Dissertation By
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KENYATTA UNIVERSITY

THE EVOLUTION OF MUMIAS SETTLEMENT INTO AN URBAN CENTRE TO CIRCA 1940

April 1998

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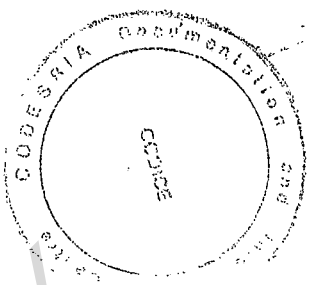


BY

GODWIN RAPANDO MURUNGA

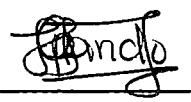
A THESIS SUBMITTED IN PARTIAL FULFILMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE MASTER OF ARTS DEGREE AT

KENYATTA UNIVERSITY

April 1998

DECLARATION

This thesis is my original work, and to the best of my knowledge, has not been submitted for a degree in any university.



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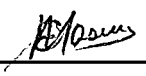
This thesis has been submitted with my approval as a University supervisor.



PROF.ERIC MASINDE ASEKA

DEDICATION

This thesis is dedicated to my wife Carolyne Temoi Rapando and to my sons Tony Wangatia Rapando and Claude Manya Rapando for their patience and constant understanding during the long years of working.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

A work of such magnitude inevitably accumulated numerous debts both at the institutional as well as the individual levels. Several institutions were instrumental in the process of preparing this document. First, is Kenyatta University that enabled me realise my dream of undertaking this masters course in history. Through the Staff Development Programme, Kenyatta University also awarded me research funds through the Deans Committee that assisted me to begin the field research. I cannot but wonder how many deserving students have longed for such an opportunity in vain.

At a point when this research was almost stalling, the Council for the Development of Social Science Research in Africa (CODESRIA) through their Small Grants Programme for Thesis Writing of 1997 awarded me a research grant which went along way into assisting me finish the field research and the writing of the report. Without this timely assistance, this study may have taken a little longer. This was even more timely because the research coincided with the infamous Structural Adjustment Programmes and the mis-adviced view then that social science disciplines like history in Africa were of no value. Had institutions like CODESRIA not resisted this view, perhaps many of the ideas entailed in this thesis might never have been heard. Thus, to these two institutions, the author will always remain grateful.

I would also like to express my appreciation to Moi Library of Kenyatta University, Jomo Kenyatta Memorial Library of the University of Nairobi, Institute of Development Studies and Institute of African Studies resource centres of The University of Nairobi, the British Institute of Eastern Africa based at Kileleshwa in Nairobi and the Kenya National Archives and its Provincial branch at Kakamega for facilitating the acquisition of both primary and secondary data that went into writing this document. The staff in these libraries were a great boost for my research work. In particular, Mr. Richard Ambani was very helpful.

At the individual level, the author is grateful to all those who in one way or another contributed to the final product that this thesis is. Special mention however, is to the thesis supervisor Prof. Eric Masinde Aseka for the patience, critical comments and for always being there to attend to impromptu questions, suggestions and alterations. His meticulous supervisory abilities and rare friendship to his student was an admirable quality. Also members of the academic staff in the Department were terrific in their valuable criticism in personal and seminar discussions. Mention should be made of Prof. Gabriel Jal, Dr. Mildred Ndeda, Mr. Pius Kakai Wanyonyi, Edward Kisiang'ani, Danson Esese, Hannington Ochwada, Edwin Gimode, Washington Ndiiri, Lazarus Ngari, Joel Imbisi, Peter Mbai Njogu, Felix Kiruthu, Martha Musalia, not to forget my classmates Peter Letotin Lemoosa and David Otieno Okelo. Prof. Henry Mutoro and Dr. David C. Sperling of the History Department, University of Nairobi were also very helpful.

Without Mr. Alfred Anangwe and Ali Wesonga, my two research assistants, this work may have taken more time. I thank them sincerely for accepting the little token in form of

payment which was **a sad reminder that we are in the 'third world'.** Also the encouragement received from my friends Daniel Wesonga and Patrick Akhaukwa cannot be forgotten. Mr. Melekidzedeck Khayesi and his wife, Jane N. Khayesi provided their time and computer for this research. I am very grateful to them for their sacrifice and dedication to work. Occasionally, Metrine Makanda and Mary Khaemba did the typing which was a tremendous contribution towards finishing this project.

Lastly, to my family members, including my father Arnold Murunga, my mothers Rita Murunga and Grace Mukoya, my brothers Peter Murunga and Patrick Murunga and the young ones. I want to make special mention of my Wife Carolyne Temoi Rapando and my sons Tony Wangatia Rapando and Claude Manya Rapando for their patience, understanding and mutual assistance throughout this demanding exercise. To them, I dedicate this work.

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ABSTRACT{PRIVATE }

This study examines the evolution of Mumias into an urban centre. It adopts and critiques the Weberian approach to urbanization and also re-asserts the underdevelopment perspective of unequal exchange and uneven development. In the framework of the underdevelopment theory, the place of merchant-capital in the development of Mumias is explained. The study demonstrates the relevance and/or lack of it of these theories in understanding the physical structure and social processes that characterised the evolution of Mumias from its earliest time to the year 1940.

The study begins on the premise that there is no standard criteria of determining an urban centre and that the Wanga had their own form of urbanism. The whole question of urbanization has to be re-examined and defined beyond Western definitional strait-jackets. The functionality of the Wanga urbanism is demonstrated in the importance of *Itookho*, the traditional name for the capital. The idea of *Itookho* is central in the urbanism of the Wanga. Its location, functions and changing character were a product of the centres response to the local needs and aspirations of the Wanga and their gerontocracy. The politico-administrative imperatives of the institution of Nabongo and the attendant socio-cultural and economic roles were pertinent aspects that defined *Itookho*. The place of the Maasai in the changing nature and functions of *Itookho* is also underscored in the study. By 1860, *Itookho* had evolved into a key aggregation of humans for socio-cultural purposes in its urban evolution.

The study proceeds to examine the interlude between the traditional nature of *Itookho* and the exceedingly powerful presence of British colonialists. Attempts are made to illuminate the impact of the Arab-Swahili presence in *Itookho* including their commercial and religious legacies. It is shown that the Arab-Swahili reached *Itookho* as a direct response to growing mercantile needs at the Coast. The Arab-Swahili mercantile incursions in Wanga in the era of Nabongo Shiundu made his *Itookho* re-named Kwa-Shiundu which became largely cosmopolitan. With such a cosmopolitan composition, the morphology of Kwa-Shiundu was gradually transformed. However, by 1894, when British colonial designs in Kenya became apparent, Islam had not effectively taken root in Kwa-Shiundu and the European presence and the Arab-Swahili lack of evangelical zeal accounted for the subsequent decline of the Arab-Swahili influence. The study analyses the impact of the Arab-Swahili merchant-capital on the Wanga and other parts of the Buluyia social formation.

The establishment of the colonial state in Buluyia is given prominence in the study. It emphasizes the importance of grasping the colonial racial dichotomy in analysing and understanding the social processes evident in Mumias. Its colonial transformation was based on this dichotomy and its declining nature after 1928 is associated to colonial policies. The study also highlights the role of Indian merchant-capital in the post 1900 history of Mumias and proceeds to offer a penetrating assessment of the conflicting place of Indian trading needs and European settler agricultural demands in Mumias. Evidence is adduced to demonstrate how the African needs were sand-witched between the Indian and European interests. Consequently, the evolution of a viable network of Wanga traders was

stifled. This explains why Mumias `decayed' after 1928 when the district headquarters was moved to Kakamega. These shifted emphasis from Mumias as greater focus went to other towns in the region. But the inability of the royal Wanga family to transform their political clout over the British into economic prowess is seen as a fundamental issue. The rest of the Wanga traders remained petty traders. The unprivileged entrepreneurial skills of the less connected local traders were easily petered out of competition by Indians. Thus the Wanga initiatives in trade and the local dynamic in the urban growth of Mumias were undermined.

CHAPTER ONE

1.0 URBANIZATION: THE PROBLEM AND THEORETICAL BACKGROUND

1.1 INTRODUCTION

Urbanisation is a dynamic process involving the emergence, growth and transformation in the nature and functions of a settlement (Mumford, 1961). Primarily, urban centres are a rural outgrowth and a number of factors operate not only to give rise to but also constantly transform a settlement into an urban one. But these factors are context specific such that broad generalisations on them act only to obscure the uniqueness of each urban phenomenon.

Consequently, the factors for urban evolution are diverse and can be better grasped within the locational context and the roles and functions of the centre to the wider society (Rambanapasi, 1993: 1). Conventional definitions of urban centres as large, dense settlements characterised by a non-agricultural way of life may not apply to all centres (Coquery-Vidrovitch 1991: 13-14 and Flanagan and Gugler, 1978: 19). That is why this study is designed to illuminate the question of urbanisation using the illustrative case of Mumias settlement. It aims at examining the evolution of Mumias settlement into an urban centre with the local context as the frame of reference. The study will trace its emergence, functions to the wider society and the changing nature of Mumias as it experienced a myriad of influences both internal and external.

Such a study can be said to be long overdue in the case of Kenya's urban history. The rise, development and transformation of a settlement into an urban centre in Kenya have not been adequately studied historically. Existing literature on urban growth have been studied by geographers, sociologists and anthropologists. Relevant as these disciplinary approaches may be, their accounts are conveyed non-historically and strictly in behavioural structural and demographic terms (Aseka, 1990b: 44). The enriching elements of historical explanation in space and time are therefore conspicuously lacking.

Anthropology has even dealt urban studies in Africa a heavier blow. Anthropological accounts in Africa have been largely dominated by Eurocentric views which are statist in approach and racist in orientation. The view that Africa did not possess any urban civilisation in the pre-colonial days emanated from this Eurocentricism and popularized in anthropological discourse. Such anthropological studies have therefore insisted that urban civilisation emerged in Africa with colonial conquest. This has also been the underlying argument of the modernisation theory among other theories.

The dichotomy between primitive and statist pre-colonial Africa and developed and dynamic colonial and post-colonial Africa was a product of Western Eurocentric writings. Social science disciplines like anthropology have largely employed this epistemological duality to explain events in Africa. Thus, modernity is posed as a product of Western civilisations while the traditional is characteristic of pre-colonial Africa. Consequently, traditional is equated to statism while modernity is equated to dynamism. The binary logic of this is that the development of colonialism put Africa in

history and one of the main agents of modernisation was urbanisation (Southall, 1973: 5).

The consequence of such a theoretical approach in urban studies has been the denial of pre-colonial urban forms in Africa. In colonail times, urbanisation was viewed as a modernizing agent and a valuable process in African development. It is Aiden Southall who buttressed this argument that urban centres are areas of spread of innovation and technology to the rural hinterland (1977). What he conveniently overlooked was the fact that there are many modernities and Africa had its own modernity. This study attempts to trace the expression of this modernity in the Wanga pre-colonial urbanisation.

1.2 BACKGROUND OF THE PROBLEM

The theme of urbanisation has featured prominently in modern scholarship. Various approaches have been adopted in the analysis of urban processes. One predominant approach has tended to accord the conventional definition of urbanisation primacy. On that definitional yardstick is determined whether given settlements were urban or rural. The works of scholars like Louis Wirth (1938), Gordon Childe (1950 and 1957) and Gideon Sjoberg (1955, 1960) among others illustrate this argument (Refer to Connah, 1987: 6-8 and Coquery-Vidrovitch, 1992).

As a consequence, Africa has been explicitly and implicitly denied urban forms in pre-colonial period (Flanagan and Gugler, 1978: 21). Whereas some scholars argued that African civilisations, including urban ones were a product of external impetus and

therefore not autochthonous in origin (see Aseka, 1990a: 3), others set standard criteria of defining urbanisation that cut Africa out of the urban sphere (e.g. Childe's ten points quoted in Connah, 1987: 7). Such a criteria however, fails to consider the historical experience of respective societies through time.

As a counterpoise, African scholars sought to correct these distortions by providing new frameworks of understanding urbanisation and giving empirical evidence for the new perspectives. For example, the works of Mabogunje on Yoruba towns illustrate this (1962, 1974). In East Africa, Robert A. Obudho's works maintain that there were compact settlements that could be called urban in pre-colonial Kenya (1976). Richard W. Hull further adduces evidence of urban forms in pre-colonial Africa (1972) while similar arguments have been succinctly put by Aseka in a study on urbanisation in Kenya (1990b). However, no systematic study of urban evolution since the pre-colonial era has been attempted especially using case studies of Kenyan origin. The case of Mumias will mark an important point of departure in Kenyan urban historiography.

Mumias has a pre-colonial origin dating back to 1800 or earlier. Throughout its long history, there have occurred changes in location, names, composition in terms of population and functions to the wider society. In the pre-colonial era, before the arrival of the Arab-Swahili in Mumias, the initial nucleus around which the centre evolved was at Imanga. This is where Muima, the leader of the Abamuima reigned over his people. Abamuima were the ruling clan that had their centre at Imanga. For several reasons including geographical and climate, Imanga had for long been ideal as an administrative

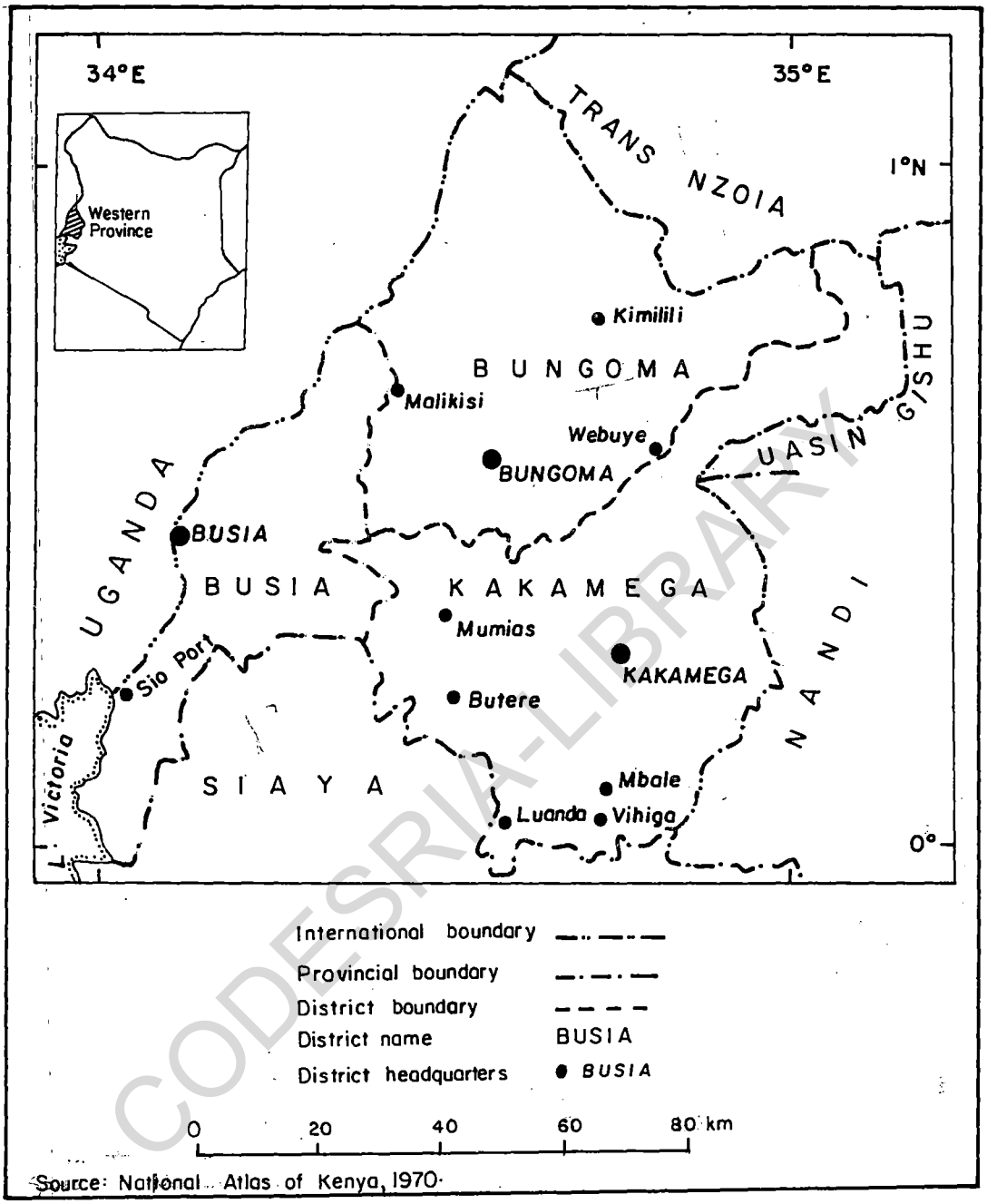
centre. Thus when Wanga arrived at Imanga, and was latter joined by people who owed allegiance to him from Tiriki, Imanga as the settlement area welcomed not only new people but also new values.

Consequently, the history of what came to be Mumias was subject to the influence of these (Abashitsetse ,Abamuima) and other groups from outside the region. Such included the Arab-Swahili whose presence in the area goes back to c.1856 (Gimode, 1990:114). In the era before colonial domination, the Arab-Swahili influence constituted an important factor which led, for instance, to the name ***Kwa-Shiundu***. The impact of the Arab-Swahili on the evolution of Mumias cannot be over-emphasized. When the Indians and Europeans arrived, the name changed to Mumia's and later Mumias. This was also accompanied by changes in the physical location and functions of the centre. In 1894, Mumias was the headquarters of North Nyanza district and in 1909 it was gazetted a township. But in 1920 the district headquarters was shifted to Kakamega (See Memon, 1976) from Mumias. .

From then onwards the role of Mumias was reduced to that of a trading centre (Memon, 1976). Today Mumias is situated approximately 30° 30' east longitude and 0° 20' north latitude (Barclay, 1977: 4). It is approximately 32 kilometres from Kakamega town on the main road to Bungoma (see Map I). It is in Kakamega district of the Western province of Kenya. Mumias is one of the three townships in Kakamega district, the others being Kakamega and Butere (Republic of Kenya, n.d a: 1). It is also the divisional headquarters of Mumias division.

Mumias division is one of the 11 administrative divisions of Kakamega district. Other divisions include Khwisero, Butere, Ikolomani, Shinyalu, Kakamega Municipality, Kabras, Lurambi, Lugari, Navakholo, and Matete. In total, Mumias division has an area of 568Km, it being the largest in Kakamega (Republic of Kenya, n.db.:1). There are three local authorities in Kakamega district including Kakamega County Council, Kakamega Municipality, and Mumias Town Council (Ibid: 6). In 1993, Mumias division had a projected population of 239,937 people compared to 246,655 in 1994 and 260,666 in 1996. In fact, it maintains the highest population in Kakamega district (Ibid: 9)

Briefly, the district within which Mumias is located is of good climatic conditions and topography. Rainfall varies from 1,250mm to 2,000mm while temperature varies from a mean maximum of 26° - 32° C and a mean minimum of 14° - 18° C. Although the rainfall varies



Source: National Atlas of Kenya, 1970.

with altitude, it is very reliable and adequately distributed (Republic of Kenya ,n.d b: 1). Such climatic conditions have been boosted with the numerous rivers and tributary streams that make the area an ideal agricultural place. Indeed, this is one reason why the Kenyan government preferred the area for large scale plantation of sugarcane.

Thus, next to Mumias, about five kilometres to the North is located the Mumias Sugar Company. This is a multinational sugar milling concern established in Kenya in the early 1970s. It is part of the London based multinational co-operation known as Booker McConnell. Booker McConnell, together with Tate and Lyle are "two British companies that straddle across the [African] continent's sugar industry like towering giants".(Zeleza, 1988:). Apart from British Guiana and the Caribbean where these companies monopolize not only sugarcane farming but also shipping and trading, (Nkrumah, 1965: 8) by 1970, these companies were involved in 55 sugar projects in 22 African countries. Kenya was one such African country.

The sugar company is important to Mumias centre given that one objective of the scheme was to provide employment to the people in the area. In turn this would act as a mechanism for accelerating rural development and improvement in living standards (Barclays, 1977: 2). Mumias centre was to benefit from this through construction of housing units for employees and the provision of other infrastructural facilities. According to Khaguli, (1981) the housing project never saw the light of the day. Thus the company provides good food for thought for interested scholars. Our study provides

the historical background to these developments. What one cannot gainsay is that the sugar scheme has had a tremendous impact on the evolution of Mumias centre.

In the vicinity of Mumias centre can also be found a complex of schools and a hospital. These include the catholic mission sponsored St. Mary's Mumias hospital, Mumias Girls' primary and secondary, Mumias Boys' primary and secondary Schools and Mumias Vocational School for the Deaf. Within Mumias town can also be found a mosque for the Muslims. This introduces a religious dimension with a long history tracing back to the pre-colonial and colonial times. The mission facilities were sponsored by the Mill Hill Fathers who arrived in Mumias in 1902 (See Ogutu, 1981 , Burgman, 1992). The Mission has since developed social amenities whose relevance to any understanding of Mumias centre can only be neglected to the detriment of a balanced historical account.

The co-existence of local and foreign economic values are attested to by the two markets in the centre: one belonging to the town council and the other to the Nabongo's family. These are located in the town adjacent to one another. The council extracts revenue from their market as the revenue from the latter goes to the Nabongo's family. This has been done essentially as an exercise of preserving the royalty of the Wanga to the Nabongo given that the market existed prior to European colonialism in Wanga (Ogutu, 1979).

A further indicator of the nature of Mumias centre is demography. During the 1989 population census, Mumias was ranked 22nd with a population of approximately 33,668 people. This is compared to 697 people in 1969 (Republic of Kenya , n.d a,: 7) and 8,305 people in 1979 (Khaguli, 1981: 41).This was a significant increase in the population and a pointer to the increasing importance of the centre. All these aspects go along way to demonstrate that Mumias may be a repository of a rich heritage that deserves adequate and systematic appraisal.

1.3 LITERATURE REVIEW

There exist general studies on urbanisation in Kenya and others that discuss themes relevant to understanding the history of Mumias centre. However, there is no study that attempts a systematic analysis of the evolution of Mumias into an urban centre. In fact the interest in recontructing the urban history of many of Kenya's urban areas has been very minimal, leaving the work to other disciplines like geography, anthropology and sociology. This review is therefore designed to illustrate this prevailing lacuna and implicitly assert the significance of undertaking this study of Mumias to circa 1940. In particular, these are barren years in terms of urban study of Mumias.

First, is Catherine Coquery-Vidrovitch's study on Africa (1991). She examines the process of urbanisation in Africa from the pre-colonial to the beginning of independence; discussing themes like ancient urban forms, the theoretical perspectives in urban studies and colonial urban processes. She notes the significance of labour relations in colonial urban studies and concludes by arguing for recasting the

modernisation theory in Afrocentric terms to help explain urban developments in Africa. Though her interest is in Africa, and does not as such specifically focus on Mumias, the analysis is nevertheless conceptually important for any study on urbanisation in Africa.

Southall (1988) and Kabegyere (1978) have studied the role of Small Urban Centres (S.U.C) in Africa's rural development. Southall argues that S.U.C. are the "most strategic key to problems of rural development" in Africa. To him, these are areas of spread of innovation and technology to the rural hinterland and therefore the engine for modernisation and development in Africa (see also S.M. Kimani and D.F.F. Taylor, 1973 and D.F.F. Taylor, 1974). The latter argues in favour of growth centres for rural development in Africa and posits that S.U.C can act as "cogs in rural development". He however, stresses local participation in rural areas as vital to the growth centre approach.

Kabwegyere (1979) was however sceptical of the view that S.U.C were necessarily significant growth centres in Africa. To him, they are an extension and elaboration of the system that created outward oriented and dependent cities (like Nairobi), and could not, therefore, work for rural development. He therefore admonishes that S.U.C are located in a neo-colonial situation in which real rural development is impeded. They can only be studied to high-light the problems involved in pursuing development in Africa.

Kabwegyere's critique acted as an eye opener for Southall who in his work (1988) recanted his earlier views. This time he admits having stated "aspirations as facts." He

contends that S.U.C are "pawns among local, national or international forces" to which they remain inextricably linked. He concludes that S.U.C function for the system or forces that brought them into being. In Africa, they perform their growth centre functions in the reverse.

The debate on SUC has broad policy implications in Kenya given that the ***Sessional Paper No. 1 of 1986 on District Focus for Rural Development*** uses the growth centre approach. The theoretical postulates of the policy accords growth centres a central role in rural development. However, such centres have a double edge i.e. they may be parasitic to the hinterland or may on the other hand promote development. The debate will be illuminated further using this case study of Mumias settlement.

Other than the theoretical aspect, the extraordinary labour of Robert .A. Obudho has afforded urban scholars detailed analysis of urbanisation in Kenya and more specifically Western Kenya. In his 1974 work, Obudho gives an analysis of the geographical distribution of urban centres in Kenya paying particular attention to the role of the transport system in determining their origin and location.

A similar approach is evident in his other work co-authored with Rose A. Obudho (1992) in which they attempted a spatio-temporal analysis of colonial urban development. Though these two studies provide an understanding of the historical and geographical context of urbanisation, there is an overemphasis on Kisumu in the first

study and the questionable assumption that urban development was limited to the colonial and post-colonial periods in the second study. However, this last issue is catered for in an earlier study (i.e. Obudho and Waller 1976).

In this study Obudho and Waller, (1976) pursue the question of periodic markets and urbanisation in Western Kenya. They document the existence of compact settlements that could be called urban in pre-colonial Kenya. These were to act as areas of initial contact between Africans and non-Africans. However, this study does not set out to systematically examine Mumias though there is an occasional reference to it. Our study has benefited from the empirical references in Obudho's works.

Another set of related studies on the urban history of Kenya include Memon (1976), Ogutu, (1979) and Aseka (1990b). Memon's and Aseka's are general studies on Kenya while Ogutu concentrates on Western Kenya. Though these studies are broad in scope, they examine briefly the history Mumias during the pre-colonial and colonial period. Aseka points out the significance of Mumias as an urban metropolis in the pre-colonial Wanga society while Ogutu concerns himself with its status as the Nabongo's market. Memon does analyse urban development in Kenya using the case study of Western Kenya. Here, he examines Mumias as an administrative cum-economic centre. Although the above works shed significant historical light on urban studies, they do not offer adequate and systematic insights on the history of Mumias.

It is evident from the above that Mumias settlement still lacks a systematic historical study. But there are other studies that adduce evidence that is important in understanding the urban context and history of Mumias. These include studies by Osogo (1966) and Were (1967) that examine the history of the Abaluyia plus Sakwa M'sake (1971) and Dealing (1974) on the political history of the Wanga. Suffice it to note that the Wanga are a sub-ethnic group of the Baluyia.

Osogo and Were trace the history of the Abaluyia, their migrations and settlement into their present abode. Were devotes a chapter on the Wanga tracing their migrations from Tiriki to Wanga. Each gives an overview of the contact between the Abaluyia and the early non-African visitors. But although Were, in particular, mentions Elureko (Mumias) as the capital centre of the Wanga, he does not analyse the nature of the centre. Such however was not the interest of Were along with scholars like Dealing and Sakwa M'Sake whose main concern appears to have been with the historical patterns of migration and the subsequent political experience of the Abaluyia towards the colonial period.

In fact Sakwa M'sake (1971) and Dealing (1974)[1] concentrate on the political organisation of the Wanga. The former focused on the years C.1860-1926 while the latter between C.1650-1914. Dealing criticised the Abashitsetse dominance of Wanga politics as overblown to enhance the effective range of their influence while Sakwa

M'Sake holds that the Wanga were already a `centralized' community under the Nabongo's prior to colonial domination. Whereas Dealing argues that the Anglo-Wanga alliance was expediently used by the British to subjugate Buluyia and parts of the Luo community, Sakwa M'sake contends that the alliance was in keeping with the traditional Wanga search for powerful friends for the sake of defence. However, without questioning the truth of each perspective, it is noteworthy that Dealing's conclusions emanate mainly from circumstantial evidence. The two studies, just like Were's do not relate their accounts to the settlement at Mumias. Our study attempts to fill this gap.

Closely related to the political organization of the Wanga are the two biographies of Nabongo Mumia. These works by Osogo (1967) and Kenyanchui (1992) examine the life and times of Nabongo Mumia who was born around 1849 and died in 1949. Incidentally, these are roughly the limits of our proposed study. Significantly, Mumias borrows its name from Mumia. Thus, the political implication of Nabongo Mumia's personality are salient to the study of Mumias settlement and we shall borrow extensively from these biographies in this regard.

An informative study that treats the interface between the pre-colonial and colonial period is Abdalla's (1971) evaluation of some coastal and Islamic influences in Mumias. These he argues emerged through the agency of the Arab-Swahili traders who settled

[1] For a critique of Dealing, see Godwin Murunga *An Assessment of 'Politics in Wanga, Kenya,c.1650-1914' in the Context of Africanists and African History*, (Forthcoming) in **Chem Chemi: A Journal of the Faculty of Arts,** Kenyatta University.

and retained the Swahili culture in Mumias. This culture was however subordinated by the British occupation of Buluyia with whom Nabongo Mumias quickly allied with.

The problematic of Mumia's reaction to the Arab-Swahili and Europeans is adequately taken up by Aseka, (1989). He examines this within the political economy approach in his seminal study of the Abaluyia. He locates the origins of social differentiation in Buluyia at the juncture when Mumia invited the Arab-Swahili and latter the British. He concludes that colonialism, though oppressive, was a pivotal agent of social differentiation in Buluyia. However, both studies do not consider the specific case of Mumias given their scope and intention.

Talking about colonialism as an agent of social differentiation, education was perhaps a chief factor in social stratification. Attempts to adequately address the disparities in the impact of western missionary education in Mumias can be found in Sifuna (1977/78) and my previous study (1994) of western education among the Wanga. Sifuna examines the roles of colonial functionaries in promoting education. He notes Mumia's complacency in promoting education in Wanga as opposed to Mulama at Butere. Coupled with the missionary insistence on religious education which had little utilitarian value, this led to the slow development of education in Mumias as compared to other areas like Butere.

Although similar arguments emerge in my previous study, (1994) the major issue pursued here is the struggle against religious education offered under the auspices of the Mill Hill Fathers in Mumias compared to the Church Missionary Society at Butere. Just like Bode (1975), I conclude that the participation of the Wanga in politics of emancipation was inhibited by the socialization process of the Catholics which emphasized religion and exercised extreme control over their converts. Evidently, although the two studies above discuss significant themes, they do not cover Mumias settlement.

The last category of studies relevant to the understanding of Mumias include Mulaa (1981) and Esese (1990). Mulaa examines the impact of the economic intervention of Mumias Sugar project on politics in Wanga. He avers that because of the centralized operation of Mumias Outgrowers Company, this inhibited the development of rural capitalism among the Wanga. He therefore attributes the retention of clan ideology in Wanga politics to poor social transformation. However, this study is less concerned with the history of Mumias.

It is perhaps Esese (1990) that is relevant to our proposed study. Esese examines agriculture and socio-economic change. The theme of land accessibility, resource allocation and the transformations as a consequence of colonial land policies are assessed. But although he analyses production and exchange he does not relate the history of this centre to agriculture. And Khaguli (1981) whose study should have shed light on Mumias is outside the time orbit of our proposed study. Thus our interest in the

social history of Mumias between to circa 1940 is largely on a historical question which remains unexplored.

From the foregoing review of relevant literature, it is clear that there has been no adequate treatment of the history of Mumias centre in a scholarly manner. This has therefore necessitated a systematic study of the evolution of Mumias settlement into an urban centre.

1.4 STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

This study attempts to reconstruct an urban history of Mumias settlement to circa 1940. It identifies the political aspect of the evolution of Mumias and examines it in relation to the impact of the Arab-Swahili, Indian and European trading interest in the centre. It is therefore an endeavour to understand how these many influences have affected the nature of the settlement and *ipso facto* appraise on the theme of endurance and change. Such an approach to the study of Mumias has not been attempted in existing literature.

1.5 OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

The study will attempt to attain the following objectives:

(a) To trace and explain the nature and location of Mumias settlement prior to any external non-African interference.

(b) To assess the impact of Islam and Arab-Swahili trading ventures on the evolution of Mumias.

(c) To analyse the establishment of colonial Indian and European commercial interests in Mumias and examine their impact in the environs of the centre.

1.6 RESEARCH PREMISES

This study is premised on three fundamental assumptions. That:

(a) Mumias existed mainly as a politico-administrative centre prior to any external non-African interference.

(b) The Islamised Arab-Swahili traders greatly accelerated the growth of Mumias without radically altering its traditional nature.

(c) The presence of Indian and European business interests in Mumias led to the emergence of an urban centre which contrasted with its rural environment.

1.7 THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

Theories are simply explanatory devices and none is by itself adequate in explaining the full gamut of reality. This study therefore reviews three theories with the aim of developing an eclectic framework of understanding the evolution of Mumias. First will be the human ecology approach of Louis Wirth and the Weberian approach before proceeding to define the underdevelopment paradoxes which the first two theories do not address and demonstrate the need for defining new theoretical parameters.

A major contributor to the human ecology approach is Louis Wirth with his views of "urbanism as a way of life." To him, size, density and heterogeneity of populations are paramount in understanding the city. He argues that social life in the city is a structure of interaction and not a mere geo-physical entity. On this basis Louis Wirth castigates the

emphasis of the `naturalistic' model of Sociology evident in the works of proponents of the ecological model like R.E. Parks, E.W. Burgess etc. (See Weber, 1958: 24-25).

Wirth has however been criticised for over generalizing the applicability of this theory. Also, he draws a false dichotomy between the city and the hinterland thereby assuming that urbanism is based solely on characteristics derived from cities. The assumption cannot be said to be true in all cases. A realistic reflection on the city should recognise that cities emerge out of the wider society. Cities are "simultaneously a part of and a major influence upon the institutions of the overall society" (Giddens, 1982: 105).

Wirth's formulation also entails pejorative elements of the theory of industrial society. In his theory, the contrast between the `traditional' and `industrial' society is drawn and the transition from the former to the latter used as an index of measuring change. At the time of his writing, the main concern in anthropological discourse on Africa stressed how the break up of ethnic affiliations through urbanisation enabled Africans enter the mainstream of history (Janmohamed, 1976: 191). The liberal affirmation that Africans were becoming urbanite (detribalized) therefore represented an assertion of modernity (Cooper, 1983: 12). This, to say the least, was downright racist, narrow and out of touch with the reality in Africa.

Max Weber on the other hand concentrates on the historical development of western medieval cities into autonomous settlements. He admonishes that size is not an adequate

basis for conceptualizing the city, rather, questions of economic and political organisation are more important. A city, he contends, is mainly a market place, a settlement whose inhabitants live primarily off trade and commerce rather than agriculture (Weber, 1958: 66). But because an urban market is the arena of normal exchange of goods, Weber posits that the urban economic policy ought to be guided by an urban authority. Such authority rests with the prince or related political authority.

It appears that the above political and economic dimensions of the city are important according to Weber. However, he does not delve into explaining the forces that lead to such congregation of activities in a centre. Latent in his argument, however, is the fact that cities emerge as a result of certain centripetal forces that allow the congregation of goods and people in a centre and at another point due to centrifugal forces that leads to decentralization of activities away from the centre. Centrality is achieved by supplying such goods and services as are not available or are insufficient in settlements within that area, while the opposite may occur with the emergence of an intervening opportunity. With such centrality of a centre, the operation of the political and economic activities identified by Weber follows. But Weber did not expound on this, seeking only to concentrate on the city as a centre of revolutionary forces in medieval Europe (Elliot and McCrone, 1982: 34).

The political and economic dimensions of urban evolution is significant for our proposed study only if we emphasize the historical background on which they rest. Such an approach is possible if we explain the centripetal forces that lead to the centrality of

Mumias as an arena where political and economic systems were subsequently organized. This particular dimension of Weber's theory requires to be interrogated in terms of the explanation of the origins and pre-colonial history of Mumias. Equally requiring interrogation is Walter Christaller's central place theory for its ahistorical posture (Christaller, 1966).

Weber concentrates on Europe without paying attention to Africa. This is despite the general title; **The City** in which he sets no geographical limit for his study. Africa is mentioned only once (p. 96) and Egypt is treated as though it is part of the Orient and the Middle East. One would therefore be excused for assuming that Weber concurs with the arguments entailed in the Hamitic theory.

The Eurocentric and derogatory connotation of the Hamitic theory (critiqued and dismissed as a myth) therefore linger in Weber's formulation. Indeed, the canons of the modernisation theory trace back to Weber's rationalization of authority and his thesis on bureaucratic management (Aseka 1989: 143). This makes it not only difficult to but also perfidious to domesticate the thrust of Webers theory to explain the unique African urban phenomenon as Coquery-Vidrovitch has suggested (1991: 72). But the political and economic dimensions identified above are general notions which can be grasped as world-wide occurrences. That is why we extract them from the "teleology and Eurocentrism of the modernisation theory". The rest of the Weberian approach needs to be countered with an Afro-centred redefinitions of the underdevelopment problematics

with a rigourous focus on spatial urban patterns emanating from the inequity between the North and South.

The structural and social prroblems identified by underdevelopment theorists in Africa have not been transcended. The underdevelopment perspective traces its roots to the writings of Latin American scholars who were largely disillusioned with conventional theories of development. However, they borrowed from Paul Baran who spearheaded the emerging school of neo-Marxism. Andre Gunder Frank subsequently sought to examine a fresh the relationship between the North and South using the neo-marxist parameters of Baran. Frank saw the spatial polarization of the capitalist system into a metropolitan centre and periphery satellite. It is from this conceptualization that the tenets of the underdevelopment theory sometimes called dependency theory were systematically examined and imported into Africa. In Africa, the underdevelopment theory was applied by Samir Amin (1974, 1976), Walter Rodney (1972) and Immanuel Wallersterin (1974) who modified it into a world systems theory. In Kenya, the theory was used by Colin Leys (1974) though he later recanted his ideas. There is need for the underdevelopment problematics to be posed in more realistic terms but not in the fashion in which it is being absorbed in postmodernism (Hettne,1995).

The underdevelopment theory traces the origin of Africa's underdevelopment to the time when the third world began to be progressively incorporated into a permanent relationship with the expanding capitalist economy (Ley, 1974: 8). The theory holds that underdevelopment is not an original condition of Africa, rather, it is a product of the

historical process of the expansion of capitalism which led to the development of the West at the expense of Africa. Thus development and underdevelopment are two sides of the same coin (Suda, 1992: 35).

Underdevelopment is seen as a product of European exploitation of African resources and labour. This is a product of the division of the world into polar opposites in which Africa produces for the appropriation of the West. This international division of labour relegates Africa into a primary producer while the West dominates in manufacture. It is in the sphere of exchange that underdevelopment is pronounced. This is because the terms of exchange are unequal and skewed in favour of the West (Temu and Swai, 1981: 78).

Given that Africa was already participating in the European dominated capitalist economy prior to colonialism, underdevelopment predates colonial domination. This is because of the international trade by the Arab-Swahili in pre-colonial Africa. Exploitation is therefore traced to pre-colonial trade relations that thrived in the form of merchant capital. Urban centres are subsequently seen as products and agents of this unfair trade arrangements serving as circulation as well as collecting centres for the foreign interests. Their spatial distribution especially in the colonial period attests to this.

Unequal exchange and uneven development are noted as pertinent themes in the underdevelopment of the third world. A significant theme in this relationship is the

operation of merchant capital which is responsible for unequal exchange and the underdevelopment of Africa. First, merchant capital, is `carrying' capital. It does not participate in production but circulates what it does not produce. To gain profits it seeks to "buy cheap and sell dear". As trading capital, it gets profits by taking advantage of the ignorance of its clients. This is assured because of distance of origin of the goods and especially for Africa due to their narrow world view (Swai and Temu, 1981: 85).

Merchant capital is parasitic because it adds nothing to what it circulates. Wealth is generated in the process of production and not in the sphere of exchange where merchant capital is penned. Because of this parasiticism, merchant capital is exploitative and therefore socially and structurally underdeveloping. Pre-colonial trade in Africa was in the form of merchant capital. It was underdeveloping because it was both unproductive and realized profit on the basis of unequal exchange. In pre-colonial Kenya it realized its objectives by allying with the local ruling class or in other cases through plunder. This trade was manifested through Arab-Swahili traders in East Africa. Their role in state formation, though sometimes polemicised in social discourse, cannot be gainsaid (Swai, 1984: 18).

By allying with the ruling class in pre-colonial Africa, merchant capital was responsible for transforming hitherto royal courts into political and commercial centres. In the process of circulation of capital, merchants gave rise to or transformed settlements into collection centres or markets. These were to emerge as important centres for the Indian and European traders and administrators. It is noteworthy that Europeans preferred

jurisdictions over areas which were already familiar and also because pre-colonial foreign trade orientation caused African communities to be more susceptible to colonial political and economic innovations (Rodney, 1985: 333). Mumias was such a familiar centre.

This study takes into account three broad theoretical postulates. First, the Weberian emphasis on the political and economic aspects of urban evolution is perspectivally contested to provide space for constructing a more serviceable paradigm to explain how Mumias emerged and evolved in the 'pre-contact' period. Secondly, it examines the era of Arab-Swahili interest in Mumias within the underdevelopment problematics of merchant capital. It will highlight on the exchange relations at the time bearing in mind its traceable consequence of exploitation. It is important to problematise the whole question of development. Thirdly, and arising from the above is how Indian and European trading interests took advantage of the Arab-Swahili inroads in Mumias and transformed the nature and functions of Mumias settlement in the colonial period.

1.8 JUSTIFICATION OF THE STUDY

The study constitutes a significant contribution to Kenya's urban historiography. Its approach is unique in the manner in which it has contextualised the problematic of urbanization. The conventional characterisation of urbanisation seems obsolete and the whole debate needs to be revisited in the light of the unique features of Mumias. The study is therefore justified because of its syncretic approach and more so, because of the absence of an urban biography of Mumias

Also, many urban studies tend to concentrate on large towns and on specific themes such as industry, transport, slums, crime etc, without tying them together within the historical context of their origin and the interacting local and external factors. Such themes intrigue most geographers, sociologists and anthropologists who convey their accounts "non-historically and (sometimes) strictly in behavioural, structural or demographic terms" (Aseka, 1990b: 44). Moreover, these themes tend to dictate a particular interest on major towns leaving smaller ones in the penumbra of discourse. This in turn results in a lopsided historiography which does not adequately cater for rural areas. The study is justified because it seeks to depart from the emphasis on major towns to consider Mumias and at the same time tie the various themes together within the historical context of its evolution.

Lastly, the study has significant implications for future policy processes. This is because it recasts the question of growth centres which formed an important policy stand point in the **Sessional Paper No. 1 of 1986**. The effectiveness of the policy standpoint was undercut by a myriad of problems. It is hoped that the study elucidates on the social dynamics of Mumias and points to possible remedies to past problems in future policy formulation. Through this, it is hoped the study will contribute to our understanding of the Growth Centre approach, its underlying assumptions and how they can be improved.

1.9 SCOPE AND LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

The geographical scope of this study is Mumias centre and its environs. As a central place, Mumias exists in service to the wider society. There exists a continuous flow of goods, people and ideas between the town and its environs in a network which appears regional. The study therefore takes Mumias as a focal point but traces certain influences to the region.

The period of the origin of Mumias though uncertain, goes back to 1800 or earlier. The study will therefore seek to trace the emergence of Mumias from the wider complex of migrations and settlements of the various clans of the Wanga and particularly Abashitsetse. In the years about 1860 the study will be enriched by the early European written records that "provide an extensive corpus of testimony" (Aseka, 1989: 177). That is why no particular date is given as the point of departure for our study.

Circa 1940 is viewed as the culmination of an epoch and the start of another. The event of the World War II is the reason, having had devastating economic and political effects in Kenyan history. Circa is used to indicate that the study, far from making an abrupt stop, flows back and forth in time. But the year 1940 is ideal because of the event of the World War II which Zeleza (1989: 144) has termed as "having several features at a transitional stage in the political economy of Kenya".

1.10 RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This study relies on two complementary sources; oral and written sources. These constitute primary and secondary sources of data.

Secondary evidence used in this study include mainly written sources like books, journals, unpublished theses, seminar papers, periodicals among others. These were derived from libraries like the University of Nairobi's Jomo Kenyatta Memorial Library, Institute of Development Studies and Institute of African Studies libraries, Kenyatta University's Moi Library and the British Institute of Eastern Africa at Kileleshwa. The written material from these libraries constituted important secondary data for our research.

Primary written documents were collected mainly from the archives. These included the Kenya National Archive, Provincial archives and archives belonging to individuals, groups, churches, etc. First to be collected were documents from the Kenya National Archives. They include documents such as political record books, provincial and district annual reports, handing over reports, intelligence reports, native affairs reports, agriculture reports, personal letters, diaries etc. These are first hand records from participants or observers that have been passed down to posterity.

During field research, the researcher also consulted private archives. They included among others, church, school or town council archives and archives belonging to

business organisations. It is here that the provincial archives came in handy. Fruitful attempts were made to use the provincial and district administrative records at Kakamega.

However, reports from archives tended to be subjective and biased. The documents were therefore critically evaluated and counter-checked to establish their veracity and reconcile the information elicited. The documents were therefore used in collaboration with both secondary and oral sources.

Oral research was conducted to collect oral histories and experiences of participants in relation to the evolution of Mumias. All those persons considered forthcoming by the researcher were consulted and interviewed. To do this, a purposive sampling procedure was employed. Though the method is subjective (Keya, et. al. 1989: 28), it remains the most ideal for a historical research. But the information derived from this procedure was ably counter-balanced. Also, attempts were made to consult material sources of informants like insignia of office, baptism cards, trading licences or certificates, photographs and related paraphernalia.

For effective administration of oral interviews, a questionnaire was used. The significance of the questionnaire was that it facilitated easy and smooth interviews without the risk of forgetting pertinent issues. The questionnaire was designed and used in a way as to cater for issues arising out of given discussions. In most cases, a tape

recorder was used to collect and store information which was transcribed later. Where this was not possible, the researcher directly wrote the notes as the discussion progressed.

The researcher used two research assistants in collecting information. To counter problems of refusal to divulge pertinent information, the researcher used people within the region who are known by the locals to guide and introduce him. This aided in easy collection of oral data.

CHAPTER TWO

2.0 EMERGENCE AND TRANSFORMATION OF MUMIAS SETTLEMENT TO CIRCA 1860

2.1 INTRODUCTION

The evolution of an urban centre is historically a dynamic process. It involves the emergence and constant transformation in the nature of a settlement. However, such a development is always context specific. Thus the process of urban evolution has to respond to the environmental context and the human needs in the area of emergence. In Africa, as elsewhere in the world, urbanisation had unique forms of evolution and manifestation according to the contextual options available then. The history of urban development in Africa therefore traces back into the pre-colonial past.

There however exists controversy as to whether Africa nurtured any urban forms in its pre-colonial past. The unique form of urban features in Africa seem to have eluded many early European writers. For the Kenyan case, a historical analysis of the early urban centres has been lacking, thereby seeming to pass the above Eurocentric contention as a truism. In this chapter, the case of Mumias settlement is analysed to understand pre-colonial urbanisation in Western Kenya. The chapter attempts to trace the evolution of Mumias settlement into an urban centre to circa 1860.

The emergence of Mumias as an urban centre is understood against the historical background of the origins, migrations and settlement of the Wanga community. Note is

taken of the geographical surrounding of the area where the Wanga settled and the emerging socio-economic and political functions of the centre. It is argued that these functions gave the settlement its distinct nature as a place in service of the wider society. By c.1860, various influences had operated to transform the nature and functions of this settlement. However, these influences did not radically change the settlement into a unique centre different from the adjoining hinterland.

The theoretical basis of this chapter is a critique of Weberian perspectives. Max Weber has appreciated the role of the city in the development of and rationalization of authority in the Western society. Aspects of structural functionalism and the modernization theory borrow extensively from this Weberian perspective. But Weber constructed his theory as an ideal-type, allowing for modifications and even radical changes. From this chapter, an attempt is made at interrogating the Weberian perspective.

Empirical evidence from Mumias is used to question the basic assumptions of the theory as the concrete cases of the Mumais social reality validate or invalidate this theory. The Eurocentric overtones that are evident in Weber's theory will be countered by the facts in order to evaluate to what extend the theory is relevant in guiding a study of the evolution of Mumias settlement into an urban centre. The chapter demonstrates that the Weberian approach has certain basic postulates may seem to explain the evolution of Mumias. But on the whole, its European orientation overlooks some basic empirical aspects of the history of Mumias. The theory has to be transcended.

2.2 MIGRATIONS, SETTLEMENT AND THE EMERGENCE OF MUMIAS

Mumias urban centre is located in Mumias Division of Kakamega District. The division is inhabited almost exclusively by the Wanga people. This is one of the 17 sub-ethnic groups of the Abaluyia of Western Kenya. (Esese, 1990: 71) The name Wanga is derived from the eponymous founder of the community. Tradition has it that Wanga was a brother of Khaviakala and the two disagreed while still in Tiriki[1] over leadership (Were, 1967: 99 and Dealing, 1974: 23). The reasons for the disagreement remain subject to controversy. What is certain is that following the disagreement, Wanga decided to immigrate from Tiriki and arrived at Imanga in the middle of the 16th century.

Wanga was the first Nabongo of the Wanga people after the Abashitsetse took power from the Abamuima. His descend from Tiriki makes it a very important dispersal place in the history of the Wanga. Dealing (1974: 23) has dismissed the reasons for the migration of the Wanga as "stereotyped anecdotes" used to replace the original story lost to memory. He admits that he expected an explanation with a bearing of "political authority more profound than the breaking of a beer straw" (Ibid: 24). For him the breaking of a beer straw is not reason enough to explain the disagreement and the consequent

[1] The Abatirichi form one of the 17 sub-ethnic groups of the Abaluyia. They are a Luyianized Kalenjin community on the border of Kakamega, Vihiga and Nandi districts. They are neighbours of the Abalogoli ethnic community of the Abaluyia. The Terik (Nyang'ori) are the unLuyianised remnants of this cluster of Kalenjinspeakers who adopted a Luyia dialect.

migration. But as we have argued elsewhere, Dealings perception of this event is wrong given the meaning attached to an intentional breaking of a beer straw during a drinking session in most African communities. (Murunga, 1996: 15-16)

Be that as it may, Wanga migrated to Imanga where he encountered Muima, then reigning over the Abamuima clan. This plus other clans like Abamulembwa, Abaleka, Abatobe and Abanashieni were the pre-Wanga inhabitants of the country (Were, 1967: 102). The encounter between Wanga and Muima has left a number of questions begging. Although it is certain that the state preceded Wanga in this area, it is still confusing whether the title Nabongo was used by Muima. Scholars like Were (Ibid: 106) persistently refer to Muima as Nabongo without caring to ascertain the origins of this tittle and the evolution of the institution. There is no doubt however that Muima was a ruler whose centre was at Imanga. Imanga would therefore appear to be the place where the initial seeds for the present Mumias centre were sown. This is because of the close relation between the history of the centre and the functional significance of the institution of Nabongo.

Imanga, from where Muima ruled was the central metropolis that blossomed into the initial Wanga idea of an urban centre. It was probably preferred for its ideal and conducive location in an environmentally sound and secure place. Indeed, Imanga fits in the characterization of a place that provided enough facilities for fecundity, nutrition and protection. According to Dealing, (1974: 57) Imanga;

> *is a gentle but distinct hill, the top of which is set off by large rock outcroppings which provide a view of the surrounding country side and which would have added to the defensibility of the area.*

This suggests a security consideration which was significant not solely because the Abamuima were threatened by neighbours but because they lived at a time when there were regular migrations and intermingling of diverse groups of people. Conflicts may have been abated by the abundance of land with sparse population, but Imanga largely remained ideal as an insurance against adverse contingent factors both climatic and human.

The environmentally sound surroundings of Imanga and Buluyia in general was yet another important consideration. "The hill," Dealing writes, "has at least two springs to provide water" (Ibid). This well watered location had the added advantage of fertile soils and good climatic conditions. Describing the soils in the whole of North Kavirondo, Fearn (1961: 16) lauded the contrasting natural endowment of the district "evident in the varied attitudes and soil conditions." He noted that the district had soil variety ranging from rich soils derived from the weathering of Elgon volcanic to the more fertile-light brown sandy soils of the granitic areas (Ibid: 23). Earlier, one writer had noted that Mumias station was situated on lava, which occurs in patches in the neighbourhood (Were, 1967: 22). It is this factor which Wagner noticed and argued that the area was fertile and healthy (1941: 198).

Also, the early Europeans to Mumias were struck by the richness of the land and the great amount of food available at cheap prices (Osogo, 1966: 18). Joseph Thomson, for instance was struck by the abundance of food since it appeared almost inexhaustible. W. J. Ansorge also alludes to a people living in "comparative affluence, owning flocks and herds, and possessing an abundant store of corn" (1899: 42). He contrasted this with the foodless tracts, which using Thomsons collaborative evidence refers to the "three weeks foodless stretch from Kikuyu" (Matson, 1961: 34). Such abundance existing in an area of good climatic conditions like reliable rainfall (Fearn, 1961: 24) was a good enough reason for settling in Imanga.

Furthermore, as a centre of political and economic activity, Imanga was centrally located, not very close to neighbours who could be potential adversaries. In view of the apparent waves of migrations then, Muima would naturally prefer a centrally located place to avoid risky contacts with potentially unfriendly groups. Due to this factors, which constituted the "magic of the hill," Imanga attracted most of the incoming migrants that were to form the present Wanga society.

It is from this centre that Muima reigned over his subjects. It was a centre favoured predominantly for its defensive and agro-ecological advantages. It therefore formed the "original nucleus of the future kingdom of Wanga" (Were, 1967: 103) whose authority began and radiated from this centre. With time, Imanga assumed functional roles which in turn characterised its new status vis-à-vis the outlying hinterland. The hinterland people

looked upon Imanga for administrative leadership as leaders at Imanga responded to these expectations as a duty. With this reciprocal flow of duties and obligations emanating from acquiescing to or acceptance of authority, Imanga became a focal centre whose urbanism was defined by its roles and functions to the wider society. This eventually did confirm linkages between Imanga as a centre in service of the wider society which was not necessarily dichotomized from the rural hinterland.

Wanga arrived and briefly settled at Imanga and was later joined by people of Abakolwe, Abakalibo, Abashikawa, Ababuka, Abashibe, Abang'ale Abatsohe and Abarunga clans (Were, 1967: 116 and Kenyanchui, 1992: 7). Initially, he had disguised himself and worked for Muima while hiding his royal bracelet. Wanga received shelter while he herded Muima's cattle and cleaned his kraal. But the belief system in Wanga then upheld that it was wrong for the two bracelets to 'meet' and worse still for one to enslave the other. Such an occurrence portended doom for the reigning ruler because it was believed that the new bracelet would dethrone the old one. Such a taboo appears mythical and inadequate to offers useful historical explanation, it is nevertheless real in most African societies. It is because of lack of adequate witness accounts that it is presented as a possibility.

Eventually, it was discovered that Wanga had all along been hiding his bracelet to disguise his status. It was about the same time that he was joined by members of a related clan led by Mukolwe. These consequently settled in the vicinity of Imanga at Eshikulu.

Wanga took charge of his people and managed to prosper in the agricultural activity by transforming the initially forested surrounding of Eshikulu (Matson,1961: 34). Just like Imanga before, Wanga had initially settled in the area "covered with dense forest" and this explains why hunting for game was an important source of food in Wanga (Dundas, 1913: 3 and Were, 1967: 35).

It is from the initial need to harness the environment and satisfy the emerging sedentary needs that forests were cut down in the process of opening new land. This was done by institutionalizing a new mode of living whose central focus was the seat of the reigning ruler. The need to maximise facilities for fecundity, nutrition and protection was indeed an important identity forming factor that contributed to the emergence of the close association. In the process, Wanga moulded this initial group of clans under Abashitsetse into a clan confederacy that formed the nascent basis of his authority. Backed by good agro-ecological conditions and security, the clans grew in lips and bounds and managed to develop a social organization peculiar to its new reconfigured nature. This reconfiguration was a gradual process of acceptance or rejection of new ideas from other clans or groups. As new levels of socio-economic complexity and crystallization were achieved, Wanga probably became powerful and confident and the two bracelets could no longer co-exist in harmony.

It can therefore be safely stated that important issues of political and economic mobilisation found their focus at Imanga and its environs. Contending political forms

emerged alongside one another and became focal points for the respective people who submitted their loyalty to the respective leaders. Each leader, it would appear, sought to mould his followers along lines that could assure him support. The economic base in terms of livestock and grain all rationalized their respective confidence as growing powers to reckon with.. Indeed, the alleged reason and process of take-over of powers from Muima to Wanga suggests disagreement over agricultural issues.

According to oral traditions, Wanga kidnapped Muima's wife and demanded the latter's milkiest cow as a ransom. Having refused to do as demanded, Muima declared war against Wanga which he lost. Another version contends that after settling at Eshikulu, Wanga managed to keep some cattle. One day, his

> *bull fought and killed Muima's bull. This caused yet another problem that led Muima to declare war against Wanga. Muima's group was defeated (G.H.C. 1986: 14).*

It is instructive to note that the reoccurrence of cattle in this oral testimonies suggests that cattle keeping was an important economic activity in Wanga then. It may therefore not be far-fetched to conclude that the reason for disagreement hinged on cattle and grazing land. It is however, not feasible that the disagreement was instant as the first version seems to suggest. Rather, disagreement over land and cattle meant that the original groups of clans had entered a period of conflict over land occasioned by increased population in relation to their grazing requirements. This was therefore a gradual process that culminated in conflict only when both Imanga and Eshikulu had

emerged as central leadership centres so that the embryonic Wanga expression of military institution for expansionist and/or defensive reasons had started developing.

Wanga therefore usurped power from Muima and together with his group established their leadership among the heterogeneous mix of clans that submitted to this authority at Eshikulu. Although the clan formed the nucleus of this organization, it is wrong to assume that political organization remained a clan affair limited to Abashitsetse and a small heterogeneous mix around the Nabongo's centre.

The important thing about authority is that it is either accepted, rejected or acquiesced to. Authority was not merely coercive as Dealing defines it (Dealing,1974: 82). Rather, it was irregularly submitted to and felt on a wide panorama of subject landscape as time passed. It did not follow defined territorial or clan frontiers, rather it was manifested among people who, for one reason or another realized that no man is an island by himself. Indeed, there existed a wide latitude of choice among the people on who deserved respect and loyalty as a leader. This means that loyalty could be withdrawn when need arose. But once authority was accepted, the ruler and subjects were obligated to perform given duties in fulfilment of this reciprocal obligations.

Clans formed the basic units of political organization after the family in the early days of Wanga's settlement (Wagner, 1941, Sakwa M'sake, 1971: 8). But at another stage, the clan realized the need to co-exist with other clans. The ideal type situation charted out by

Dealing is that of clans always struggling for autonomy from real or perceived subordination and thereby remaining in distinct isolation until the British imperial catalyst began a process of integration contradicts. This is done rather ahistorically, and Dealing talks of persistent contacts and intermingling of clans and their consequent reconfiguration and eventual emergence of the society that the Wanga became. The fact that the community takes its name after the eponymous founder is a recognition of his status. As it will be shown in the sequel, the clan formed the initial authority base of Nabongo Wanga and this authority spread outward from Wanga's central metropolis near Imanga. The Wanga like any other society needed urban places to serve as centres of leadership and expressions of the growth of their civilization.

2.3 SOCIO-ECONOMIC FUNCTIONS OF THE CENTRE

The political authority whose base was at Wanga's place of residence acquired some economic backing as the Nabongo began to play redistributive roles. This may have arose from the ritual power long reserved for the Nabongo. In particular, Nabongo had always exercised authority by virtue of his priesthood, a role which Dealing pinpoints as central to understanding the institution (1974: 82). He presided over numerous ritual ceremonies especially during breaking the soil and sowing. This made him a 'custodian of crop fertility' (Dundas, 1913: 62) because the Nabongo was believed to be the symbolic link between the subjects, their ancestors and the gods. Crops and animals could not prosper

without the ritual blessings of the ancestors, yet this was the basis of human survival in the society.

"The belief that the spirits of the dead are capable of exercising considerable influence over the affairs of the living, and the conviction that they were ever ready to use this influence" is the rationale for the insistence on the ritual role of the Nabongo (DC/NN/3/2/2). Nabongo interceded between the subjects and the world of the ancestors and so remained the only avenue through which human prosperity was allegedly channelled. People therefore invoked the mediatory role of Nabongo and because of this the Wanga rationalized the significance of continued homage to the institution paid in material form. Such payment was therefore not compulsory (Esese 1990: 116)

This dynamic interplay between the religio-ritual aspects and the political function of Nabongoship translated to bear its significance in distributing societal wealth among subjects. The Wanga began to send the best meat or crops to Nabongo or to his close relatives for his daily needs or for redistribution to kinsmen. As usual, the rulers palace being an administrative centre attracted numerous people who came for various reasons. It is from this crop or meat that the Nabongo in turn used to feed his many visitors (Wambani, O.I 30-7-1992). A relationship of dependence was the consequence and further reinforced the need for continued homage to the Nabongo as this habit became the acceptable form of etiquette. This transformed Nabongo's court into a central place

not only for politico-ritual leadership but also socio-economic activities including trade, conflict resolution, beer drinking and other celebrations.

Given such politico-administrative and economic centrality, the institution of Nabongo cannot be divorced from the original Wanga urban idea. This original idea emerged from a fusion of several elements in dynamic interaction i.e. authority of Nabongo and the roles and functions associated with this institution. The Wanga form of urbanism revolved around the officialdom of the Nabongo given that in one way or another, the roles and functions of Nabongo cut across all aspects of the peoples lives.

It is then important to emphasize that this initial Wanga view of an urban centre changed with time and conditions to accommodate new values as old and obsolete ones were discarded. As changing roles and duties of the institution defined what Nabongoship was all about right from the start, it by implication impacted greatly on the nature of his central metropolis from where leadership roles devolved to the wider society. Questions of scale and complexity of Nabongo's authority were therefore elastic as power was alternatingly acquiesced to, accepted or at times rejected.

2.4 CHANGING LOCATION, NAMES AND NATURE OF THE CENTRE

From the preceding discussion, it is apparent that urbanization in Wanga traces its origin from the functional significance of the institution of the Nabongo. The association of this

institution with its functions and location therefore remains the most fruitful and possible line of investigation in tracing the origins and development of urban settlements in Wanga. The place where the occupant of the seat stayed and discharged his duties represents the autochthonous idea of Wanga urban settlement (Ansorge, 1899: 76). This place was more appropriately called ***Itookho*** among the Wanga. ***Itookho*** refers to the place where the ***Omwami*** (ruler) stays though it has been narrowly conceived to refer only to his court (Esese, 1990: 116).

The prototype of urban centres in Wanga was therefore ***Itookho***. Its pedigree goes back to Imanga which was Muima's centre as he ruled over the initial clans under him. Within the vicinity of Imanga, there developed a second competitive centre under Wanga at Eshikulu (Osogo, 1967: 69). Wanga after taking leadership of his subjects withdrew further North to Matungu. Matungu therefore became the second most notable abode for Nabongo Wanga and since authority lay with him, Matungu acquired comparative significance. Eshikulu never really acquired such prominence as Matungu. Its role must have therefore been transitory in the changing nature of the Wanga political economy. It would also appear that this transition from Imanga to Eshikulu and eventually to Matungu was gradual and occasioned by new demographic trends, inter clan conflicts, new ideas of political authority and most importantly expansion and consolidation of the heterogeneous mix of the clans (Were, 1967: 107). The Abamuima never really lost completely to Abashitsetse and so Imanga and Matungu may have co-existed, for some time, as valuable centres for their respective people.

A demographic trend towards greater concentration of people owing their loyalty to Nabongo Wanga seems to have been a prerequisite for his dethroning Muima to become the widely acknowledged Nabongo (Ibid: 117-118). Such a demographic trend was only possible through increased influx of other clans who in turn accepted and recognised Wanga as ruler or due to a higher birth rate which implies that more Abashitsetse were born. The latter view would then require enabling factors like low mortality rates coupled with better dietary habits that increased fertility. This off course overlooks other cultural variables like indigenous family planning methods that mitigated high population growth. But the feasibility of this latter view remains questionable since population growth could not have been limited to one exclusive clan in the midst of others. Indeed, conditions were such that abundance of land allowed an increase of population whether through influx of a new group or by a high birth rate. The fact remains that for Wanga to dethrone Muima, he needed a higher population submitting to his rule than Muima. In which case the idea of Wanga defeating Muima in a war and ironically withdrawing to Matungu would appear illogical. In such a case, some of Muima's subjects may have withdrawn their allegiance from him preferring the emerging leadership of Wanga at Matungu.

It appears that the increased importance of Matungu during the last years of Wanga's rule was a function of the growing authority of Nabongo Wanga. As more people accepted and submitted loyalty to the leadership of Wanga, the functions of Matungu began to edge over the faltering Imanga. ***Itookho*** then, must have shifted too Matungu

since greater leadership focus had also shifted. Furthermore, this shift to Matungu would suggest transformations in the patterns and machinery of state. It also demonstrates the ability of the people to subordinate economic advantages to politico-ritual needs since Imanga was environmentally and economically advantaged over Matungu. In a nutshell, Matungu as the new centre illustrates the changing needs and aspirations of the developing Wanga society.

The leadership patterns and the machinery of government of the Wanga changed or were modified with this geographical shift of ***Itookho***. Politically, Matungu as the new ***Itookho*** represented an accommodation of new ideas to the institution of Nabongo and ***ipso facto*** his central metropolis. Wanga himself was a recent factor in the politics of the area. In him and his subjects was the embodiment of new ideas permeating into the society from external sources. His arrival, settlement and rise to power introduced new ideas of leadership and succession in Wanga. The question of succession in fact illustrates that ***Itookho*** was not to be of static geographical location. Rather, as new political values emerged and peoples needs changed, ***Itookho*** acquired new functional roles and when necessary geographical location. That is why migration from one location to another cannot be reduced to the mere dual man/nature relationship because political considerations involving man to man relations which may appear to have exercised equally important effects. Ecological, climatic and demographic requirements are important in explaining such shifts.

As earlier hinted, a demographic consequence accompanied Wanga's arrival and settlement at Imanga and Matungu. This may have necessitated relocation of people in new lands that were less densely populated or that did not experience severe or comparable ecological or climatic problems. It may not be far-fetched to argue that the shift from Eshikulu to Matungu entailed such demographic cum environmental consideration especially in relation to the land carrying capacity. Other causes like ecological hazards that led to food shortage and disease could be probable explanations (Esese, 1990: 148). The consequence was a political decision which had an impact on the early urban history of the area.

Inter-clan and ethnic feuds and conflicts began to characterise the reign of Nabongo Wanga. Matungu, for instance was located near the Teso and generally among the iron smelting groups like the Samia along the present boundary of Busia. Iron smelters manufactured spears, knifes, hoes, etc. This entailed a mixture of two contradictory possibilities of friendship and hostility along the Wanga boundaries. As cattle keepers and crop producers, the Wanga needed iron implements for these economic activities. These are activities which necessitated friendship with neighbouring communities. The double pronged nature of iron smelting was the weaponry which gave advantages to the iron smelters and their neighbours as opposed to the agricultural communities especially during conflicts.

It should not however be misconstrued that warfare was a constant phenomenon of the ethnic groups inhabiting this region as Wagner argues (1941: 198) .Conflicts may have arisen from disagreements over territorial land or expansion of population or even over wealth. However, war only became necessary in the absence of viable alternatives. It was a last resort and in view of the good arbitration mechanism in place, it was sporadic and often interrupted by occasional truce during critical times like harvesting or planting seasons. This explains why the early military tradition among the Wanga was diffused by various social instruments of conflict. Indeed, that is why;

> *there was no need for a tribal military organization, but that each clan or group of neighbouring clans would conduct their war expeditions, as well as their defence against attacks, on their own account (Ibid; 228.*

By the time of the death of Nabongo Wanga, about 1652, he had sojourned many places and established another station at "Elureko" near the present day Mumias. Several reasons could have catalysed this move. First, could have been a security consideration in view of Matungu's proximity to iron smelters and the Teso. But insecurity may not have been very serious given that even with "Elureko", Matungu remained the acclaimed ***Itookho*** until much later during Nabongo Mumia's era. Secondly, and perhaps more important was the need to counter the dangers posed by Muima's men at Imanga. "Elureko" also seems to have been more centrally positioned relative to the other areas of the society. It appears Wanga encouraged his sons to settle at "Elureko" thereby

introducing another element in the urban history of Wanga. His successors operated more from Matungu than "Elureko" until much later.

The ancestry of the name "Elureko" however raises some pertinent question. In Luwanga, and many other Luhyia dialects, the verb "reka" means 'to trap'. The name "Elureko" therefore refers to "where they trap". Given this linguistic dimension, the name "Elureko" could possibly only be traced to a practice or episodes of trapping most memorably involving people and not animals. In the case of animals, Omureko and not Elureko was used. Such an instance in Wanga occurred latter in the history of ***Itookho***. During the Arab-Swahili period, people from ethnic groups like the Bukusu were conscripted to slave trade as porters by the Arab-Swahili with the help of Mumia using ***Itookho*** mainly as the base. Mumia's place came to be remembered most as a base where the Arab-Swahili conscription into slavery was launched. The Arab-Swahili operated from these centres for trade from where the Wanga brought their produce to 'trap' money. It was Mumia who first talked about trapping money (***Okhureka litongolo***). It is for this reason that the Wanga and their neighbours remember Mumia's place as "Elureko", where people trapped money by selling their produce. (Shiachi, O.I. January, 1997) Given this etymology, the name "Elureko" seems to be recent and may not have challenged Matungu as ***Itookho*** until more recently.

During the intervening period between Wanga's death and the next most active Nabongo Wamukoya Netya, little seems to have changed in terms of the history of ***Itookho***. This

may perhaps be attributed to the lack of adequate data in Wanga history before Netya. However, during the succession disputes between Wanga's sons, another area of central concern came up. Webala, Wanga's appointed successor quarrelled with his elder brother, Murono over succession rights. In the event, Webala was assassinated in Bukhayo allegedly at Murono's instigation. Murono enjoyed a short stint at Matungu as Nabongo before Webala's son, Musui engaged him in a battle which the latter won. Feeling defeated and rejected, Murono crossed River Nzoia and established a separate centre at Indangalasia c. 1679-1706.

By the time Nabongo Netya took over, c.1760-1787, there were about four centres of considerable functional authority in Wanga. They included Murono's centre on the right bank of River Nzoia, Abamuima's centre still at Imanga and the most prominently acknowledged ***Itookho*** at Matungu and its subsidiary at Elureko (for want of a better name). The existence of these centres was a show of the changing patterns of authority as people accepted or acquiesced to particularly new power bases and rejected others who for one reason or another they disagreed with. This line of analysis therefore demonstrates that the urban history of pre-colonial Wanga was largely determined by the political decisions of the Nabongo and his subjects. The reign of Netya however, attempted to bring all these centres under one effective control with varying degrees of success. These attempts were carried over to the reign of the acclaimed most powerful Nabongo since Wanga in the name of Osundwa, c. 1784-1814 (Dealing, 1974: 144).

Nabongo Netya reigned during a period of constant interaction and intermingling of people and clans. By this time, most people had settled and adopted to their habitat, responding to instances of climatic and ecological hardships in dynamic and self-serving ways. It is conceivable, too, that by this time, due to population increases, each community after staking out claims over particular territories expanded and sought to expand their territories. This was a natural consequence of the interplay between population size, land carrying capacity and intervening ecological and human factors. Indeed, it was during the reign of Netya that tremendous pressure was exerted by the Wanga neighbours. This meant constant fear of siege. It therefore in a way hampered productive activity occasionally leading to famine (Esese, 1990: 148). Such conflicts resulted from identification and adoption of certain values to the land as it became a jealously guarded asset.

As Spear (1996: 213) has argued, land encapsulates many diverse elements of nature, order and ideology through which a sense of identity of the occupants is conveyed. These elements make land a contested space as people seek to exploit it. They organize this exploitation activities through economic and political means that define their uniqueness. This dichotomy is what makes the contest conflictual because land is socially constructed through cultural values and beliefs that identify the Wanga as different from the Jougenya or the Teso, and internally, the Abahsitsetse as different from Abamuima. In such circumstances, the military tradition becomes important.

2.5 THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE MILITARY TRADITION AT ITOOKHO

During the reign of Nabongo Netya, land became an explosively contested space between the Wanga and their neighbours like the Teso, Bukusu, Jougenya, e.t.c. (Were, 1967: 120). This contest spread over to the control of livestock as sporadic raids were launched for cattle, land and related assets (Wagner, 1941: 198). Livestock was very important in the Wanga pre-colonial economy because it represented storable wealth and a very significant source of meat, blood and milk (Esese, 1990: 157). Such sporadic raids were therefore an expression of the changing situation in Wanga as population-land ratio became disproportionate. Every group of people thus began to consider expansionist moves as viable alternative to land pressure and ecological disasters. The military became a requirement both for expansion, defence, and raiding. Hitherto, the military existed in Wanga in less conspicuous forms. It is probably the impact of the Uasin Gishu Maasai that transformed the military tradition in Wanga to acquire a more noticeable form.

The Uasin Gishu Maasai (Wakwavi) were a section of the Maasai whom, Wright has aptly categorized as cultivating pastoralists (1979: 179-180). These were a more versatile group since they moved and tried to adapt to various lifestyles and agro-economic zones than the other Maasai groups. In the period under consideration i.e. c. 1760-1787, it would appear that the Maasai started experiencing some ecological hardships that eventually became acute in the 18th century. This may have started upsetting the yearly pastoral calendar based on pratices of pastoral transhumance. This practice entailed the

seasonal mobility in search of grasses and water (Sherrif, 1985: 6). This could have been the reason for their sojourn across the plains to Western Kenya. The Wakwavi had a superior military tradition and must have spread this across territories as they moved in search of water and grass. Wagner (1941: 225) has noted evidence of Maasai military influence in Bukusu.

Still cattle commanded more respect among this section of the Maasai. Backed by the military expertise, they reached Wanga at a time when Nabongo Netya was faced with such formidable enemies like the Teso and the Jo-Ugenya. It would appear the two struck an accord in which the Wanga would pay the Maasai a herd of cattle in addition to grazing land in exchange for Maasai military assistance. The reason for this agreement may have been Teso threat near Matungu and Jo-Ugenya threat near "Elureko". Military bases started in the two centres because of this emerging threats. While most of the Maasai moved with cattle, some adopted a quasi-sedentary lifestyle as they remained at ***Itookho*** to hold the fort. This added the element of a military base to the urban history of ***Itookho***.

It was therefore during the reign of Nabongo Netya that this new dimension was added to the Wanga idea of ***Itookho***. The military needs of the society came to be served mainly from ***Itookho*** which remained the base of a combined Maasai and Wanga operation. This further reinforced the fact that the changing needs of the Wanga rationalized their accommodation of new external ideas and values as the Maasai presence demonstrates.

This new dimension to the urban history of ***Itookho*** was a show of the changing needs and aspirations of the Wanga. It was so because as inter-society conflicts emerged more prominently, security and protection became issues of greater concern for the Wanga as was for many other communities. Consequently, the initial Wanga military arrangement became inadequate to cope with the emerging dangers. Consequently, all other factors related to communial solidarity and pride of cultural uniqueness were subordinated to the necessity of alliance with the Maasai. The nature of this alliance appears to have given the Maasai an upper hand. Nevertheless, by the death of Nabongo Netya, the nature and functions of ***Itookho*** as the Wanga central metropolis had enlarged thereby stressing its dynamic aspect as a centre in service of the wider society.

The death of Netya ushered in a period of increased external conflicts that rendered the Wanga more amenable to the Maasai power. In fact the Maasai power at ***Itookho*** was demonstrated through their role in the death of Netya. Netya seems to have acted treacherously in his attempt to circumvent the growing Maasai power at ***Itookho***. He usually called the Maasai for beer parties and when they got drunk, he killed them. When the Maasai discovered his deceitful tricks, they killed him too. They subsequently had a hand in the choice of Nabongo Osundwa as the successor. The posthumous events demonstrate that this external conflicts did encapsulate the changing priorities of the Wanga.

As a capital centre of the Wanga, the location of ***Itookho*** was geographically not a sacrosanct. Many considerations took precedence over location. One such consideration was security. Security became an issue because Nabongo Osundwa ruled during a period of increased contact between the Wanga and other Luyia groups. Trade relations constituted one reason for contacts as the Wanga traded with their other neighbours including the Samia and the Basoga far away in Ebukholi in the present day Uganda (Fearn, 1961: 31 and Esese, 1990: 141). The Samia were important in this case because they were iron workers and produced implements that were necessary for agriculture and also for defence against enemies. Osundwa was more advantaged in relation to trade because, having re-established relations with the Maasai, he became more wealthy using the trade contacts and the war booty from the combined Maasai /Wanga raids.

During Osundwa's reign, the economic significance of ***Itookho*** was asserted through the primacy of trade. Traders were settled at ***Itookho*** and did their trading activities or duties as Nabongos clients. Although the commercial nature of such barter trade was undercut by kinship relations, the situation allowed for a negligible group of professional traders to emerge. Their outlook was supra-ethnic. Kinship relations therefore reduced commercial trade to an inter-ethnic and not intra-ethnic affair. Within the Wanga society, reciprocity and re-allocation of resources was the prime motive of exchange while at the inter-ethnic level, surplus was exchanged through barter. It was through such trade contacts that conflicts over distribution of the surplus social product was either heightened or reduced.

Two considerations therefore came to have a bearing on the location of ***Itookho*** during Nabongo Osundwa's reign. These were trade and security. Trade rendered Matungu more amenable to Teso threat since iron workers like the Samia were geographically near the Teso and Matungu. Security was however the issue that made "Elureko" more apt as ***Itookho.*** Generally, both Matungu and "Elureko" retained advantages and disadvantages that made them apt at one point and disadvantaged at another. The consequence was that during Osundwa's reign, equal attention was accorded to both centres which acted to elevate the significance of "Elureko".

Subsequently, it appears that Nabongo Osundwa innovatively used both Matungu and Elureko and elevated them as active centres for political leadership and economic activity. For security reasons however, "Elureko" and Matungu were used to disguise the true movements of the Nabongo. There is the possibility that Osundwa, having been the most wealthy and shrewd leader of the Wanga could be credited with the creative move of making "Elureko" the administrative centre while Matungu became more of Nabongo's residential place. The intelligent security guise here was the difficulty of knowing where the Nabongo was at given times. This period therefore witnessed the slow shift of the administrative ***Itookho*** from Matungu to "Elureko". Consequently, there emerged the functional dichotomy of ***Itookho*** where Matungu became the residential one as opposed to the administrative cum economic centre at "Elureko". But these differences were even sharper during the reign of Nabongo Shiundu by 1841.

Yet again by the time of the death of Nabongo Osundwa, succession disputes acted again to institute new changes in the location of ***Itookho***. A dispute arose between Osundwa's sons, Kweyu and Wamukoya, around 1814. There are various explanations for the disagreement that have little bearing on the history of ***Itookho*** except perhaps for the consequence which is undisputed in the Wanga oral testimony. It is claimed that Osundwa's choice of Kweyu as a successor was actively contested by elders because they did not like him. They therefore enthroned Wamukoya in Kweyu's absence, a decision which Kweyu rejected and seceded to Eshimuli with his followers. Here Kweyu established another metropolis for his new Wanga Mukulu confederacy (Kenyanchui, 1992: 12).

Eshimuli therefore became another important ***Itookho*** apart from Matungu and "Elureko" (DC/NN/3/2/18). The two rival states came to be controlled from the forementioned three centres as each confederacy maintained and asserted its autonomy (Ibid). By this time Imanga and Indagalasia had lost significance given that Osundwa had managed to subordinate their sovereignty within the wider society of the Wanga. Thus it was only "Elureko" and Eshimuli that remained as centres of authority together with the residentially significant Matungu.

The rivalry of "Elureko" and Eshimuli continued to express the disagreement of this confederacies. It was however latent given that the two rival states maintained friendly contacts and appreciated their common ancestry. Today intra-clan marriages between the

Abashitsetse of each confederacy are not permitted. Even during the time of Kweyu, Wamukoya and their successors, they used to co-operate on issues of mutual benefit. Indeed during the 1931 boundary disputes in Wanga, Mumia pleaded "that there should be no definite line demarcated to divide Mukulu and Wanga, as this would tend to destroy all chances of a future reunion of the Wanga..."(Ibid). This line of argument demonstrates that the Nabongo retained a hope of reuniting the rival confederacies. Such rivalry would therefore appear to have been an affair that was not allowed to interfere with kinship and the economic relation of the Abashitsetse. Kinship relations therefore remained strong and cemented the Abashitsetse while on the political front, the confederacies retained their autonomy (Ibid). But some political and economic association was retained as each ***Itookho*** met and discussed issues of common interest. That is why the Ama***tookhos*** maintained similar values and structures. Unifying cultural values and belief patterns were maintained and expressed at ***Itookho*** as rivalry remained a latent affair.

Indeed, there is as yet no evidence of armed conflict between Wanga and Wanga Mukulu. Until around 1841 when Wamukoya died thereby paving way for Nabongo Shiundu at "Elureko", the history of ***Itookho*** moved more prominently to "Elureko" and Eshikulu where Nabongo Sakwa lived after he succeeded Nabongo Kweyu. It was however during Nabongo Shiundu's reign that "Elureko" became more pronounced than Matungu. Shiundu may have given "Elureko" more emphasis due to the new rivalry from Wanga Mukulu. Also during this period, the first non-African visitors of Arab-Swahili extraction

arrived, first at Eshimuli and at "Elureko" and consequently named the latter Kwa-Shiundu, a name whose usage seems to have been concurrent with Elureko (Aseka, 1990: 47).

By this time, the authority of Nabongo had developed more clearly beyond the clan trappings. The clan had been and still was the basic unit of social organization among the Wanga (Sakwa M'sake, 1971: 8). Indeed, it had been the basis of initial authority of the Nabongo (Dealing, 1974.). The clan was a step above the family and the household. The association of several families together arose from natural human propensity to socially and physically reproduce. Despite this propensity, there were times of harmony and at times acrimonious relations developed within the agnastic circles. Harmony among clans arose out of the preponderance of commonality or mutuality of interests while acrimony was a product of conflicting interests (Wagner, 1941: 199).

Clans therefore emerged out of a fusion of various families with common ancestral and mutual interests. Clans were larger units whose authority was under the **Liguru**. There is no clear rationale for limiting this gregarious instinct to the impenetrable curtain that the clan seems to be conceived in Dealings assessment (1974: 89). The clan was dynamic and constantly in contact with other clans and ethnic groups. The extent to which the clans were in contact with other clans is the line of investigation through which it can be established how values of one clan permeated through other clans and therefore the

possible way through which clan identity dissolved (although it did not peter out) into an ethnic identity.

Clans were clearly associated with the land they occupied. The way this land was occupied and how its exploitation was organised identified clans with their respective areas of habitation. Above all things, the social relations arising out of the clans manner of exploiting land was an identity forming factor that determined its defence against enemies. Nevertheless, enemies were not necessarily non clan members, rather, enemies were those whose kinship, mutual or common interests differed with those of given clans. That is why clans were in position to admit non clan or ethnic visitors to stay among them first for a probationary period before being allowed to settle permanently (Esese, 1990: 81). Although man/ land relationships weaved together to give clans some identity, man to man relationships transgressed the clan particularities to include supra -clan contacts in the region . It is along this line of dynamism that values were exchanged, leadership and belief patterns were moulded as the clans constantly accepted the emerging supra- clan organization that became the Wanga society. The extent to which the overall leader of the group, Nabongo, was recognized was irregular and did not follow defined frontiers of authority . But the 'pull' of ***Itookho*** was a significant indicator of the dissolution of clans into ethnic identity.

2.6 NATURE AND FUNCTIONS OF ITOOKHO TOWARDS 1860

Itookho was the seat of central government in Wanga. It was the place where the Nabongo stayed and dispensed his duties. As a centre of authority ,***Itookho*** was a territorial and not a clan centre. The application of this authority was however, unique because it did not involve the coercive and physically violent connotation associated with Dealings definition(1974: 82) .Power, the abstract concept that legitimates authority was in fact a many sided social relation .That is why authority was either acquiesced to, accepted or rejected by the people. In Wanga authority was a virtue respected for its wisdom, age and prudence. It was mainly a product of the traditional Wanga gerontocracy which emphasized respect for age, experience and wisdom.

Authority among the Wanga was submitted to and respected .It was not feared. Submission to a central authority therefore did not define the Wanga as a political entity, rather, it was the consciousness of unity and interdependence that did (Wagner; 1941: 201). Consequently then, authority among the Wanga was not legitimated through law enforcement by police power, rather, it was earned through wise leadership and prudent actions. The ability of the Nabongo to win respect and acceptance was derived from his capacity to talk wisely and act prudently. To do this ,Nabongo acted more in the socio-economic spheres which consequently buttressed his ritual authority as political .Because this ritual authority was expressed mainly around socio-economic roles that straddled both divine and politico-administrative functions, it is difficult to dichotomise the

religious from the political or economic . But the ability to dispense these duties diligently constituted the 'pull' of ***Itookho*** .

Yet the numerous Wanga clan governments were directly involved in their matters under the **Liguru.** They were semi-autonomous in the sense that "it was the clan government whose presence was persistently felt and submitted to" (Sakwa M' sake ,1971: 8) However, there was no Nabongo in charge of clans, rather, the authority of the Nabongo had began more concretely at the clan level and developed to accommodate a territorial spread. That is why, in the event of conflict at the inter -clan level, Nabongo was the next and ultimate arbitrator after the **Liguru** (Osogo, 1965). ***Itookho*** being a centre of such final arbitration had political structures put in place for effective rendering of such services.

First, Nabongo appointed elders who made up ***Abakali be Itookho***. These were about six elders drawn from several clans and constituted under ***Wayengo*** as chairman.. These were appointed on the basis of age, experience, skill and prudence. They had permanent residence at ***Itookho*** where all their survival needs were catered for. They arbitrated on issues affecting clans and in particular were in charge of safety and protection of society. They decided on war or not but the Nabongo retained what was like the veto power. They also acted as a court of appeal. Between them and the Nabongo was a link called ***Eshimbusi*** (high court).

Eshimbusi included all the **Liguru's** and elders qualified to sit at ***Eshimbusi*** meetings and participate in the deliberations. Their meetings were open though participation was gerontocratically determined. ***Eshimbusi*** was also a link between the king and the clans. Given this, the power of **Liguru** did not challenge that of Nabongo. Members of ***Eshimbusi*** were not residents at ***Itookho*** but were always summoned for meetings when they were needed.

It is however the armed forces whose place was reinforced by the Maasai presence given that before the Maasai, the Wanga did not maintain a standing army at ***Itookho***. With the Maasai, although all able bodied adult men qualified as warriors, Nabongo realised the need to have security strategies and kept some warriors in residence at ***Itookho*** under appointed leaders. Of the three arms of the society, the elders of the court and the high court are institutions that developed previously as ***Itookho*** acquired new status and functions down in the antiquity of the Wanga history. With time, the crystallization of the Wanga as an ethnic group became more apparent as the level of complexity of political institutions and organization increased and expanded. By the arrival of the Arab-Swahili traders c. 1860, this developments had reached appreciable levels of centralization and dynamic complexity that the intruders noticed and chose ***Itookho*** as a possible area of operation. Both Nabongo Shiundu and Sakwa welcomed them.

This juncture also witnessed the convergence of several historical happenings that facilitated the visitors choice of ***Itookho***. First was the considerable affluence associated

with ***Itookho*** that emanated from Nabongo's redistributive functions (Ansorge, 1899: 42). Second was the exchange relations that found confluence at ***Itookho*** because of security and proneness. This singled out *Itookho* as a central place, the locus of many societal activities. Lastly, the neighbouring threat caused by the Jo-Ugenya, Teso and Kabras on Shiundu and Sakwa pushed them to welcome the Arab-Swahili who possessed better weapons for defence than the Maasai. When Arab-Swahili entered Elureko, their coming brought to an end the pre-contact period in the Wanga history. This entry demonstrated the Wanga's ability to accommodate new elements that would bolster the security and prosperity of their society.

2.7 CONCLUSION

In this chapter, we have attempted to demonstrate the close relationship between the political institution of the Nabongo and the evolution of Mumias urban centre. It was noted that the origin of Mumias centre emanated from the role played by the Wanga Nabongos whose area of residence also acted as the centre in service of the wider society. In a complex and dynamic manner, the centre developed as the functional significance of ***Itookho*** grew. This functional importance depended on the growth in power or authority of the Nabongo. With such a power base, the subsequent history of ***Itookho*** grew in leaps and bounds, changing in nature and location, as the Nabongo attempted to mould the society now referred to as Wanga.

This set up throws probing questions to theory. Indeed, urbanism could be conceptualized as a way of life. Some urban centres do emerge as social responses to economic necessity (Aseka, 1990: 45). The economic necessities related to Mumias centre however seems to be subsumed under political necessities because reciprocity and reallocation of resources was a far more important political function than exchange of goods on a purely commercial and profit-geared agenda. In doing this duties, Emphasis went more to Nabongo's political duties than to the economic activity underlying this. Max Weber however left this question open only noting that economic relationships did necessitate a political leader under whose guidance economic activity was organized. Events in Mumias before 1860 seem to modify this contention by according the political aspect greater prominence over the economic dimension.

In a nutshell, although Weber's ideal type constructions apply to some of the elements entailed in the history of Mumias, the prominent elements in his paradigms do not stand out as such. This seems to lend credence to the view that the socio-cultural context are much more complex and ought to be considered in the theorization on the development of an urban centre. Culture seems to have considerable influence on the process of urbanization making size, density and heterogeneity of populations to appear subordinate. This may be the reason why Weber's theory requires some modification to fit within the case study on Mumias. Consequently, this implies that the city cannot be dichotomized from the countryside. It is perhaps because of this factor that the main elements of urbanism remain so while their significance in different cultural strands vary. This chapter

has aptly demonstrated that not all tenets of Webers theory are tenable. In the next chapter, an analysis of the influences from the Arab-Swahili traders in Mumias is attempted and their impact on the evolution of centre is examined.

CHAPTER THREE

3.0 THE ARAB-SWAHILI ERA IN MUMIAS, CIRCA 1860-1894.

3.1 INTRODUCTION

In the previous chapter, an attempt was made at tracing and explaining the evolution of Mumias settlement into an urban centre prior to any external non-African intrusion. It was demonstrated that Mumias emerged out of indigenous Wanga initiative as a result of the politico-administrative functions of the institution of Nabongo. The chapter highlighted on the changing locations, names and functions of ***Itookho***. ***Itookho***, it was emphasised, constituted the initial Wanga idea of urbanism. In conclusion, it was underscored that by c.1860, Mumias had evolved to play significant political and socio-economic functions but this did not radically alter its nature as a centre in service of the adjoining countryside.

By 1860, ***Itookho*** was a name that had three or more places of reference, i.e. Elureko, Matungu and Eshikulu. The strategic rationale for this kind of arrangement has been attributed to the security detail of Nabongo Shiundu (Aseka 1990b: 47). This was a period of increased contact among communities and each was staking out claims over particular territories. Increasing population pressures from the Wanga neighbours like the Luo, Iteso, Bukusu and the Kabras and the looming internal strife because of the emergence of a rival clan confederacy in Wanga Mukulu all required that the question of security be given primacy (Aseka, 1989 and Kenyanchui, 1992: 12). The emergence of an external factor in the name of the Arab-Swahili was timely for the Wanga. These visitors arrived and were settled at ***Itookho*** (Khaguli, 1981:46). Therefore, the juncture

between the Wanga and the Arab-Swahili in Mumias was made even more significant by the security question.

This chapter seeks to examine the significance of the Arab-Swahili era in the history of Mumias centre. In particular, the chapter traces the arrival, settlement and changing roles of the Arab-Swahili's in Mumias. The impact of their presence will be assessed against the background of their activities and interaction with the Wanga. The chapter hopes to illuminate how the urban history of the centre was transformed as a result of the interacting needs and aspirations of the Wanga and the Arab-Swahili upto the year 1894. 1894 is significant because that is the year when colonial rule was formally instituted. The chapter also highlight on the prelude to the colonial domination in the region and the role Arab-Swahili merchant capital played in paving the way for colonial conquest. Merchant-Capital, it must be emphasized has a transformatory role in society. Its role in Wanga is investigated in this chapter.

3.2 MUMIAS AND THE ARRIVAL OF THE ARAB-SWAHILI

The Arab-Swahili traders arrived in Buluyia in the 1850s (Johnson, 1902: 218; Gimode, 1993:115). This was the time when Nabongo Shiundu had inherited leadership from his father Nabongo Wamukoya in Wanga. Of significance in Wanga then was the rulers pre-occupation with external threats from neighbours and internal strife between Wamukoya and his brother Kweyu of Wanga Mukulu (Were, 1967: 123). Nabongo Shiundu therefore ascended the throne at ***Itookho*** " at a time of acute social hardship and political

instability" (Ibid). It is this situation that exercised enormous influence on the Wanga reaction to the arrival of the Arab-Swahili in Mumias.

The social hardships and political instability arose because of the apparent movement of communities, increase in population and the consequent land pressures that this elicited (Wright, 1979: 180-81). All the Wanga neighbours at ***Itookho*** were undergoing a period of transformation which elicited bitter rivalries and at times conflicts over land for human settlement and livestock grazing. The presence of the Maasai at ***Itookho*** was hitherto rationalized by this security consideration. Also, the use of the two ***Itookhos***, one mainly for residential needs of Nabongo Shiundu at Matungu and another for politico-administrative purposes at what came to be called Kwa-Shiundu was due to these security considerations (Aseka: 1990b: 47). These two ***Itookhos*** came to be vehemently institutionalised with the leadership of Shiundu as he often retreated to the privacy of Matungu but carried out his administrative obligations at Kwa-Shiundu.

At Matungu, the main threat was from the Bukusu and Teso while at Kwa-Shiundu, the Luo and the rival state at Mukulu posed some dangers for Shiundu (Kenyachui, 1990). However, the greatest threat to the Wanga was posed by the Luo of Jo-Ugenya and Jo-gem. The Kager clan of Jo-Ugenya was so formidable that during Shiundu's reign, the Southern section of Wanga including Tingare, Matungu, Ulema, Umala, and parts of Musanda and Ebukaya were almost permanently occupied by the Kager people (Were, 1967: 126; Abdalla, 1971: 21). So serious was the situation that one early catholic missionary at Mumias, Father Stam noted that "no woman could go to the well to fetch water without the escort of warriors (Ibid: 123 and Lutomia O.I: 8-9-1994). Yet this

areas were at the doorstep of the two ***Itookhos***, whose prominent role among the Wanga included the provision of security.

If security for these *Amatookho* was not guaranteed, the situation was no better at Eshikulu where Kweyu had paved way for his son, Nabongo Sakwa to rule. Here, Nabongo Sakwa's main enemies included the Abanyala, and Ababukusu with whom the Wanga occasionally clashed over grazing land. Nabongo Sakwa's reign was noted for his attempt at raiding cattle from the Bukusu and an attempt at extending his frontiers to the Abanyala (Wambani, O.1: 27-7-1992). During the reign of Kweyu, Wanga Mukulu had been repulsed from extending her authority over Abanyala and their Abatsotso allies. Thus, Sakwa had fled to seek refuge in Kabras from where he was to be bailed by the Abarama. The whole Wanga territory had to contend with enemies including the Jo-Ugenya, Abanyala, Babukusu, and the Abakabras with whom relations had moved from good to bad (Ogot, 1967). This was especially the case when after the Maasai civil war of 1840, the Uasin Gishu Maasai fled to Wanga seeking refuge and got 'employment' as mercenaries during Nabongo Shiundu's era (Dealing, 1974). The Maasai existed among the Wanga in a semi-autonomous manner where they grazed extensively provided they found good pastures. It was during this period that antagonisms developed between the Abakabras and the Wanga, as a result of the Maasai grazing and raiding ventures (Shilaro, 1991: 49).

Contrary to what some scholars have implied, it appears that from the second half of the nineteenth century to the last decade of that century, relations between the two ***Itookho's*** in Wanga and Wanga Mukulu, though tainted with some suspicion were generally

amicable. For instance, "in practice, up till the present, the territorial boundary between Wanga and Mukulu seem to have been fairly fluid, whereas the loyalty of each family to one side or the other has stayed firm." (KNA, DC/NN 3/2/18: 1931:3) Moreover, the Wanga-Bukusu relations helped cement the relations between Wanga and Mukulu. It has been demonstrated that to placate the Wanga from conflicting with the Bukusu, Namachanja Khisa of the Bukusu married two Wanga wives, one of whom was Nabongo Sakwa's daughter. Sakwa, whose tenure coincided with Mumia's, therefore underlay the reason's why Mumia chose on Namachanja and later his son, Sudi's to be the chief among the Bukusu during the early colonial period. It is for this brother-in-law relationship with Mumia that the former rose to prominance among the Bukusu. (Wafula, 1996;39). It is important to insist that Mumia, who was a nephew of to Nabongo Sakwa of Mukulu retained a lot of respect for his uncle and even asked for assistance whenever need arose from Wanga Mukulu just like the Wanga Mukulu rulers did ask for assistance from the sister ***Itookho***.

What ensued in this era after 1860 was a systematic erosion of the fighting power and concentration of the Maasai and the extreme danger, alluded to earlier, posed by Wanga enemies. Oral tradition recounts instances when the Ugenya Luo invaded Wanga to the extent of reaching the ***Itookho*** at Elureko. At Eshikulu, the Abanyala were so formidable that they led to the running away of Nabongo Sakwa to Kabras. In such a situation, the arrival of the Arab-Swahili was timely. It was a situation in which internal pride for autonomy was secondary to security needs. Since the prudence and wisdom of all Nabongo's was needed at ***Itookho***, it was in the interest of the Wanga that the visitors be

welcomed and 'used' especially given their weaponry advantage in form of guns (Khaguli, 1981: 46).

Towards the end of 1850s, the first group of Arab-Swahili arrived in Wanga. Matson (1972:40) has dated the arrival of Arabs in Nandi territory at the time when Sawe were warriors, that was about the 1850's. The first caravan from the coast consisted mainly of Islamized traders (Abdalla, 1971:23). Trade was therefore their central reason for venturing into the interior of this territory. In particular, the lure of ivory was foremost given that the same traders had been in commercial links with the Akamba and related communities at the coast like the Giriama. In their previous trade links with the Akamba, the latter had acted as middlemen where goods were passed over from the Maasai to the Arab-Swahili at the coast and then sold at a profit to the Indian and new incoming European mercantile traders. With the increasing demand of ivory at the coast, the Arab-Swahili constantly ventured into the hinterland by-passing the middleman's role of the Akamba, through the Maasai and Nandi country to Karamoja and Mount Elgon (Matson, 1972). It is instructive to note that as the Arab-Swahili caravans increasingly entered the hinterland, trade routes were opened that became very instrumental during European intrusion.

A formidable obstacle obstructing the early arrival of the Arab-Swahili in Western Kenya had been the Maasai and the Nandi. These communities were depicted as war like and therefore an impediment to the traders who sought to cross through the Maasai and Nandi territory to Western Kenya. However the image of the Maasai and later the Nandi as warlike communities is a perversion of reality in colonial historiography. On

the contrary, both the Maasai and Nandi were conscious of their territorial integrity which they jealously guarded. Their environment provided resources that satisfied their needs in terms of fecundity. Where climatic conditions were unfavourable to agricultural productivity, as the case of the Maasai was, they adopted livestock rearing through the practice of transhumance. But essential to the survival of these communities was security against intruding foreigners (Abdalla, 1980). It is in this context that their reactions to the incoming Arab-Swahili should be understood.

But despite this, the first caravan of the Arab-Swahili arrived in Wanga under Mwinyi Msilima and Sudi Msilima. Oral research revealed that this caravan also included Majimbo, Undusi, Muhamedi (probably the Luhyanization of Mohamed) and Mwadaba of Segeju of Tanga. (Abdalla, 1971: 23). These caravan is said to have originated from Southern Mrima coast opposite Zanzibar, variously passing through Changamwe and Mt Kilimanjaro and beyond through the territory of the Maasai to the Eastern shores of Lake Victoria. This route was famous for its exchange of ivory with guns. It accounted for twenty percent of the ivory obtained from the interior (Ibid).

Apart from ivory, clothes, beads, Rhino horns, wires and cloves were exchanged (KNA, DC/EN 3/2/4). The other effect of this movement was the diffusion into the interior of Islamic and swahili values which we shall return to later. But the significance of clothes, firearms and ivory in the context of the history and transformation of ***Itookho*** should be emphasized. The basic fact was that the arrival of the Arab-Swahili not only in the first caravan but also the subsequent ones opened up caravan routes that were to be exploited later when Europeans ventured into the interior. This was a function of the interests of merchant-capital. These routes may never have been opened were it not for the

increasing demand of ivory at the coast and the expanding avenues for profitable trade in cloves and slaves.

As if by coincidence, the insecurity characteristic of Wanga then made the reciprocal need for firearms to bind the link. In exchange for shelter, ivory and some slaves, the Arab-Swahili had guns and extra-manpower to repulse the Wanga enemies. Furthermore, the prestige of ***Itookho*** was enhanced given the arrival of Arab-Swahili. This was because the nature of ***Amatookho*** as market centres became firmly established. This, as we shall demonstrate in the sequel contributed to the emergence of the name Elureko and the establishment of a stable currency, from beads to Indian rupees during the colonial times.

The instance of the arrival of the Arab-Swahili at Elureko is captured in the words of Ali Namukoya. He said that when the Arabs arrived in Elureko, the Wanga leader, Nabongo Shiundu welcomed them, gave them shelter and food.

> *One day, they were given a bull, but they did not slaughter it as was the normal practice in Wanga. One of them simply moved a few meters behind and shot the animal dead to the amazement of those present. Consequently, the Wanga realised that these people had weapons that could help them against their enemies, especially the Luo of Ugenya (Wamukoya, 0.1, 20-7-1994).*

Contrary to what other scholars (like Dealing, 1974) have suggested, this story suggests that the Wanga welcomed the Arab-Swahili not because they were already aware of their military advantage but on the basis of their traditional value of friendship. It shows that the Arab-Swahili may not have been saviours, expected because of the security

consideration by the Wanga. Rather, the very reciprocal relationship emerged as a product of the values and interests that each hoped and aspired to satisfy. Indeed, the Arab-Swahili got ivory by raiding neighbours and using the stock specially reserved for the Nabongo (Omukenya, O. 1, 1-9-1993). It is this new interests and activities that acted to emphasize the centrality of Kwa-Shiundu in Wanga.

Kwa-Shiundu is therefore a name that can be traced to the arrival of the Arab-Swahili at ***Itookho***. Shiundu had designed his ***Amatookho*** in a way that when the visitors arrived they were sheltered at Kwa-Shiundu while Shiundu himself retreated to Matungu for residential purposes. The Arab-Swahili remained at Kwa-Shiundu and as the name suggests, they are responsible for it. Contrary to suggestions that the origin of Kwa-Shiundu dates to about 1800, the linguistic origin of the name does not seem to tally with the date. The name merely represented an instance in the changing nature of ***Itookho*** where the name "Kwa" was the Kiswahili phrase referring to someone's place. In this case Kwa-Shiundu refered to Shiundu's place. This is, therefore, evidence not only of a change in name, but also of aspirations, interests and values. The name denotes a swahili influence in Mumias.

3.3 ARAB - SWAHILI ACTIVITIES IN MUMIAS

3.3.1 TRADE AND THE TRANSFORMATION OF ITOOKHO

The aspiration and interests at the juncture between the Wanga and Arab-Swahili are captured in Wamukoya's oral testimony as cited on the previous page. The Wanga rulers aspired to make ***Itookho*** and therefore Wanga secure. The early Arab-Swahili had

arrived with trading interests. The Arab-Swahili concept of trade was different from the traditional Wanga idea of trade. For the Arab-Swahili, the physical exercise of power using force defined their means of acquiring trade goods. That is what the gun represented. In the context of merchant capital, the acquisition of a commodity at a cheap cost was acceptable and fitting. In particular, the concept of "buying cheap and selling dear" easily fitted in the activities of the Arab-Swahili in Wanga. The logic of buying cheap was however replaced in this case by that of acquiring free. Kwa-Shiundu was the centre from where the expeditions to acquire ivory were initiated (Khaguli, 1981: 46).

During the reign of Nabongo Shiundu, the Arab-Swahili caravans arrived and used Kwa-Shiundu as a collecting centre. The superiority of the Arab-Swahili weapons for acquisition was first demonstrated during the wars against the Wanga enemies. Together with the Maasai, Shiundu embarked on the defence of his territory. The fact that the Luo threat occurred among the Wanga of Abamuima clan acted to force the latter to recognise Nabongo's leadership. It is therefore these wars that made the Abamuima recognise the suzerainty of ***Itookho*** over them thereby reinforcing Nabongo's influence.

The need to defend Tingare which was just at the doorstep of ***Itookho*** or Kwa-Shiundu came first in the combined Arab-Swahili and Maasai agenda of assisting the Wanga. These wars became an essential preparation for trade given that insecurity would have made trade in goods difficult. However, it also ushered in the Arab-Swahili method of raiding as a continuation of the war. War booty was gratefully shared among warriors as the Arab-Swahili also got some of their trading goods like ivory and even slaves. The

essential nature of Kwa-Shiundu as a security enclave was therefore paving way for trade in ivory and other goods. Kwa-Shiundu needed this security in order to protect its administrative functions. This was even more important considering that as a collecting and residential centre, it was now holding more valuables and people of diverse cultural origins.

The structures of Kwa-Shiundu had to change to cater for the new or transformed needs. More houses to shelter the Arab-Swahili and their merchandise were constructed in a nearby but not so secluded place. The Arab-Swahili area of settlement was different from the Maasai area. Also Nabongo Shiundu's court and houses at ***Itookho*** were located a distance from the others. This physical structures signified the changing idea of urbanism in Wanga with some form of seclusion on lines that were unconsciously racial and ethnic. Khaguli describes the area;

> *Thus one can argue that during this particular phase, the major settlements in Mumias consisted of the Administrative boma. Next to it (to the East) was the area given to the Arab and Swahili traders for their trading activities. Here, they might have put up temporary structures. These were surrounded by dispersed indigenous Wanga huts. (1981: 47).*

However the sharing of resources made this seclusion less noticeable and irrelevant because it was merely focused on places of shelter. As we shall demonstrate in the sequel, there occurred intermarriages that blurred this elements of seclusion.

The combined Wanga-Arab-Swahili-Maasai alliance did not effectively check the Jo-Ugenya threat. The Luo remained recalcitrant to the extent of revealing the weakness of

the Arab-Swahili war tactics and weapons. What undermined the initiative of this alliance was the fact that the Arab-Swahili and partly the Maasai did not concentrate exclusively on war to repulse the Jo-Ugenya. As the Maasai went out in search of pastures, the Arab-Swahili went on the ivory hunting expeditions towards Mt. Elgon. Eventually the Arab-Swahili left their Wanga allies prone to external threat. What was remarkable was the gradual transformation in the Wanga system of military organisation as they tried to mould their own regular army (Lutomia, O.I., 8-9-1994).

While searching for their trade goods, the Arab-Swahili often used plundering methods among the Wanga neighbours. Kwa-Shiundu remained the launching pad for these plundering activity. There were reports by early missionaries on the Arab-Swahili trading activities among the Kabras which included slave trade (KNA,DC/EN/33/1/2). Also the traders plundered regions up to Samia to the South-West and Bukusu to the North. The same slave trade activities aggravated hostility between the Wanga and Abanyala of Kakamega and the Abatsotso (Aseka, 1989: 176-177). It was the Marama and Kisa who were spared owing to their friendship with the Nabongo.

On all their journey's in this country, only the Wanga benefitted by receiving new products, new kinds of wealth and sources of prestige and power in form of guns (Dealing 1974: 253 and Aseka, 1989: 176). In the words of Aseka (1989: 110), new forms of wealth appeared as the ruling clique in Wanga Kingdom dominated its possession. Human commodities and ivory began to acquire new economic value that was non-existent earlier. In consequence,

> *Mumias took on a new significance as a market place handling exchange of human commodities, ivory with numerous luxury items such as cloth, beads, guns, salt and blankets brought from the coast by the caravans.*

This in turn transformed the very idea of ***Itookho***, this time from an indigenous centre into a trading post and security enclave that Kwa-Shiundu encapsulated. Also, Kwa-Shiundu emerged as a symbol of repression to the Wanga neighbours. The story of the Arab-Swahili atrocities among the Bukusu is particulary revealing. Makila (1982: 189-190) associates the start of the cruel atrocities of slave trade to the opening up of a calling station in Wanga for accomodating Arab-Swahili slavers who passed along the caravan route to Buganda. Notorious slavers like Sudi of Pangani and Abdulla bin Hamid of Mombasa organized slave raids from Kwa-Shiundu. It was these activities that precipitated a showdon between the Bukusu and the traders in about 1878. The Bukusu are said to have decimated a party of about 50 slavers and snatched their guns. In retaliation, the combined Wanga-Arab-Swahili force attached and destroyed Bukusu villages killing many people. Henceforth, the Bukusu came to loath any stranger who approached their territory from the direction of Mumias. (Makila, 1982; 192 and KNA, DC/EN/3/2/4).

Because of the Arab-Swahili trading activities, the name of Kwa-Shiundu acquired denigrating connotations among the Luhya. However, the Wanga and their friendly neighbours of Marama and Kisa gained some prestige. The Arab-Swahili could not conscript anybody from among these communities without the permission of Nabongo Shiundu and later Mumia (Omukenya, 0.1, 29-7-1994). The Wanga in particular used this instance of Arab-Swahili presence to trade and acquire new goods and values. The

traders, locally referred to as **Abasikoyo** (because they looked like termites), used to bring beads, copper wire and wire for arm bands (KNA DC/EN/3/2/4). They also had necklaces, iron ornaments etc for the local dances while clothes had a significant impact on the Wanga. Nabongo Mumia who took over from Shiundu liked the ***Kanzu*** cloth which he used henceforth. However, the sale of guns was restricted by Mumia since he sought to monopolize their ownership and use.

It can therefore be concluded that the nature of trade activities at Kwa-Shiundu differed from those of traditional ***Itookho***. While ***Itookho*** was administratively dominated by Nabongo and his court elders, Kwa-Shiundu entailed new power brokers in the Arab-Swahili traders. The latter engaged in trade activity that was repressive to the Wanga neighbours. Also, force came to be applied discriminately against Wanga neighbours. In the traditional nature of ***Itookho***, trade between the Wanga and their neighbours occurred on friendly and amicable lines. The nature of the trade was aimed at satisfying people's needs rather than being fired by the excessive search for profits. Its nature assured a semblance of egalitarianism. This trade has been succinctly described by Wagner (1941: 224) thus:

> *Trade relations between the tribes were only weakly developed as natural resources were fairly evenly distributed over the whole of Kavirondo and technical skill and knowledge were of such similarity in all of the Bantu tribes that there was no incentive for a regular and organized exchange of goods. The occasional battering of crops for livestock and the products of certain crafts (pottery, iron-work and ornaments) was too erratic to lead to the establishment of permanent political relations between the tribes on economic grounds.*

Itookho was more of a central place from where justice and order were maintained, than an area for accumulation of profits because of excess avarice.

Elsewhere, Wagner (1970: 163) had noted that individuals on their own initiative organized intertribal trade prior to the colonial intrusion. This kind of trade was called barter and entailed exchange of goods without any common currency. Trade goods were exchanged instead. During this early days, especially before colonialism, early Europeans noted the abundance of food, among the Wanga. Frederick Lugard had, for instance, noted that: "the enormous quantities of flour brought in for sale and the cheap rate at which it is obtained proves that this country produced very large surplus of food beyond the wants of its population" (Lugard, 1895:540).

Even Joseph Thompson was impressed by food at Kwa-Shiundu which was suprisingly cheap and apparently inexhaustible (Thompson, 1887: 287). Using some corroborative evidence, Ogutu (1979: 217) has concluded that there is no doubt that these European pioneers bartered for this food from the Wanga. The traditional ***Itookho*** before it was transformed to Kwa-Shiundu was a place striving for harmony and friendship, through both socio-economic and political means.

Kwa-Shiundu was therefore transformed into a place of plunder and repression according to the rhythms of merchant capital. It was a collecting centre for ivory which was acquired free and using force. Nabongo Shiundu and later Mumia would order his spear men to accompany the Arab-Swahili in their plundering expeditions to far off territories. Even after slave trade was declared illegal, Mumias still had relics of ivory

trade being conducted from there. These trade required the services of human porterage to their destination and slaves provided cheap head porterage. Nabongo Mumia got so involved in this trade that much of the plundering was done in his name. Evidence of this abounds in archival documents indicating that as late as 1906, trade in ivory continued at the behest of Mumia and the Arab-Swahili in Mumias. (KNA/DC/NN.3/1)

The North Kavirondo District Political Record Book details reports of caravan trade between 1900 and 1906 in which Mumia and Mumias feature prominently. On 1st September 1900 it reports of "Small trade in ivory passing through Mumias, chiefly in the hands of Chief Mumia and a few Indians and Swahili". Most of the ivory was got from Karamoja (KNA DC/NN 3/1, P.13). In January 1901, there was considerable trade between Mumias and Karamoja under the Arab-Swahili. In 1902, Mr. H.B. Partington revealed that the swahili were taking the ivory direct to the coast. There was notice of a considerable increase in number of the Swahili. (I bid; 14-15).

It must be remembered that international restriction of slave trade were signed first in 1822 and 1876. Yet by the years 1903 - 1904, reports of 65 traders in Mumias were written. 40 of these had caravans still trading in Karamoja and Suk (Pokot). However, their movements were restricted as is indicated by reports that the "safari [caravan] of Jumbe Kaman and Mwinyi Haji was cut up while in Karamoja". By 1906, though this trade was just about eliminated, large gun-running trade was reported in Mumias. It was not until 1907-1908 that Mumias trade was hard hit owing to the closing of the ivory trade. But by this time, Mumias was already a declared British Protectorate.

The exercise of merchant-capital was therefore central to the transformation of the nature of ***Itookho***. The name Kwa-Shiundu captured this transformation as it evidenced the instrusion of the Arab-Swahili in Mumias. Especially during the reign of Nabongo Mumia, the Arab-Swahili in alliance with a small cross section of the Wanga ruling class established networks of trade that relied on plunder. Mumia was at the head of this operations. By mid 1880's the nature of Kwa-Shiundu came to be superceded by the person of Nabongo Mumia and his aspirations for the Wanga. The name Elureko is associated with trade after Mumia took over.

Elukero is derived from the word 'reka' which means 'to trap'. Its etymology may illustrate instances of trapping. For the name to acquire such prominence, a regular act of trapping ought to be put into focus. Oral evidence reveals that the name Elureko was coined by Nabongo Mumia (Siachi,0.I. 22-1-1997). Given that the early Arab-Swahili population in Kwa-Shiundu had increased tremendously, they could not be expected to depend entirely on the Wanga for food. Thus the present place where the Kenya Commercial Bank is located in Mumias town emerged as a point where the Wanga bartered and sold goods and food to the Arab-Swahili and other incoming visitors. This was the earliest permanent market area where goods were brought in Kwa-Shiundu for sale. Initial exchanges had no fixed place of transaction. People would buy and sell and proceed in search of other goods. Also there was no hitherto fixed currency. But at this particular place, people came to sell foodstuffs like millet, simsim, sorghum, cassava etc. The Arabs, in turn exchanged beads, copper wire and clothes (Okusimba, 0.1. 27-7-1994). Beads were on great demand because women wore them during dances. Their

popularity was evidenced beyond the Wanga territory. Among the Bukusu, Robert M. La Follete reported that

> *girls were delighted to be able to get necklaces and wire for neck-rings, the adornments that they could wear when dancing at weddings, for a girl who did not come wearing these things would not dance well with warriors*" (KNA, DC/EN/3/2/4).

The market constituted the first initial step in the institutionalizing of a permanent and recognisable area for exchange. In the traditional sense, Mumia associated this Wanga ingenuity to the instance of trapping. The Wanga went to this particular spot, in the view of Mumia, to trap money and other valuables from the visitors. The name Elureko therefore sprang in reference to the permanent market where the Wanga went to trap money. But because of its close proximity to Kwa-Shiundu and above all, bearing in mind the administrative functions of ***Itookho***, Elureko remained under the Nabongo. It was referred to as Nabongo's Market; a title it holds to date (Ogutu, 1979: 218).

It would roughly appear that trade was central to the changing nature of Kwa-Shiundu to Elureko. The name Elureko illustrates this transformation. Both Kwa-Shiundu and Elureko therefore seem to have co-existed with the former representing the changing socio-political functions of ***Itookho*** while the latter entailed ***Itookho's*** new or transformed commercial roles. At Elureko the profit variable began to develop in its local and embryonic form. Goods slowly began to be quantified in terms of their market value. The essence of this initial quantification was to be able to exchange one valuable against another item. But the inputs in terms of production and manufacture costs were unknown to the local people. Thus although oral evidence did not indicate exactly how this goods were valued for exchange, there was overwhelming evidence that the Wanga

exchanged very large quantities of their produce at very minimal gain, if any from the Arab-Swahili. Instances were given where large quantities of simsim were exchanged for copper wire or beads whose value was very low. Thompson's rates illustrate the point clearly. For instance, "four men's food in flour was food for one string of beads, eight men's food of sweet potatoes for the same, a sheep for fifteen strings and a goat for twenty strings." (1887: 287). This indicated that, from very early in their interaction, the Arabs-Swahili exploited the Wanga ignorance in valuing their produce. Elureko therefore bears the stamp of exploitation which is a function of the operation of merchant-capital. It is in this manner that indigenous Wanga merchant-capital networks were stifled. Also, the value of frugality in accumulation was not yet inculcated locally. This became very apparent in the consumption patterns and lack of investment priority for the local ruling class that the British created in form of the 'native' administration. But at this point of the Arab-Swahili, this patterns were still latent as the Arab-Swahili Left room for the locals rulers to enjoy the fruits of their trade.

As Temu and Swai (1981: 85-86) illustrated, merchant capital bears a philosophy of buying cheap and selling dear. It is that capital which organises the sphere of circulation. It is parasitical to industrial capital and survives on the process of unequal exchange based on the distance between the place of buying and where goods are sold. It is difficult for those buying to know the cost of production of an item that is alien to them but which they like. Given this ignorance, which is true of the case of the Wanga before the turn of the century, the Arab-Swahili economic philosophy that underlay the emergence and development of Elureko was merchant Capitalist in nature. But this

philosophy needed a local political class, in the name of Nabongo Mumia and his ruling family to enable it to grow and sustain its presence.

But in the case of the Wanga, this local class of the ruling family engaged in merchant-capitalist trade without acquiring the necessary values for accumulation. Apart from their lack of a frugal tradition which was subsumed under the reciprocal ties of kinship relations, excess avarice never was a virtue in autochthonous Wanga experience of the royal family. The local kinship and royal relations required the Nabongo to play re-distributive functions. In the Nabongo was a kind of social and economic security for the local people. They went to him for advice and to be bailed out in case of famine or hunger. Thus his items acquired in trade could not be kept aside for accumulation purposes amidst starving people. While it is important to appreciate the transformations in then Wanga society then, the Arab-Swahili impact was not strong enough as to allow the royal family, who got into merchant-capital first, to accumulate without redistributing.

Thus, the tastes and values of the Wanga began to experience outside influences in the second half of the 18th century the site of the influences was ***Itookho,*** later Kwa-Shiundu and Elureko. But the value of kinship relations mitigated extreme merchant-capitalist accumulation thereby obstructing the rise of a local network of merchant-capitalists. As we shall demonstrate in the next chapter, these problems were coupled by the fact that the local 'native' administrative staff engaged in consumption patterns that undermined their petty-bourgeoisie status given that they came to depend on the colonial state to accumulate without ever learning the investment priority and the state aversion

to a local class of bourgeoisie. Those outside this framework however left to the unfair competition that allowed foreigner credit facilities and promoted their interests as against the local class of businessmen. In turn the royal family remained a parasitical class of functionaries to commerce If commerce was the central aspect of Elureko, Kwa-Shiundu in general was stamped by the Arab-Swahili associated social values that emerged through religion.

3.3.2 RELIGIOUS AND SOCIAL ACTIVITIES

Apart from the first caravan of Islamised Arab-Swahili who arrived at ***Itookho***, there were subsequent caravans that came with mixed objectives in Western Kenya. A second caravan, which arrived in the early 1880's had the likes of Idi Rajabu, Sefu bin Kibwana bin Salim al-Mawli and Seyyid Abubakar. On the third journey were Mwinyi Kombo Wazongo, Mwinyi Amanzi, Juma Ananga, Sheriff Hassan Abdallah al-Mahdally, Abdallah al-Mafazy, Mwalimu Nasibu, Sheikh Suleiman bin Khamisi and Sheikh Abdul Samaad bin Najba (Abdalla, 1971: 23, Kangu, O. I, 23-7-1994). It is on this last caravan that alot of archival work has focussed attention (See KNA, PC/NZA. 3/18/29 and KNA, DC/KMG. 2/8/13). One of them, Sheriff Hassan Abdallah al Mahdally was to become a muslim leader in Mumias and was succeeded by his brother, Sheriff Umar bin Abdallah al-Mahdally. The two came to be popularly referred to as Shariff Hassan and Sheriff Omar and shall be so referred to henceforth.

It was with this last caravans that the move to Islamize the Wanga at Kwa-Shiundu was initiated under the leadership of Sheriff Hassan. The early initiatives at proselytizing the

Wanga went unnoticed since the need for ivory overshadowed religion. Whereas the Arab-Swahili made known their religion to the Wanga, they were not initially forceful in converting the Wanga to Islam (Wamukoya, O. I. 20-7-1994) preferring a slow and gradual process.

However, by the time the missionaries of the Mill Hill Fathers arrived in Mumias in 1903, the most formidable religious challenge they faced was the Islamic influence in the area. The Christian mission which was operating in a British colonial situation had the inevitable obligation of Christianizing the Wanga to de-emphasize the place of Islam, a religion with a long history of rivalry with Christianity. Mumias was an important area of this contest because as Barker noted, "The Moslem religion is strong among the Wanga, where Swahili influence was felt from very early" (Barker, 1950: 27). The period, of relative inactivity, when the Arab-Swahili concentrated on ivory trade was only in a short, relative exclusion of evangelical goals (Murunga, 1994: 74).

The earliest indicator that the Wanga would be impressed by the Arab-Swahili religion came from the interest Nabongo Shiundu and later Mumia showed towards the Arab-Swahili traders. The place of security in this period has already been noted. Guns were to play a prominent role as to enable the Arab-Swahili settle in Mumia's vicinity. The Arab-Swahili manner of dress was among the first too impress Mumia. Initially the Wanga King used to dress in Leopard skin and this seems to have been reserved for him. The ***kanzu*** was among the early gifts that Mumia received from the Arab-Swahili. It was to remain Mumia's main attire for long (KNA, PC/NZA, 1/4).

What also came to intrigue the Wanga about the Arab-Swahili was their food. Initially, most people at ***Itookho*** disliked rice, associating its appearance to jiggers (Kangu, O. I. 23-7-1994). But the growing relation between the Wanga and Arab-Swahili came to be cemented through marriages. In these instances, some Wanga married to Arab-Swahili men had the opportunity to taste Arab-Swahili food (Ibid). As a consequence of this, many of the Wanga leaders were converted to islam.

For example, in the interest of security, Mumia and his brothers planned to make sure that the Arab-Swahili remained at ***Itookho*** for ever. This was against the Arab-Swahili wish to search for ivory and return to the coast. Knowing very well that the Arab-Swahili had travelled long distances without their women, Mumia organized to have Wanga women to co-habit with the Arab-Swahili. In the process, some Arab-Swahili were trapped in marriages that bore off-springs. One of the Arab-Swahili called Khamisi married Mumia's sister Wamakobe with whom they stayed for long (Wamukoya, O. I, 20-7-1994). Sheriff Omar was to marry a Wanga woman from Eshisumo near Shianda called Masakhwe, daughter of Kalelwa (Wanzetse, O. I, 22-7-1994 and Chitechi, O. I, 21-77-1994). Among their children included Mohammed Mweupe, Said Ahmed Omar and Said Maboka Omar. It became almost automatic that sons and daughters of such marriages became Muslims.

But even more important is that such marriages opened an avenue for closer association between the Wanga royal family and the Arab-Swahili. This was an important nucleus around which Arab-Swahili values, customs and habits revolved before the dissemination of the outside Wanga community. It was from such homes, for instance,

that the Arab-Swahili clothes, foodstuffs and manners were acquired and copied. The conversion of Murunga (Suleiman) and Mulama (Omar) to Islam was due to their sister Wamakobe. But while the former retained Islam as his religion, Mulama later came under the influence of the Church Mission Society at Butere (Inzofu O. I, 11-9-1993). It was also around such marriages that Kiswahili became the *lingua franca* in Mumias (Kenyanchui, 1992: 35).

In the process of the extended Kinship relations that were entailed in marriage among the Wanga, several homesteads came in contact with Muslims and were converted. The Wanga royal family was involved in this network although it is faulty to argue that Islam became the 'official religion' of the Abashitsetse and their royal family as Lonsdale (1964: 180) has argued. Such an assertion limits the Nabongo's royalty to be an Abashitsetse affair which is in fact not true (Murunga, 1997). Secondly, not all Abashitsetse were converted to Islam although there is evidence that they constituted the largest number of converts (KNA, DC/NN 3/2/1). It is more accurate therefore to insist that the development of Islam in Wanga began at Kwa-Shiundu and spread on a very irregular basis to the people who for one reason or another became convinced of the worth of the religion. That is why many converts were to be found in Kwa-Shiundu compared to other places (Chitechi, O. I, 21-7-1994).

It cannot be conclusively asserted that Nabongo Mumia converted to Islam. Mumia, like most other Wanga people adopted certain aspects of Islam but discarded others. His Muslim name remains sidelined in most discussions compared to his brother, Murunga. His praying habits, according to one informant, did not conform to the Islamic way

because he spent his Fridays inspecting his markets (Lutomia, O. I, 8-9-1994). Apart form this, Mumia did not discard some of the traditional Wanga ways of prayer. It is however true that many of the Muslim practices fitted in with the Wanga way of life thereby making it easy to convert the Wanga. Circumcision was one such practice common among the Wanga and the Muslim (Were, 1967, Abdalla, 1971, KNA, DC/NN 3/2/1). Also, the place of polygamy in both Wanga and Islam caused no conflict, though this idea was perverted by some Wanga Muslims (Wanzetse, O. I, 22-7-1994; KNA, PC/NZA 3/1/9, 1919).

Apart from these aspects that were common in both Wanga and Islamic tradition, the place of Soothsayers in Wanga society was important especially for the royal family. Islam, too, had a similar concept in those people refereed to as "Wapiga ramli." These people have pejoratively been referred to as medicinemen or 'Waganga' in Kiswahili. The latter have connotations of witches which may not accurately refer to the idea of its practice in Islam or among the Wanga (KNA, DC/NN 3/1). But this practice among the Wanga found resonance with the Muslims and this similarity endeared a number of locals to Islam (Wangara, O. I, 26-7-1994).

By 1894, the initial seeds of Islam in Kwa-Shiundu and later Elureko had been planted. The works of Sheikh Hassan in this regard have been recognized. It is however true that this initial efforts to evangelise the Wanga were slowly and gradually approached. This was for fear of having a negative or repulsive impact if the whole range of Muslim rules and customs were imposed. In the early days, therefore, Muslims were willing to leave their converts to engage in traditional religion. But eating meat that was slaughtered by a

non-Muslim or dead meat was not compromised. Teachings in Koran and the 'Sharia' were done gradually while on occasions, people would be given clothes, blankets etc. in exchange for being baptised with a Muslim name (Kangu, O. I, 28-7-1994).

A community of Muslims therefore emerged in Kwa-Shiundu before 1894. Their location near Nabongo Mumia was ideal for their activities. There was no definite place of worship then. Also their area of residence seems imprecise to memory and oral information could not produce an exact location. However, there was an indication that the first Mosque was located next to the present area of the Total Petrol Station while the Chief's Office site was the Arab-Swahili residential place (Kangu, O. I, 27-9-1994).

In the subsequent years, a community of Muslims developed and became an important component of the social structure of Mumias town. The Islamic concept of Umma was central too this development prior to colonial rule. Under this concept, a community of Muslims emerged under the influence of Islamic brotherhood. They did many of their activities together, developing a peculiarly Muslim culture and tradition in Mumias town. By the time Europeans arrived, there was a clear Muslim influence in Mumias which composed not only of the Wanga but also Maasai, Nyamwezi and were later joined by Nubians and Somali. However, in Mumias town the majority were Wanga (Abdalla, 1971: 38). It is notable that whenever Wanga people were converted to Islam, many opted to move to the Muslim settlement in the town (Wanzetse, O. I, 22-7-1994). This was to be referred to as 'Mjini' (settlement) in Mumias. But its precise location was mapped during the early colonial period.

3.3.4 THE ARAB-SWAHILI LEGACY AND ARRIVAL OF EARLY EUROPEANS IN MUMIAS

The significance of Kwa-Shiundu began to wane with the growing influence of Nabongo Mumia. Although Mumia did not discard the Arab-Swahili, his reign began when there was growing recalcitrance among his aggrieved neighbours. The Arab-Swahili trading activities were responsible, in large measures, for this. By 1882, when he ascended the throne from Shiundu, the Ugenya Luo had not ceased attacking the Wanga (Kenyanchui, 1992 and Osogo, 1967). In fact, they steeped up their aggression against the Wanga and their allies. It is for this reason that an alternative to the Arab-Swahili was a welcome occurrence for Mumia to check the impact of the Ugenya Luo.

The Arab-Swahili were ineffective because they were frequently out of Kwa-Shiundu. As Abdalla says:

> *Their frequent absence from Mumias (Kwa-Shiundu) and their erratic manner of trading and journeying to and from the interior to the coast, was another factor that led to a partial commitment to fight the Wanga Kingdom, (Abdalla, 1971:27).*

As a result the swahili did not have any great impact in the court of Mumia given their disorganized and ineffective military help.

In as far as political culture is concerned, the Arab-Swahili did not alter or greatly transform the nature of political activity at Kwa-Shiundu. Their impact came to be confined to the commercial and religious arena thereby living no lasting political legacy

at Elureko. Elureko was therefore essentially a commercial legacy. It differed from Kwa-Shiundu in the sense that the latter was more of a political and administrative domain. The waning importance of Kwa-Shiundu illustrates the inadequate impact of the Arab-Swahili on Wanga politically. Elureko, which remained was rather an assertion of their commercial and perhaps religious imprint.

The reasons why Mumia would eagerly welcome new forces in Kwa-Shiundu are therefore evident. It ought to be remembered that Mumia's rise to power was a contested issue because his father Shiundu had dismissed him as "weak and feminine in character". He was considered shy and timid and therefore rated low as a heir (Kenyanchui, 1992: 16 and Osogo, 1967). By the time he became Nabongo, mainly through the astute scheming of his mother, Wamaya, he was faced with the challenge of proving himself worthy of the title. It was in this eagerness that the early European travellers arrived in Wanga. Thus, these two aspects have to be put in mind in order to contextualise and understand Mumia's response to the European. Joseph Thompson was the first European to arrive in Wanga. He arrived at Kwa-Shiundu on 3rd December 1883 in the company of Arab-Swahili caravan members already known to the Wanga (Aseka, 1989: 181). His impression of Kwa-Shiundu was low. He wrote that

> *this place, under the father of the present chief, was one of great importance and size, but since his death it has gradually dwindled away till the walls enclose more Mutama (Sorghum) fields and grass patches than huts* (1887: 285).

However, Thompson was referring to the deserted part for which both Shiundu and Mumia reserved for intruders who were not familiar to the Wanga. Mumia and Thompson soon got on talking terms.

In 1886, Bishop Hannington arrived at Sakwa's and Kwa-Shiundu (Dealing, 1974, 300-301) on his fateful journey to Buganda where he died at the instruction of Kabaka Mwanga. Mumia had received and warned him of impending dangers of using the route to Buganda. He even offered his spear men to escort the Bishop. One of them survived the attack at Luba in Busoga and aided in collecting the remains of the Bishop now buried in Mumias. These first Europeans helped mould the European impression of Nabongo Mumia favourably. Thompson, for instance, emphasized the friendship of Mumia and the abundance of food at Kwa-Shiundu. He also illustrated how cheap the food was in view of the enormous foodless tracts which the travellers had to cross before reaching 'Kavirondo.'

All these factors added to the fact that Kwa-Shiundu was a traditional administrative centre whose communication link had been opened through the Arab-Swahili trade. The pattern of political history of the area did compound the importance of Kwa-Shiundu thereby opening it up for subsequent European intruders. Towards the end of 1889, the first imperialists arrived at Elureko including Frederick Jackson who was accompanied by Ernest Gedge, followed by Dr. Carl Peters and later Frederick Lugard. Frederick Jackson was an employee of the Imperial British East Africa Company (IBEA Co.) who arrived at Elureko in 1889. Carl Peters, the founder of Germany East Africa Company (GEA Co.), arrived at Shikulu in 1890 and proceeded to Elureko. Following Lugard were Captain Smith in May 1891, Bishop Tucker in 1882 and Sir Gerald Portal in March 1893 (Dealing, 1774:304). Portal was on a government mission expected to recommend the viability of the Eastern province of Uganda to Britain as a colony. (Ogutu,1979).

It was this first crop of imperialist terrain mappers that emphasized the centrality of Mumia to the political history of Elureko. At this time, the availability of food appeared more central to them than politics. They emphasized Elureko from where they bought food at an abundantly cheap price. The idea of Kwa-Shiundu therefore began to die given that Mumia had started building a new village, consisting of a number of huts surrounding a large inner circular space" (Ansorge, 1889: 76). As a result, Elureko got detached from Kwa-Shiundu because Mumia's new place was in close proximity to Elureko. For the early part of their arrival, the Europeans had been allocated a portion at Kwa-Shiundu to stay (Khaguli, 1981:41).

The new houses built by Mumia came to be referred to as Mumia's village. It was here that traditional Wanga political and administrative activities were handled. This new place was different from Kwa-Shiundu given that its traditional political habits had been influenced by the new Arab-Swahili values. It however retained many of its aspects relating to leadership. What however changed were the commercial aspect evidenced in the rise of Elureko and its associated values including religion and commercialization of life. The close proximity between Elureko and Mumia's village was asserted in the influence Nabongo exerted on the Market. This was referred to as Nabongo's market and all dues collected went to the Nabongo (KNA.DC/NN/3/6/1). Dues were collected inform of agricultural produce, livestock and pink beads which acted as currency. This development demonstrated the exertion of Mumia's influence on Elureko. It was an attempt to bring under traditional authority the new forms of exchange and values associated with foreigners in Mumias.

The name Mumias which emerged as the influence of the Europeans, especially the British administrators designated Elureko, indicated the arrival of new values. Initially, Mumias referred to the place belonging to Mumia. Slowly the apostrophe disappeared giving way to Mumias. The slow change captured the emerging influence of Mumia and the arrival of European. It also led to the waning of Kwa-Shiundu. Mumias as a name signified both politico-administrative and commercial importance of the place. It fused together elements of Kwa-Shiundu and Elureko without killing the latter. It is therefore true as Hobley (1970:81) says Mumias takes its name from the Wanga chief. What however came to be Mumias station built by the Europeans was moved further off from Mumia's village (Ansorge, 1899:75).

The name Mumias did therefore come into vogue side stepping Kwa-Shiundu mainly because of the external impact of Europeans. The Europeans took advantage of the already opened up station at ***Itookho*** (Kwa-Shiundu). The trade from the coast to the interior was therefore instrumental in determining European routes of intrusion and settlement. As Walter Rodney argued, Europeans preferred jurisdictions over areas which were already familiar and also because earlier foreign trade orientation caused some African communities to be more susceptible to colonial political and economic innovations (1985:383). The history of Mumias, so far charted reveals that it was such a familiar centre. The fact that Joseph Thompson used Arab-Swahili caravan men who were already known to the Wanga is a significant example of this familiarity. All the way from the coast, Mumias was the next most important centre after Machakos and Fort Hall (Stitcher, 1982, 10-12).

Indeed, this consideration of the familiarity of a centre was uppermost among the functionaries of IBEA Co., a company that was already operating in Buganda. In 1888, the company had secured a charter from the crown and was looking for ways of linking the coast with Uganda. Uganda was completely dependent on food supplies from the coast. (Hobley, 1970:79). Their choice of Mumias as a collecting centre for the company was explained not only by the friendship of Mumia but also by the historical familiarity of Mumias. Referring to Mumias, Hobley (1970: 81) wrote

> *As his village had been, from the time of his father Sundu (Sic), a trading centre on the main route to Uganda. It offered a convenient place for the foundation of an administrative station.*

This development had the consequence of establishing Mumias as the initial administration centre for the IBEA Co. and later the nucleus around which British colonialism would revolve. By November 1894 when Colville send his company officer a Mr. Valet Frederick Spire to found a permanent administrative post at Mumias, Mumia still imagined that he could use the British presence to fight the Luo of Ugenya under whose military aggression he had recently suffered defeat (Ogot, 1967:231). Mumia hoped to use the British the way he had used the Arab-Swahili or the way his predecessors had used the Maasai. But 1894 was the last year that Mumias operated as a sovereign station. On June 10th 1894, a protectorate was declared over Uganda. Then Mumias was part of the Eastern province of Uganda. On July 1st 1895, a similar move was imposed over British East Africa.

3.4 CONCLUSION

In this chapter, an attempt was made at investigating the significance of the Arab-Swahili era in Mumias. It has been demonstrated that the Arab-Swahili ventured into the interior of East Africa in response to the trading needs of coastal merchant-capital. In underdevelopment terms, this chapter has analysed the operation of merchant-capital in Wanga illustrating how this transformed the economic world view of the Wanga and Kwa-Shiundu. It has emphasized that this transformation was underlying the new name of Elureko. The chapter has underscored the impact of the Arab-Swahili on commerce and religion thereby demonstrating the rich social history that the physical nature of Mumias entailed.

It appears clear that the imprint of the Arab-Swahili on the Wanga political process was inconsequential. Their military assistance was disorganized and inadequate thereby opening Kwa-Shiundu to continued external African threats. It is in this context that the arrival of the Europeans was examined. By 1894, the European interests in the area were not apparent to the Wanga and Nabongo Mumia assumed that he could use them as he had done with the Maasai and the Arab Swahili.

It may safely be stated that the Arab-Swahili presence in Kwa-Shiundu initiated a new era of merchant-capital in which trade acquired new transformations in terms of the currency of exchange, means of acquiring goods and the new value attached to such goods for trade. In this era, force also came to apply as the Arab-Swahili used guns to punish and extract valuables from Buluyia social formations. It is such force that came to characterise the initial European relations in Western Kenya. In terms of their political

and religious impact, the Arab-Swahili only managed to transform the Wanga system of political organisation and religious practice at ***Itookho*** to a very negligible extent by 1894. Observably, the Wanga retained their freedom of choice in crucial matters. All the changes that occurred as demonstrated in this chapter characterised the new nature of commercialised Kwa-Shiundu and later Elureko. It is in this sense that the Islamized Arab-Swahili agents of merchant-capital accelerated the growth of ***Itookho*** without radically altering its traditional nature.

CHAPTER FOUR

4.0. INDIAN AND EUROPEAN CAPITAL IN MUMIAS TO 1920

4.1. INTRODUCTION

The previous chapter investigated the significance of the Arab-Swahili presence in Kwa-Shiundu. It highlighted on the emergence of the Arab-Swahili and their socio-economic activities in Mumias, illustrating how these impacted on the nature of the centre. It was apparent that the arrival of the Arab-Swahili in the interior and Mumias in particular introduced new ideas, values and practices that set in motion long lasting external influences on the centre. Such external influences were epitomized in the arrival and establishment of the Indians and Europeans in Mumias.

The Chapter also briefly highlighted on the arrival of the initial group of Europeans in Mumias arrived before 1894. These were mainly explorers, traders, government agents and the officials of the Imperial British East African Company (IBEA Co.) This initial group of Europeans, especially the explorers and missionaries were both cultural and commercial pace setters of European imperialism in Western Kenya. Their role in relation to British colonial intrusion was centred initially in Buganda but came to bear significance in Mumias too. In retrospect, one agrees with Mudimbe when he states that:

> *The more carefully one studies the history of missions in Africa, the more difficult, it becomes not to identify it with cultural propaganda, patriotic motivations, and commercial interests, since the missions' program is indeed more complex than the simple transmission of the Christian faith. (Mudimbe, 1988:45).*

Even the European explorers and traders seem to have been important precursors to European colonial adventure. Armed with their European cultural armoury, `explorers just brought new proofs which could explicate `African inferiority" (Mudimbe, 1988:13). Given this understanding, the analysis of colonial intrusion in Mumias and the subsequent European activities in the area ought to be problematised in this context. The place of their perceptions of Africans and the manner in which this perceptions were actualized in colonial practice have to be pursued against this background.

This chapter seeks to illuminate the process of establishment of Indian and European trading and agricultural capital in Mumias. This is to be done in the wider context of the history of British colonialism in Kenya and the relations that this context entailed for urban social policy and morphology. The transformation from merchant-capital to agricultural capital will be assessed to illustrate the changing dynamics of colonial interest in Kenya. The chapter does not lose sight of the continuing legacy of Islamic religion and the rise of Christian missions as an important component of the social history of Mumias town. This agenda will enable us to evaluate the nature of socio-economic developments in Mumias by 1920. Particular attention is paid not only the physical manifestation of urbanisation in Mumias but also the social processes entailed in this physical structures. This is because, as Aseka (1990a) argues, an urban center represents a congeries of cultural institutions which by themselves are a physical manifestation of a peoples way of life.

4.2. MUMIAS IN THE ESTABLISHMENT OF COLONIAL DOMINATION

> *All the goods upon which Uganda was dependent for existence had to be forwarded on from Mumias to Port Victoria on the Lake by the native staff at the station...(Hobley, 1970:89).*

The above quotation aptly summarizes the place of Mumias in the history of colonial intrusion in Western Kenya. This history began with the early travelers, traders, missionaries through whose initiatives, company agents came and later the British Government sent officials to inquire into the viability of Kenya as a British protectorate (Portal, 1950). This process occurred in the context of imperial rivalry between the British and Germans for control of the source of River Nile. It also occurred amidst the intellectual processes that sought to rationalise and give academic and moral respectability to the colonial enterprise in Africa (Pels and Salemink, 1994 and Mafeje, 1996). The scramble for the region placed emphasis on the significance of Uganda. Therefore, the colonization of Buluyia depended on the importance of Uganda (Mazrui, 1968 & Ingham, 1962:205, Bode, 1978:54). Between 1985 to 1900, Mumias was little more than a supply route to Uganda (Ingham, 1962:205, Murunga, 1994:10) leaving the larger region between Mombasa and Mumias undeveloped and of little consequence.

The British declared a Protectorate over Uganda on 10th June 1894. Colonel H. Colville, the Commissioner of Uganda dispatched a company official Mr. Valet Frederick Spire to establish a station at Mumias in the same year (Dealing, 1974:308,

Esese, 1990:191). At this time, Mumias was part of the Eastern Province of Uganda and was, administratively, a part of Uganda. The IBEA Co. was at the time more interested in Uganda and used Mumias as a supply route for caravans going through. The company did not bother with furthering trade within the Luyia region as Mumias remained a place for shelter and storage en route to Buganda. It appears that the diverse groups of people traveling on this caravans found Mumias a familiar place (Were, 1967).

Under company rule, the caravan route remained the only source of merchant-capital that made Mumias significant. The centre remained a transmission station from where relatively small and local trade occurred at Elureko. The company administration at Mumias was small and ineffective. At one time, the station was manned by one Swahili. Spire failed to induce the local people to participate in company affairs and it was merely for the friendship and interests of Mumia that the station was maintained. It was only the sub-Commissioner and a couple of collectors, mainly Swahilis, that were stationed at Mumias. Also, a small number of soldiers were garrisoned at a number of stations along the caravan route of which Mumias was the most important (Bode, 1978:55). The company maintained a few contacts in the area. In general, the company failed in its bid to assert its influence in the area.

In 1895, Hobley was sent to relieve Spire and establish a permanent station at Mumias (Osogo, 1966:129). Like Spire, Hobley emphasized the need for efficient and rapid forwarding of mails and goods from the Coast to Uganda, the improvement of the existing lines of communications in Western Kenya and the collection of food by

caravans (Aseka, 1989:160). However, these requirements could not be achieved without the direct control over the population that felt no obligation to an inefficient foreign company. In fact, the Wanga seemed to violently resist company overtures in Wanga until they realized the friendship of Mumia to company officials (Esese, 1990:192) and retreated. It was in this context that Hobley arrived in Mumias with instructions to establish British authority in the region (Hobley, 1970:80). Mumias became the launching pad for punitive expeditions in the region (Mutoro, 1976, Lonsdale, 1964:114) and a centre of exchange of foodstuffs.

The expeditions that Hobley embarked on earmarked the foremost relations of power that the juncture between the British and Africans entailed in Western Kenya. As opposed to the traditional Wanga means of control, 'the British employed violence on a locally unprecedented scale, and with unprecedented singleness of mind' (Lonsdale, 1989:6). This violence mediated the relation between command and submission which formed the logic of imperial control. Consequently, where submission was not forthcoming amicably by way of Mumia's intermediary, punitive expeditions were initiated by the British to ensure submission and compliance.

In Western Kenya, Mumias remained an island, not of submission but alliance. The context of Nabongo Mumia disposed him to various options of which his royal status obliged him to make a prudent choice (Kiwanuka, 1982:34-5). He was faced with hostile foes among the Ugenya Luo, Teso, Kabras and Bukusu. His earlier allies, the Arab-Swahili had proved inadequate to face these threats. Internally, he was faced with a legitimacy crisis, having been rated low as heir to Nabongo Shiundu's throne.

Nabongo Shiundu, Mumia's father, had dismissed him as `weak and feminine in character' preferring his daughter, Mayende to Mumia (Osogo, 1967:3). Given this context, and the fact that the worth of any Nabongo as a leader was gauged against his wisdom and prudence, not in his own interest but in the interest of the community, Mumia made a choice that he hoped would ensure the continuity of the kingdom.

In colonial and nationalist historiography however, Mumia's alliance with the British has been negatively connoted as collaboration (See the works of Dealing, 1974, Ochieng', 1974:223). Fazan, operating within this kind of thinking asserted about Mumia that `this remarkable man realized from the very first the position that the Europeans would take in the country and his policy has therefore always been one of loyalty to the [British] government' (KNA, DC/NN 3/1). But such a conclusion misses to grasp the complexity of this historical reaction by the Wanga because of its anthropological reductionism. Mumia's response to the British cannot be extricated from the historical context and interpreted as a loyal submission to inevitable British overlordship as both Dealing (1974) and Fazan (KNA,DC/NN 3/1) would have us do.

The dynamic and complex history of the Wanga reveal various forces that had predisposed them to adopt a policy of looking for able friends to assist them against foes. The Wanga always sought after friendly groups to assist them against enemies (Sakwa M'Sake, 1971). They began first with the Maasai, the Arab-Swahili and then the British. During the Maasai and Arab-Swahili era, the need for a standing army arose and the Wanga had, in response to this need, established some semblance of that army. Earlier, the reason for the long history of Wanga friendship to other people

was not because they wanted `to expand their power' but to `defend the kingdom', a policy that incidentally favoured the British designs in Mumias (Sakwa M'sake, 1971:8). This is why Sakwa M'sake concludes:-

> *The question of whether Mumia was right or wrong in accepting [the Swahili-Arab and later British] alliances is an academic one. What was important for Mumia was to decide either to lose his kingdom to the Luo enemies, or to accept the British help... It was a question of common sense and his very existence.*

Collaboration, as Boahen (1987:41) argued, is a pejorative term denoting acts of complicity with foreign interests for selfish reasons against ones own community interest. In the context of colonial intrusion in Mumias, it postures Mumia as a traitor and Mumias as an enclave of conscious complicity with British interests. Especially when collaboration is seen as a polar opposite of resistance, it acquires this connotations in a vivid and clear manner. Yet it is not understood that by allying with the British, Mumia was more interested in autonomy and self-preservation. The ideology of sovereignty which Mumia exercised in relation to the British was similar to what he did with the Maasai and Arab-Swahili. Why is it the case then, that Mumia collaborated with the British and not the Maasai or Arab-Swahili? The British fixation in relation to the historiography of resistance is anthropological and aims at perpetuating the ideology of African inferiority.

Colonialism was an exercise in constant negotiation. The Wanga did not submit to colonial domination, rather they allied with the British hoping to defeat their enemies and defend their territory. Force was therefore, not necessary to mediate between

British command and African submission in Wanga. While, in the short term, the Wanga objective for the alliance was achieved with Hobley based at Mumias, the long term, implications were different and favourable to British designs. The British only needed a nucleus from where expansion outward would begin. Roland Oliver and J.D. Fage (1965) underscored this point thus,

> *What every colonial government tried to do, was to establish a nucleus around the capital and to extend its influence slowly outwards as its resources increased. What every colonial government learnt from experience, was that the inhabitants of the peripheral areas did not simply wait peacefully until their turn to be brought under administration arrived. They traded their ivory and built up their supplies of arms.*

In Western Kenya, the Bukusu learnt this logic earlier. They convinced and bought arms from the Arab-Swahili. They consequently dissipated a troop sent by Spire to retrieve the arms (Makila, 1982). It was not until Hobley sent a punitive expedition to Bukusu that forcefully engaged the Bukusu at Chetambe and Lumboka forts that the Bukusu were defeated (Makila, 1982). In this cases, therefore, the British philosophy of force was put in practice. This philosophy had been clearly stated by Sir Arthur Hardinge in different forums. In advising the foreign office, he stated that `In Africa, to have peace you must first teach obedience, and the only tutor who impressed the lesson properly is the sword' (Mungeam, 1966:20). The Somali had been among the first to learn this lesson. Annoyed at the Ogaden habits, Hardinge said:

> *The Somali are getting much cheekier. These people must learn submission by bullets, its the only school; after that you may begin more modern and humane methods of education. (Turton, 1974:347).*

Although the colonialists were convinced of the need to use force to ensure submission, recalcitrance became a feature of African reaction to colonial domination as people adjusted to its vagaries. Imperialism therefore became an exercise in the art of collaboration because the few British soldiers used operationalised orders of imperial governors in their divide and rule technique to dominate numerous Africans (Kipkorir, 1980: 1). Where force seemed inexpedient, negotiations were incepted. Such negotiations this process entailed defined the colonial nature of Mumias. Between 1895 and 1900, it was predominantly a launching pad for punitive expeditions, a centre that served double interests. First, was the Wanga need for self-preservation and secondly, the British colonial designs. It was only when the later started to explicitly conflict with the former that the impact of British presence began to be felt in Wanga and Mumias came to be perceived differently.

4.3. CHANGING NATURE OF MUMIAS

When in 1895, Mumias became a recognized British administrative centre, it started acquiring a morphology that corresponded to this new reality. Various grass-thatched houses and mud-walled structures were built to house the administrators. It was at this time that the building of the Uganda railway towards Port Florence (Kisumu) commenced. Then, Mumias was the headquarters of North Nyanza district. At the same time, the importance of Mumias was not seen in relation to Port Florence because there was no direct connection between the two. But in 1896 the Sclater Road built for Ox-Carts reached Mumias from Fort Maxsted present day Kakamega (Matson, 1972:206, Esese, 1990:193), thereby bringing Kakamega, in line with urban

developments in the region (KNA DC/NN 3/1). All these infrastructural developments became important to the changing nature and significance of Mumias.

At the turn of the century, events of significant historical value occurred in terms of policy and implementation of colonial domination. In 1899, the rail head reached Nairobi almost at the same time all the Luo and Luyia sections of Nyanza were conquered. In the same year the provincial headquarters was moved from Mumias to Kisumu. When, in 1901, the railway reached Kisumu, the transfer of the former Eastern province of Uganda to the British East African Protectorate took place on April 1st, 1902. Since the administrative post for the Nyanza province had been moved from Mumias to Kisumu, Mumias remained the district headquarters of the then Elgon district that later became North Kavirondo district (Memon, 1976:141).

These changes reflected the new thinking at the central colonial government in Kenya. The need to make the colony profitable and self-sustaining had been made explicit by the foreign office in London (Wolff,1974: 47). The building of the Uganda railway had been predicated on this urgent need. To make it self-reliant, the productive capacity of the so called white highlands was urgently emphasized. It was because of their agricultural potential that the colonial state embarked on an aggressive campaign of inviting white settlers to Kenya (Ibid: 51). The place of agricultural capital was therefore significant to the building of the railway. In consequence, the centrality of Mumias relative to Kisumu was asserted although Mumias declined in favour of Kisumu (Obudho, 1981:18). The significance of Mumias reduced because, the goods

upon which Uganda depended on could now pass through Kisumu owing to the railway and across Lake Victoria on canoes to Uganda.

The transfer of the Eastern Province of Uganda to the British East Africa Protectorate was therefore, a culmination of the need to consolidate infrastructure within one territory and one administration. The Sclater road being less significant to the British compared to the railway could not ensure the centrality of Mumias to colonial policy. However, Mumias was retained as a significant centre in North Kavirondo district, therefore remaining the most important administrative centre in Buluyia. It housed the early District Commissioners of North Kavirondo District and the attendant British bureaucracy necessary for administration in the district. The centre was indeed an early microcosm of British modernity, a place where British values and norms were inculcated and emulated. The first lessons of obedience, law and order had been initiated from Mumias.

The spread of law and order was done after all the neighbouring communities had been brought under Hobley's authority. More humane and modern methods of education followed Lugard's indirect system of rule. Chiefs, assumed in British rule, to have customary powers and authority were necessary in order to establish control over these conquered groups (Lonsdale, 1964). Mumias therefore became the centre from which the choice of chiefs was done. Hobley relied on Mumia to make these choices. Mumia picked on his relatives and close friends as chiefs in various areas. Thus, his brother Murunga was posted to Bukusu of which the southern part was under Namachanja and later Chief Sudi. Mulama, another of Mumia's brothers was

taken to Marama while Mumia's friends like Mulimi and Kivini of Kakamega were elevated. What was true was that most of these chiefs had no customary authority over the communities they administered. Some represented Wanga sub-imperialism wherever they were. From very early, the British policy of indirect rule was faulty for imposing chiefs with enormous powers but who had no authority over the communities they ruled (Mamdani,1996).

By having Wanga or non-Wanga's who were friendly to Mumia as a British agents in the region, the British consolidated for some time the place of Nabongo Mumia in Buluyia. Such a situation seemed to fulfill Mumia's false belief that he had checked his foes, this time for ever. By implication, Mumias also asserted its centrality as the politico-administrative and economic centre in the region. The transfer of the Eastern Province of Uganda to the British East Africa Protectorate meant that the Mumias station was no longer only valuable as a supply centre. Its administrative significance came to overshadow the supply needs that it had served in the last quarter of the 19th century. The trade initiated at the centre for reasons of supplying Uganda was transformed into local trade among the Wanga and for the benefit of the Europeans who had settled in Mumias. This trade went into satisfying local fecundity and developed Mumias as a valuable station from where trade in numerous commodities was conducted.

The subjugation of the local communities could not have succeeded without the active participation of Wanga spear men, the Somali and Nubians who came to Mumias with Europeans. Their presence in Mumias was a milestone in re-ordering the centre as an

upcoming colonial cosmopolitan town. The British garrison at the centre therefore came to add a new military and racial element to the nature and composition of the Mumias. This called into question the need for planning which was an important aspect of British administrative policy.

Although the Somali and Nubians and even the Arab-Swahili were important British functionaries in Mumias, the ideology of Western liberalism relegated them to status of lower citizens of the British empire. The Indians who came with the arrival of the railway mainly as traders were also categorised in the same hierarchy as lower citizens. The Wanga and Mumia, in particular, realized only latter that Africans ranked lowest in the British colonial hierarchy. Subsequent developments in urban policy left Europeans as the highest while the Indians came second and the rest of the races were ranked lowest.

This reality of British hierarchical policy in Mumias dawned on Mumia when in 1907 relations between him and Hobley soured with the later doubting Mumia's Nabongoship. Mumia sulkingly retreated to Kwa-Shiundu leaving his brother, Mulama to deal with the British at Mumias. It was Geoffrey Archer, the District Commissioner of Elgon District who mediated these relation in 1908. Archer was later to use Mumia and Murunga in demarcating the boundaries of the administrative locations in the area culminating in the elevation of Mumia to paramount chief in 1909 (Kenyanchui 1992:29). This consolidation further cemented the centrality of Mumias in the region given that the definition of territorial extension was done with the active participation of Mumia.

With a sprawling urban nature, the functions of Mumias were set to change and enlarge and change. The connectivity between Mumias and Kakamega through Sclater road implied rising commercial functions as people and goods reached Mumias easily. The place of settler agriculture implied that Mumias became another supply centre, this time it supplied labour to the settler farms. The centre therefore housed the personnel involved in these tasks of recruiting labour to the labour sites. This in turn required of the administrator at Mumias to lay out settlement areas and other infrastructure to ensure that the town was carefully planned to render its services. Given that this planning occurred in a colonial context, the assumptions and philosophy of the colonizers were applied and were paramount.

The British philosophy that applied in Mumias since 1894 but became apparent after 1901 accorded supremacy to hierarchies based on race. The criterion in this regard was essentially the level of civilisation each race was assumed to have attained. In Western perception, the ladder of progress pitched them at the apex while Africans were merely at the rudimentary stages of civilisation. The British became custodians of modernity because theirs was a race born to rule. It was therefore acceptable to them that the best way such custody of civilisation could be maintained was through colonial domination. That is how the poetics of the white man's burden were explicated and justified.

This philosophy was implemented in a colonial framework by Frederick Lugard's philosophy of indirect rule. Here, the Africans were put under native authority of

which the custodian was the customary chief while the constitutional operationalisation was vested in the British crown. Chiefs implemented the directives and policies in the village while the Africans in the urban centres were left in juridical limbo (Mamdani, 1996:9). The colonial constitution institutionalized racism as a pertinent aspect of the colonial order. Thus, racism was the glaring reality that defined urban social and economic relations. Through the policy of indirect rule, which Mamdani (1996) equates to decentralized despotism the urban neglect of Africans was accepted. It was argued that the African stay in the urban areas was only temporary because they had left their families in the rural areas where they would periodically return and eventually settle (Werlin, 1974:45). Colonial policy in Mumias followed this liberal mappings of modernisation

In the context of modernisation theory, Africans who lived in urban centres were called detribalized natives (Janmohamed, 1976:191 KNA, DC/NN 3/4/2). This was because urban centres bore the seed of modernity with the colonial state which was an important agent of this modernity posing as an engine of progress. Together with urban centres as indexes of measuring change were the transport system, education and the impact of values attached to European items like cloths, bicycles etc. This became indicators of progress in the colonial project of modernity and they could only be acquired through shops in urban areas or as gifts from benevolent foreigners. Most shops offered items manufactured in factories that catered for an industrialized society. Nevertheless urban structures like shops and markets became conduits of exploitation and underdevelopment (Magubane,1971:425). Exploitation was realised through unequal exchange that the process of buying and selling goods spawned. The

double pronged nature of urban policy in Mumias was designed in line with the ideology of Western developmentalism which does not conceive poverty as a function of exploitation.

By 1900, when the first hut taxes were collected from Buluyia, the impact of colonialism became manifest among the Wanga (Mwenesi, 1972). The tax collectors were mainly Swahili (KNA, DC/NN 3/1) and later African chiefs undertook this task owing to the reported Swahili dishonesty in 1904. This postponed the housing problem that became urgent in subsequent years with the diverse ethnic and racial groups in Mumias. Part of the revenue collected went into developing the housing facilities and settlements in Mumias. The social status that followed the racial contour was evidenced in the houses constructed and the segregation that began.

By 1906, for example, there were twelve Indian shopkeepers in Mumias. The Public Works Department was reported to have finished the collector's house, two clerks houses but another clerk and accountants house was still on (KNA, DC/NN 3/2/4). This were grass thatched and mad walled houses which the British administrators hoped to pull down immediately proper and healthy houses were constructed. In 1907, the sub-commissioner based at Kisumu urged for `the building of a proper stone house at Mumias', since this `will give this station a new lease of health'. Formerly, the writer noted, the station 'possessed rather a sinister reputation'. (KNA DC/NZA, 1/2). Health, or sanitation in general defined the different settlements in a town and became a basis of determining the location of administrative centres in colonial Kenya and the internal morphology of such centres.

The area of occupation designated for Europeans and the administration came to be referred to as the `boma' (Okwaro, O.I., 24-5-1997). This was essentially the area where colonial policies were handled administratively and implemented (Wanga, O.I., 28-5-1997). Indian traders occupied their areas from where trading was conducted. The Somali, Nubians and Arab-Swahili also had their areas of settlement. Nubians settled near the clinic at a place then referred to as Manyatta which was near River Nzoia (KNA, DC/NN 3/2/19). Category of inhabitants had their settlements changed over a period of time. For example, Nubians together with the Somali were latter to be moved to Lumino. At Manyatta, the Nubian community was essentially Muslim. They developed into a community that closely identified with their Muslim brothers who were Somali, Arab-Swahili and others. They prayed together in the common Mosque at Mumias (Akina, O.I. 18-4-1995). Their leader both at Manyatta and later at Elumino was Said Effendi (KNA, DC/NN3/1 and Akina, O.I. 18-4-1995). When the Nubians moved from Manyatta to Elumino, the idea seems to have been aimed at bringing them to the vicinity of the town, but poor planning seems to have left their settlement very untidy (KNA, DC/NN 3/2/19). The reasons for these changes were related to the changing planning policy and sanitation. By 1912, a distinct layout of the town included the government quarters, the Indian Bazaar, the villages of the Baganda, Nubians, Somali, Swahili and Wakamba (KNA, DC/NN 3/1).

On the other hand, the Arab-Swahili settlement in Mumias also developed in its peculiar manner. This came to be called Mjini (Odongo, O.I., 27-5-1997). The people in Mjini were mainly Mulsim and Arab-Swahili. However, whenever local

Wanga people were converted to Islam, they joined the settlement (Wanzetse, O.I., 22-6-1994). Its location seems to have changed several times from the neighbourhood of the government boma to Elumino and back to its present location near the Indian bazaar. Also, a mosque was relocated opposite the Arab-Swahili settlement. Over time the original mosque has been rebuilt in the present location on the Mumias-Kakamega road. As we shall demonstrate in this sequel, this is where the initial Mulsim school was to be located

The Arab-Swahili houses in Mjini were mainly grass-thatched and mud-walled. They, in most cases reflected elements of the Coastal structure mixed with a local Wanga design. The initial houses would shelter more than one family because their legal occupation of the site had not been made clear. The structures were of a temporary nature until 1927 when the Swahili settlement became an issue of discussion. It was questioned why the Arab-Swahili occupied native land by the Local Native Council (Livendi, O.I., 2-9-1993). During the Kenya Land Commission proceedings, it was questioned under whose permission Mumia had allowed the Arab-Swahili community in Mumias (Kenya Land Commission,1934:2233).

Nonetheless, the Arab-Swahili had settled in Mumias, intermarried with the Wanga and identified with local people. Many of them were indeed integrated in the local environment. By 1920, residents in Arab-Swahili Mjini were a mix of Arab-Swahili and Wanga. Others were in fact offsprings of the mixed marriages. Such a situation implied that Mjini settlement developed a culture whose basis was the Coastal and religious influence of Islam and some Wanga customs (Ngashira, O.I., 22-1-1997). In

dressing and eating, this mixture was clearly expressed. While the Kanzu, and *Leso* were the main dressing for both men and women respectively, foodstuffs like rice and simsim, potatoes and cassavas became common in Mumias (Munyendo,O.I.,23-1-1997). This was an important factor to the increasing Indian trade becaue a wide variety of both local and foreign products were circulating.

The leader of the Arab-Swahili settlement was Sheriff Hassan who later paved way for his brother Sheriff Omar. This were Wanganised Arabs whose duties were autonomous from the chiefs. However, both recognised the importance of Mumia and visited him for counsel (Ali, O.I., 17-4-1995). The two, however worked more with Chief Murunga who was an ardent Muslim. They would occasionally use Murunga to convince Mumia over some things. Among their duties was to make sure the Mjini was clean and well kept and play the role of Kadhi in the region. They arbitrated on disputes related to islamic community in Mumias apart from solemnising marriages and keeping the marriage records. It was not until 1915 that Sheriff Omar was appointed as Registrar of Mohammedan Marriages and Divorces in North Kavirondo amidst opposition from local Wanga Muslims (KNA, DC/NZA 3/38/1). This opposition became protracted in the inter-war period and this struggles had a bearing on the social history of the town as it related to islam in Mumias.

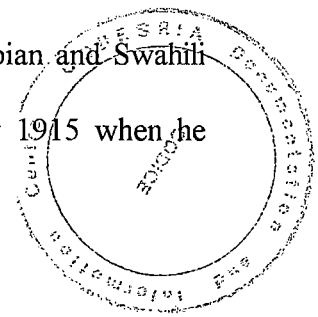
The year 1912 was important for Mumias town for it represented the culmination of the rise to prominence of the centre. In 1909, Mumias was upgraded to a township, while Butere, Malakisi and Maragoli became trading centres in 1910 and Yala in 1912 (Memon, 1976:141). Malakisi was surveyed in 1910 while Kabuchai (Bungoma) was

established later. The status went with certain infrastructural developments related to it. In the same year, the road network connected Mumias with Kisumu, Mbale in Uganda, Jinja, Kakamega and South Kitoshi where Sudi reigned as chief (KNA, DC/NN 3/2/4, Nasimiyu, 1984). The annual reports of 1911-1912 indicated that a stone post office had been built and a telephone placed in the District Commissioner's Office at Mumias. Also, the hospital and dispensary were built by the Public Works Department while a savings bank was erected and the local people began to use it (Ibid.)

Between 1912-1913, the infrastructure in Mumias was improved. Included were a new stone jail, a market place and a slaughter house. The old jail was converted into a court house. In July 1912, the Provincial Commissioner, the Principal Medical Officer and the Director of Public Works visited the district on a fact finding mission to re-assess the habitability of the station. It is in this year that the question of the health status of Mumias became pertinent. In November 1913, `Mumias was inspected by Prof. W.J. Simpson to determine its health status for habitation (Burgman, 1979:7 and 1990:75). He pronounced the station `unfit for human habitation' (KNA, DC/NZA,3/1/1).

What was perplexing about this declaration was that the station had been the settlement for the Wanga for long. The station could therefore not have been `unfit for human habitation' if `human' was not confused with `race'. This declaration also meant that a new concept of health was implied in the new urban policy. For the Africans, the conditions in Mumias were manageable. But the European concern with

health and sanitation came to be reflected in the colonial perception of the Nubian and Swahili settlement in Mumias. On 26th, September 1913, the Ag. D.C. H. Hartings-Horne reported that the Swahili's village was clean while the Nubian village was dirty. On his next visit, on 21st December 1913, he reported that the `Nubian and Swahili villages were in similar conditions'. This was stressed on 4th May 1915 when he reported that the:



> *`Swahili location requires more attention paid to it and its Liwalis should be forced to keep it clean'. (KNA, DC/NZA 2/2).*

In the sequel, we shall demonstrate how these health factor fused together with the changing climatic conditions to influence the change of station from Mumias to Kakamega in 1920.

4.4. TRADE ACTIVITIES IN MUMIAS

The colonial pioneers of trade in Mumias were Indians. The type of exchange in the Arab-Swahili era was transformed by policies put in place to entrench colonial domination. As more Arab-Swahili entered the colonial service, the earlier Indian trader engaged in the existing merchant-capitalist trade while the many who arrived with the building of the Sclater road in 1890 and the railway in 1902 established *dukawallas* from where typically European manufactured goods were sold (Atieno-Odhiambo, 1981). The colonial system provided a context that impelled Africans to buy these items. Its posturing of Africans as inferior must have made some Africans to aspire to have these items (Magubane, 1971:425).

As early as 1901, Indian traders were already in Kakamega, possibly having come on the Ox-cart from Kisumu. In terms of trade therefore, Kakamega became very significant to Mumias given the connection through Sclater road. The initial Indian trade entailed bartering trade goods with skins but this business was not extensive. However, it contributed to the rapid changes in the socio-economic structures of Mumias (Esese, 1990:194). As such, there occurred a rise in the level of exchange of both local and imported goods. There was also a rise in market demand as the market became more of a regional phenomenon compared with the localised nature of Elureko (Lonsdale, 1992:62).

In 1906, the trade in ivory was checked when the whole district was declared closed (KNA, DC/NZA,1/2). In the same year, a market fee was introduced thereby reducing the flow of trade. The market fee illustrated the new exchange relations where tax was collected from aspiring traders for the sake of maintaining the infrastructure of the market. But it took long for this fee to go into maintaining the market facilities. The prevalence of the ivory trade ensured that local trade was less emphasized on. The 1907-1908 annual report declared that `Mumias trade was hard hit owing to the closing of the ivory trade". But the following year, the Provincial Commissioner reported that:

> *Mumias, a veritable Augean stable in the past, has been cleared out and the population purified and the whole of the Elgon district is now maintained as a closed district, to enter which, licenses have to be obtained (KNA, PC/NZA, 1/2 and Memon, 1976: 142-143).*

But on 1st April 1909, all roads and trading centres were thrown open to the public and this initiated a new era of trade, progress and prosperity (KNA, DC/NZA,1/6).

For the Africans in the region, their participation in trade was hampered by taxes which were aimed at coercing them into migrant wage labour. The emerging dialectic was one of opening up Mumias for Indian trade while coercing Africans into migrant labour. Migrant labour as opposed to permanent wage labour suited the colonial policy on urban development because the policy permitted Africans in urban areas on temporary not permanent settlement. As more taxation forced an increasing number of Africans into wage labour, the more local productive activity was reduced because of the limited supply of male labour in the rural areas. These left Indians trading mainly in imported products and thereby extroverted the local tastes for imported items and goods. Further, women became the main engines of production and exchange in the absence of their husbands. The tussle therefore became one between the European agricultural need for African labour and Indian trading initiatives. Merchant-capital locked horns with agricultural capital at this juncture.

The operations of merchant-capital in Mumias was evidenced in the growing number of shops that mushroomed and sold mainly foreign imported goods. By 1909, there was a flourishing market in Mumias and the shops sold among other items `cloth, wire, blankets, knives, umbrellas, cups, helmets, second hand clothing, beads and pipes'. According to the Provincial Commissioner, John Ainsworth:

> *There is an increasing demand for shirts, kanzus and khaki clothing, and also folding chairs and most strange*

> *to relate, safety pins are somewhat in demand as an ornament. Among the most wealthy and important elders, Arab johos find a limited sale.*

The imposing arrogance typical of a middle-class bureaucrat emerged in Ainsworth's next sentence. He said:

> *The Kavirondo are known generally as a naked race, it is, however, surprising what a large number have begun to clothe themselves even within the last year. (KNA PC/NZA, 1/4).*

This attitude was to continue in relation to missionary education in Mumias with some administrator associating dressing to missionary education, urbanisation and progress. It is evident that the items exchanged in the shops were mainly imported ones. The demand for these items seemed to grow drastically.

In 1911, Ainsworth projected an increase in trade in the province:

> *Trade in this province from various sources should, within the next few years, become of great importance. The demand for imported goods is continually increasing and will eventually be very large (KNA, DC/NZA 1/6).*

It is however, inaccurate to associate increasing demand for European commodities to an African aspiration for `goals of a European character', as some administrators and anthropologists did. The Wanga in Mumias adopted some of these commodities and goods as a matter of necessity. Many did not exercise free choice because the colonial context dictated the adaptation and acquisition of these new items.

The exchange of such items and goods was however local -i.e, mostly a shop trade, the shopkeepers depending mainly on disposing of imported goods to the 'native' and the 'native' selling any surplus he might have' (Memon, 1976: 145). A growing class of Africans started buying `bicycles, watches, pipes, clothes, hats, boots, etc.' (Ibid.). By acquiring such items as bicycles, shoes and clothes, the inevitable need for repairs and spare parts emerged. Nubians were very important in this respect in Mumias. As more bicycles were acquired, bicycle repair stands emerged on the landscape of Mumias town. Notable Nubian bicycle repair shops included Dorka Karala and Ali Biro's who were the first to engage in bicycle repair at Mumias. Some of the Nubians like Akina, Ismail Agolla, Ali Judi and Hassan Keya were to be employed as drivers by Indian businessmen. They were an important component in the emerging Indian middlemanship when local products were transported to Kisumu (Akina, O.I. 8-4-1995).

The impact of the monetisation of the economy stimulated new levels of trade as class differentiation also emerged. A new class of Africans emerged in Mumias consisting of chiefs and their children, clerks, educated Africans especially teachers (Osundwa, O.I.,23-1-1997 Chiefs and their children were elevated by virtue of their position in the colonial administrative hierarchy. They became pilot targets of policy implementation since they were used as microcosms of British modernity from whom other Africans would copy urbane values and mannerisms (PC/NZA, 3/7/2/3, 7/1).

That is why, with the introduction of education, chiefs sons became targets of mission schools as the provincial administration insisted on educated Africans (KNA,PC/NZA 1/5). Schools were set up mainly to educate son's of chiefs who were to be trained within the mainstream of the British ideology of political control (Sifuna, 1977, Murunga, 1994:80). Although by 1910, a number of youths were attending the Mill Hill Mission Schools in Mumias, chiefs were slow in taking their sons to school. In the Wanga royal family, Mumia refused to take his sons to school. Many of the chiefs refused to take their children to school for fear of entrusting them to foreigners (Wambani, O.I. 27-7-1992). According to Shilaro (1991:17):

> *'Mumia of Wanga resisted mission attempts at christianising his children. Even when he yielded in 1902, he evaded their demand by gathering and entrusting to them orphans'.*

Whenever possible, the Wanga resisted the modernising ideology of colonial rule evidenced in their discomfort with aspects of urban growth in Mumias.

By rejecting colonial education, Mumias and the other members of the Wanga royal family were in fact rejecting the core of their colonial heritage. This of course went into illustrating the extent to which Mumia and the rest of the colonial customary functionary did not understand the reasons for the British presence in Mumias. Chiefs, all over the British spheres had been given the privileged status in the colonial system of indirect rule to be the vanguard of the diffusion of British notions of civilization under Pax Britanica. Thus the position of the chiefs in Wanga and Buluyia in general depended on how well they got integrated into the British value systems. Education

was assumed to be the initial point of entering into this value network This would consequently enable them be enlightened members of her majesty's network of imperial government.

But the overriding interest of the colonial government was not in the growing trade based on the logic of merchant-capital. This trade was important only in transforming the local tastes and needs to integrate the local needs and tastes in the production patterns of foreign capital. The trade did not therefore contribute much in terms of development of the local economy. Rather, the said items were merely circulated on a global scale and this did not add new products on the local market or economy. Development can only occur if nature is harnessed justly and is exploited to create use values and capital resources to be ejected back into the economy. The commoditisation of the local economy only acted to transform local needs as the Wanga too began to sell their surplus at the market in Mumias. Education helped to accelerate the rate of acceptance of European ideas, values and commodities. What annoyed the colonial administration in Kenya was that although `the larger percentage of such goods [traded] is of foreign origin, very little comes from England' (KNA PC/NZA 1/6). Civilisation had to come from England!

Agriculture was the mainstay of settler enterprise in Kenya and the reason why the early administration went out to encourage the settler to come to the colony. The central government therefore focused on this and apart from monetising the economy, taxation and land alienation were used to extrovert the economy thereby checking the rise of Africans in colonial hierarchy (Zeleza, 1989). This was because, with new

trade relations, the Wanga increasingly produced commodities in response to the growing market economy. Many of them started accumulating income which they used to purchase the above European items (Esese, 1990:194). Thus, taxation and land alienation achieved a number of objectives. Other than ensuring that a select few Africans engaged in profitable trade, it enabled settlers get cheap labour and changed the local Wanga aspirations to Western tastes. But these processes were never fully realised.

Some Wanga, for instance, effectively competed with the Arab-Swahili and Indian traders. This competition threatened the colonial policy of establishing Indian trading centres for commerce and European settler economy. The latter needed cheap and easily available labour. But such labour had to be balanced with local commercial needs. There was therefore a conscious policy of pegging commercial activity to agricultural production. This would check the proliferation of a large class of able Africans while at the same time ensuring enough produce on the market. The policy became abundantly clear in 1911 when the Governor of Kenya, Girrourd instructed the Provincial and District heads to pay great attention to production of agricultural crops and the establishment of markets and trading centres as a step to opening up of the reserves (Ogutu, 1979:218). He also saw a connection between agriculture, trade and transport arguing that `the developed trade would facilitate road construction and therefore, improved means of transporting products' (Ibid.).

To check the proliferating African participation in trade, taxes, were introduced and implemented and later the Native Registration Ordinance was promulgated in 1915

together with the Crown Land Ordinance of the same year that made all unoccupied land crown land. Also the planting of certain cash crops was restricted where a few able Africans were encouraged to grow crops like simsim, cotton, sorghum and millet. These were bought through Indian middlemen at Mumias and sold cheaply to Europeans. The prices for such items were decided by the Indian merchants and not the African producers. This is how Mumias emerged as an exploitative conduit of Indian merchant-capital. Native registration was coupled up with the declaration of the North Kavirondo reserve to reduce Africans into dependent in the colonial economy as we shall shortly demonstrate in the study.

For now, it is notable that the imposition of a hut tax in 1900 and a poll tax in 1910 ensured that fewer Africans managed to engage in profitable commerce. Poll tax was paid by all men over sixteen years. It carried a three month sentence for defaulters. The initial rate of three rupees was raised to five in 1915 and eight rupees in 1920 (Van Zwanenberg, 1975:77). This is notwithstanding the fact that the initially payments in kind had been accepted. By insisting on money, the monetisation of the economy went hand in glove with the commodisation of production and reduction in number of African traders in Mumias township.

Indication that the colonial taxation was not enough and that Africans still manipulated and survived the restrictions appeared in 1907. Writing on behalf of Allidina Visram, who by 1910 was already operating two motor wagons on the Yala-Mumias road, Mr. Mohamed Kasim Lakha complained about the high prices ruling imposed on local products that made `the natives easily satisfied, for, with little labour

they make enough money for their little wants'. The logic of his reasoning was that Africans expended little energy in producing local products, which under the new rule fetched enough money owing to their increased prices. Given the Africans `little wants', they had enough money to buy what they needed for their survival and pay taxes. He, therefore, suggested the lowering of these prices by introducing imported articles to be `in competition with local products'. This could be done, first, by `lowering railway freight for such products carried for a greater distance than 300 miles' (KNA, PC/NZA, 1/2).

This writer was in essence asking for unfair advantage in favour of imported goods in the trading centres in Nyanza province, including Mumias. Such a tradition of unfair advantages was a glaring feature of colonial policy that aimed at reducing Africans into inferior participants in the colonial political economy. But most importantly, it reminded the colonial government that with well catered for Africans, the possibility of their going out to settler farms for wage labour was remote. It is in this context that the 1910, poll tax and the 1915 increase in tax fee plus the 1915 Native Registration Ordinance was implemented. It was not until 1920, that the labour recruitment centres were firmly established in Mumias township. But as early as 1912 the importance of agriculture to the development of townships, trade and exports was clearly asserted (Memon, 1976:147). Subsequently, African agriculture came to be properly sand-witched between activities of Indian middlemen and low wages from the colonial government. The essence being to squeeze the Wanga out of adequate productive activity that would enable them survive outside wage labour. Indian

traders and middlemen therefore benefited from this arrangement. Their monopoly of trade in reserves was a product of racial superiority imposed in British colonial order.

It would have been expected that the Wanga royal family would have bailed the position of the indigenous people as good entrepreneurs who, given chance, would maximise on the opportunity for trade and accumulation. The rest of non-privileged cadre of traders in Wanga had been squeezed out of the trading links in Mumias town. The future of the town as a trading centre was therefore left in the hands of the royal family in Wanga. They had managed at the start of colonial rule to strike a rapport with the colonialist and acquired the privileged status in the colonial system. They became a part of the British authority structure and therefore capable to reap the benefits of that position.

It should be noted that the colonial state was part of the merchant-capitalist network. It had interests in the accumulation of resources and profits for the metropolitan centre. Its role in the articulation of the colonial economic interests and its constant intervention in the production and exchange system defined it as part and parcel of merchant-capital (Kitching, 1980). Since the colonial state was made up of officials and chiefs, this interventions predisposed these officials in a position to exert influence in the production and exchange spheres to their own advantage.

Elsewhere in Kenya, especially in Central Province, the early colonial chiefs took advantage of this position, educated their own family members, engaged in trade and generally used the colonial network to accumulate and transform themselves at best

and their societies in general as a result of the trickle down effect (see Cowen, 1979). In contrast, the Wanga royal family failed to take advantage of this position and their imprint on Mumias town remained minimal and reminiscent of the pre-colonial times. First, was their failure to development the systems that would have long term impact on the urbanization of Mumias. They rejected colonial education and sought to consolidate the traditional values that were quickly being anachronised by the fast advancing capitalist impact. Secondly, they failed to engage in productive activity or profitable investments that would have transformed the nature of Mumias town.

While borrowing the unproductive consumption patterns of British life, Mumia, for instance bought a bicycle and latter a car. His brother, Mulama stationed at Butere also bought a car in the 1930s. There is no evidence of their engagement in trade or profitable investment after the Mumia supported ivory and slave activities of the Arab-Swahili and Indian era in Mumias. The royal family in Wanga did lack the necessary preparation that would have put them in a position to accumulate and develop as a local network of capitalist, however defined. They lacked any frugal instinct just like their traditional role militated against excess avarice. Their investment options were limited to conspicuous consumptive facilities like cars and bicycles. The only other investment was the Nabongo's market in the town whose tax value was very low. Also, their hold on the market depended on the traditional authority arrangement which the British retained perhaps in order to appease the family. It was among the remaining vestiges of the traditional authority to be accommodated as a part of the customary privilege of the bifurcated colonial state.

When the prebendal ties that defined the royal family's closeness with the British colonial state were severed in the 1930s with the growing senility of Mumia, the position of privilege was badly threatened. Having made no adequate investment and no profitable accumulation from their relationship with the British, the family started clinging on the need for another of their own to succeed Mumia as paramount chief. A protracted struggle ensued as many more communities started agitating against the Wanga imposed sub-imperialism. The family had no option but to retreat back to their homes near Mumias town with no economic legacy to retire to. Thus their failure to invest and their lack of commercial skill all coupled up to deny the town any local base for development.

4.5. MUMIAS DURING THE FIRST WORLD WAR

The First World War began in 1914 and new demands were exerted on the colonies of the contending imperial nations. Such demands included labour requirements in the form of soldiers and support staff and also demands of necessities such as food in terms of cattle and money. Great manpower was needed to transport the necessary equipment to the battle ground. The war impacted on the colonial state's ability to satisfy local European and African obligations. Both trade and agriculture were hampered as more and more resources were invested in the war operations. The conduits for siphoning these resources out remained the urban recruitment centres while in the rural areas chiefs engaged in the exercise of collecting the needed animals as war food requirements (Wambani, O.I. 27-7-1992).

Some of these resources were forcefully taken. There was also an attendant social dislocation among families and communities as people were forcibly recruited (Wanga, O.I., 21-1-1997). Indeed, Mumias developed into a key recruitment centre only that this was accompanied by the increasing condemnation of the centre as "an unhealthy station". It is this complex reality that characterised the history of Mumias during the First World War.

The health status of Mumias remained an issue mainly in the light of European occupation since 1913. Complaints about sanitation and health emerged basically European considerations. British colonial urban policy emphasized the health aspect in Mumias as a prerequisite for European environmental settlement there. These were an integral aspect of the racial dichotomies that defined urban development policy in Kenya. Sanitation was therefore a western gauged value used to determine the correct location of a centre where administrative work could be conducted with less risk to the bureaucracy. In Mumias, it was the missionaries, not the administrators who first raised this concern and remained central to the decision as to whether Mumias was admissible as a district headquarters or not. Most of the Europeans living in the district, it was reported, were under the missionary category (KNA DC/NN 1/3). It is however the administrative office that gave the last decision on this issue. Ironically, while the missionaries withstood this condition throughout the colonial period and retained their station in Mumias the colonial administration moved from Mumias in 1920. It is to the credit of Father Stam (later Bishop Stam) at Mumias that the Mill Hill Fathers retained the station at Mumias (Mumias Diary).

Missionaries of the Mill Hill Fathers numbered more in Mumias compared to the administrators. The origins of the religious centre in Mumias dates back to November 1904 when the Roman Catholic Mission was opened on a temporary site near the Indian Bazaar. These were missionaries of the St. Joseph's Society of Foreign Missions founded by Herbert Cardinal Vaughan in 1866 with their headquarters at St. Joseph's College, Mill Hill in London[1] (Gale, 1959, Ogutu, 1981:4). In 1903, Bishop Hanlon based at Nsambya in Uganda posted some Mill Hill Fathers to Kisumu from where they established their first stations in Mumias and Kakamega (Burgman, 1990:36, Murunga, 1994:52). But the Mumias station was not firmly established until 1913, when the priest was able to reside there (Gale, 1959:277).

The main explanation inhibiting the permanent settlement of a priest at Mumias until 1913 was the constant attack by small pox. In 1906, when a plot was surveyed for the Roman Catholic Mission in Mumias, there was also the condemnation of Mumias as a very unhealthy place. Many Europeans there called it a death trap (Burgman, 1979:5). Between 1907-1910, owing to the fear on health grounds, the station was closed because of the outbreak of smallpox (KNA, DC/NN 3/1 and Mumias Diary). The missionaries persevered on after 1912 when the station was re-opened and they acquired 224.5 acre space in Mumias town in 1915 where the permanent church mission was to be located (KNA DC/NN 3/1). Latter the mission was to establish a school, hospital and church compound on this land that subsequently gave the town its new urban social structures.

[1] For a general history of how the Mill Hill Fathers were allowed to establish a station in Mumias, see Roland Oliver (19--)

But it was in the same year that the station acquired a permanent site that the colonial administration intensified its complain about the station as unhealthy. It did not matter the significant role Mumias played as a recruitment centre for the war effort. Consequently, when in 1913, Prof. Simpson condemned the station as unsuitable for human habitation, there was arising number of Africans registering for settler farm labour and Carrier Corps labour. `The first demands for men for the Carrier Corps were easily met' (KNA,DC/NN 10/1/4) prompting the promulgation of the Native Registration Ordinance. The implication was that as more people left Wanga through Mumias, the towns status declined owing to the perceived European vulnerability to its health conditions. The war demands seemed to extract what was left of Mumias as a township, including its trade goods, animals, labour etc. By 1920, Mumias remained important mainly as a recruiting centre. In the annual report for 1919-1920, it was noted that `registration started in this district on the 9th January 1920 when Mr. Galway, Labour Inspector arrived with a staff of 2 clerks and 6 finger print boys'. Upto 31st March 1920, 5097 certificates had been issued (KNA, DC/NN 1/3). All the natives going out to work were registered and the majority, who lived close to Mumias, had been done plus a number from Marama location (See table below showing the labour recruitment trends).

TABLE SHOWING LABOUR RECRUITMENT TREND IN NORTH KAVIRONDO DISTRICT,1914-918.

TABLE I: WAGE LABOUR RECRUITMENT

YEAR	*1914-1915*	*1915-1916*	*1916-1917*	*1917-1918*
Persons Reg. For Work				
Outside the District	10,190	12,712	10,340	13,730
Inside the District	240	305	334	178
Total	10,394	13,017	10,674	13,908

TABLE II: CARRIER CORPS LABOUR

YEAR	*1914-1915*	*1915-1916*	*1916-1917*	*1917-1918*
Persons Registered				
Carrier Corps	4,372	7,459	6,469	10,036
Other Labour	6,022	5,558	4,205	3,872
Total	10,394	13,017	10,674	13,908

* Note that some persons could have left the district without registration because of the centralized registration centres.

SOURCE: KNA, DC/NN 1/1./1.

Except for the years 1916-1917, the trend shows an increase in both forms of labour recruitment. However, the people preferred work outside the district than inside. This preference was perhaps a response to the increasing levels of taxation which increased as from 1915 with the introduction of poll tax. These taxes acted to eject more Africans to the labour recruitment exercise (Lutomia, O.I., 8-9-1996). In turn, this affected the African participation in agriculture, a factor initially related to growth of trading centres and transport networks. Given the relation between agriculture and urban development, the latter was hampered as a result of labour migration out of Mumias. By 1920, the growing significance of Mumias was heavily undermined by a fear of its health situation when Mr. Hernmant and Captain Fraser died from there. This led to the total condemnation of Mumias station and the transfer to Kakamega (KNA, DC/NN 1/3).

4.6. CONCLUSION

Mumias played several roles in the process of colonial intrusion. It was mainly the launching pad of colonial subjugation and initial administration. The chapter demonstrated the significance of the centre in the historiography of resistance in Kenya. The history of Baganda activities is linked to the pacification efforts of Semei Kakungulu in Eastern Uganda given that Mumias was part of the Eastern Uganda Province before 1902. The arrival of the Nubians, Somali and some Baganda was therefore associated with the history of colonial subjugation and resistance in Western Kenya. A community of alien Africans came to be a component of the changing nature and composition of Mumias. They engaged in various socio-economic activities that defined the urban nature of Mumias in the colonial context.

The presence of Indian capital in Mumias was examined in the context of colonial policy and pattern of urban evolution and planning. The complex relations between merchant capital and settler agricultural capital was discussed to illustrate how this sand-witched African interests with an aim of exploiting them. The place of taxation, land alienation and native registration have been highlighted to show how native registration and recruitment lines were introduced in Mumias. It was stressed that the struggle between settler agriculture and Indian merchant-capital went in favour of the former. Apparently, a racial bias seemed to de-emphasize Mumias because of its health conditions in favour of Kakamega. Various factors were lined up towards 1920 to explain the transfer of the district headquarters to Kakamega in 1920.

It cannot be conclusively asserted that Mumias was by 1920 an enclave of European modernity different from the rural areas. This was because rural-urban movement in the region of Mumias was still subsumed by a rural peasant dynamic in the Wanga community. Its infrastructure was still underdeveloped as to warrant a large population of Europeans whose influence could have been greater on its urban nature. This explains why by 1920, Mumias retained numerous aspects of the traditional social and economic environment which animated the Wanga initiatives against the exigencies of colonial domination. Thus, the presence of Indian and European capital in Mumias partially transformed the nature of Mumias centre. New concepts of trade emerged as the drive for profit became paramount. Moreover, the religious impact of islam and Christianity emerged that gave new skills in architecture and education to local people. Subsequent urban social processes which came to privilege such skills and values as class differentiation emerged in Mumias. In the next chapter, we hope to further analyse the changing nature of Mumias centre in the inter-war period.

CHAPTER FIVE

5.0 MUMIAS IN THE INTER-WAR PERIOD

5.1 INTRODUCTION

In the preceding chapter we have examined the origin and development of Indian and European capital in Mumias. An assessment of the impact of this foreign capital on the growth of Mumias town between 1894 and 1920 has been made. An appreciable attention has been paid to Indian merchant-capital whose function is located within the problematic of colonial capitalism Colonial capitalism pitted Indians against European merchant-capitalists and settlers. The colonial state was a European controlled affair. It was made evident in the chapter that between 1901 and 1920, there was competition over African labour between the needs of Indian trading capital and European settler agriculture. The colonial government therefore, adopted a conscious balancing policy between trade and agricultural needs, knowing very well that each was significant to the colony.

The chapter looked at colonial policy in terms of its transformative goals and demonstrated how this impacted on Mumias. An account of this transformation up to 1920 provided insights into the impact of foreign capital and interests on the social history of the people and the town of Mumias. Racial discrimination in town planning affected its African occupants while the place of taxation, land alienation and native registration exacerbated their plight. The need for an inquiry into the impact of religious and educational factors on the social history of Mumias has been demonstrated. The definition of progress in terms of urbanisation, clothing, education and so on appears problematic given that the conception of modernisation is straitjacketed in Western terms. This approach wrongly makes local

values appear inferior under the Western perceptions of urban development. Such an approach fails to understand that there are many modernities and Africans have their own modernity and progress (Vilikazi, 1997). It is this wrong perception which propelled colonial policy into the determination of which administrative centres were to be earmarked for urban development support to meet European interests. The issues of health and sanitation became European priorities in urban planning and policy implementation as exemplified in Mumias. In the foregoing analysis, it became apparent that by 1920, Mumias retained a complex mix of traditional African values and structures while the intruding Arab-Swahili, Indian, Nubian, Somali and European values and structures began to exercise coercive influence on its population and status in the region.

The logic of colonial policy determinacy in urban development is stretched a step further in this chapter in order to enable us understand the complexity of the post World War II transformation of Mumias. The year 1920 constituted a watershed in the history of Mumias town. It was a period of convergence of numerous factors that affected the history of the town. The year witnessed the end of the World War I and the initiation of the transformation of the East African Protectorate to Kenya Colony and Protectorate (Maxon, 1989:81). The activities of the colony were also transferred from the foreign office to the colonial office. With the inception of total land alienation entailed in the 1920 declaration of Crown colony, the place of Africans was further re-defined. The North Kavirondo Native Reserve was declared in 1922 thereby instituting new thrusts in the colonial attempt to further coerce Africans into migrant labour.

Whereas under the 1915 Native Registration Ordinance, the ***Kipande*** registration system was initiated, its implementation did not occur until 1920. The notorious Northey circulars were also issued owing to the labour requirements of the Ex-soldier settler scheme in 1919. This enhanced the paramountcy of settler interests in colonial Kenya. A combination of all these led to increased political activity as Africans attempted to cope with the new overt coercion of Governor Edward Northey. It is no wonder then that this repressive tendencies witnessed increased Indian and African agitation leading to the founding of the Young Kavirondo association in 1922 in Western Kenya and later the Catholic Union to deter the Catholics from joining the former association (Bode, 1978)

It is this light that an analysis of urbanization in the colonial political economy seems long overdue. Mumias was a key point in the inception of the colonial state in North Kavirondo District. There is need to investigate the factors that explain the new shifts from Mumias to Kakamega in the provincial administration of North Kavirondo. The place of regional infrastructure, the rise of other towns and the new resources that were discovered are worthy investigating. It is pertinent to evaluate European settler interests in determining the location policy shifts. Also, the religious and educational factors ought to be examined to illustrate new shifts in perception of the region among sections of urban dwellers. Equally important is the place of Indian capital. The shift of administrative focus to Kakamega from Mumias town seems not to have differed significantly from the 1920 scenario. It appears that the inter-war period made Mumias a centre of regional concern by re-defining its role

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and status in the area as we shall demonstrate shortly.

5.2. FROM INDIAN TRADING CAPITAL TO EUROPEAN AGRICULTURAL CAPITAL

The Indian trading capital seems to have been more tolerant about the conditions in Mumias town. There is an absence of Indian complaints about the health situation in the station. On a visit to Mumias, Ainsworth formed the opinion that the Indian and Swahili traders had no complaints. `They appear to be prosperous, the same applies to the Yala river township. The Mumias Indians sought quick settlement of the question of the disposal of plots on the new bazaar site (KNA PC/NZA 2/2). Reports of Indian traders in Mumias detail their trading activities and the nature of the Indian Bazaar in Mumias town. Their other activities included subletting their verandahs for Nubian bicycle repairs. In the years after 1920, Indians seem to have enlarged their business interests to include transporting maize produce from the farmer in local centres to Kisumu. Consequently, a transport sector emerged among Indian families in Mumias that transported Maize, passangers and other cereals to Kisumu.

The main challenge to Indian trading in Mumias was the quick rise among the Wanga of African entrepreneurs (KNA, DC/NN 3/6/1). Due to the social differentiation accruing from the commoditisation of economic life in Mumias station, some Africans had risen up in social status owing to their new jobs. Chiefs, clerks, teachers, tax collectors etc.

accumulated capital and joined business. They specialized mainly in local produce including local crafts like pottery and iron implements to crops like simsim, groundnuts, potatoes etc. They therefore established shops and retail centres from where they dispensed these products (Kaka, O.I., 3-5-97).

The local market was also valuable in this regard. In 1906, when market fee was introduced, trade seems to have been hampered. However, this action put trade and the market directly under Mumia. The market at Mumias was put under the direct authority of Mumia to whom the market fees went. This acted to stamp the authority of Mumia on local trade relations within the town and give the local people some interest to trade. This was detrimental to the Indian trading interests in Wanga. Apparently, the Indian traders had hoped to develop Kenya into another India. This was stated by A. Jevanjee when he urged the British `to give us Kenya and we shall turn it into another India' . Indian business shops initially concentrated on imported goods. The goods were mainly American in origin. These traders had to manipulate and attract the Africans buyers given that they preferred their local shop-owners. Also, owing to the language barrier, the local shop owners seemed to out-compete Indian traders. Consequently, Indian shop-owners employed some Wanga who acted as shop assistants in their shops. Many of them did not like this because it implied more expenditure on payments (KNA, DC/NN, 3/6/1). They encouraged the Wanga to buy from their shops by giving them additional tokens like sweets and sugar. This was often added on to the items bought free of charge. In due course, owing to the long distances traveled by local people to the market, drinking water

was their main attraction as Indian shopkeepers offered them free drinking water in which they had added sugar (Wanzetse, O.I.,22-7-1994).

These inducements seem to have augured well with the Wanga but only for a short period. It was discovered that people would drink water in an Indian shop but buy items in African shops (Anyona, O.I., 22-1-1997). This habit infuriated some Indians who complained of the cunning nature of the Wanga buyers. In a struggle for survival, the Indians ventured into other businesses. For instance, they started their middleman's role of buying local products like simsim, groundnuts, millet, sorghum, elusine, etc. This were agricultural products produced in Wanga from prior to colonial domination (Wafula, 1981:8).

The change in the Indian strategy revealed the importance of diversifying the activities of the alien traders in order to cope with the competition and contradictions of the colonial system. By entering this new sectors, the Indians realised the fact that, under the colonial circumstance, European priorities were assured of success against their trading capital. The instance also illustrated the significance of agriculture to trade (Nasimiyu, 1984:92). Indeed, there had been a systematic emphasis in colonial administration that increased agricultural production. This was essential to the establishment of markets and the opening up of the reserves (Ogutu, 1979 :218). That is why the early colonial administrators had emphasized and promoted agricultural production.

John Ainsworth in particular promoted a policy of encouraging Africans to grow `maize, simsim and cotton for marketing' (Stichter, 1982:45). The idea of marketing African products led him into adopting free seed distribution programmes. Chiefs became the avenue through which the seeds were distributed in Wanga. Nabongo Rapando of Wanga Mukulu was one such keen farmer who tried to plant cotton on his farm (Wambani, O.I. 30-7-1992). The rest of the community entered such activities taking their examples from the chiefs. Given the target on marketing, colonial policy on marketing had also to be defined explicitly. It is in this context the formation of the Local Native Council (LNC) should be viewed. In this respect, the policy formulations pitted the African interests in Mumias against the Indian interests with the Europeans as overloads.

The Local Native Councils (LNC.'s) were constituted in 1924, the same year that the only government training school was set up in Bukura where pupils receive agricultural and technical training (KNA, DC/NN 1/4 and KNA, DC/NN 1/5). The LNC was established under the Native Authority (Amendment) ordinance of 1924. It held its first meeting on 20th may 1925 with the Acting Governor (KNA, DC/NN 1/6)at Matungu in Mumias. By 1927, the tussle between the LNC, the Indians and the Provincial Commissioner were the subject of discussion. They set about defining, in concert with the District Administration, the fundamental aspects of marketing and the rules that governed the activity. This was because the LNC was mandated to discuss and resolve issues concerned with `food and water supplies, use of land, forests, hospitals, cattle dips, agriculture and livestock and education among others' (Ogutu, 1979:219).

For instance, native produce was seen to include only maize, legumes, simsim and rice. They also defined a buying centre as `a place where produce may be purchased, and which has been established by the Local Native Council' while native market was seen as `a recognised place where natives sell and exchange produce' (KNA DC/NN 3/6/1). For long, Indians, being unhappy with the competition from other races wished to be allowed to trade in the native market. This was where African traders acquired their goods and sold others to their kinsmen. The LNC rejected this move arguing that the racial context the system ought to accord them priority in their 'native' market. They rejected Indian and European presence in the 'native'market knowing that in the event of Indian and European failure to gain access to native markets, their survival in trade was assured. According to one writer, `the immigrant races find the native trade a necessity, whereas, at present, the native is content with trade without outside competition' (KNA DC/NN 3/6/1).

This situation gave Africans an advantage in trade which ensured their self-reliance. To the settlers, self reliance was detrimental to their labour needs. The settlers thrived on cheap African labour on their farms in Central and Rift Valley provinces where large plantations were located (Kanogo,1987). The ex-soldiers who had been settled in the 1919 scheme made the situation worse because many of them lacked basic agricultural knowledge (Duddler, 1993). This is what set in motion the notoriety of Governor Northey. Mumias became a recruiting centre for labour into the settler firms in 1920 to the detriment of local production and trade. Native registration, land alienation and taxation in Mumias made

labour recruitment easier. What compounded the situation in the area was the famine that occurred in 1919 (KNA DC/NN 1.2). This was a result of the war recruitment that caused a shortage in the `supply of labour on the individual peasant holdings in the reserves' (Nasimiyu, 1984:80).

The essence of a recruitment centre in Mumias was to reduce peasant self-reliance in the region and promote settler agriculture. The implication was to leave Indians controlling trade and transporting African produce to European producers. But priority was given to settler agriculture as evidenced in the rise of labour recruitment centres in Mumias. Indians were not prominent in subsequent policy formulations but the local labour recruitment drive ensured that the presence of colonial relations in Mumias were felt.

By 1921, 5,220 people were officially recorded to be in labour force employment from North Kavirondo District. Yet a total of 44,952 were out on labour force from Nyanza province in 1922. This compared well with 1924 which reported 45, 719. In 1926, North Kavirondo district had 27,332 out compared to 22,449 in 1927. In 1928 and 1929, North Kavirondo reported a stable number of 24,043 and 24,474 people respectively in labour force (Stichter, 1982: 54-55). The district was the highest labour supply centre to the settler farms and the District Commissioner boasted of this high number (KNA DC/NN 1/9; KNA, DC/NN 1/10). It appears that the settler fears of losing valuable labour force by 1920 were unfounded given the steady supply of labourers needed by recruiters in the area (KNA, DC/NN 1/9).

Mumias was such an important hunting ground for recruiters. According to one informant, Mumias continued to attract labour recruiters up to about 1928 when the recruitment rules forbade the recruiters from Mumias. By that time the `natives' close to Mumias had registered in big numbers. By 31st March 1920,

> *all natives going out to work [had] registered and the majority who [lived] close to Mumias [had] been done' (KNA, DC/NN 1/2).*

The reasons why Mumias and North Kavirondo District was preferred was the belief within the provincial administration that the region provided the best labour force. This had been stated earlier with the P.C. insisting that,

> *the highest demand for the Kavirondo labourers were government departments... the railway prefers men from Mumias instead of Kisumu since the former are `better workers' and have `better physique'.*

He concluded that `if the Kavirondo are taken away from their country, they work much better' (KNA, PC/NZA Annual Report 1905/1906). Indeed, in 1928, `large numbers of natives from Kavirondo were becoming resident natives on the tea estates on long agreements which makes for an efficient labour force' (KNA, DC/KER 1/2). In total there were `about 1,500 of these, mostly from the North Kavirondo district of Mumias, Maragoli, Bunyore, plus a certain number of Wakendi' (arap Korir, 1976: 50). But 1928 was the

dying period of labour recruitment at Mumias owing to the shift from Mumias to Kakamega.

5.3. THE SHIFT FROM MUMIAS TO KAKAMEGA

Kakamega town had been a significant centre from very early in the colonial period. It was gazetted as a trading centre in 1912 and remained an important place for temporary European settlement. The move from Mumias to Kakamega was impelled by the European health consideration after many of them died at the centre. By 1920, Mumias had gained the notoriety of `a death trap' and the cemetery there had eight European graves (KNA, PC/NZA, 1/15). The decision to look for a healthier site therefore was reached at and initially Kabuchai (later Bungoma) in what was then called Kitosh was chosen only for the water to be proved impure on examination. Eventually, Kakamega was chosen (Ibid.).

The building of temporary buildings in Kakamega was started in February 1920 and the Administrative staff did not leave until the end of the financial year. But the significance of Mumias did not end immediately. By 1921, despite the move from Mumias to Kakamega, both towns retained significance in the district. Mumias was `gradually losing its importance as a trade centre. Thjis was due to the impossibility of effective supervisory control from there which was not exercised under township regulations'. The post office at Mumias had been closed and only 2 African telegraph engineering staff remained (KNA, DC/NZA 1/16).

Mumias administrative offices were de-roofed and the materials were transported, using free African labour to Kakamega. A few buildings for officials were left at Mumias' old station while the bricks and other building materials were sold to the Roman Catholic Mission. The effect on trade in Mumias was noticeable. Indians in Mumias were financially embarrassed given that their prices were very high for the local market. `At Mumias, several shops were empty and all trading centres reported very little business. But these challenges did not suffocate the life of Mumias as a township because by 1923, it still remained well populated (KNA, PC/NZA 1/17). It had a population of 339 persons including three Europeans.

By the end of 1923, Mumias ranked among the `most prosperous towns in Nyanza in a commercial sense'. These included Luanda, Asembo, Homa Bay, Kisii and Kericho (KNA PC/NZA 1/18). However, by this time, owing to a combination of factors, of which taxation, native registration and land alienation, African entrepreneurs in Mumias were few and competed unfavourably with Indians. By 1925, trade was entirely in the hand of Indians merchants.

> *`A number of shops in central and North Kavirondo have been opened by the natives, but they cannot yet be regarded as serious competitors to Indians. Their shops are small, not well stocked, and they do not know where and how to buy their goods (KNA PC/NZA 1/20).*

Although the move to Kakamega began in 1920, official sanction by the Governor was given in 1927 (KNA, DC/NN 3/4/2; Memon, 1976:148). It was in the same year that `alien native villages were laid out in plots' prompting greater Swahili and Indian movement to Kakamega. The Swahili, for instance had problems of location in Mumias with the LNC claiming their location in the town as being on `native' land (KNA, DC/NN 3/4/1). By 1928, the population of Mumias township was broken down as follows.

Population of Mumias Township

	Men	*Women*	*Children*	*Total*
European Officials	—			
Goan and Indian				
Indian traders	18	10	17	45
Somali, Swahili, Nubians	94	94	84	265

Source: **KNA, DC/NN 3/4/1 and KNA, DC/NN 3/4/2.**

The only old feature that remained on the landscape of Mumias town was the old labour lines. In 1928 a notice was issued terminating the permission given for labour recruiting purposes in Mumias. Recruiters were expected to terminate by 31st November 1928. But by 1929, the recruiters were still in Mumias although the centres significance had reduced to the extent that it was described as `a decaying relic of early British penetration' (KNA,

DC/NN 3/4/1). The Features that defined it as a relic are not made apparent from available sources, but this could be associated with the old and abandoned buildings which perhaps were not adequately catered for and maintained. This factor becomes more appreciated when it is noted that the normal European methods of sanitation and emphasis on preventive health was now directed more to Kakamega than Mumias. In 1931, Mumias was reduced to the role of a trading centre (Memon, 1976:148).

It would appear that on the stroke of about four years since 1927, Mumias had reduced in urban hierarchy, being displaced first by Kakamega and later by towns like Luanda, Bungoma, Webuye and Yala. The rise of these towns was a product of a combination of factors in the region. For instance, in 1928, the Nakuru-Kampala railway was laid traversing the Northern parts of North Nyanza district. This refocused transport networks towards new urban centres like Broderick Falls (later Webuye) and Kabuchai (Bungoma). Bungoma, in particular, gained by this extension of the railway owing to the amount of settler presence in adjoining areas of Trans-Nzoia and Kitale. The railway branch to Kitale reached there in 1926. There was an evident rise in cultivated land in Trans Nzoia from 36,100 acres in 1924 to 78,600 acres in 1927 and 107,200 acres in 1930 (O'Conner, 1966:149). These factors of agriculture and transport seemed to have combined to reinforce the place of Bungoma town in the urban hierarchy of North Nyanza District. In these years, many local Indian traders applied to relocate in this new trading centre at Bungoma hoping to benefit from its new facilities (Memon, 1976:148).

The line from Kisumu was extended to Butere in 1930. This was aimed at tapping the agricultural produce on the Southern side of the district. Initially, this railway was meant to go up to Mumias but it was latter decided to shift the focus to Butere. Given the strength of the Kisumu-Yala transport corridor, the Butere extension only helped emphasize the Kisumu-Yala corridor. As a result, the place of Luanda town in the urban hierarchy of the province was enhanced. Luanda was established as a trading centre in 1924. It grew form relative insignificance to a blossoming Indian town by 1930 (Memon, 1976: 149).

The transport corridors consequently left Mumias and Kakamega out of the network. But Kakamega was soon to attract government attention in 1930 when gold was discovered at Rostermann (Aseka, 1989:320). This was the period of the great depression and Kakamega, compared to Mumias, survived the problems generated by the depression due to gold mining activities.

Hitherto the Kakamega station had began attracting Indians and Arab-Swahili from Mumias. The shops in the town were owned mainly by Indians and Goans who transformed their pre-occupations from government workers to private businessmen. The station therefore acquired a new morphology. In 1928, it was reported that,

> *the progress made in the conversion of the station composed of wattle and daub bandas more or less obscured by long grass and bush, into a well-kept township of modern houses, has been considerable (KNA, DC/NN 3/4/2).*

By the end of the year, the building programme in Kakamega was complete with 5 houses, an administration store, and a hospital. `4 other houses were rapidly approaching completion and a water scheme was in course of construction' (Ibid.). Even the labour lines to replace those in Mumias had been laid out and the African Highlands and Produce Company was the first European concern to establish quarters for contracted labour in the township (KNA, DC/NN 3/4/2 and KNA DC/NN1/10).

It is this plus the discovery of gold in 1930 that boosted the significance of Kakamega. Despite the distance from Kakamega to any of the transport corridors highlighted above, the European focus of urban development sent new signals to the township. While in places like Mumias, businesses closed because of the depression, the first European shop in Kakamega township was opened in 1932. In 1933 their numbers had increased to warrant a European Chamber of Commerce. Kakamega enjoyed great importance at the time that when gold mining Prospects diminished in 1936 the impact of this on Kakamega was considerable (Memon, 1976:150). The European population in Kakamega township reduced from 752 in 1935 to 463 in 1936 to 403 in 1937 (KNA, DC/NN 1/19). But the history of Mumias town at the time was already sidestepped in significance to that of Kakamega.

5.4. CHANGING SOCIAL INFRASTRUCTURE IN MUMIAS

The inter-war changes from Mumias to Kakamega had visible impacts on the social

infrastructure in Mumias. In particular, the new regional physical infrastructure acted to reduce the colonial emphasis on developing Mumias. The colonial policy with their focus on Europeans was therefore to benefit Kakamega as compared to Mumias. The status of the latter was made insignificant in relation to both Kakamega and Luanda. Consequently, the context within which urban planning evolved in the years after 1920 did not reflect the initial concern that the administration had evinced towards the town. In particular, the impact of Islam and the growing feuds between Arab Muslims and local ones was instructive.

Despite the foregoing administrative and economic shifts, the focus on social dynamics in the urban development of Mumias involved the ethnic and religious mix and the complex social relations emanating from this. In particular, the religious history of Isalm was very significant. In 1912 Sheriff Omar had been appointed as a registrar of Mohammedan Marriages and divorces (KNA, PC/NZA,3/18/29). Tentatively, he was also accepted as the Kadhi in the district who could attend to problems of an Islam nature. This was however not legally accepted because in 1909, the registrar of Mohamedan marriages at Mombasa had raised concern about an `Arab being granted powers to perform marriages between Coast men and women belonging to up-country tribes' (KNA, PC/NZA 3/7/2/3). He argued that in their proselytizing zeal, the coast men co-habit with local women whom they treat either as slaves or abandon after a short while (Ibid.). This concern came out very clear after the inter-war period when local Wanga Muslims protested the appointment of Sheriff Omar as Muslim Chief Kadhi of Nyanza Province (KNA, PC/NZA,3/18/29).

Hitherto, the running of judicial matters relating to township Muslims of African blood was an unresolved issue in North Kavirondo district. This was because of the imprecise position that the appointment of Sheriff Omar entailed in 1912. The appointment was not explicit on the duties of Sheriff Omar and it had been locally assumed in Mumias that he was the Kadhi. The D.C. of North Kavirondo, basing on the recommendations of the P.C., Coast province, confirmed that there were no Kadhi's outside the Coast province. There was only a registrar of marriages (KNA, PC/NZA 3/18/29).

In 1934, the Township Native Tribunal was set up under Sheriff Omar to `exercise jurisdiction over Mohamedans of African blood in the district of North Kavirondo in cases of marriage and divorce but not of pride-price'. But the growing number of Africans who lived in townships challenged the unofficial arbitration mechanisms under the tribunal. It was therefore felt unsatisfactory to use this mechanism to resolve the Mohamedan problems. The setting up a position of a Kadhi was the recommended solution. The Kadhi would be distinct from the Native Tribunal since the latter had no jurisdiction over Mohamedan affairs.

But in 1938, the place of Sheriff Omar was already being challenged on the basis of his racial ancestry in Mumias. One local Muslim, Athuman Seiff Wangara insisted that as an African of Nyanza province, he had been appointed as leader of African Muslims of the province. He wanted the registrar's book which he had not been given since 1934 when he

was appointed. He hoped to teach Muslims on how to build mosques and schools. Wangara's claim was indeed supported by Chief Murunga and the Wnaga and non- Wnga inhabitants of Mumias. The local people questioned why a foreigner was made Chief Kadhi while local people who had the future of the country at heart were left out (Ibid.).

Out of this confusion, by 1940, the township infrastructure in Mumias lacked viable Muslim structures. The Muslims lacked any school and relied on the Roman Catholic School at Mumias for educating their children. The initial Koranic School held in Bakari Kangu's house in the Mjini the only available structure. This was slowly transformed into a school in the 1940s. Prior to that Muslims concentrated on Koranic education to the exclusion of other literary education. This marked the almost virtual absence of Muslims in higher education and the various ranks of the colonial bureaucracy in Mumias. It was not until after 1940 that Muslims began to lobby for schools and a permanent mosque (KNA, PC/NZA 3/18/29 and DC/KMG 2/8/13) which they got after 1940.

What made matters worse was the relations between Muslims and Catholics in Mumias which had for long been characterised by religious suspicion. The building of the school belonging to the Muslims a half a mile from the Catholic mission in the township illustrated this. When the Muslims were given a plot to build in 1944, they delayed building expressing fear that that may be located near mission school. They sought an alternative site which they did not develop for a long time. This further contributed to the

slow growth of islamic civilisation in Mumias as the Catholics dominated. Even the islamic religion was affected by these squabbles.

5.5. AGRICULTURE IN MUMIAS TO 1940.

Towards 1940, agricultural development of North Kavirondo sealed the lessening significance of Mumias compared to other towns. In 1931, Mumias hosted the first agricultural show in the district. This was a major success for the urban centre. The show indicated the growing agricultural relevance of the township and the reduced trade activity that was not emphasized at the show. Indeed, in the schools, only technical and agricultural education was emphasized (Mwanzi, 1971). Agriculture became the mainstay of the district with its northern part doing better in large scale cereal production. Mumias was therefore surrounded by an agriculturally productive area.

With farming as an essential element of regional economic activity, it because difficult to stimulate merchant economic activities. More Indians went into transport sector, transporting local produce to Kisumu where the Kenya Farmers Union (KFU) depots could be found. They bought local produce and consequently sold to the Kenya Farmers Union or took it direct to buyers in Nairobi.

The role of the Indians settled at Mumias then became valuable as many of them opted to buy vehicles and engage in transport activity. Prominent among them were Kurji Walji and

the Korji and Kaka families and Nuru Mohamed Walji. Kaka for instance settled in Mumias in 1910 after migrating from Tanzania. He stayed briefly at Kakamega and on realizing better trading potential at Mumias, he went there. Kurji Walji impressed upon him to settle in Mumias. These men engaged initially in various businesses including selling hides and skins and later as labour recruiting agents. They also had shops in Mumias , the first one having been put up by Nuru Mohammed Walji and bought in 1960 by Kaka (Kaka, O.I., 3-5-1997)

In the 1940s, Kaka bought a vehicle that carried passengers to Kitale and Kakamega. He went into this business owing to his experience in buying and selling commodities as far off as Uganda. His business interest spawned across the Malaba border to Uganda and back in the whole of the Western Kenyan region. They also had lorries that carried local produce to outside centres. This somewhat changed the functions of Mumias as it began to serve external oriented interests. By 1940, the agricultural base of the region had a disarticulated relationship with the urbanization of Mumias. The centre developed distinctly as an urban centre focused on trade. Also, a mixture of rural and urban traits were encouraged by the agricultural character of the region.

Between 1930 and 1940, there was an intensified move towards cash crop production in Wanga. The colonial government had introduced the planting of maize both as a cash crop and food crop in Wanga. New grade maize was introduced in Mumias to boost grain production. Laws were passed to restrict the growing of the local maize variety in the area.

But the local people inter-cropped maize with other crops like cassava and sweet potatoes. Under the new 1922 directive, it was made illegal to sale uninspected maize. Consequently, production of maize in Wanga expanded by 1925. Over 100 tons of maize was exported from Mumias town (Esese, 1990:263).

Other crops encouraged in Mumias was rice and new variety of green grams. Rice had been introduced as early as 1901 and green grams in 1929. The two were not liked in Mumias. Rice was mainly grown in the vicinity of the township by Arab-Swahili. The Wanga disliked it because of the labour implications for a particular household. The new variety of green grams on the other hand did not offer a better choice to the old local variety. What perhaps attracted more attention was sim sim which was good for export as well as for food. It fetched a lot of money for the local people and between 1923 and 1930, `the entire District exported an average of 250 tons' (Esese, 1990:266). Attempts to curtail the growth of the crop did not succeed (Fearn, 1961).

Both cotton and groundnuts were also produced. The former provided Indians with business as ginneries were only available in Kisumu. However, as an a non-edible crop, cotton did not attract people in North Kavirondo. The crop could also not be exchange for any other crop. Thus by 1925, the ginnery at Malakisi was sold to an Indian firm (Fearn, 1961:64, Aseka, 1989:289) owing to its unprofitability.

The relation between this development in agriculture and Mumias urban centre was not

only through the market. The Wanga who were left to transact business in Mumias were themselves farmers. Their rural outlook gave Mumias a social rural dynamic whish defined the nature of the centre. Mumias as an urban centre was therefore tied to the agricultural development of the area by the fact of entrepreneurs being farmers. This defined the agricultural character of the centre (Kongstad and Monsted, 1980:12).

Mumias was therefore basically an extractive centre from where local produce was sold out of the region. The LNC oversaw these developments in the inter war period. The LNC gained by receiving the market fee but was later charged with maintaining the market. In other places the markets were owned by the chiefs and the colonial administration hoped to impress upon them to maintain them. The particular case of Mumias market had been an issue in the 1920s.

5.6 CONCLUSION

In this chapter, the changing influence of merchant capital to agricultural capital to about 1940 has been highlighted. The analysis of the shifts from Mumias to Kakamega was is posed within the context of settler thrusts in Kenya and the impetus of various forms of merchant-capital. These forces gave Mumias a new outlook evidenced in the nature of goods sold and the trade relations initiated. The emerging panoply of trade relations privileged Indians and settler interests.

Despite the changes, by the 1940s Mumias retained elements of its traditional socio-political functions. The traditional political dispensation placed the local market under the Nabongo. Political problems were also left to the local 'native' authority mainly controlled by the chiefs. Many old chiefs had been swept away by the new class of African elites and later by the nationalist initiatives which articulated local interests and needs more forcefully and with renewed energy. What energised these movements was the fact that nationalist struggles outside the domain of the customary law overlooked the gerontocratic prerogatives of the Nabongo kinship sytem. The nationalist struggles expressed new needs and aspirations. The customary domain as defined by Mahmood Mamdani (1996) was couched in the philosophy of indirect rule. This philosophy was punitive and repressive. The nationalist movement as evidenced in Western Kenya and especially in Mumias remained nascent because its urban subjects were cushioned from extreme colonial pressures of land alienation, racial segregation characteristic of larger towns dotted across the colony. The local gerontocratic influences in Mumias had a constraining effect on the militancy of the youth while a subsistent peasant agriculture made the people resilient and resistant to unwarranted changes. The prevalence of local values in the urban nature of Mumias was an expression of resilience.

CHAPTER SIX

6.0 CONCLUSION

In this study, we set out to examine the physical evolution and social history of Mumias into an urban centre. From the outset, it was emphasized that urbanisation is both a physical as well as social process. As a social process, in a multi-faceted way, a peoples way of life in cultural terms is exhibited. The study has demonstrated the transformation of Mumias into an urban centre which reached its climax in the 1920's when various regional factors and policy issues designed by the colonial government impinged upon its cultural function and reduced its significance to an administrative and economic determinacy.

In problematising the analysis, an eclectic approach was preferred in which the Weberian perspective to urban growth was used together with the underdevelopment perspective of uneven development and unequal exchange. For the latter theory, extensive use was made of the operations of merchant-capital whose profound transformative agenda is best explained within the underdevelopment problematic. It is in this vein that we argue that merchant-capital, is consistently parasitic capital that thrives on buying cheap and selling dear. It organizes the sphere of exchange and circulation and reaps profits based on the distance between the buying point and selling point. It uses what is extant, and the political appropriation of Nabongoship in its exploitative pillage and extortionism can be understood in this sense. It is parasitic in the sense that it does not add new resources in the process of circulation, rather it circulates what is already produced and consequently, it lacks any impact in terms of production and economic growth.

The analytical procedure in this study has been an integration of inductivist and deductivist approaches to historical evidence. Both theory and praxis are deemed necessary in the constitution of social knowledge. The underdevelopment dialectic is located within a dialectical and materialist perception of history in which praxis is a criterion of theory. Thus, empirical data ought to be interrogated theoretically and where necessary, one theory may be used to interrogate another theory. This exercise is carried out in chapter two in which the Weberian approach is portrayed as inadequate in understanding the history of Mumias prior to any external non-African intrusion. Caution must however be exercised to this end because Weber constructed his theory within the Enlightenment project of modernity as an ideal-type allowing for theory to respond to particular empirical data (Saunders, 1982).

Max Weber in legitimation of Western modernity accorded primacy to political and economic organisation of the city noting that these allow for aggregation of people and activities in a particular centre. He failed to delve into the diverse elements that led to this human aggregation. The case of Mumias however, demonstrates that the politico-administrative functions of the institution of Nabongo had a greater bearing on the initial Wanga form of urbanization beyond Weber's definitive walls of urban modernity. The Wanga capital was locally called Itookho which literally meant `where the ruler stays'. Itookho was, therefore, the embedded notion in the origin of Mumias and it entailed mainly political and administrative functions that spawned both political, religious and economic realms.

Beyond the Western modern values and bureaucratic assumptions of Weber, the religious aspects defined the economic redistributive role of the institution of Nabongo. This cultural institution circumscribed politico-religious feudal relations in which the

Nabongo enjoyed the custody of land. In turn, Itookho became a focal point of the Wanga society with its centrality and influence enjoying mythological legitimation over the years. Its gerontocratic dispensation addressed issues of practical needs of the Wanga which required Nabongo's personal attention. Nabongo's ability to prudently and wisely respond to these needs and aspirations were essential in winning the consent of his subjects and render his influence and authority and that of Itookho acceptable across the various clan confederacies in Wanga.

Authority for Nabongo and respect for Itookho was established ideologically in a gerontocratic model of governance which emphasized agnastic rights to land and relations of reciprocity at the helm of which was Nabongoship. The performance of duty by the Nabongo and his council of elders in dispensing justice, arbitrating disputes prudently and satisfying the economic needs of the diverse clans earned Itookho its legitimacy. Consequently, the authority of Nabongo came to bear on the people as diverse clan identities were gradually subsumed under the core ones. Power in Wanga became a many sided social relation entailing more of local loyal submission and acquiesce than forced submission (Zeleza, 1996:226). The economic realm was imbued with religious overtones as the Nabongo's custodianship of land and initial exchange activity was emphasized.

The political norms, religious values and economic relations emanating from Mumias undermine the theoretical rigidity of the Weberian model. Weber's skepticism that, at best, the theoretical conceptualisation of urban development should be structured as an ideal type points to a strait-jacketed Western ideal type. However, there is need for theory and empirical data to interlock and interrogate each other to see which aspects of theory remain tenable. The eclecticism of our study has allowed us to pose the

underdevelopment perspective with the emphasis on the role of merchant-capital which theories of modernity and postmodernity hardly grapple with. The postmoderns today are neo-Weberin and neo-Parsonian. Talcott Parson was a Weberian who following Weber's sociological approach, inspired the modernisation theory. The modernization theory was to be discredited by the underdevelopment theorists before its ideological quests were to be resuscitated by the neo-liberal project of postmodernity. Colonial urban development borrowed extensively from the Enlightenment project of modernity which saw colonialism's essence as that of a civilising mission. Colonialism was seen as an engine of progress. Urbanisation became an index of measuring change and progress. Africans who became urbanite were referred to as `detribalised natives' illustrating the fundamental transformation from the stagnationist and drudgery of `native' village life to the dynamic progress of urban life.

Employing the underdevelopment perspective in this study has enabled us to question the central thesis of modernisation theory and its anthropological posture that dichotomised local values and customs against the external ones. Chapter three of our study emphasizes that Africa was already participating in the world economy prior to the era of colonialism (Uzoigwe, 1974). The traits of merchant-capital are traceable back to the Arab-Swahili era and their trading interests that sent them to the interior in search of ivory, slaves and related items. By the end of 1850s, the earliest Arab-Swahili trading caravans were in Western Kenya attempting to set up contacts with local agents. They opened trade routes that became central to European penetration into the interior.

Coincidentally, these traders found Nabongo Shiundu and later Mumia in dire need of allies who could assist them repulse their neighbouring enemies. These enemies including the Luo and Teso had proved effective challengers of the Maasai who were the

sustained attacks to the extent of threatening to overrun Itookho and delegitimise the authority of the Nabongo. In view of this, the presence of the Arab-Swahili was a boon for Nabongo who quickly allied with them on noticing their military advantage. The Wanga supplied the Arab-Swahili with shelter, food and other valuables as the Arab-Swahili set up trade networks and assisted the Wanga defend their territory. Islamic values permeated the Wanga society as closer contacts were forged through marriages and other forms of friendship. This developed Itookho into a cosmopolitan centre harbouring different races as historical processes of intermarriage and miscegenation took root. Other religious and linguistic values developed to quickly give Mumias a new social outlook and physical stature. The Arab-Swahili influence was noted in the change of name from Itookho to Kwa-Shiundu.

Kwa-Shiundu embraced the new values, norms and aspirations that the contact between the Wanga and Arab-Swahili encapsulated. The most profound one was in terms of trade and the need for security. The latter variable was almost a prerequisite for proper trade relations. It implied that trade rode on the backs of new military tactics that the Wanga learned from the Arab-Swahili. The Arab-Swahili idea of trade implied force and plunder. As the Wanga enemies were fought and defeated, their territories were plundered and looted and war booty became part of the acquisition of Arab-Swahili trade goods though part of it was shared with the Nabongo. During this era, the Arab-Swahili idea of trade was operationalised through force giving Kwa-Shiundu this negative image. The merchant-capitalist philosophy of buying cheap and selling dear was replaced with acquiring free and selling dear.

By this time, the Wanga royal family acquired significant regional importance because of their allies. Kwa-Shiundu was not only a commercial centre but also a politico-

administrative and religious centre blending local values and Muslim aspects. The Arab-Swahili presence opened Kwa-Shiundu as an important centre where external values were introduced in the region. Because of their trade routes, Kwa-Shiundu became a notable stopping centre from where early Europeans arrived and settled. We have emphasized the role of Mumia towards the end of chapter three. Mumia was an important ally of the developing network of merchant-capital in Western Kenya. In this network, Mumia allied with the British and became an important colonial functionary.

By 1894, the significance of Kwa-Shiundu as a trading centre was established. The name Elureko illustrated this. This place stimulated local initiative to trade as the external Arab-Swahili and early European presence demanded food. Their needs in terms of shelter led to a new urban morphology. In 1894, the European presence in Elureko was stamped with the establishment of colonial domination. Slowly, the place of Arab-Swahili was sidestepped as the Europeans came with better weapons and legislation which the Arab-Swahili could not satisfy. Mumia, responding to his local interests welcomed them hoping to use them as he had done with the Maasai and Arab-Swahili. Little did he know nor understand the imperialist agenda of the British of which he was a mere functionary.

In chapter four we have focused on the Indian and European capital at Elureko. The change from Elureko to Mumias was the influence of these new arrivals. The former represented Indian merchant-capital while the latter, which we discussed in chapter five represented the European agricultural capital. We noted that the European presence in Mumias between 1894 to 1920 was mainly in the political and religious arena. The Europeans developed Mumias into the colonial administrative centre and established a colonial bureaucracy at the Mumias boma from where colonial legislation and directives

were issued and pursued. The colonial `native' authority system allowed for the spread of Wanga sub-imperialism in Buluyia to serve British interests. Mumia's early identification with the British worked for the entrenchment of the colonial state in Buluyia on a patron-client basis.

Between 1894 to 1912, Mumias grew into an urban trading centre and a township by 1938. In the early years of colonial rule, it was an important regional centre as a District headquarters, coming only second to Kisumu. Kisumu surpassed it in importance because of the railway. As a District headquarters, Mumias housed the European staff and later the Catholic Church Mission and their missionary apparatus. Its urban morphology was therefore transformed in line with the new values of the state and its agents serving capitalist interests. British capitalist norms and practices diffused into the region from here. The authority of the centre in the region was further stamped in 1909 when Nabongo Mumia was appointed a paramount chief. A prebendal relationship between the Wanga royal family and the colonial state was consummated then at Mumias. The former represented what Mamdani calls the customary domain while the latter represented the civil domain (Mamdani, 1997). In this manner the racial dichotomy of British rule began to promote what Mamdani refers to as bifurcated state structures.

While the political sphere retained these forms of perbendalist or patrimonialist expression in Mumias, the commercial relations in these years saw the development of Indian capital in competition with indigenous Wanga commercial initiatives. Indian shops, transport companies and factories together with Nubian shoe shine and bicycle repairs emerged after the railway reached Kisumu. The Indians sold imported items and helped subvert the local tastes and aspirations. They used the colonial state to obtain unfair trade advantages over Africans. An emergent but unprivileged African trading

community competed against the Indians for a time. However, owing to obstacles imposed by the colonial state, they were soon undercut by growing patron-client networks in trade. Discrimination in policy application made these cadres of African traders to lack loan facilities, and to be given third rate treatment in all spheres. Their entrepreneurial skills were also undermined by the kinship ties and encumbrances which militated against capital accumulation. Under these circumstances, the ability to accumulate, compete and develop a local network of merchant-capitalist was inhibited. This explains the area's inhibited capitalism with its features of corresponding backward politics of claiming for the reinstatemnet of Nabongo paramountcy when this was being faced out in the late 1930s.

The royal family was immersed in such stunted capitalism in Buluyia. Owing to its privileged prebendal relations with the colonial state, it established no investments for its accumulated capital despite its network of merchant-capital operative in indigenous markets. That way it failed to transform the nature of Mumias.

The royal family merely adopted poor trade strategies engaging more in dissipating conspicuous consumption habits and unprofitable purchases. Mumia, for instance, rejected Western education, failed to send members of his family to school and purchased a bicycle and a car. His brother, Mulama also bought a vehicle. Thus when the prebendal ties were severed in the 1930s the family crumbled and its commercial legacy in Mumias was confined to the local market whose taxation turnover was nigligible compared to other spheres of income generation in post-depressionary colonial Kenya. By 1920, following the health and sanitation problems, Mumias was dwindling and reverting back to its rural subsistence character.

The Indian dominance of trade met its competition in settler agricultural needs. The struggle for African labour became real between Indian trade and settler agriculture. The growth of Mumias in colonial era was sandwitched between the Indian and Wanga trade impetus and the agricultural proclivity of the Wanga. This had a setback to the town in the sense that in 1913, Mumias had been declared unfit for human habitation. This discomfiture with Mumias culminated in the transfer of the district headquarters to Kakamega in 1920. The process of transfer was completed in 1928. By 1931, Mumias was a dying relic, and it was reduced to a mere trading centre. In chapter five we have demonstrated how the regional transport network and the growing agricultural base of the post first World War economy pushed emphasis away from Mumias to other centres like Kakamega, Luanda, Bungoma, Webuye and to a lesser extent Malakisi.

In conclusion, we must that Mumias was a significant politico-administrative centre prior to any external non-African interference. Its nature did not conform to the standardized definition of urban centres set out by among others Gordon Childe as we have seen.In this study, we have given an analysis of how this urban centre evolved historically. The incoming Arab-Swahili influence did accelerate the growth of Mumias but their overall influence was not great enough to alter Mumias significantly from its traditional character. In this sense, our first two research premises stating that the Mumias nurtured a unique urban nature prior to any non-African intrusion and that even after the arrival of the Arab-Swahili, their activities did not radically alter the nature and functions of the centre have been vindicated. The last research premise stating that the presence of the Indian and European interests in Mumias led to the development of an urben centre whose nature contrasted with the rual environment has been disapproved in the light of the evidence that by 1940 Mumias was still a localised metropole meeting the needs and aspirations of the local population. In subsequent years, there was to be considerable

investment in agricultural and induxtrial capital in Mumias especially in the post-colonial era. Further research needs to be undertaken to examine and extrapolate on the impact of agricultural and industrial capital on Mumias in the subsequent years.

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b) ORAL INFORMATION

See Appendix I

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APPENDIX I

ORAL INFORMANTS

1. Abdalla Masimba Odongo, 59 years, interviewed on 27th may, 1997 at Ekoro Village, Mumias Division, Kakamega District.

2. Abdul Jabal Kaka, 58 years, interviewed on 3rd May, 1997, in Mumias town, Kakamega district.

3. Ali Shisia Chitechi, 86 years, interviewed on 21st July 1994, at Makunga Village, Mumia Division, Kakamega District.

4. Ali Wamukoya Murunga, 87 years, interviewed on 20th July, 1994 at Panyako Village, Mumias Division, Kakamega District.

5. Atiba Wanga, 64 years, interviewed on 28th May, 1997 at Ebumanyi Village, Mumias Division, Kakamega District.

6. Bakari Kangu, 89 years, interviewed on 23rd July 1995 in Mumias town, Kakamega District.

7. Bonventure Livandi, 72 years, interviewed on 2nd September, 1993 at Emakhwale Village, Mumias Division, Kakamega District.

8. Cyprian Inzofu, 48 years, interviewed on 11th September, 1993 at Lubinu Village, Mumias Division, Kakamega District.

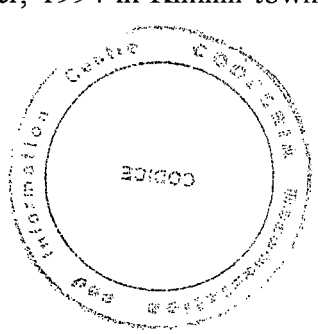
9. David Livingstone Lutomia, 80 years, interviewed on 8th September, 1996 at Elureko Village, Mumias Division, Kakamega District.

10. Ham Wanzetse, 72 years, interviewed on 22nd, July 1994, and 24th January 1997 at Lubinu Village, Mumias Division, Kakamega District.

11. Hamisi Makapia Wanga, 76 years, interviewed on 21st January 1997 at Ebumanyi village, Mumias Division, Kakamega District.

12. Ibrahim Okwaro, 90 years, interviewed on 24th may 1997 at Ebumanyi Village, Mumias Division, Kakamega District.

13. Ibrahim Watako Okumu, 71 years, interviewed on 3rd September, 1994 in Kimilili town, Bungoma District.



14. Iddi Pinzi, 60 years, interviewed on 26th May, 1997 at Khinga Village, Mumias Division, Kakamega District.

15. Isaac Were Osundwa, 67 years, interviewed on 23rd January 1997, at Lubinu Village, Mumias Division, Kakamega District.

16. Marciano Munyendo, 56 years, interviewed on 23rd January 1997 at Ebumini Village, Mumias Division, Kakamega District.

17. Matayo Shiundu Omukenya, 86 years, interviewed on 1st September, 1995 at Elureko Village, Mumias Division, Kakamega District.

18. Mohamed Wambare Ali, 92 years, interviewed on 17th April, 1995 in Kimilili town, Bungoma District.

19. Musa Ateya Nambuku, 86 years, interviewed on 25th July 1994 at Lubinu Village, Mumias Division, Kakamega District.

20. Omari Akina, 74 years, interviewed on 18th April, 1995 in Kimilili town, Bungoma District.

21. Peter Shiachi, 60 years, interviewed on 22nd January 1997, in Mumias town, Kakamega District.

22. Rajab Ngashira, 76 years, interviewed on 22nd January 1997 at Ebumanyi Village, Mumias Division, Kakamega District.

23. Rajab Matendechere, 68 years, interviewed on 18th June, 1997, at Ekere Village, Mumias Division, Kakamega District.

24. Ramadhani Akida Athman Wangara, 80 years, interviewed on 26th July, 1994 at Elukoye Village, Mumias Division, Kakamega District.

25. Selina Nyona, 65 years, interviewed on 22nd January 1997 at Lubinu Village, Mumias Division, Kakamega District.

26. William Wambani, 78 years, interviewed on 27th, 28th, 29th, July, 1992 at Emulambo Village, Mumias Division, Kakamega District.

27. Wilson Asman Okusimba, 85 years, interviewed on 27th, July, 1995, at Eluche Village, Mumias Division, Kakamega District.

APPENDIX II

SAMPLE QUESTIONNAIRE

I. PERSONAL INFORMATION

NAME:

SEX:

AGE:

CLAN:

PLACE OF BIRTH:

RESIDENCE:

II. QUESTIONS FOR THE INFORMANT

1. Where did the Wanga originate?
   .....
   .....
2. Why did they migrate into present day Wanga?
   .....
   .....
3. Who were their predecessors in this place?
   .....
   .....
4. How did they inter-relate with their hosts?
   .....
   .....
5. How did the institution of the Nabongo originate?
   .....
   .....
6. Mention some of the political factors which led to the growth of the institution of Nabongo
   .....
   .....
7. Did the neighbouring communities contribute to the growth of Nabongoship?
   .....
   .....
8. When did the Wanga begin to practice the idea of a political capital? Did the capital have

religious or traditional symbols?

.....

.....

9. Did the capital serve all the Wanga given that there are different clans in the community? What was its traditional importance?

.....

.....

10. Why were foreigners, non-Wanga immigrants and traders attracted into Wangaland? What was the influence of these groups in capital of Wanga and the peasant Countryside?

.....

.....

11. Identify some of these immigrants and briefly mention their contacts in Wanga.

.....

.....

12. Give a brief account of their activities in Wangaland?

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.....

13. Mention some of the key traders who came to Wangaland.

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14. Give a description of the functioning of the royal court of the Nabongo.

.....

.....

15. Explain the patterns of trade in Mumias from its earliest settlement.

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16. How did the name Mumias come about? Before this name, what were it's other names? Give a brief account of each of these names.

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17. Apart from trade, list other activities which non-Wanga immigrants engaged in.

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18. When did the Europeans arrive in Mumias? Where did they come from and where did they settle?

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19. What noticeable changes did the Europeans bring in Mumias?

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20. Where did Europeans get their food while in Mumias? Which economic activities did Europeans engage in?

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21. Did Europeans engage in trade? If yes, specify the items of trade and where this was carried out.

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22. Where did Europeans in Mumias stay? Where did the people of other races stay?

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.....

23. In trading activities was there any partnership with the Wanga?

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.....

24. Did Europeans engage in other activities other than trade?

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