforts in increasing the scale of productive capacity to meet up with their primary economic survival needs and the persistent demands of taxation from the colonial authorities.

Nevertheless, at times, the yields of the groundnut crop were low on an annual scale, which to a great extent affected the overall resources of all parties (groundnut growers, trading agents/companies, and by extension the colonial administrative bodies) whose interests were vested on its proceeds. The principal factors that were responsible for the minimal output of the crop included low acreage, scarcity, and costly nature of groundnut seeds for planting, and environmental factors such as scarcity of rainfall. For example, there were records of low yields and tonnages of groundnut in 1933-1934, 1937 and 1939 which drew the attention of the colonial administrators and therefore affected the accruable resources from the area during such trading seasons, going by the financial year reports.⁵⁷⁹ Despite the abysmal records of these years, groundnut kept being a central export crop of attraction in the Kano area after the eventual end of the depression in 1939 and into the 1940s onwards.

⁵⁷⁹ SNP 17/3 25673, Kano Province Annual Report, 1935, by H. O. Lindsell, 2; SNP 17/4 R 30847, E. K. Featherstone, Kano Province Annual Report, 1938, 1-2, pp. 4&5; SNP 17/4 R 32098 Civil Secretary's General Office: Kano Province Annual Report, 1939, by J. R. Patterson, 1, pp. 1

Cotton cultivation, usage and exports also dominated the economic attention in the 1930s and 1940s. During the heated period of the economic depression, the slump in export prices was more felt concerning groundnut than cotton. As a result, several proposals were considered by the British colonial authorities in Lagos and Northern Nigeria, as well as the Kano Chambers of Commerce on the possibility of advising the natives to increase the cultivation of cotton instead of groundnut to replace the former with the latter as a major export crop.⁵⁸⁰ Although the final resolution favoured the continuity of the groundnut crop, efforts were made toward the intensification of the cotton trade. As a result, during the 1930s, particularly from 1934, cotton seeds of the American, Egyptian, and other specimens were increasingly distributed freely by the Ministry of Agriculture to indigenous farmers for cultivation and increased yields. Also, by December 1934, the Challawa Ginnery in Kano (which was established in 1925) was reopened to operate along with the functioning ones in Zaria and other parts of Northern Nigeria – where cotton exports were still thriving.⁵⁸¹

However, the outcome of the renewed emphasis on cotton cultivation in Kano did not favour the export-based plans of the British administrators and trading companies. This was because, amongst others, like the embedded tradition, the Kano internal cotton manufacturing and distributive capacities were too strong for the foreigners to push aside. Therefore, unlike in Zaria, Duchi, Wei, Katsina and other northern areas where proceeds from cotton were encouraging for exports, the majority of the crop's proceeds up till the 1940s, were consumed in Kano by the numerous available indigenous cotton industries' networks.⁵⁸² Various authorities have shown that

⁵⁸⁰ KAD Min of Agric, 21550/13 (1), Secretary, Northern Provinces Secretariat, Kaduna: Cotton cultivation in place of groundnut, April-May 1934, 1-5.

⁵⁸¹ SNP 17/2, 1324: Annual Report – Kano Province 1&2, 1934, by H. O. Lindsell, 1.

⁵⁸² Min of Agric, 134A/275-25, Northern Province Zaria, Agricultural Development: Post War Work, 1943, 2-3.

the overall cotton development from cultivation, production and distribution had been under the absolute control of the internal structure of Kano's flourishing economy. For instance, Fika has observed that "in 1933, it was estimated that 50,000 people in Kano emirate were largely dependent on the cloth-dyeing industry alone."⁵⁸³ Also, an official report in 1935 noted that:

The production of cotton increases through the absorption of the product in native consumption is greater than in sales for export. Local prices are higher than export prices and country cloth, especially in women's garments, is in as great a demand as ever, so much so that it is said that spinners can turn 3d. of cotton into eight to nine penny worth of thread.⁵⁸⁴

Further, the 1936 report of the Agricultural Department went on to show that despite the increasing distribution of cotton seeds in the Northern Provinces, there were still empirical results of the minimal availability of cotton bales for exports in comparative terms to the increasing export rates of the product in neighbouring Katsina area. This could be seen from the analysis of the following table.

Table 15: Comparative Rates of Cotton Seeds Distribution and Available Cotton Bales for Exports in Kano and Southern Katsina from 1928 to 1936

Kano				Southern Katsina		
Years	Seed Tons	Purchased Bales	Bales Per Ton of Seed	Seed Tons	Purchased Bales	Bales Per Ton of Seed
1928-1929	596	357	0.6	590	10,029	17.0
1929-1930	379	425	1.1	852	15,252	17.9
1930-1931	348	5	.01	803	8,582	10.68
1931-1932	240	-----	-----	542	3,651	6.73

⁵⁸³ Fika, *The Political and Economic Re-orientation of Kano*, 396.

⁵⁸⁴ SNP 17/3 25673, Kano Province Annual Report, 1935, by H. O. Lindsell, 2, pp.6.

1932-1933	132	320	2.4	554	9,432	17.20
1933-1934	142	695	4.90	742	7,901	10.64
1934-1935	564	1,836	3.25	927	15,735	17.00
1935-1936	819	-----	-----	1,089	-----	-----

Source: SNP 17/3 258/3, Kano Province Annual Report, 1936.⁵⁸⁵

In summary, what could be deduced from the Kano cotton market during these periods was that it was the local industry that was driving the course of the product. In such a case, it was only when the demand of the local industry was satisfied that the remaining cotton products would be available for the export trade. Even when the available supply of the product could not meet the expanding demand of the local cotton users, they usually purchased from other neighbouring areas. A notable example of this was earlier in 1931 when cotton weavers bought their raw materials from Zaria and Katsina which they directly railed to Kano through the Bauchi Light Railway line.⁵⁸⁶ Also, the local industry was in sharp regular competition with the export market and that ensured that the prices offered at the home front were usually higher than those offered by the trading firms.

Many farmers specialized in the cultivation of various food crops during the 1930s and 1940s, which sustained the day-to-day consumption of the massive population of the Kano area. Some of these food crops included millet, guinea-corn, corn, cassava, sweet-potatoes, cowpeas, tomatoes, pepper, rice, beans, locust beans, carrots, onions, and vegetables of different varieties.⁵⁸⁷

⁵⁸⁵ SNP 17/3 258/3, Kano Province Annual Report, 1936, 1.

⁵⁸⁶ SNP 17/3 258/3, Kano Province Annual Report, 1936, 2, 4.

⁵⁸⁷ Kanoprof 5/1 1514, Gabasawa District Test Assessment 1929, 2-9; SNP 17/3 258/3, Kano Province Annual Report, 1937, 26, 64.

These products were usually exchanged at an informal level of trade among the indigenous people or taken to the numerous gazetted markets for sale. Through these sales, the local farmers usually obtained money for themselves for the satisfaction of other necessities;⁵⁸⁸ while the export crop farmers, livestock keepers and career traders in the Kano area used the avenue to acquire the desired food supplements for their daily needs.

The Kano livestock activities, too, were maintained onwards during the 1930s and 1940s, like the previous eras by a broader measure of the Fulani/Hausa herdsmen whose occupational lifestyles depended on them. Accordingly, there was a wide distribution of cattle, sheep, goats, donkeys, ostriches, and other types of animal husbandry and domestic livestock in the Kano Province. In terms of their economic importance, aside from the colonial tax collection from the animal keepers known as *Jangali*, these livestock were regular sources of supply for the hides and skins export trade, while many animals were transported southwards as sources of meat supply to other parts of Nigeria. For periodic assessment, records of the major livestock were usually documented by colonial administrative authorities. For example, below is the record of the distribution of different breeds of Cow in the Kano Province for the 1935 financial year.

Table 16: Distribution of Cow Breeds in Kano Province, 1935

Emirates	Village Cattle	Nomad	Pack	Total
Kano	351,100	83,096	-----	434,196
Kazaure	20,140	2,001	25	22,166
Hadejia	28,620	5,316	83	44,019

⁵⁸⁸ SNP 17/3 258/3, 29652, Kano Province Annual Report, 1937, 2.

Gumel	18,453	20,218	1,526	40,197
Grand Total	428,313	110,631	1,634	540,578

Source: Kanoprof, SNP 17/3 25673A, Kano Province Annual Report, Returns, 1.⁵⁸⁹

Significantly, the agricultural sector also witnessed some novel issues during the 1930s. These related to the government’s direct intervention and participation in the agricultural sector, as well as the introduction of the ‘mixed farming’ scheme to expand cash crop production, most importantly groundnut and cotton.⁵⁹⁰ The colonial mixed farming scheme was an arrangement whereby animals such as cattle were kept on the same expanse of land in which agricultural cultivation was being carried out. While the animals helped in the ploughing of the farmland, they were at the same time used in providing farmyard manure to the crops. The experiment of the mixed farming programme was first carried out by the Ministry of Agriculture, at Samaru, in the Zaria Province in 1929 – by the Institute of Agricultural Research which was established in 1922 as a specialized export crops research centre.⁵⁹¹ By the early 1930s, the scheme was introduced to the Kano area, with pioneering Experimental and Demonstration Farms opened at Bichi, Rano, Karaye, Taura, Gaya and Dan Gora – which were staffed and financed by the Native Administration.⁵⁹² These farms were expected to serve as recruiting grounds for would-be mixed farmers in the linking communities. In addition to the operation of the demonstration farms, the mixed farming practice was thrown open to the public for all interested farmers to participate in. As such, regular publicity was promoted by the Native Officers to the respective districts of Kano

⁵⁸⁹ SNP 17/3 25673A, Northern Provinces Secretariat: Kano Province Annual Report, Returns, 1935, 1.

⁵⁹⁰ Zubairu, *A Study of the Colonial Economy*, 122-130.

⁵⁹¹ “Institute for Agricultural Research, Federal Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development, Ahmadu Bello University, Zaria-Nigeria.” <https://iar.abu.edu.ng/pages/history.html>. Accessed 4 February 2019.

⁵⁹² SNP 17/2 Vol.1, 14686, Northern Provinces Secretariat: Kano Province Annual Report, 1930, 46; SNP 17/3 21326, Northern Provinces Secretariat: Kano Province Annual Report vol 1, 1933, 42.

on the need for farmers to adopt the methods of ‘mixed farming’ as the proper method for increasing yields.⁵⁹³

Thus, the mixed farming scheme received the full support of the colonial government through the Ministry of Agriculture. Under it, the farmers were expected to operate on a reasonably large scale of land and to obtain loan facilities from the Native Administration for the acquisition of farm animals and other necessary implements. As part of the new regulations for the scheme, specific requirements were needed from the farmers for them to be supplied with cattle and implements by the Ministry of Agriculture. These requirements included that the farmer should have the farming ability, suitable accommodation for his animals paid his entrance fees, and possess at least 10 acres of farmland.⁵⁹⁴

However, despite the basic setting and the continuous publicity associated with it, the mixed farming scheme did not witness appreciable success during the 1930s. One of the primary reasons why success was limited is the fact that the programme was too elitist, as persons with links to the native administration were able to access the loan, but not farmers. In this regard, Zubairu has argued that:

The (mixed farming) program though was introduced in order to achieve some sets of objectives, it at the end of the day became futile. This is because the beneficiaries of the loan scheme meant for the exercise were mostly people in authority and their relations, and they subjected the funds meant for the exercise to their personal use. This in effect undermined the objective of the exercise.⁵⁹⁵

Besides, a majority of Kano’s farmers were conservative in their reliance on family labour and traditional agricultural practices, without regard for proof of what the new method could bring. This convinced only a few farmers to subscribe to the newly introduced colonial ‘mixed farming’

⁵⁹³ SNP 17/3 21326, Kano Province Annual Report, vol 1, 1933, 43.

⁵⁹⁴ Kanoprof, 11703/896 Vol.V, Circular from the Civil Secretary, Northern Region to the Residents, All Provinces: Expansion of Mixed Farming, 1952, 1, pp. 2.

⁵⁹⁵ Zubairu, *A Study of the Colonial Economy*, 132-124.

methods. For instance, the table on the next page shows the lists of the numbers of mixed farmers in the various Kano districts for the year 1937. Also, in the official records of 1939, the comparative figures of the numbers of mixed farmers in Kano for the periods of September 1937 to 1939 were recorded thus: “30/09/1937: **342**; 30/09/1938: **398**; and 30/09/1939: **411**.”⁵⁹⁶ Therefore, these minimal results necessitated further improvement on the scheme in the 1950s.

Table 17: Numbers of Mixed Farmers in Kano Province for the year 1937

Emirates	1st January 1937	31st December 1937
Kano	226	281
Kazaure	26	44
Gumel	17	26
Hadejia	2	14
Total	271	365

Source: SNP 17/3 258/3, 29652, Kano Province Annual Report, 1937, 31-32.

Taxation: During the 1930s, until the end of the Depression – taxation in its various forms – continued to be a cardinal point of the colonial occupation of Kano and other parts of Nigeria. In Kano, as in the earlier periods, the Native Officials usually collected the taxes from the people on behalf of the other higher hierarchies of the central colonial authority. The proceeds of such taxes were earmarked accordingly for the payment of colonial officers and administrative staff salaries, implementation of development projects, and remitted home to Britain.⁵⁹⁷

However, from the early 1930s, there was the intensification of the taxation system to make up for the revenue shortage from the decline of export prices. Owing to this, first, active efforts

⁵⁹⁶ SNP 17/4 R 32098, Kano Province Annual Report, 1939, 18-19, 48.

⁵⁹⁷ Lord Lugard. *The Dual Mandate in British Tropical Africa*, 1st Edition. London: Blackwood and Sons, 1922, 230; Zubairu, *A Study of the Colonial Economy*, 100-101.

were carried out periodically to do an overall census of the township and rural communities of the various districts of the Kano Province, to have a better knowledge of residential areas, gender status, occupational variation, and age composition of the taxable population.⁵⁹⁸ During the colonial period, taxes were usually exacted from the adult male population. Secondly, Kano districts were thoroughly mapped out by specialized teams of surveyors, which made it possible for colonial political officers to carry out periodic tax assessment of the component communities and their land acreage – since taxes were assessed based on crops acreage.⁵⁹⁹ This pattern of an established tax valuation is known in the indigenous Hausa language as *Taki*. Also, statistics of cattle (for *Jangali*) and any other economic activities in the entire area – by both natives and foreigners – were regularly kept by the administrative officers for their respective annual taxes’ assessment and collection.⁶⁰⁰

Another notable feature of the 1930s onwards’ taxation was that, unlike the earlier periods when taxes were collected during the middle months of the year from May to July, the practice was now changed towards the latter parts of the year, particularly during the harvest periods from October to November.⁶⁰¹ Even, at times when the harvest periods were delayed as a result of unusual weather and environmental factors, the collection of taxes from farmers was shifted ahead, pending the end of the financial year. Also, for the efficiency of native officials, and to avoid fraud from the indigenous people, the collection of taxes was separated into two major parts: *Jangali* – which was carried out in the early-middle parts of the year; and General Tax – which collection was fixed for the harvest periods, towards the last quarter of the year.⁶⁰² Also, during this period,

⁵⁹⁸ SNP 17/2, 1324: Annual Report – Kano Province 1&2, 1934, by H. O. Lindsell, 9.

⁵⁹⁹ SNP 1708, Vol. 1: Revenue Survey, Kano Emirate, 1930-1935, 2.

⁶⁰⁰ Kanoprof 5/1, 1523: Test Assessment of Rano District, 1935, 1-12.

⁶⁰¹ Kad Min of Agric, Zaria 3503, Vol. 1: The Time of Tax Collection and its Effect on Agricultural Production, August 1937, 1.

⁶⁰² Min/Agric, Zaria 3503, Vol. 1, August 1937, 1, pp. 4.

poor yield of crops and low prices affected the active collection of taxes by making the process to be a protracted and challenging exercise.⁶⁰³ However, irrespective of the condition or nature of the performance of the peoples' economic activities, taxes were always appropriated and collected from the Kano areas – whether immediate or delayed. More so, tax assessment and rates of the collection were periodically increased by the Native Administration to meet up with the extensive demands of the colonial occupation; without considering the sapping nature of such taxation on the indigenous people of entire districts of Kano.⁶⁰⁴ The figures in the following tables 18, 19, 20 and 21 are revealing examples of the increasing rates of taxes from Kano Province in the 1930s. Even after the years captured here, the taxes collected from the Kano area kept on increasing.

Table 18: Records of *Jangali* (Cattle Taxes) Collected in British Pound and number of Cattle in Kano Province, 1931-1935

Emirate	1931		1932		1933		1934		1935	
	Jangali	Cattle	Jangali	Cattle	Jangali	Cattle	Jangali	Cattle	Jangali	Cattle
Kano	43,146	431,459	39,302	393,016	31,557	420,617	30,267	408,226	32,564	434,196
Kazaure	2,561	25,610	2,952	39,366	1,746	23,283	1,744	23,252	1,662	22,166
Hadejia	3,731	37,238	3,672	36,472	2,952	39,366	3,287	43,771	3,301	44,019
Gumel	2,773	27,735	3,093	30,668	2,242	29,870	2,630	34,764	3,014	40,197
Total	£52,211	522,042	£48,370	483,218	£38,497	513,279	£38,278	510,013	£40,451	540,578

Sources: SNP 17/3 21326, Kano Province Annual Report, 1933, 14; SNP 17/3 25673, Kano Province Annual Report, 1935, 21.

Table 19: Population and Records of General Taxes Collected in British Pound from Kano Province, 1931-1932

1932 General Population & Taxation Assessment (in British Pound)					
Emirates	Adult Males	Adult Females	Children	Total	Tax Assessment (£)

⁶⁰³ SNP 17/4 R 30847, E. K. Featherstone, Kano Province Annual Report, 1938, 3; SNP 17/4 R 32098, Kano Province Annual Report, 1939, 1.

⁶⁰⁴ Zubairu, *A Study of the Colonial Economy*, 105-107.

Kano	715,346	682,616	586,860	1,984,822	259,051
Hadejia	57,869	64,815	71,388	194,072	17,037
Daura	28,910	32,771	44,248	105,929	10,119
Gumel	19,842	28,893	26,117	74,852	5,997
Kazaure	21,853	22,863	21,887	66,603	7,649
Total	843,820	831,958	750,500	2,426,278	£299,853

Source: SNP 17/3 21326, Kano Province Annual Report, 1933, 15.

Table 20: Population and Records of General Taxes Collected in British Pound from Kano Province, 1932-1933

1933 General Population & Taxation Assessment (in British Pound)					
Emirates	Adult Males	Adult Females	Children	Total	Tax Assessment (£)
Kano	706,920	678,903	586,376	1,972,199	257,011
Hadejia	57,988	67,075	73,917	198,980	17,081
Daura	29,509	33,500	46,862	109,871	10,328
Gumel	20,734	31,768	29,840	82,342	6,265
Kazaure	21,890	22,814	22,096	66,800	7,661
Total	837,041	834,060	759,091	2,430,192	£298,346

Source: SNP 17/3 21326, Kano Province Annual Report, 1933, 15.

Table 21: Population of Adult Males and Records of General Taxes Collected in British Pound from Kano Province, 1934 and 1935

	1934		1935	
Emirate	Adult Males	Tax Assessment (£)	Adult Males	Tax Assessment (£)

Kano	699,224	240,349	676,158	253,486
Kazaure	21,202	6,930	21,322	7,491
Hadejia	56,597	16,667	58,090	17,120
Gumel	21,073	6,367	21,197	6,402
Total	798,096	£270,313	776,767	£284,499

Source: SNP 17/3 25673, Kano Province Annual Report, 1935, 22.

Commerce and Trade: Activities relating to commerce and trade were also characterized by the dynamics which continuously shaped the colonial economy of Kano and its environs from the 1930s onwards. In terms of influence, the colonial economic and commercial activities of the entire area were geared towards external, export trade. As pointed out earlier, among the articles of trade, groundnut continued to occupy a towering position for exports from the Kano area. In fact, according to official sources, “the prosperity of Kano Province all through the colonial period depended primarily on the groundnut trade.”⁶⁰⁵ However, being an export-oriented product, the financial proceeds from the groundnut trade were always profoundly affected by the price of the product at the world market, on the one hand; as well as the amount of tonnage, which was produced and sold from the entire area, on the other hand. Hence, as discussed above, the global economic depression of the 1930s, for instance, had a tremendous impact on the course, price and output of Kano’s groundnut export trade.

Next, in order of importance, in external commercial relations was the hides and skins trade. These products maintained an excellent steady supply all through the 1930s, as their prices

⁶⁰⁵ SNP 17/4 R 32098, Kano Province Annual Report, 1939, 50, pp. 154.

were not too subjected to the upheaval fluctuations of the trade in oilseeds – such as groundnut.⁶⁰⁶

Thus, there was an improvement in the scale of the exports of hides and skins from Kano during these periods. For example, the table below about the export of these products from 1937 to 1939 shows their increasing supply from the Kano area.

Table 22: Hides and Skins Railing from Kano, 1937-1939

Products	1937	1938	1939
Hides	1832	1285	1539
Skins	1789	1860	2513

Source: SNP 17/4 R 32098, Kano Province Annual Report, 1939, 52.

The outbreak of World War II also helped to promote the commercial exports of hides and skins from Kano as they were demanded and shipped to American markets; in addition to the existing European markets for them. This not only encouraged the supply of these products but also boosted their export prices. This is explained in the comparative table of the pre-war and during war export prices of hides and skin, as captured by the 1939 end of year report, as follows:

Table 23: Comparative Prices of Export of Hides and Skins in Pre-War and during World War II

Products	Qualities	Pre-War Prices Per Bale (in British Penny)	World War 11 Prices Per Bale (in British Penny)
Goat Skins	1 st Quality	1/5¼	1/7
”	2 nd Quality	1/2	1/5
”	3 rd Quality	½	1/5

⁶⁰⁶ SNP 17/4 R 32098, Kano Province Annual Report, 1939, 51-52.

Hides	1 st Quality	3 ³ / ₈	5 ¹ / ₂
”	2 nd Quality	2 ¹ / ₂	4 ¹ / ₂
”	3 rd Quality	1 ¹ / ₂	3 ¹ / ₂
Sheep Skins	1 st Quality	8	10 ¹ / ₂
”	2 nd Quality	4 ³ / ₄	7 ¹ / ₂

Source: SNP 17/4 R 32098, Kano Province Annual Report, 1939, 52.

This increasing tempo in the hides and skins trade was sustained onwards until the end of the Second World War. Positively, aside from contributing to the treasury of the government, the upward trends helped in improving the finances of the Kano people, merchants and trading firms that participated in the commercial circles of these products. For instance, it is on record that in 1939 alone, “the cash gotten by the peasantry and middlemen concerned in the (hides and skins) trade, amounted to approximately £260,000.”⁶⁰⁷

In addition to the significant products, several new articles of trade were added to the export products from Kano, which helped to expand the economic scale of the associated areas during the 1930s and beyond. Some of these minor products included clarified butter (Ghee), guinea-fowl eggs, beeswax, and gutta-percha.⁶⁰⁸ On the other hand, several imported products were continually brought into Kano, and distributed by the trading firms and merchants and were also available for sale at the popular markets all over the province.

A significant feature of the commercial activities of Kano during the 1930s was the expanding roles played by the Syrian, Lebanese, and other non-European foreign merchants. These

⁶⁰⁷ SNP 17/4 R 32098, Kano Province Annual Report, 1939, 52, pp. 158.

⁶⁰⁸ SNP 17/3 25673, Kano Province Annual Report, 1935, by H. O. Lindsell, 4-5; SNP 17/3 258/3, 29652, Kano Province Annual Report, 1937, 4; SNP 17/4 R 32098, Kano Province Annual Report, 1939, 52-53, pp.159.

businessmen had extensive networks linking them up with their affiliates in Lagos, Sierra Leone, the Arab world, and other parts of the globe – through which they maintained regular contacts and created strong financial bases.⁶⁰⁹ Dan Asabe has demonstrated how some of these non-European and non-indigenous traders such as Saul Raccah, Ferris George and many others made fortunes in Kano before and during the depression.⁶¹⁰ During the economic depression years, these traders instilled an atmosphere of competition in the Kano markets – which to a great extent helped to forestall the monopolistic tendencies of the European firms. Also, as a result of their strong financial base, these non-European foreigners were able to move steadily into the cattle and kolanut trade of Kano – thereby edging out indigenous traders from their middlemen roles in these and other key economic areas of the booming trade in Kano.⁶¹¹ Owing to this, the majority of the Hausa/Fulani middlemen were confined to sub-middlemen levels, which impoverished them the more, while the Syrian and other alien traders were taking full advantages of Kano’s economy by occupying the central middlemen position between European trading firms or trading directly with the indigenes in the export and import trade. The presence of these alien traders was felt in the Kano area either in the growing population of their settlement known as ‘Syrian Quarters’ or in the open field of competitive commercial relations in the entire province.⁶¹² From multiple angles, the expansion of the non-British foreigners’ interests in Kano was beneficial to the colonial authorities as land/residential rents and commercial duties were collected from them which added to the financial resources of the colonial administrative authorities. The Levantine traders were able to compete against both African merchants and European commercial houses because they

⁶⁰⁹ KSHCB 2568/1933: Kano Provincial Gazetteer 1933, Vol. II, 52.

⁶¹⁰ Dan Asabe, *Comparative Biographies*, 66-67.

⁶¹¹ SNP 17/2 Vol.1, 14686, Kano Province Annual Report, 1930, 46, 185.

⁶¹² SNP 17/2 Vol.1, 14686, Kano Province Annual Report, 1930, 53, 203; SNP 17/3 21326, Kano Province Annual Report, 1933, 82; SNP 17/3 25673A, Kano Province Annual Report, Returns, 1935, 25.

had the capital. The capital was essential in trade in Kano and they had the access to the capital outside, Nigeria which they used to establish their business.

5.4 Infrastructure Development: The 1930s also witnessed further expansion in different aspects of infrastructure developments in Kano Province and its environs. During this period, the construction of the basic infrastructure was under the authority of the Public Works Department of the Kano Province Native Administration – which was staffed by a team of specialized European supervisors and a large pool of African artisans and other native workers who were engaged as labourers. In later years, some of the construction works were given out as ‘contract projects’ by the Native Administration to designated corporate bodies, for the sake of specialization and to reduce the expanding scope of the Public Works Department. Also, the facilities that were built could be classified into two broad categories, first, those that served the primary purposes of the colonial administrative centres and their component staff; and second, those that were geared towards the welfare of the general population and the associated development of the overall society. Some of the focused aspects of infrastructure during these years include water and electricity, health facilities, education, and transportation developments.

Water and Electricity: Among the significant infrastructure developments that drew attention to the Kano area, more than other parts of Northern Nigeria, during the 1930s was the Kano Native Administration's joint water and electricity scheme. This dual project was started in 1928 and completed in 1931, with a total cost of £333,000 out of which only £20,000 was supplied by the Colonial Administrative Headquarters in Lagos through the office of the Northern Nigeria Secretariat in Kaduna, while the rest was paid by the Kano Native Administration.⁶¹³ The water

⁶¹³ KSHCB 2568/1933: Kano Provincial Gazetteer 1933, Vol. II, 54.

part of the scheme was carried out by Construction Engineers for the Native Administration selected by Messers Sir Alexander Binnie, Son and Deacon – who designed the project. On its part, the electricity work was constructed by the Public Works Department of Nigeria on reimbursement from the Native Administration.⁶¹⁴ Below is the description of the actual cost of the joined projects.

Table 24: Financial Costs of the Kano’s Waterworks and Electricity Projects

Project Lists	Costs (in British Pounds)
Preliminary Work, Housing, etc.	£20,000
Water Works Construction	£219,000
Electric Power Construction	£94,000
Total	£333,000

Source: KSHCB 2568/1933: Kano Provincial Gazetteer 1933, Vol. II, 54.

The dual projects were commissioned by the Emir of Kano – Abdullahi Bayero Dan Abbas (1926-1953) - on February 21st, 1931 in the presence of the Resident of the Kano Province, Mr. H. O. Lindsell, and the Lieutenant Governor of Northern Nigeria Provinces, Cyril Wilson Alexander. Aside from these top dignitaries, the inauguration witnessed the presence of about 50,000 spectators. The projects brought fame to Kano Province, thereby spreading the popularity of Kano City to all parts of Northern Nigeria and beyond. Notably, the Kano Provincial Gazetteer described the joint scheme as “the largest public utility scheme financed in Nigeria by a local Native Administration.”⁶¹⁵

⁶¹⁴ KSHCB 2568/1933, Vol. II, 54.

⁶¹⁵ KSHCB 2568/1933, Vol. II, 54.

In its structural system, the primary sources of supply to the waterworks project were five wells that were sunk in the bed of the Challawa River, which is about twenty kilometres distant from the Kano Township. The maximum yield of the wells when the project started was between 1,893 to 2,272 litres of water per day. From the Challawa wells, the water was pumped by electric power generated by the Power Station constructed on the riverbank, to the reservoir, which was mounted on top of the Goron Dutse Hill within Kano City. The reservoir was installed with a Chlorinating Plant for hygienic treatment and it had a capacity of 5,679 litres.⁶¹⁶ In terms of supply, this was done through the use of gravitational force whereby water was passed through the primary distribution pipe which adjoined the reservoir's base to all the connecting mains that linked the different parts of the city and other destinations where the pipe-borne water was connected to. These linking pipes were channelled directly to sources where the population could access the water for usage. While some of the water-accessible destinations were public taps, others were connected to private homes with fitted facilities for piped water.

Electricity too was connected, tapped directly from the Generating Turbine Plant at the Challawa Riverbank to an internal Power - House which was stationed adjacent to the Goron Dutse Hill Water Reservoir. From the Power - House, the electricity was distributed with wooden poles to the different sections of Kano where it was supplied to consumers. Also, at its inception, street lights of about 50 miles linked to the main power supply were installed in Kano City.⁶¹⁷ From these take-off positions in 1931, the supply capacities of both pipe-borne water and electricity continued to expand steadily in scale to various parts of Kano to meet up with the expanding population demand for the consumption of these modern facilities. For example, it is on record

⁶¹⁶ KSHCB 2568/1933, Vol. II, 54.

⁶¹⁷ KSHCB 2568/1933, Vol. II, 55.

that the Kano waterworks' overall production capacity increased from 86 million gallons in 1932 to 134 million gallons in 1934.⁶¹⁸ This is also true of electricity supply, as consumers were added in geometric numbers of 414 new users, in addition to the combined pioneer users of 402 homes for both 1931 and 1932.⁶¹⁹ These upward trends continued as more water and electricity were supplied to new areas of Kano. Water was piped to the newer houses that had facilities for such and water was provided to the rest of the city through community taps. However, the majority of the people in the villages still depended on wells, rivers, and streams for their water supply. The same applied to electricity; it was available mostly to colonial officials, members of the aristocrat, offices, but it was the beginning of something significant for an area that lacked such amenities.

In terms of management, both the waterworks and electricity projects were initially coordinated by the Public Works Department of the Kano Native Administration until 1935 when the regulation of electricity was separated and transferred to the control of the Electrical Engineer-in-Chief of the Kano Province. Also, apart from the ones which were consumed freely by the offices of the Native Administration and other designated colonial quarters, regular charges/rates were collected from the general users of these facilities.⁶²⁰ For instance, the next table contains the list of the number of water sales in gallons to both public and private consumers during the first three years of the beginning of the project.

Table 25: Records of Water Sales in Gallons in Kano City, 1931-1933

Years	Public Standpipes' Consumers	Metered Consumers	Total
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⁶¹⁸ SNP 17/2, 1324: Annual Report – Kano Province 1&2, 1934, by H. O. Lindsell, 10.

⁶¹⁹ SNP 17/3 21326, Kano Province Annual Report, 1933, 33, pp. 103.

⁶²⁰ SNP 17/3 25673, Kano Province Annual Report, 1935, by H. O. Lindsell, 8.

1931	14,400,000	14,500,000	28,900,000
1932	54,444,000	8,820,000	63,264,000
1933	72,638,285	25,533,772	98,172,057

Source: SNP 17/3 21326, Kano Province Annual Report, 1933, 30.⁶²¹

To a high degree, these two functioning projects were revolutionary, as they further helped in facilitating the urban outlook of Kano City, by transforming it from just the largest settlement in Northern Nigeria into a renowned centre where residents (both indigenous and foreigners) could enjoy modern living.

In addition to the pipe-borne water supply from the Goron Dutse Hill Reservoir, the Native Administration of Kano embarked on rapid exercises of digging wells in different communities of the province from the 1930s onwards. The well-sinking programme was placed under the Geological Department of the Native Administration. Through the programme, several new wells were dug in different parts of the Kano, Kazaure, Hadejia, and Gumel districts. For instance, in 1935 alone, the number of new wells sunk in the different emirates indicated Kano: 32; Hadejia and Gumel: 27; and Kazaure: 18.⁶²² The projects were geared towards supplementing existing traditional wells, as many communities in the Kano Province were facing the urgent challenge of scarcity of water and its concomitant negative effect on the overall yield of crops. Thus, these new wells were meant to be a ready source of manual water supply to the residents of the various districts of Kano for their daily domestic needs and for the irrigation of crops, when necessary. However, irrespective of the range of the well-digging projects, I will argue here that while these supportive facilities were beneficial to the indigenous people of these communities in encouraging

⁶²¹ SNP 17/3 21326, Kano Province Annual Report, 1933, 30, 100.

⁶²² SNP 17/3 25673, Kano Province Annual Report, 1935, by H. O. Lindsell, 3, 8.

population concentration as well as in alleviating water shortages and boosting their agricultural practices, they were also in the long run favourable to the Native Administration as the continuous boost in the people's agricultural and other associated economic activities increased the tax assessment of the administrative authorities and the propensity of the people to pay tax promptly.

Health Facilities: unlike the previous eras, the 1930s onwards experienced some significant developments in the health sector in Kano Province as many hospitals, and dispensary centers were built during this period. Nevertheless, the locations and patterns of the medical facilities were peculiar, depending on the population that they were each meant to serve. Also, out of the entire province, the Kano district received more attention than the rest of the emirate put together, as there were three leading hospitals established in it while in all the other districts there was only the one which was later built in Hadejia district.

Among the major health facilities in the Kano district was the European Hospital which was built by the government and was opened in March 1930. Located within Kano Township, this hospital was strictly meant to serve the medical needs of the European population, which was only about 385 persons at the time it was completed.⁶²³ At its opening, the European Hospital had a 12-bed structure and was staffed by a Senior Medical Officer, a Senior Nurse, and two Nursing Sisters – all of whom were Europeans (Britons).⁶²⁴ A second crucial medical facility was the Native Administration Hospital, which was opened in 1931. This facility was also known as 'Kano City Hospital' and was built for the natives. It was very large with 120-bed spaces at the beginning – which was to be extended from time to time to meet its increasing patronage. The sections of the Native Administration Hospital included the comprehensive treatment, female wards, and

⁶²³ SNP 17/2 Vol.1, 14686, Kano Province Annual Report, 1930, 33, pp.125

⁶²⁴ KSHCB 2568/1933, Vol. II, 56.

maternity welfare unit. In terms of staff composition, the hospital at the early period was staffed by a Medical Doctor and a Nursing Sister who were detailed to it by the Medical Department of the Native Administration, while the African and general administration of the hospital was in the hands of a Warden usually appointed by the Emir.⁶²⁵ Besides, small fees were usually charged at this hospital for those who were able to pay for its services.

The third main hospital in Kano was the African Hospital located at Fagge outside the city walls near Sabon Gari. Established earlier in 1926, this health facility was later refurbished in the 1930s with more attention to it by the authorities of the Northern Provinces Secretariat and the Kano Native Administration. By the early 1930s, the hospital had about 130-bed spaces that attended to the needs of natives and migrants from the south who were working in the various administrative departments and commercial firms in the area including the government and commercial clerical class, police, and military officials. The European staff of this facility by 1932 consisted of a Medical Doctor and a Nursing Sister.⁶²⁶ A dominant feature of all these medical facilities was that they were all equipped with pipe-borne water and an electric power supply.

Apart from the above hospitals established in the Kano district settlements, a series of medical works were extended to the other districts in the form of 'Bush Dispensaries.' For instance, by the early 1930s, ten dispensaries had been built in the external districts of Kano in the communities of Gwarzo, Wudil, Dawaki, Bichi, Dambatta, Ringin, Hadejia, Daura, Gumel, and Kazaure.⁶²⁷ The primary staff of these remote centres were dispensary attendants, who after receiving a year of training at the Kano City Hospital were dispatched to give simple treatment and stock medicines for the needs of the inhabitants of these communities. It was not until February

⁶²⁵ KSHCB 2568/1933, Vol. II, 56; SNP 17/3 21326, Kano Province Annual Report, 1933, 34.

⁶²⁶ KSHCB 2568/1933, Vol. II, 56.

⁶²⁷ SNP 17/3 21326, Kano Province Annual Report, 1933, 34, pp. 115.

1935 that the only external hospital outside the Kano city was completed and opened at Hadejia by the Native Administration.⁶²⁸ This new hospital was established to serve the emirates of Hadejia, Gumel, the outlying district of Nguru in the Bornu Province and other near and far areas. It was also run by the Native Administration as a small fee-paying medical centre for those who could afford it. It should be noted that during the beginning periods, the Hadejia Native Administration Hospital witnessed very low patronage as the indigenous population was still heavily dependent on the miraculous ‘Auyo Water’ which many people believed, could solve all their medical and spiritual problems.⁶²⁹ However, over time, they gradually sought the advanced medical alternative of the Hadejia Hospital.

Other specialized medical facilities in the Kano Province during these periods included the Leprosy Colony founded at the remote town of Sumaila in June 1935 by the Native Administration and the New Leper Settlement which was later established in 1937 and managed by the Sudan Interior Mission at a site about 10 miles from Kano city.⁶³⁰

The various established hospitals in the Kano Province were major avenues under which medical treatments were provided for many persons – both indigenes and foreigners. Below is an example of the categories and number of treatments provided by the major medical facilities in 1933 and 1935.

Table 26: Attendants Records of Hospitals in Kano Province, 1933 & 1935

Hospitals	Years	In Patients (Males)	In Patients (Females)	Outpatients (Males)	Outpatients (Females)	Deaths	Attendance

⁶²⁸ SNP 17/3 25673, Kano Province Annual Report, 1935, by H. O. Lindsell, 5, pp. 15.

⁶²⁹ SNP 17/3 25673, Kano Province Annual Report, 1935, by H. O. Lindsell, 6-7, pp. 16.

⁶³⁰ SNP 17/3 25673, Kano Province Annual Report, 1935, by H. O. Lindsell, 35, pp. 137; SNP 17/3 258/3, 29652, Kano Province Annual Report, 1937, 10.

European Hospital	1933	97	23	438	65	1	990
	1935	78		350		----	1,113
Native Administration Hospital	1933	925	457	4,619	2,021	81	166,461
	1935	3,142		8,577		143	-----
Fagge Hospital	1933	1,447	370	5,345	1,553	87	41,073
	1935	265		3,356		20	54.07 (Daily Average)
Hadejia Hospital	1935	78		407		-----	4,500

Sources: SNP 17/3 21326, Kano Province Annual Report, 1933, 33-34; SNP 17/3 25673, Kano Province Annual Report, 1935, by H. O. Lindsell, 33-35.

Regular treatment, immunization/vaccination, and sanitation exercises were usually carried out by the Native Administration Ministry of Health. However, a dispassionate assessment of the available health facilities and the manner of their treatment reveals that, on the one hand, significant improvements were made in this sector compared to the available systems of the years before 1930. On the other hand, certain features were associated with the nature of health development in the entire Kano Province which left much to be desired in certain areas. First, from the high level of the prioritization of health for European officials in the Kano areas – despite their low populations – it could be seen that the colonial health development continued to remain lopsided in favour of the colonialists. Second, the available medical facilities were too insignificant, especially in relative terms to the massive population and expansive geographical size of the Kano Province. Even the medical centres were all highly understaffed. Regardless of these limitations, the health system of the vast Kano area would have been worse off without the visible interventions made into the sector by the colonial authorities.

Educational Development: By the late 1920s, renewed efforts were directed towards educational development in the Kano Province, which expanded rapidly from the 1930s onwards. The schools established in the area were in different categories based on the levels of education and specialized areas of focus, including Elementary, Middle, Koranic/Islamic, Girls, and Mission Schools.

First among these, were the ‘Elementary Schools,’ whose curriculums were designed for the fundamental training of pupils either to be transited to other higher levels of education or to be equipped with necessary knowledge which would enable their graduates to work as clerical officers and other junior categories of wage-earning employment.⁶³¹ In 1930, there were eleven Elementary Schools in the Kano Province with seven established in the district of Kano and one each in the four districts of Hadejia, Gumel, Daura, and Kazaure respectively.⁶³² By 1939, the total number of these schools had increased to twenty-one. Also, while the recorded numbers of the pupils of the elementary schools were 452 in 1930, they had increased up to an average figure of 1,300 by 1938 – with about 80 girls being part of the latter figure.⁶³³ For the ‘Middle School,’ it was an advanced level of education where students were trained in specialized skills which could enable them to take top administrative jobs. The only Middle School in the Province during this period was located in Kano City, and it was opened in March 1930 with a total of 68 students, whose distribution in the component emirates was Kano: 42, Hadejia: 11, Daura: 11, Kazaure: 3,

⁶³¹ SNP 17/2 Vol.1, 14686, Kano Province Annual Report, 1930, 36.

⁶³² KSHCB 2568/1933, Vol. II, 55.

⁶³³ SNP 17/3 21326, Kano Province Annual Report, 1933, 34; SNP 17/4 R 30847, E. K. Featherstone, Kano Province Annual Report, 1938, 6.

and Gumel: 1. By the late 1930s, the students' number increased to 155.⁶³⁴ Both the Elementary and Middle schools were administered and fully funded by the Native Administration.

In terms of coverage, the Koranic Schools continued to top the educational system of Kano and its environs during the 1930s and beyond as a result of the strong foundation of the Islamic religion and their preference by the indigenous rulers and people of Kano. For instance, by 1930, there were about 10,000 Koranic Schools in Kano Province with a total figure of 46,000 students in the respective districts. Further interesting development in Islamic education was the establishment of the Law School in 1928. This school was soon developed into a renowned centre for recruitment into various specialized aspects of legal studies based on the tenets of Islam.

The 'Girls' Centre' founded in August 1930 was also a significant centre of educational development in Kano. However, the centre was patronized mainly by the children of the ruling class and other enlightened persons, as the culture discouraged female education. For example, the centre started with only 15 students, which increased to 34 in 1934, reached a peak of 52 in 1937, and dropped to 48 by the year 1938.⁶³⁵

Mission Schools were also founded in the Kano area in the 1930s, especially after the establishment of some of the Christian Missions' strongholds in the Sabon-Gari settlement. The notable pioneer Missions in Kano in the early 1930s included the Roman Catholic Mission, Christian Missionary Society, Christian Missions in Many Lands, Baptist Mission, United Native African Church, Methodist Mission, and Sudan Interior Mission.⁶³⁶ By 1935, there were four

⁶³⁴ SNP 17/2 Vol.1, 14686, Kano Province Annual Report, 1930, 37, pp. 147; SNP 17/4 R 30847, E. K. Featherstone, Kano Province Annual Report, 1938, 6, pp. 20.

⁶³⁵ SNP 17/2 Vol.1, 14686, Kano Province Annual Report, 1930, 37; KSHCB 2568/1933, Vol. II, 55-56; SNP 17/4 R 30847, E. K. Featherstone, Kano Province Annual Report, 1938, 31.

⁶³⁶ SNP 17/3 25673A, Kano Province Annual Report, Returns, 1935, 25.

Mission Schools established in Kano out of which two were built by the Roman Catholic Church, while one each was founded by the Christian Missionary Society and Sudan Interior Mission respectively.⁶³⁷ These schools were mainly attended by children of the residents of the Sabon-Gari and other non-Muslim settlers in the Kano area.

Educational development in Kano was more developed from the 1930s upwards. The emerging schools served as complements to, as well as multiple channels of alternative learning to the long-held tradition of Islamic education in the Kano. Through the schools, many persons gained the opportunity of being engaged in different viable employments, which in turn helped in the improvement of their socio-economic lifestyles. Also, the products of these schools were able to later fit into the top leadership positions in the post-independence period. Regardless of the above, the educational system was also fraught with specific challenges. First, despite the series of campaigns about their advantages, the various modern European-based curriculum schools experienced low patronage, unlike the Koranic Schools because of the strong Islamic orientation of the indigenous people. Second, there was the underlying problem of adequate teachers to man the growing educational centres in the various districts of the Kano province. Also, apart from main the administrative (clerical and teacher education), commercial, craftsmanship and religious focus of the curriculums of the various schools – which were in line with the extended colonial ideals of “limiting the developmental capacity of the natives”.⁶³⁸ Thus, it is my argument here that, amongst others, the curriculum and focused areas of these schools were not comprehensive enough in the training of students in science, technological and other more advanced skills which could

⁶³⁷ SNP 17/3 25673, Kano Province Annual Report, 1935, by H. O. Lindsell, 29, pp. 107.

⁶³⁸ Ezekiel T. Ebitu. “The Impact of Colonialism on the Development of Marketing in Nigeria: A Dyadic Analysis.” *British Journal of Marketing Studies* 4, No.2, March 2016, 5.

enable the indigenous people to grasp the complex mindset in the independent development of their immediate and broader societies.

Transportation Development: The transportation sector, particularly roads and bridges were expanded in scale from the 1930s by the colonial authorities, in addition to the existing channels created by them – that were discussed in the previous chapter. Among these, was a laudable event, the opening of the Wudil Bridge – constructed in 1928 by a collaboration of the Colonial Government and the Kano Native Administration with the sum of £30,752⁶³⁹ – which according to official sources in 1933, was “the longest road bridge in Nigeria being 880ft in length.”⁶⁴⁰ Zubairu stressed the continuous importance of the Wudil Bridge throughout the colonial period when he noted that:

The completion of the bridge was of great significance to the British colonialists as it served as means of linking Kano City with eastern and southeastern districts of ... Sumaila, Gaya, Birnin Kudu, Jahun and Harbo which served as major centres of groundnut production in Kano Emirate.⁶⁴¹

Two concrete and steel bridges were financed by the Native Administration in 1930 for the Kano-Daura-Zinder road which linked the Kano Province with the French colonial territories northward. Also, about 400 miles of all-seasons roads were being maintained in the province during the 1930s, while the majority of the shorter network routes were made accessible by periodic macadamizing.⁶⁴² Other constructed road-related works during this period included the 4¼ Waterworks main road to Kumbotso District headquarters, Hadejia–Mallam Madori road, Gumel–Jeke road, Madagu and the Bornu boundary link connecting the Kano–Nguru road, reconstruction

⁶³⁹ Kanoprof Provincial Annual Report 1928, pp.52.

⁶⁴⁰ KSHCB 2568/1933, Vol. II, 53.

⁶⁴¹ Zubairu, *A Study of the Colonial Economy*, 99.

⁶⁴² KSHCB 2568/1933, Vol. II, 53.

of the Kano section of the Kano–Katsina road, and continuous maintenance of several existing road networks.⁶⁴³

Undoubtedly, these road networks had the advantages of inter-linkages between the administrative centres and the component communities, enhancing speedy and more straightforward accessibility, improving communication, and increasing the scale of urbanization around the major settlements. However, the manner of inter-connectivity of these roads and the other ones constructed in the previous eras shows that they largely served the exploitation policy of colonialism as the roads were linked to major sources of groundnuts and other raw materials, thereby facilitating the easier transportation of these products by trucks via the feeder roads to major roads running to the railway lines where they were carted away to the coast for export to their European and other overseas destinations.⁶⁴⁴ More so, the majority of the overall infrastructure construction projects were carried out with forced labour – whereby the indigenous people were paid little or nothing in comparative terms to the supervising officials of the government and engineers of the construction companies. While the popular views of the supporters of colonialism claimed that the road construction projects led to the development of the colonies,⁶⁴⁵ I will argue against this by supporting the view of scholars who have used empirical facts to justify that the transportation-based projects were channels of colonial exploitation.⁶⁴⁶ Therefore, no matter the range of the expansion of road projects in the Kano Province from the

⁶⁴³ SNP 17/2 Vol.1, 14686, Kano Province Annual Report, 1930, 23, pp. 89; SNP 17/3 21326, Kano Province Annual Report, 1933, 26-27, pp. 87; SNP 17/3 258/3, 29652, Kano Province Annual Report, 1937, 12, pp. 26; SNP 17/4 R 30847, E. K. Featherstone, Kano Province Annual Report, 1938, 8, pp. 29; SNP 17/4 R 32098, Kano Province Annual Report, 1939, 63-64, pp.189.

⁶⁴⁴ SNP 17/3 258/3, 29652, Kano Province Annual Report, 1937, 12, pp. 26.

⁶⁴⁵ Lugard, *The Dual Mandate*, 100-101; Hogendorn, *Nigerian Groundnut Exports*,

⁶⁴⁶ Bello, *The State and Economy in Kano*,99.

1930s onwards, their accessible nature to a large extent served the purpose of facilitating the administrative control and economic exploitation of the entire area.

5.5 Conclusion

The colonial economy of Kano witnessed chequered fortunes in about four decades of its existence. Of initial significance was the discouraging economic environment of the Great Depression which affected the Kano Province, likewise most parts of the world, with dramatic consequences on the resource bases of all major players of the economy such as the colonial government, trading firms and the indigenous people. As part of the efforts of the colonial authorities and the trading companies to alleviate the biting nature of the depression as resources shrank, they took specific actions which had a revolving impact on the indigenous people. In a similar vein, over the years, the indigenous people adopted specific strategies which equally helped them in coping along, all through the negative and positive eras of the 1930s and beyond. In some sense, the global economic crisis brought out the ingenuity of the people as they sought ways to cope with the negative impact of the economic depression in the 1930s.

It is important to analyze the major issues and determinants of Kano's economic development from the early 1930s onward. Undoubtedly, a combination of local issues, colonial policy, and implementation, as well as global developments influenced the pattern of Kano's economic development from 1929 to 1939. An understanding of these issues helps to situate developments in Kano in a broader context. The next chapter is a general conclusion, which contains an analysis of the forces at play in Kano's economic development in the colonial period from 1899 to 1939.

CHAPTER SIX

GENERAL CONCLUSION

6.1 Introduction

In this concluding chapter, a summary of the assessment of the impact of British economic policies on Kano is undertaken and reached. These include the impact of all these policies upon the aristocratic ruling class, the peasant farmers, and enslaved persons, among others. The chapter examines the colonial legacy of the British in Kano, what they did and what they did not do, and how it impacted the province at that time. British economic policies advanced the development in Kano earlier started by the Habe Kings and then the Emirs from the Fulani Jihad, especially on taxes, land, labour, judiciary, administration, education, kingship, and slavery. Warren argues that:

Direct colonialism, far from having retarded or distorted indigenous capitalist development that might otherwise have occurred, acted as a powerful engine of progressive social change, advancing capitalist development far more rapidly than was conceivable in any other way, both by its destructive effects on pre-capitalist social systems and by its implantation of elements of capitalism.⁶⁴⁷

This dissertation agrees with Warren and contends that overall, the British colonial economy between 1903 and 1939 was an improvement on what they met, thus negating the anti-colonial literature that argues otherwise.

6.2 The Colonial Period and the Economy of Kano: An Assessment

Over several decades, issues relating to the impact of colonialism in Africa have generated extensive debates among scholars and commentators. Some of these debates have revolved around the pros and cons of colonial policies and their impact on different parts of Africa. On the one hand of the submissions are people who have supported the idea that colonialism brought civilization

⁶⁴⁷Warren. *Imperialism: Pioneer of Capitalism*, 9.

and other positive developments to their erstwhile territories.⁶⁴⁸ On the other side are the writers who have argued that colonialism was negative as it formalized the exploitation of the resources of the latter to the benefit of the former and therefore contributed to the chains of underdevelopment of the African continent alongside other aspects of the unequal historical relationship with the European and other Western countries.⁶⁴⁹ In the same manner, some African scholars have subscribed to the idea that colonialism was just episodic for Africa and one of the phases of the continent's history;⁶⁵⁰ the opposing school of thought has contended that colonialism is epochal, and that its impact has been fundamental and that it contributed to the effective structures of post-colonial-African states.⁶⁵¹ The anti-colonial line of thought is found in the views of scholars like Shenton, Watts, Ochonu, Fika, Tukur, Gwadabe, Bello, Garba, Ubah, Sa'id and many others. An opinion of a British District Officer also summarised some of what happened in West Africa, including Nigeria: "Truth is that we have no colonial policy. For years we have drained West Africa of her wealth without putting anything back. We have allowed vested interests to do much as they liked".⁶⁵² This summary is true in a broader sense, however, looking deeper

⁶⁴⁸ Margery Perham. *The Colonial Reckoning* (Reith Lectures, 1961) London: Collins, 1962, 23; J. F. Ade Ajayi. "Colonialism: An Episode in African History." In *Colonialism in Africa, 1914-1960, Vol. I, The History and Politics of Colonialism, 1870-1914*, eds., L. H. Gann, and Peter Duignan. London: Cambridge University Press, 1969, 499; A. Adu Boahen. "The Colonial Era: conquest to Independence." In *Colonialism in Africa, 1914-1960, Vol. II The History and Politics of Colonialism, 1870-1914*, eds., L. H. Gann and Peter Duignan, London: Cambridge University Press, 1969, 523-524.

⁶⁴⁹ Michael Crowder. *West Africa Under Colonial Rule*. London: Hutchinson, 1970, 176; Walter Rodney. *How Europe Underdeveloped Africa*. London: Bogle-L'Ouverture Overture, 1972, 59; Kwame Nkrumah. *Revolutionary Path*. New York: International Publishers, 1973; Ali A. Mazrui. *The Africans: A Triple Heritage*. New York: Little Brown and Co., and London: BBC, 1986, 251.

⁶⁵⁰ J. F. Ade Ajayi. "Colonialism: An Episode in African History." In *Africa: The Heritage and the Challenge*, eds., J. G. Roland, and P. College. Greenwich, Connecticut: Fawcett Publication, 1974; 230, 499.

⁶⁵¹ Peter P. Ekeh. "Colonialism and the Two Publics in Africa: A Theoretical Statement." *Comparative Studies in Society and History* 17, No. 1 (Jan. 1975): 91-112; Peter P. Ekeh, *Colonialism and Social Structure*, University of Ibadan Inaugural Lecture, 1980. Ibadan: Ibadan University Press, 1983, 10.

⁶⁵² Cited in Robert Pearce. "The Colonial Economy: Nigeria and the Second World War", In Barbara Ingham and Colin Simmons (eds.), *Development Studies and Colonial Policy*. London: Frank Cass, 1989), 263.

one can conclude that the British did give back to West Africa, especially Kano, the subject of this dissertation.

Each of these above conflicting positions on the colonial impact is germane and based on the perspectives of the scholars that advanced them. Moreover, the purpose of this study is not to defend primarily one particular ideology or standpoint, but to explore the versatility encapsulated in the themes of the varying debates and harmonize them towards the understanding of the initiation, implementation, and impact of the particular British colonial economic policies on Kano and its environs from 1903 until 1936.

To a great extent, the presence of the British and colonial occupation had both good and bad consequences for the economy and overall society of Kano. At first, the British authorities were attracted to the expansive economy of Kano. This, among others, had facilitated the excuses for conquering Kano which were advanced by Sir Fredrick Lugard. Thus, the successful military invasion and conquest of Kano in 1903 and the subsequent establishment of colonial rule opened access for the British to influence the political, economic, and social developments of the area. However, for the specific economic focus of this dissertation, attention will be devoted more here to evaluate colonial policies relating to the indirect rule system, taxation, land administration and usage, crop production, trade and commerce, labour relations, infrastructure development, industrialization, and other associated developments during the period.

6.3 Indirect Rule System

Politically, the British colonial rule over Kano reshaped the existing structures in a manner congruent with the embedded economic interest of imperialism. This was manifested in the Indirect Rule system introduced first to Kano through the Native Administration alongside similar

settings in the various parts of Northern Nigeria Protectorate by Lord Lugard before spreading it to other areas in Nigeria and all-over British colonies and protectorates in Africa. On the negative side, the new administrative system terminated the independence of Kano's indigenous ruling authorities headed by the Emir. Owing to the conquest and Lugard's declaration of the area on March 6th, 1903, as a territory of the British Crown and his subsequent appointment of Dr. Featherstone Cargill as the first Resident of Kano on March 7th, 1903, also ended the continuing allegiance of Kano's Emir to the supreme authority of the Sultan of Sokoto. In a good way, except cases of the topmost leaders being responsible or accountable to the Resident, by building the new political system on the existing pattern of indigenous rule, the British policy did not wreak much havoc on the people's administrative and societal arrangements which in the long run ensured a peaceful relationship between the Europeans and Kano's residents all through the colonial period. Although, in some cases, British authorities' acute interference with the indigenous political structures was challenged by Kano's indigenous rulers and were thus counterproductive as far as the healthy relationship was concerned. A notable example was Resident Cargill's continuous interference with Emir Mahammadu Abbas and his council's activities, especially on the issue of Cargill's promotion of Muhammadu Allah bar Sarki, a high-ranking slave official with the title Dan Rimi, to the position of Waziri in 1908.⁶⁵³ As stated earlier, the criticisms that were associated with these actions led to the intervention of Governor Percy Girouard, British administrative head of Northern Nigeria Provinces, 1906-1912, under whom the title of "Governor of Northern Nigeria" began in 1908, replacing that of 'High Commissioner'⁶⁵⁴. This made Girouard replace

⁶⁵³ Lovejoy et al, "C.L. Temple's 'Notes, 10; Sean Stilwell. "Power, Honour, and Shame: The Ideology of Royal Slavery in the Sokoto Caliphate". *Africa*, Vol. 70, issue 3. 2000, 411-413.

⁶⁵⁴ Burns, *History of Nigeria*, 215.

Cargill with Major Arnold Festing as Acting Resident and Charles Lindsay Temple as substantive Resident in 1908 and 1909, respectively.⁶⁵⁵

Through the Native Administrative system, the British colonial authorities were able to effectively coordinate the vast territories under the Kano Emirate and the Northern Protectorate with a handful of European administrative staff – since lack of adequate staff was among the fundamental reasons for Lugard’s introduction of Indirect Rule to Nigeria.⁶⁵⁶ Hence, since much activity in the physical administration of the province, collection of taxes, implementation of colonial policies and other associated duties were carried out by members of the Kano indigenous rulers on behalf of the British Resident and other supervising staff, the British policy of ‘Indirect Rule’ really affected local developments tremendously in the shaping of economic change in Kano and its environs during the colonial period. Little wonder that Gwadabe argues that “the Native Authority was found fully involved in the processes that provided support for the actualization of colonial rule.”⁶⁵⁷ Therefore, the Indirect Rule system had a significant impact on the area in the facilitation and achievement of the British authorities’ central economic aim of their colonial occupation of Kano and by extension to other parts of Nigeria – which was the exploitation of the territory.

Also, under the British colonial authorities’ recognition of the importance of the position of persons in the Native Administration, salary schemes were introduced for them, particularly from Resident Temple’s administrative reformation of 1909 known as the *Beit-el-Mal*. Among others, this pioneering step had been influential because it introduced a pattern of civil service

⁶⁵⁵ Hamza, *Cargill’s Mistakes*, 161-166; Lovejoy et al, “C.L. Temple’s ‘notes on the history of Kano’”, 8.

⁶⁵⁶ Crowder, *West Africa Under Colonial Rule*, 165-167; Tukur, *The Imposition of British Colonial Domination*, 335-336.

⁶⁵⁷ Gwadabe, *Land, Labour and Taxation in Kano*, 268.

salary-scale structure into the Kano economy from then onwards until and after the end of British colonialism.

6.4 Taxation

Taxation was key in British colonial economic policy which served as a major component of the British colonial administration, especially in the aspect of raising revenue through various channels from the people of Kano. Apart from acting as revenue sources to the governmental authorities, some scholars have supported the idea that by submitting to the colonial taxation, the people of Kano Province acquiesced to the dictates of the British-imposed authority after the conquest and establishment of colonial rule.⁶⁵⁸ Nevertheless, the colonial taxation policy had a great impact on the people of Kano and its economy in various ways.

First, the form of colonial taxation for the Kano area was not new, as the indigenous people were used to the payment of various forms of taxes during the precolonial period. Thus, the new British-imposed tax system was a modification of the existing structure save for the fact that it abolished the sending of portions of the revenue collected to Sokoto and created an avenue for the colonial treasury to receive a more significant proportion of the regular taxes collected. Among others, the impact of building the colonial taxation system on the existing structure made the indigenous people cooperate along with the payment of the different forms of taxes to the new British overlords.

Second, the colonial taxation policy was expansive as its various forms extended to virtually all socio-economic activities of the people of Kano. The British explored all avenues to increase their revenue base through this medium. In this regard, the various reforms introduced

⁶⁵⁸ Gwadabe, *Land, Labour and Taxation in Kano*, 139. 07; Zubairu, *A Study of the Colonial Economy*, 137.

were meant to serve the interest of colonialism and not that of the residents of the Kano area. For example, the permission of the payment of taxes and the overall economic transactions in Kano only in foreign currency steadily ended the locally recognized cowries currency and the indigenous barter system in favour of the British Pound Sterling, which became the official legal tender all through the colonial period. Also, the elimination of the *Chaffa*, *Hurmi* and other forms of tax evasion systems, ensured that every taxable adult was captured in contributing to the revenue bases of the Native Authority and the Colonial Treasury.

Third, to a high degree, colonial taxation was burdensome to the people of Kano. The manner of assessment, modes of collection, the regularity of payment, and consequences of non-payment were realities that led to the increasing pauperization of the residents of the Kano Province. Assessments of taxes were carried out by British officials based on the population composition and the professional disposition of the people. Through this, the rates of taxation were increased periodically without due consideration for the plight of the people's payment in periods of famine, poor harvest, and economic recession.⁶⁵⁹ Also, taxes were collected from the indigenous people by officials of the Native Administration for remittance to the supervising colonial authorities. The direct effect of such was that the revenue collected from the people was serving dual administrative authorities (Native and Colonial) primarily, as the accruable amounts to the officials of the Native Administration were based on percentages. For instance, Tukur, notes that the initial payment of the District Heads in the Northern Nigeria Provinces ranged from 20% to 25% of the *Kudin Kasa* and *Jangali* they collected from the people under their respective domains,

⁶⁵⁹ Shenton and Watts, "Capitalism and Hunger," 58; Kanoprof 4/4202/1917/Kano Province Annual Report, 1916, by Mr. W. F. Gowers, Revenue and Taxation, 55; Kanoprof 24/1926/Kano Province Annual Report, 1925, General Tax, 41-42; *The Nigerian Gazette*, July 1931, 414.

which continued until the implementation of fixed salary structures for members of the Native Authority from 1909 onwards.⁶⁶⁰

Taxes were collected annually, separately, and on a timely basis, depending on the suitability of the colonial calendar for the various economic activities in the Kano area. These made the indigenous people always conscious of the regular financial demands of the tax collectors. At times, “those who were opportune to pay their tax were left with little cash which was not enough for them to cater for their family’s needs.”⁶⁶¹ The consequences of non-payment of taxes were so much that it led to continuous harassment of the indigenous people and at times arrest, trial, and imprisonment by the administrative and judicial mechanisms of the Native Authority, while some people who could not bear the burden of tax payment or punishment were pressured to embark on migration. Hence, while taxation could be to the British authorities a civic obligation that must be fulfilled by the people for the thriving of the ‘colonial project,’ for the indigenous people it was an avenue for the depletion of their resources to serve the native authority and imperial interests throughout the colonial period.

In another dimension, through taxation, the British authorities instituted some forms of administrative efficiency and effectiveness in the various sectors during the colonial period. In the bid for proper assessments/projections of taxes, extensive geographical mapping and periodic population census were carried out in the different emirates under the Kano Province. Serial evaluations were done, and accurate records were kept on taxation and other forms of revenue generated from the Kano areas. The records collated at the District Heads’ Offices were compiled and published at the Resident’s Office and were transferred to the Office of the Governor of

⁶⁶⁰ Tukur, *The Imposition of British Colonial Domination*, 335-336

⁶⁶¹ Zubairu, *A Study of the Colonial Economy*, 137-138; Rhodes House MSS Afrs S. 230, “Annual Report for of the Year Ending 31st December 1909, by Resident C. L. Temple: Kano Division,” pp. 51-52.

Northern Province, as well as to the Secretary-General Office at the Governor-General's Office in Lagos (after the 1914 amalgamation) for continuous assessment, re-assessment, approval, and overall statistical compilation, before being sent to the Office of the Colonial Secretary in London. These rigorous approaches had the effect of checking some of the excesses of the native administrators and European staff of the colonial offices in Kano and other parts of Northern Nigeria on issues of financial accountability.

Furthermore, taxation had a good impact as one of the active measures employed by the British colonial authorities in checking and eventually ending slavery in Kano and the Northern Nigeria Provinces in general. This was facilitated through the *Murgu* system introduced by Sir Frederick Lugard, which provided the option for slave owners to pay full taxes on behalf of their enslaved persons or permit their enslaved persons to pay for their taxes at periodic levels alongside other acts of service to their masters in return for their manumission so that they could be able to participate fully in the economy.⁶⁶² Lovejoy concludes that “slaves who were trusted were allowed to work on their account, with weekly, biweekly, or monthly payments.”⁶⁶³ Since the second option was preferable to both parties, the *Murgu* policy not only accelerated the discouragement of slavery until its eventual abolition in Northern Nigeria in 1936, it also helped to expand the scope of revenue generation from the Kano area through taxation as more erstwhile enslaved persons continued to regain their freedom and participate in the economy. Klein also observes a similar situation in French West Africa where he states that “Slave ownership was not actively discouraged.”⁶⁶⁴ The introduction of *metayage* or sharecropping by the French colonial administrators helped to assist in the gradual end of slavery. Klein argues that “The contract the

⁶⁶² Lovejoy, “Murgu”, 167-170.

⁶⁶³ Lovejoy, *Jihad in West Africa*, 126.

⁶⁶⁴ Klein, “Slavery and Emancipation in French West Africa”, 175.

Metayer had with his employer was not seen as a new bondage, but as an affirmation of his freedom because he contracted the labour of his own free will.”⁶⁶⁵ Klein concludes that most enslaved persons rejected the contracts as *metayage*, in part because many local administrators were interested in simply perpetuating slavery.⁶⁶⁶ Despite the effort made by the British to stop slavery, a pattern of insincerity is overserved because of a lack of full commitment toward the cause. In the same situation with the French, Klein observes:

Whatever policies the colonial government pursued, these events led to increased slave flight to colonial towns, to mission stations or, when they were safe, to earlier homes. Colonial regimes often moved to ban the slave trade, but most continued at first to return slaves to their masters except where there was evidence of substantial physical abuse.⁶⁶⁷

Approved funds from the proceeds of taxation were among the resources used by the different administrative authorities in implementing developmental projects, which further had their specific impacts on Kano and its environs during the colonial period. Admittedly, the revenues collected, and other economic accumulations were geared towards the usage for other beneficial purposes of the colonialists. However, parts of the received funds were used for the implementation of various projects such as railways, roads, health facilities, electricity, pipe-borne water, agricultural facilities, education, and other infrastructure projects which acted as catalysts in the expansion of Kano during the colonial period.

Thus, it could be summarised here that on the one hand, the British colonial taxation policy was detrimental to the indigenous people because of its burdensome and exploitative nature as a formal means of reducing the people’s overall income from their economic activities through the payment of such regular obligatory fees to the government’s native and foreign agents. On the

⁶⁶⁵ Klein, *Slavery and Colonial Rule*, 179.

⁶⁶⁶ Klein, “Slavery and Emancipation in French West Africa”, 175-176.

⁶⁶⁷ Klein. “Slave Descent and Social Status”, 28.

other hand, British colonial taxation policy also helped to shape the context of Kano's economy as a result of the practical structure of the colonial taxation mechanism in Northern Nigeria, the efficient taxation coordination system between the supervising colonial authorities and the indigenous emirate administrative system in Kano, the cooperative spirit of the indigenous and foreign residents of Kano, and some developmental impacts of the proceeds of taxation as a significant revenue base.

6.5 Land Administration and Usage

The British policy on land administration and usage was developed in line with their acclaimed ownership of any territory where they had established their active presence. For instance, by the conquest and subsequent establishment of colonial rule in 1903, Lugard declared the people and land of Kano to be subjects and property respectively of the British monarchy.⁶⁶⁸ Also, the Land and Native Rights Proclamation of 1910, which was the pioneer official policy on land ownership, administration, allocation and usage in Kano, clearly stated in parts that, "the whole of the land of the protectorate is under the control and dominion of the government and that no title to the occupation, use or enjoyment of any land is valid without the assent of the Government."⁶⁶⁹ The land policy also had an impact on Kano's colonial economy.

Among others, the land policy led to the ownership of land in the territory of Kano by the British colonial authorities. This was made manifest by the nationalization of the land which the above policy of 1910 emphasized. This led to the incorporation of the *Kudin Kasa* (land tax) as a

⁶⁶⁸ Lugard, "Protectorate of Northern Nigeria 1906-1913, Annual Reports."

⁶⁶⁹ Kanoprof 2/31/LAN/32, ii Land Tenure in Northern Provinces, Provinces, by C. W. Rowling, Commissioner of Lands, Nigeria.

formal practice backed by law within the context of British colonial brazen revenue collection in Kano and other parts of the Northern Nigeria Provinces.

Also, in practical terms, the land policy did not change the structure of land tenure in Kano dramatically. This was because it placed the primary control of land under the existing indigenous system headed by the Emir in the 'Native Administration.' Through this practice, the indigenous inhabitants continued the usage of their land. Since the people had been used to the payment of the *Kudin Kasa* under the precolonial system, the new policy of payment of rents for land being occupied and cultivated did not alter the societal structure. Since the Kano Province covered a vast expanse of land, people used the existing land tenure system to expand their underlying agricultural economy.

Moreover, the land policy entitled the colonial authorities to willfully claim and allocate any land for residential quarters, businesses, and company sites, for themselves, the other European immigrants, various Arab/Asian migrants and different Nigerian and non-Nigerian ethnic nationals who had been motivated to settle in the Kano area. In essence, the land policy allowed the British to shape the settlement patterns of the Kano Province, mainly the metropolitan centres. Thus, the policy was implemented in such a way that it created opportunities for various people to reside and establish their businesses in the Kano area. Similarly, the British colonial officials mapped out and allocated sufficient land for the various colonial infrastructure and economic expansion projects such as railways, roads, agricultural sites/government farming schemes and other necessary purposes. While these exclusive land allocation patterns promoted the ideals of the colonial project, they had negative consequences on the indigenous people through the consistent denial of their right to such apportioned lands without any form of compensation.

6.6 Crop Production

It has been emphasized that agriculture was the mainstay of the indigenous economy of Kano during the precolonial and colonial periods. However, the colonial policy relating to crop production had a tremendous impact on the agricultural and other associated sectors. First, unlike the existing pre-colonial crop production system which was based on food crops and commodities' consumption for the satisfaction of the local populace, the colonial policy focused primarily on the cultivation and exportation of cash crops – especially groundnut and cotton. This led to a significant shift in the production system and the overall economy of Kano with attendant consequences. On the positive side, a majority of the people increasingly engaged in activities relating to the cash crop economy because of its lucrative nature, thereby creating a new wealth structure for the people of Kano. On the negative side, it led to the discouragement of, and decrease in, the cultivation of food crops, which opened the Kano area to recurrent famine⁶⁷⁰ – coupled with environmental factors of shortages of rainfall – as many of the people that would have participated in the cultivation of adequate food were trapped into cash crop production.

Also, the export crop economy helped to define the context of the broad Kano colonial economy as activities in this area affected almost all the actors, particularly after the completion of the railway construction in the area. Accordingly, actors, including government officials, trading companies, indigenous people, and various migrants had their economic activities tied to the export crop production in Kano, particularly to the production and sales of groundnut. This facilitated the creation of different specializations in Kano's economy. It equally influenced the eras of boom and bust in the Kano economy during the colonial period. As shown in chapters four and five of this study, the intensified production and export of groundnut however made the Kano area the

⁶⁷⁰ Watts, *Silent Violence*, 327.

largest exporting area of the product in the world, during a significant part of the colonial period. While, for cotton production, the heated competition between the indigenous users of the product and the European exporters led to the further advance of the sector and the recognition of the dogged indigenous productive and industrial skills of the people of Kano.

The intensification of the cash-crop economy led to real government incentives in the creation of agricultural research centres, promotion of mixed cropping schemes, and provision of certain facilities to the people to boost the production from the Kano area. Although these were intended programmes for economic progress, the conditions attached to these schemes made their impact not to be far-reaching as they enabled the advantageous participation in them by the aristocratic ruling classes and the wealthy indigenous middlemen, while the peasants were continuously disadvantaged. Thus, in some areas, the colonial policies widened the gap between the privileged and the peasant classes in the Kano society.

Moreover, the export crop dominance of Kano's colonial economy produced the uniqueness associated with the transformations recorded in the area. It created opportunities for an increase in government revenues through the collection of taxes and commercial charges from participating individuals and trading firms and coordination of exports. For commercial firms, it led to the expansion of their profit bases; while for all classes of individuals (indigenous and foreigners) who engaged in the productive processes, it resulted in the creation of more wealth. In summary, though the crop production policy had its deficiencies, it still stood out among the contributing factors to the development of Kano's economy during the colonial period.

6.7 Trade

The British colonial commercial policy in Kano focused centrally on the export of raw materials from the native communities to Europe and the import of manufactured products from Europe to the colonies.⁶⁷¹ This policy was vigorously pursued so much that it had a massive impact on the Kano area. First, it propelled the drive for cash crop production and other primary articles of trade to meet the increasing demand for raw materials for exports all through the colonial period. The policy was pursued in such a way that the prices of these raw material commodities for external trade were fixed and maintained at very cheap rates, while the prices of imported products were consistently rising sharply. Among others, these tendencies crystalized the ‘exploitation theory’ within the context of the British colonial economy of Kano.

Second, the conduct of the trade and commercial policy was flexible in that it provided the environment for the accommodation of various business people from different nationalities to participate in the economy of Kano. It was not operated based on the principles of monopoly. For instance, aside from the British majority, other European firms, Arab-North African merchants, and indigenous businesspeople participated in activities relating to the export and import trade. This led to competition among the active practitioners of the trade, which at times had benefitted the indigenous people in price regimes. Also, it increased the revenue base of the colonial authorities as a series of charges/rates that were collected from the participants of the trade under the regular taxation system.

Third, the policy had a revolutionary impact in abolishing the external trade routes which were northward via the Trans-Sahara Desert connecting the Kano area to popular centres in

⁶⁷¹ *Reports on the Amalgamation of Northern and Southern Nigeria and Administration, 1912-1919*, by Sir Fredrick D. Lugard, 29.

Western Sudan, North Africa, Asia and to Europe across the Mediterranean Sea throughout most parts of the precolonial period. These were replaced by the southward external trade links created by the British which connected Kano and its hinterland neighbours to the coast, particularly the Lagos Port and on to Europe and other overseas destinations across the Atlantic Ocean, especially from 1912 onwards after the completion of the railway lines to Kano.

Despite its new focus, the policy was pursued in such a way that as in the previous eras, Kano maintained and expanded its position as the commercial entrepôt of Northern Nigeria throughout the colonial period. For example, the massive production of export crops and the siting of major commercial firms in Kano, the gathering of export commodities from other interior centres of Northern Nigeria into Kano before being carted away by rail transport, and the offloading of many imported products from the trains before being redistributed within and to the interior centres, in addition to the continuous vibrant internal economy; resulted in the unparalleled development of the economy of Kano during the colonial period.

Also, the British colonial policy on trade and commerce was more externally oriented in the integration of Kano's economy with the international markets based on its priority of the export and import trade. To a great extent, the colonial regime effectively retarded economic growth at the indigenous level and thereby exposed local producers to the collapse of prices on the international market during the Great Depression. In this regard, little or no attention was given to the internalization of the context of Kano's economy all through the colonial period. While this continued to advance British colonial interests, it, however, led to the inevitable subjection of Kano's economy to the harsh effects of the global economic depression (1929-1939) and other fluctuations of international trade with attendant consequences for all actors and the overall development of the economy during and after the period.

The various innovations that were introduced by the colonial authorities for the regulation of trade were designed to continuously maximize their interests in Kano's economy, with attendant impact on all participants in the economy, mainly the peasants. For instance, from the early period of colonialism, the British practiced liberalization in the export and import trade, which resulted in increased competition among the trading firms, middlemen, and by extension the indigenous farmers. While the tri-network created was viable, it led to the porous exploitation of the primary producers by the middlemen and the trading companies. While the exploitation of the people underlines the economic activities of the colonial authorities, the emerging innovations expanded the level of wealth generation for the government, trading firms, middlemen, primary producers, and various other ancillary services linked to the business environment of the periods.

6.8 Infrastructure Development

Compared to the pre-colonial setting, the colonial period introduced a variant form of development to the Kano area and many parts of Nigeria through aspects of modern infrastructural development.⁶⁷² These infrastructure facilities, which include transportation, electricity, pipe-borne water, healthcare, and educational developments, had their peculiar impact on the economy and the general society of Kano during the colonial period.

In the transportation sector, the construction of the railway as pointed out in chapter four of this study had a pivotal influence in facilitating the environment for the economic expansion of Kano's colonial economy by pioneering the Kano export and import trade towards the southwards direction from its opening in 1912. Thus, it served as the leading channel for the moving of goods and services from Kano and its environs to the port centre of Lagos before being exported overseas

⁶⁷² Ayodeji Olukoju. *Infrastructure Development and Urban Facilities in Lagos, 1861-2000*. Ibadan: Institut Français de Recherche en Afrique – IFRA, 2003, 1-19.

and vice versa during the colonial period. The roads and bridges constructed by the colonial administrative agents also aided the free and faster movements of humans, goods, and services across hitherto challenging areas within the Kano Province; as well as created further accessible linkages between the Kano Province and other centres of Northern Nigeria and beyond. Conversely, these transportation mediums had negative consequences too on Kano's economy in opening doors of colonial exploitation in the areas as the nature of their interconnectivity promoted the carting away of the valuable resources of the indigenous people to serve British imperial interests. Nevertheless, transportation and communication infrastructures were beneficial to a great extent in expanding the scope of the economy of Kano during the colonial period.

The electricity, pipe-borne water, healthcare, and educational development projects implemented for Kano also had their landmark impact on the economy. In this regard, though the residents were meant to pay for the services, the electricity and pipe-borne water facilities, for instance, helped to advance the urban scale and taste of the areas to which they were distributed. Also, the healthcare facilities, despite their insufficiency regarding the teeming population of the Kano Province, assisted greatly in improving the wellness of those that we're able to access them and as well had an impact in redressing some of the health epidemics during the colonial period.

Concerning Western educational development, this did not have a broadscale impact in Kano and other parts of Northern Nigeria, compared to the Southern parts, during the colonial period as a result of the British colonial authorities' focusing on creating structures for the political and economic exploitation of the areas without disrupting the people's embedded Islamic culture and educational arrangements, until the late 1920s. The latter attention to development in this sector resulted in the incorporation of many interested persons being educated for various societal usage during and after colonialism. However, the policy of limiting the Western influence and

education had an impact in originating the differences and gaps in certain aspects of overall political, social, and economic developments between the peoples of Northern and Southern Nigeria as at the end of British colonialism, which has continued to be among the issues of nation-building in the post-colonial Nigerian State.

A general assessment of the various infrastructure developments shows that regardless of the weaknesses associated with them, they were evidence of increased government attention to the Kano area in economic facilitation and in rendering social services to the indigenous and foreign population of the province. They also had an impact in increasing the urbanization schemes of Kano and its environs during the colonial period, as well as the building of foundational structures in further infrastructural development efforts in the years after 1939.

6.9 Labour Relations

Issues in colonial labour policy and relations have also been considered to be fundamental in the economic system of Kano.⁶⁷³ These have been on the aspects of the labour relations between the colonial administrators and the residents of the Kano Province on the one hand, and the labour relations among the indigenous people on the other hand. Concerning the first, the colonial Native Authority provided the avenues for some privileged Kano indigenes, especially the aristocratic class, to be engaged in various administrative sectors which made them become monthly wage earners and as a complementary alternative to the existing economic activities. Also, the labour policy of engaging the indigenous people in the construction of the various infrastructure facilities such as railways, roads, hospitals, schools, and other emerging projects had a detrimental impact. This was because, among others, the majority of the labourers were conscripted as forced labour

⁶⁷³ Gwadabe, *Land, Labour and Taxation in Kano*, 189-216; Fika, *The Political and Economic Re-orientation of Kano*, 270-271; Lovejoy and Hogendorn. *Slow Death for Slavery*, 199-234.

by the district heads to work in the various construction projects with minimum pay, thereby making them not upgrade themselves like their counterparts who were not enlisted for such construction works.⁶⁷⁴ Some of the indigenous persons involved in such construction projects were married men and as such, they were not allowed to cater to their family needs adequately, which negatively impacted their lives and that of their families.⁶⁷⁵

Moreover, the impact of the labour relations policy on the economy was more far-reaching concerning the issues of slavery. As emphasized in several parts of this study, the colonial authorities were against the slavery system they met in Kano; they however implemented a gradual and effective approach to its eventual abolition through the *Murgu* system. The pioneering law in this regard was the several Slavery Proclamations, which abolished the legal status of slavery, prohibited slave-dealing, and declared children born from 1st April 1901, to be free.⁶⁷⁶ The implementation of *Murgu* as a policy was allowed to work on its own and steadily became effective. Burns summarises the nature and impact of the flexibility of this policy concerning the labour relations and social structure of the indigenous people in the following:

The proclamation did not make the holding of slaves to be illegal, the abolition of the legal status merely preventing a master from recovering a runaway slave through the medium of the Courts and enabling a slave to leave his master and claim his freedom anytime he chose. It was not considered expedient to abolish domestic slavery at once, for had this been done, a very serious problem would have arisen. The social scheme of the people would have been rudely shattered, slaves thrown on their own resources and deprived of the protection of their former masters would have starved or taken to brigandry and the prosperity of the country would have been ruined by an arbitrary act, utterly incomprehensible to the African mind and uncalled for by an African opinion. For though to many, it may seem as a disgrace that slavery in any form could be tolerated in a moment in a British Protectorate, it cannot be too often repeated that on this point the European and the African think entirely differently.⁶⁷⁷

Gwadabe, also notes that:

The engagement of such slaves on *Murgu* in agricultural production stimulated and promoted the development of agricultural wage labour as well as that of an agrarian semi proletariat. *Murgu*, as this

⁶⁷⁴ Gwadabe, *Land, Labour and Taxation in Kano*, 203-204.

⁶⁷⁵ Zubairu, *A Study of the Colonial Economy*, 142.

⁶⁷⁶ Lugard, *The Dual Mandate*, 365.

⁶⁷⁷ Burns, *History of Nigeria*, 207-208.

arrangement is called, can, therefore, be regarded as a step toward the end of slave labour as well as a factor for the development of the colonial economic process.⁶⁷⁸

Essentially, the impact of this was that it resulted in a fruitful course of separation between enslaved persons and their former masters without conflict, and the eventual abolition of the slave trade by the British in the Kano regions by 1936. The system also provided the environment for sustaining and expanding labour productivity during the colonial period, as more freed enslaved persons were engaged in different economic activities which made them create personal wealth for themselves, and the payment of their regular taxes to the constituted authorities.

6.10 Industrialisation

British policies in their African colonies, like other colonialists in Africa, were conservative and did not promote productive industrialization schemes.⁶⁷⁹ The central colonial economic policy was designed for the colonies to produce raw materials for export to overseas destinations in Europe and other Western countries, while the conversion of these raw materials into finished products was carried out at industries based in Europe and imported back to the colonies as manufactured products for sale. This central theme was also implemented vigorously in Kano with concomitant economic consequences for industrial development in the province.

Before the colonial occupation of Kano, it was on record that the emirate was bubbling with many indigenous industries such as textiles, leather making, blacksmithing, craft making and others which were discussed in chapter two of this study. However, the pursuit of the colonial policy of making Kano mainly a raw material producer for the export centre and a commercial

⁶⁷⁸ Gwadabe, *Land, Labour and Taxation in Kano*, 204.

⁶⁷⁹ O. Teriba and M. O. Kayode. Eds., *Industrial Development in Nigeria: Pattern, Problems and Prospects*. Ibadan: Nigeria, Ibadan University Press, 1977, 211; Muhammad A. Liman, *A Spatial Analysis of Industrial Growth and Decline in Kano Metropolis, Nigeria*. Ph.D. Dissertation, Department of Geography Ahmadu Bello University, Zaria Nigeria, April 2015, 29, 66.

base for the redistribution of imported manufactures from Europe had an impact on the decline and eventual collapse of most of the hitherto indigenous industries. Accordingly, the main promotion of the cultivation of crops for export, intensification of the taxation policy and the compulsory payment of taxes by individuals in foreign currency made many practitioners of the local industries abandon their specialized sector to join the raw materials production chase to acquire enough currency to pay their taxes and create more wealth for themselves in the booming colonial businesses. Geoffrey Manase has argued that “the production of these export crops led to a decrease in industrial production and the final stagnation of the indigenous industries.”⁶⁸⁰ Zubairu, citing official sources, had provided some early negative impact of the export-oriented policy on the indigenous dye industries of Kano when he observed that, “there were about 8000 dye-pits in the district by the second half of the nineteenth century. However, by 1912, the number of dye-pits in the district declined to 4, 905.”⁶⁸¹ A similar fate was experienced by many other local industries during the colonial period.

In the same vein, certain practices of the colonial economy had a detrimental influence on the survival dilemma of the existing indigenous industries of Kano. Classic examples include the cotton and iron-production sectors. In the cotton and textile sectors, the activities of the BGCA and its affiliated trading firms made a series of efforts to edge out the predominance of the Kano vibrant cotton industries. Although the indigenous sector maintained a dogged position for a very long time, the British colonial authorities later had their ways by deterring the cultivation of indigenous cotton in Northern Nigeria and introducing new “improved cotton” seeds to boost

⁶⁸⁰ Geoffrey Manase. *The Kano Peasantry Under Colonial Rule c. 1903-1966*. Master of Arts thesis, Department of History, University of Ibadan, Nigeria, 1985, 128.

⁶⁸¹ Zubairu, *A Study of the Colonial Economy*, 147; Polly Hill. *Population, Prosperity and Poverty*, 12; Kanoprof/63/442/12/Makama District Assessment Report, 1912.

export, as well as the massive importation of manufactured cotton clothes from Europe, particularly England, at cheaper prices by the trading companies. In the iron-production sector, too, the colonial policy prevented the indigenous blacksmiths from partaking in the activity, by granting the exclusive license for mineral exploration to foreign companies, which affected the businesses of the former.⁶⁸²

Also, British colonial policy had an impact on the discouraging of manufacturing companies being established in Kano. The companies that were established in Kano during the colonial period were mainly trading firms that were sited specifically for the promotion of the export and import trade. Thus, there were virtually no manufacturing companies in Kano until the 1940s, when 'P. S. Mandrides Ltd.' was founded as the pioneer and only company then. This was later followed by the 'W. J. Bush & Co. Ltd.' and 'Northern Enamelware Co. Ltd.' in the 1950s.⁶⁸³ These foreign-owned companies were involved in the production of soap; oil mill and groundnut paste. The only indigenous company emerged in 1957 and was known as the 'Kano Citizen's Trading Company' which then established the first textile mill in Kano with the aid of the Northern Nigeria Development Board (NNDB) which was created in 1956.⁶⁸⁴ However, it was recorded that at the end of the Great Depression, there was not a manufacturing industry in Kano Province.

Despite the unpopular influence in this sector, the colonial authorities created avenues of alternative economic development which though was based on their perceived interests, affected

⁶⁸² Jaggar, *The Blacksmiths of Kano City*, 39-42; Manase, *The Kano Peasantry Under Colonial Rule*, 129; Zubairu, *A Study of the Colonial Economy*, 146-147.

⁶⁸³ Liman, *A Spatial Analysis of Industrial Growth*, 66.

⁶⁸⁴ A. Olukoshi, "Economic Crisis, Structural Adjustment and the Coping Strategies of Manufacturers in Kano, Nigeria." *United Nations Research Institute for Social Development Discussion Paper No. 77*, 1996; Liman, *A Spatial Analysis of Industrial Growth*, 29.

all the major actors in the economy and acted as catalysts to the development witnessed in Kano from the first decade of the twentieth century until the end of colonialism.

The trajectory of the colonial rule over Kano was peculiar as it reflected the inter-mixture of existing patterns and emerging innovations which acted as catalysts to the patterns of development recorded in the province during the colonial period. The British authorities who forcefully took over the territory made some policies and carried out specific actions which fostered the environment of peace for the successful occupation of their colonial venture. Since economic interest was their primary target, all efforts were put together toward its pursuit and achievement at all costs. As such, the colonial authorities took a flexible posture concerning the political and social systems which in the long run influenced them to function in manners that did not run contrary to the expected economic benefits from the area.

On the socio-political aspects, the application of policies including the Indirect Rule administrative system, land allocation, gradualism in slavery abolition, and the initial limitation of Western' Christianity and educational influence on the Islamic and traditional culture of the people resulted in the incorporation of the indigenous rulers and the various classes of persons in the Kano territory under the new political cum economic direction without the manifestation of conflictual relations from 1903 to 1939. Hence, through colonialism, several changes in the organization of labour, the decline of slavery, land tenure, division of labour, and indigenous commercial structure had an impact on the facilitation of the main economic activities during the period.

Economically, the British occupation of Kano was carried out for the expansion of the imperial interest and the ultimate exploitation of the human and material resources of the area. This was reflected in various manners including the southwards diversion of the routes of

international trade of Kano by undermining its long-existing northward pre-colonial-period pattern, the extension of the taxation system, the centrality of the export-oriented production of crops and other raw materials, importation from Europe and marketing of foreign-based products in Kano, the nature of infrastructure development, the discouragement of industrialization – both local and foreign and the periodic innovations that were introduced all through the period. The colonial system was oriented towards British interests without much room for further exploration and diversification of the original potentials of the economy. Also, the nature of the economic system, which was directly linked to the international marketing system, made it experience booms until the 1929 Global Economic Depression and recovery in the post-depression era.

While the British colonialists gained tremendously from the colonial occupation of Kano, their economic policies also resulted in the revolutionary expansion of the level of development greater than in the precolonial period. This is because, among others, the colonial economy had the feature of flexibility, dynamism, accommodation, lucrativeness, and competitiveness which enhanced the prosperity of the major actors of the economy, namely the government authorities, trading companies and agents, and indigenous people. The colonial system also helped to restructure some aspects of the life of the people, including the end of slavery, creation and administration of the various districts, and the adoption of the proceeds of revenue generated from the area for key infrastructure development, despite it serving as a significant avenue of external exploitation of the area. Through its groundnuts and other exports' specialization, Kano's fame was global and unmatched in groundnut supply in international trade, which resulted in the increase in wealth for the government and the various persons associated with their production and supply. In addition, the colonial economy gave speed to the rapid urbanization of many settlements

in the Kano Province, the expansion of the trading networks within the Kano environment and economic interactions between Kano and other parts of Nigeria.

At the end of the Great Depression in 1939, an encouraging structure of continuous economic and socio-political developments had been established for Kano and other parts of Northern Nigeria. Together with the economic-oriented policies, the overall colonial system of Kano had series of impacts for the indigenous people and foreigners (European and non-European), as well as the immediate and distant environments of Kano. Therefore, in terms of overall impact, it is being summarised here that despite its exploitative nature, the colonial economy helped to improve the overall development of Kano more than its previous eras and set the stage for continuity in the post-colonial period.

6.11 Conclusion

The study examines the history of Kano Province during the colonial period with a particular focus on the economic changes experienced in the area because of British colonialism. It discussed the structure of the indigenous economy of Kano, the British conquest, colonization, and the varying nature of economic developments which were experienced in Kano and its environs from the end of the nineteenth century to 1939. The study is premised on the argument that though colonialism resulted in some economic woes for Kano Province. It nevertheless created multiple avenues which benefitted the different actors in the economy as well as the general environment of economic expansion, sustainability, and overall development during the period.

Colonialism was a major shift from the pre-colonial indigenous social systems of the people of Kano. By the late nineteenth century when the British imperialism started making an incursion into the area, Kano and most parts of the Northern Nigeria Provinces had been functioning through the emirate system, each controlled by an Emir who was under the broad

political umbrella of the Sokoto Caliphate headed by the Sultan. The indigenous state policy reflected various aspects, including taxation, land, legal system, non-Muslims, and foreigners' affairs. In terms of economy, the pre-colonial setting was unique as the area was famous for various indigenous agricultural and non-agricultural productive sectors, commercial development, industrialization, and for its dominant position as a hub of the long-distance international trade networks of the trans-Saharan Desert routes. These and other associated factors made Kano be a major target for British dominance in the new economic drive of imperialism. The culminating point was the British invasion and conquest of Kano in February 1903, which not only ended the status of Kano as a vassal to Sokoto but also placed the allegiance of the territory under the British Crown – thereby setting the stage for the colonial occupation of the area through several official and subtle mechanisms.

According to Robert Pearce:

The economic function of colonialism has been to expand the world market economy, opening up underdeveloped areas to world trade. The colonial powers aimed to use their colonies as markets for manufactured goods and to extract primary products in return, taxation and to a less extent forced labour encouraging farmers to shift from subsistence to export production. Colonial governments did not, as is so often claimed, pursue a policy of pure *laissez-faire*: they constructed roads, harbours, and bridges; they built railways and ran them; they encouraged new export crops and the adoption of more productive agricultural techniques; they instituted a system of produce inspection for exports; they made some progress in combating livestock diseases; they provided some rudimentary health and education services, to the limit that local revenue could support.⁶⁸⁵

The arguments of Pearce are germane; furthermore, visible positive developments were seen during the British administration of Kano. No matter how minuscule these positive developments, they were an improvement over what was in existence. British colonization of Kano, though peculiar was anchored on the central theme of the pursuit of the economic interest of the colonizer and the exploitation of the colonized territory, like the cases of many other

⁶⁸⁵ Pearce, "The Colonial Economy" 266.

dominated territories across the world. This created the environment of change and adjustment in critical sectors of the Kano society from the first decade of the twentieth century until 1939 onward. As part of the efforts towards the economic efficiency of the area, the British authorities explored and exercised significant influence on the political and social developments of Kano in manners that ensured sustainability and a peaceful atmosphere for the colonial project. Through the Native Authority and Indirect Rule system, the indigenous political structures in Kano headed by the Emir and his officials were permitted to function freely under the coordinating authorities of the British Resident in Kano and the Governor of the Northern Nigeria Provinces. The decentralization of power in the creation of various districts and other forms of administrative re-organization was able to capture all parts of the territory under the new colonial system.

Similarly, much of the Kano social sector was promoted through the preservation of the indigenous and Islamic lifestyles of the people, and by the limitation of the excessive influence of Western-cum-other-foreign cultural infiltrations. Examples of this could be seen in the earlier restrictions laid on the introduction of Christian religion and Western education to the Kano area, the geographical allocation of quarters along identity lines as in the creation of distinct settlements for Europeans, Arab-Lebanese related groups/merchants, and Sabon Gari for non-Hausa/Fulani Nigerian migrants to the Kano area. Moreover, a critical adjustment was made concerning issues of the slave trade, slavery, and labour relations in Kano, regarding the colonial reforms of 1904, which introduced the *Murgu* system. This flexible and effective approach towards the end of slavery yielded many positive results which later benefitted the enslaved persons, some owners of enslaved persons who adapted to change, and colonial authorities in terms of continuous economic expansion of Kano and other parts of Northern Nigeria.

Significantly, British colonialism ushered in many revolutionary changes in the economic sectors of Kano. First, the existing taxation system of the Kano area was strengthened and expanded in scope to serve as a real source of revenue generation for the administration of the province, wealth accumulation for the imperial authorities, and implementation of developmental projects in the province. Thus, this had a diverse impact in reducing the accruable income to the indigenous people/residents of Kano by the various forms of taxation, modes, means, and frequency of taxes' collection, which were carried out regardless of periods of economic prosperity or not, on the one hand, and the consolidation and expansion of the revenue bases of the colonial authorities and their agents, on the other hand.

Second, the colonial economy was based on the structural setting of the production and supply of raw materials from the Kano area for export overseas and the importation of manufactured products from Europe for sale and redistribution in Kano and its environs. This was vigorously pursued by harnessing the valuable primary products of Kano and creating alternative accessibilities for economic expansion. Prime among these had been the intensification of the export crop economy in Kano Province. In this regard, the cultivation of export crops such as cotton and groundnuts were highly promoted together with hides and skins, and other export products. While the export crops attracted serious attention as a result of the colonial economic policy, the cultivation of food crops suffered neglect from the majority of the Kano populace which in addition to environmental factors had at times ensued cycles of food shortage in the area including 1907, 1914, 1927 and 1934 famines.

Another revolutionary factor for Kano's economy was the extension of the railway construction from Baro to Kano from the first decade of the twentieth century and which, by its opening in 1912, connected Kano directly downward to the Lagos Port. The completion of the

railway had a tremendous impact on the economic development of Kano and its environs. It led to the swift change of the existing international trading network of the Kano area from its hitherto northward trans-Saharan direction to a new focus southward to the Lagos Port via the railway. Rail transport provided the avenue for many European trading firms and other foreigners to traverse inland from the coast to participate in the Kano economy as ready buyers of the export products and import products distributors, too. The railway transport facilitation and the environment of international trade from 1910 onwards soon boosted groundnut as a popular export product from Kano in comparative terms to cotton and the other articles of international trade. This also encouraged the rapid migration of persons from within and outside the Nigerian area to participate in the various economic activities of Kano. Together with the continuous increase of export products, the transportation and cash-crop economy sectors contributed to the periods of the boom in Kano from 1912 to 1929.

Apart from the human development aspects, the colonial policy and the attendant economic prosperities recorded in Kano were reflected in the infrastructure development projects launched for the area, including roads, hospitals, electricity, pipe-borne water, schools, bridges, and construction of hospitals and dispensaries. Although some of these projects were a burden on the indigenous people because they required forced labour, they, however, led to the opening up of the area for increased productivity and rapid urban development which benefitted the various actors of the economy.

The focus of the colonial economy of Kano on the dictates of international trade also opened it up to the bad effects of the global economic depression from 1929 to 1939, which led to the crash of commodity prices and also to the collapse of the economy of Kano, famine, regression, and human suffering during this period. The widespread impact of this affected all the major

participants and beneficiaries of the hitherto Kano economy, including the colonial administrative authorities, trading companies and the indigenous population. Several reactions were also experienced from the angles of the various parties in finding a solution to the impact of the depression. The government authorities stopped the expenditure on important infrastructural developments, deferred projects which were related mainly to public works that had a bearing on the welfare of the indigenous people, retrenched much administrative staff and encouraged measures of increasing taxation to boost up revenue generation. For the trading companies, they devised means of expanding their profit bases by creating indirect burdens on the indigenous people through monopolies and enforcement of dubious price regimes; and for the indigenous people, they faced the depression by working harder to earn more money for their cheap products and also sought for ready alternatives for higher prices for their products from non-British and non-European trading firms available in the area.

Despite the reversed state of the depression years, the nature of the economy of Kano from the late 1930s onwards was such that it adapted to changes as a result of some further innovations carried out by the colonial authorities, which shaped the associated developments in the area until the independence period.

Overall, the colonial economic policies of Kano combined with the socio-political forces in creating avenues for the associated developments which were experienced in the area from 1903 to 1939. Among others, the general conclusions which can be drawn from this study include:

1. That the colonial occupation of Kano was deliberately designed and implemented by the British authorities to serve their economic interest and imperial control.
2. That British colonialism yielded changes for the overall sectors of Kano's society, which were both negative and positive.

3. That the colonial authorities promoted aspects of social and political cultures of the indigenous people in manners that created the environment for sustainable economic activities and exploitation of the resources of the area.
4. That the colonial economic policies were dynamic, flexible, and accommodative which provided opportunities for the colonizers, and colonized to profit from the enabling environment of economic expansion which characterized the colonial period.
5. That British colonial policies were lopsided such that the overall benefits in terms of resources and revenue generated were gained by the colonialists to the detriment of the indigenous people.
6. That despite the bad impact in terms of resource exploitation, the colonial policies gave room for the specialization and diversification of the economies of the indigenous people and even resulted in improved wealth creation for the aristocratic and peasant classes.
7. That British colonialism with a focus on exports and imports development was too externally driven, thereby subjecting the Kano area to the bad effects of the Global Economic Depression of the 1930s.
8. That the colonial economic policies were characterized by series of innovations as the British authorities made practical efforts in finding solutions to the series of problems that faced their real economic interests in Kano and its environs.
9. That to a high degree, the good impact of the British colonial economic policies outweighed the bad effect.

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