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FROM COMMODITY TO COLONIAL CURRENCIES: A HISTORY OF MONEY IN THE FORMER SOKOTO PROVINCE OF NIGERIA DURING PRE-COLONIAL AND COLONIAL PERIODS

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ABSTRACT: *Prior to the British conquest of Northern Nigeria in 1903, to which the former Sokoto Province area of Nigeria belonged, the region had an organised economy consisting of an agricultural system that produced not only foodstuffs but also raw materials and supplies for industries and international trade. There were systems of markets, taxation, credit, as well as local and long distance trade. There were also many kinds of currencies used as medium of exchange. The currencies are being referred to differently by various scholars. Some of the names given to them include: 'commodity', 'trade', 'traditional' or 'local' currencies. They include slaves, cloths, cowries, manilla, iron rods, silver, gold, Maria Theresa dollars, etc. Some of them had very limited areas in which they were used as currency while others were used over a vast area. Moreover, some of them such as slaves and cloth were locally sourced and had other uses than serving as currency. Others like cowries and silver dollars were obtained from far places such as Maldives Island in the Indian Ocean and various European and American countries respectively. However, when colonial rule was imposed on Africans, the colonial powers regarded the pre-colonial currencies not only as inefficient but also pernicious and then replaced them with colonial currencies. The colonial currencies were actually more portable, easily convertible and universally acceptable compared to the pre-colonial currencies. Thus, the British considered the pre-colonial currencies of the Nigerian area as 'cumbersome', which would not allow for international trade and incorporation of the country's economy into that of the British capitalist economy. Consequently, the British coins were introduced and gradually they replaced the pre-colonial currencies as the only medium of exchange. This paper, therefore, examines the history of transition from the use of commodity to colonial currencies as media of exchange in the former Sokoto Province of Nigeria during the pre-colonial and colonial periods. Historical research methodology, through the use of primary and secondary sources, were employed to write the paper.*

KEYWORDS: Currency, Commodity currencies, Colonial currencies, Former Sokoto Province.

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INTRODUCTION

The paper discusses an aspect of monetary history, which is one of the themes of African history that suffers serious neglect from scholars. It specifically examines the history of transitions of money from commodity to colonial currencies in the former Sokoto Province of Nigeria during pre-colonial and colonial periods. Contrary to the assumption of Eurocentric writers and commentators on West African economic history in general and Nigeria in particular, that prior to Africans' contact with the Europeans, the people of the region failed to develop a monetary system that could facilitate trade and that exchange relations were essentially conducted by barter; this paper is of the view that the people in the study area have made extensive use of cowries and other forms of pre-colonial currencies such as slaves and cloths, as media of exchange and means of payments both at local and regional levels (Hogendorn, 1999; Abubakar, 2018). Of course it is true that prior to colonial period, exchange relations in some parts of Africa were conducted initially through barter; but later through a series of "transitional currencies" such as cowries and manilas (Kirk-Greene, 1960, p. 136). With the arrival of Europeans and subsequent imposition of the colonial administration on the people of Nigeria, British coins were introduced and gradually became the only medium of exchange. As from 1916 the West African Currency Board (WACB), which was established in 1912, began issuance of currency notes for the entire British West African territories; and since then the various denominations of the notes were used in different parts of Nigeria (the study area inclusive) as medium of exchange until in 1959 when as part of preparation for the country's independence, the notes were replaced with the ones issued by the Central Bank of Nigeria (CBN). It was on 1st October, 1960, that Nigeria regained her independence from its former colonial overlord - Britain, and that marked the end of formal colonial rule in the history of the country.

The Study Area

By former Sokoto Province of Nigeria, this paper refers not simply to Sokoto, Gwandu and Argungu, the emirates that constitute the Sokoto Province at its establishment in 1903, but incorporates the emirates of Yauri and Zuru, which were transferred to Sokoto Province from Kontagora Province in 1924. While Yauri Emirate remained part of Sokoto Province, Zuru Emirate was, again, transferred to Niger Province in 1939. The two provinces (Sokoto and Niger) were later merged together in 1967 to form the then newly created Northwestern state. When in 1976 the Niger Province was detached from the Northwestern state and made Niger State, Zuru Emirate was finally left in the then newly created Sokoto State. The geographical area that this paper is concerned with, therefore, had experienced a series of excisions. It is that area of Nigeria, which was equivalent to Sokoto State of between 1976 and 1991, that is, the present day Sokoto, Kebbi and Zamfara States of Northwestern Nigeria (see maps below). The area falls between latitudes 8^0 to 14^0 north of the equator and longitudes 11 E to 60 E (Northwestern State, 1972). It borders Niger Republic on the north and north-west, Benin Republic on the south, Niger State on the south-west, Kaduna State on the south-east and Katsina State on the east. It further covers an area of 101,007 square kilometers (Swindle, 1982).

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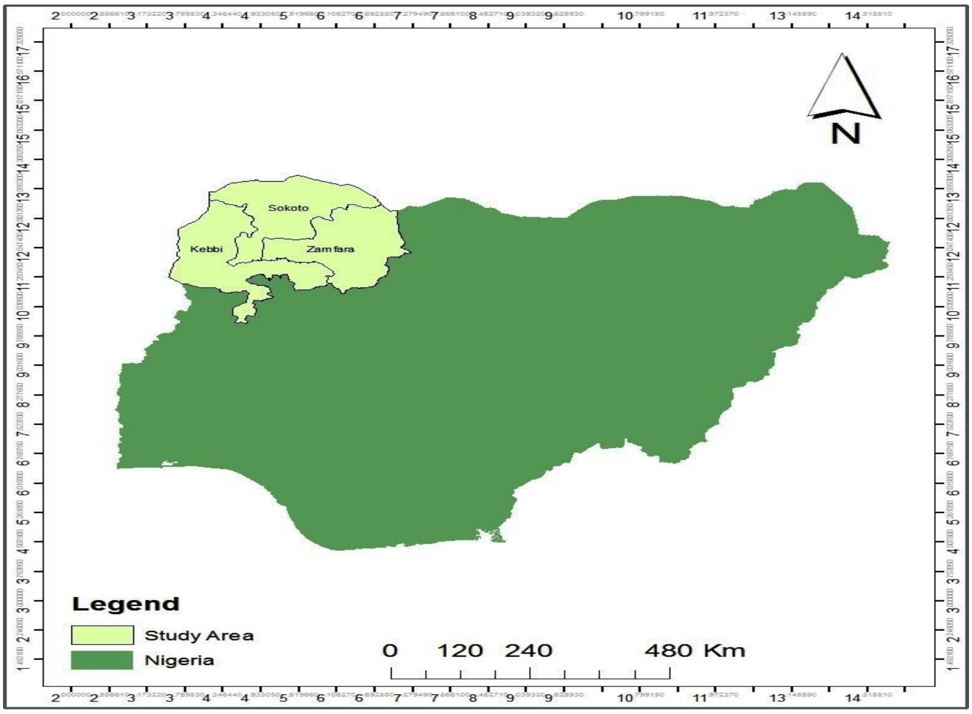

Map of Nigeria showing the Study Area (the Present Sokoto, Kebbi and Zamfara States)

Source: GIS Laboratory, Department of Geography, Usmanu Danfodiyo University, Sokoto,

Redrawn by Budah, G. A.

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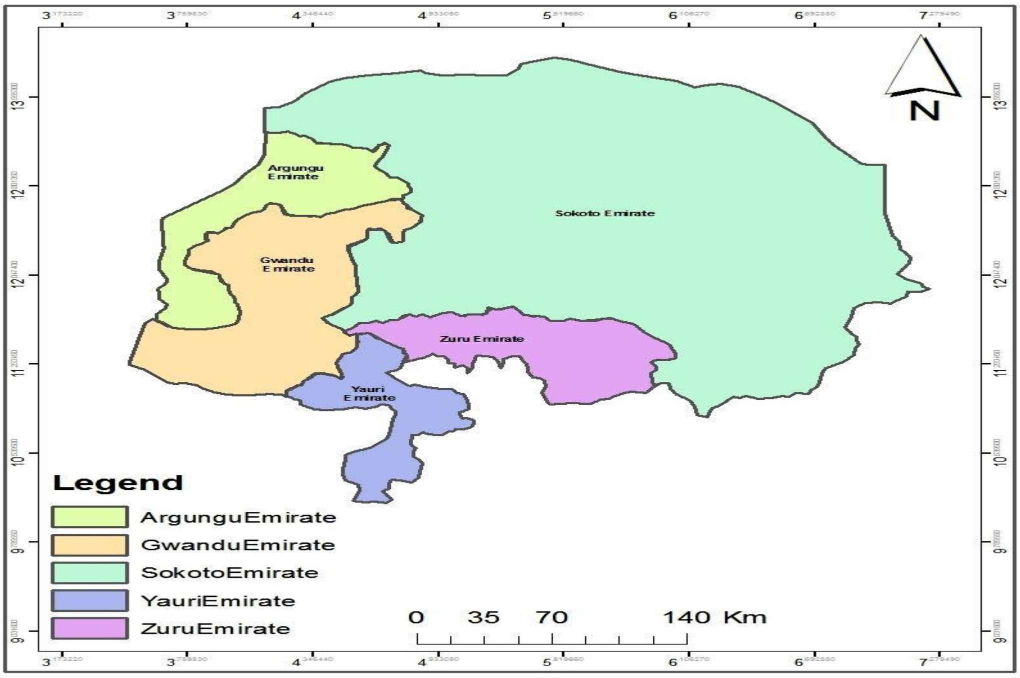

Map of Former Sokoto Province Showing the Emirates of Argungu, Gwandu, Sokoto, Yauri and Zuru

Source: GIS Laboratory, Department of Geography, Usmanu Danfodiyo University, Sokoto, Redrawn by Budah, G. A.

Pre-Colonial Exchange Relations in Some Parts of Nigerian Area

Prior to the British conquest of Northern Nigeria following the defeat of Sokoto forces on 15th March, 1903, Sokoto Caliphate, to which the former Sokoto Province belonged, had an organised economy. There was an agricultural system which produced not only foodstuffs but also raw materials and supplies for industries and international trade. There were systems of markets, taxation, credit, as well as local and long distance trade (Chafe, 1999). There were also many kinds of currencies used in the Nigerian area in pre-colonial times. Some of them had very limited areas in which they were used while others were used over vast areas. For instance, Lovejoy has shown that by 1570, gold was a standard medium of exchange in Hausaland (Lovejoy, 1978). Many were locally sourced and had uses other than money (such as cloth or iron). Others were sourced from far places such as cowry shells obtained from Maldives Island in the Indian Ocean and silver dollars from various European and American countries. Regardless of their shortcomings, however, they all satisfied to a minimal extent the basic functions of money: a medium of exchange, a store of value, a means of payment and a unit of account (Mankiw, 1977; Shea, 2005).

Though it cannot be established with certainty when the first currency was introduced and used in different parts of Nigeria, what is certain is that, the domestic and long distance trades

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and markets in pre-colonial period used various forms of currencies that have been termed as "native", "traditional", "trade", "commodity", "transitional", currencies, etc (Jones, 1977; Ofonogaro, 1979; Aghalino, 2002). During the pre-colonial period, varieties of currencies such as cowries, manilla, copper, iron bars, glass, beads, cloth and gin were used in different parts of the country. For instance, during the heyday of the Sokoto Caliphate in the 19th century, the major currencies used were the cowries, silver, gold, Maria Theresa dollars, slaves, strips of *sawaye* cloth, kola nuts and millet. The expansion of commerce in the Caliphate led to a corresponding wider application of the currencies. However, the propensity for credit facilities among circuit traders made foreign currencies and other media of exchange like the dollar, silver and gold the preserve of the wealthier merchants, and were often used in exchanges involving large sums (Chafe, 1999; Babajo, 2012).

The introduction of the cowry into the Nigerian area was a manifestation of the intensity of economic bilateral relations between Nigeria and the outside world (Aghalino, 2002). According to Chukwu (2010), the cowry came into Nigeria through two agencies. The first was through the Arab merchants, who traversed the Red Sea and the Indian Ocean carrying the cowries as bulk of the articles for trade. The Arab merchants eventually found their way overland from Zanzibar through the Upper Congo River and soon across Lake Chad and Upper Niger where they used cowries down these rivers and their tributaries. This currency, as he further argued, was introduced into Kano at the beginning of the 18th century during the reign of Muhammadu Sharafi (1703-1731) and its commercial relevance continued to be felt in many parts of the Nigerian area up to the nineteenth century.

The second agency through which the cowries penetrated into the Nigerian area was the sea, especially the Atlantic Ocean. The agent-general of the Royal Company of Africa and Islands of the America, Barbot, wrote in the 17th century that cowries were made available to the Dutch and English factories in India. From India, they were sent to Europe, more especially through the agency of the Dutch who, in turn, supplied them to the coasts of Guinea (West Africa). In each case, India was mentioned as a centre from where the distribution of cowries to Nigeria in particular and other parts of the world in general, took place (Chukwu, 2010).

Other areas where cowries featured prominently as a currency in the Nigerian area during the pre-colonial period were Yorubaland, Benin, Nupeland and some parts of the Eastern Region. By extension, the cowry currency must have circulated wider than other local currencies of its period. In areas such as Bida, Lokoja, Ilorin, and Igalaland for instance, the cowry facilitated commercial transactions in the closing years of the 19th century and the opening years of the 20th century (Abdulkadir, 2014). By 1902, its exchange rate was said to be 4,000 for the British shilling at Ilorin; 2,500 at Lokoja; 3,000 at Bida; 1,500 in Igboland and 1,200 at Sokoto (Chukwu, 2010).

Commenting on the advantages of cowries, Hopkins has this to say:

> The success and longevity of the cowries as a form of currency is readily explicable. Its size and shape made it easy to handle, convenient to count and impossible to counterfeit while its durability meant that it could be stored safely for years (Hopkins, 1966, p. 472).

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It is, however, important to note that the pre-colonial currencies generally had some notable deficiencies as means of exchange. The physical character of some of them made them very inconvenient to handle. For instance, Clapperton (1996) had to purchase an additional camel to move his 212,000 cowries, which, according to him, was just about 500 pounds, from Kano to Sokoto. Similarly, clothes as a medium of exchange was very unmanageable as they had limited areas of operation, hence they could not be converted into international currencies. Their inadequacies became very serious by the 19th century so much so that they began to decline rapidly, not only because of their inherent weaknesses but also because of other developments. It was then cheaper, because of technical advances and availability of new sources of supply, to produce and deliver European currencies. At the same time European currencies, particularly the British and French currencies, were increasingly coming into use. The result was a serious depreciation of the pre-colonial currencies' value, and inevitably, confidence in them was lost. This greatly accelerated the decline of not only cowries in former Sokoto Province, but the entire pre-colonial African currencies (Ake, 1981).

Cowries as a Medium of Exchange in the former Sokoto Province Area

Of all the types of currencies used during pre-colonial times in the Nigerian area, cowries had the greatest acceptability and widest spread in the former Sokoto Province. Some of the European travelers, who visited some parts of the study area during the pre-colonial period, have attested to the use of cowries as medium of exchange. Notables among them were Captain Hugh Clapperton and Henrith Barth. For instance, while on a journey from Bussa to Kano, Clapperton reported on a market in Nupeland which was largely attended by the people of Cubbi (Kebbi), Youri (Yauri), Soccatoo (Sokoto) and Zanfara (Zamfara); where they were sure of getting a ready sale of their goods for cowries (Clapperton, 1996). In another instance, he made mention of a vicinity called 'Rajawada' in Yauri domain where the head man of that town collected for his superior Chief of Yauri, 500 cowries for every loaded bullock and 300 cowries for every loaded ass (Clapperton, 1996). He also narrated, while on a journey from Kano to Sokoto, an incident of his crossing a river which runs close to the foot of a hill on which Sokoto stands, where he met a crowd of people fishing on banks of the river. The fish they caught were small white ones as he described them, which they carried to market fried in butter and sold at two cowries a piece (Clapperton, 1996: 147). Finally, while residing in Sokoto, Clapperton reported selling of slaves to the merchants of Kano, Kashna (Katsina) and Tripoli (Libya) as follows: a young male slave from thirteen to twenty years of age, was sold from 10,000 to 20,000 cowries; a female slave if beautiful, from 40,000 to 50,000 cowries; the common price was about 30,000 cowries for a virgin about fourteen or fifteen years. He also gave the price of a camel he bought in Kano but which he sold in Sokoto at 60,000 cowries, the price of a bullock at 12,000 cowries and the pay of men who accompanied his servant Richard Lander, from Kano at 4,000 cowries each (Clapperton, 1996).

Barth, who travelled more widely in the study area that later came to be known as Sokoto Province, also shared his experience of the usage of cowries as a medium of exchange. Describing Badarawa market and exchange relations therein, in the present day Shinkafi local government area of Zamfara State, he stated that:

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> In the midst of this dense body of trees, there was a very considerable market attended by 10,000 people and well supplied with cotton, which seemed to be staple commodity, while Indian millet (sorghum) also was in abundance. A great number of cattle were slaughtered in the market, and the meat retail in small quantities. There was also a good supply of fresh butter (which is rarely seen in Negroland), formed in large lumps, cleanly prepared, and swimming in water: They were sold for 500 kurdi each. Neither was there any scarcity of onions, a vegetable which is extensively cultivated in the province of Zanfara, the smaller ones being sold for one uri, the larger ones for two kurdi each (Barth, 1965, p. 100).

In the above report by Barth the words 'uri' (*wuri*), which is a Hausa term for cowry and 'kurdi' were used by the explorer to refer to cowry and cowries respectively, and according to Hiskett, *kudi*/*kurdi* as used by Barth is a plural Hausa word for the *wuri* (Hiskett, 1966: pp. 352-353; Gidan, 2013; Bargery, 1934).

While in Sokoto, Barth also reported an incidence when *Galadima* (Mayor) of Sokoto arrived at his tent and presented the sum of 100,000 'kurdi' from the Sultan of Sokoto in order for him to settle the expenses of his (Barth) household during their absence in the town, for an expedition. Barth added that he had every reason to be grateful with this kind gesture by the Sultan, based on his difficult experience of converting his Spanish dollars into 'kurdi' at Wurno, even though the sum did not exceed forty Spanish dollars (Barth, 1965). This means that every Spanish dollar was changed for 2,500 cowries during the stay of Barth in Sokoto in the second half of the 19th century, because 100,000 divided by 40 is 2,500. He further explained that sheep were transported from Wurno to Sokoto for a very small profit, being bought in Wurno for 1,200 cowries or when on credit for 1,400 cowries and sold in Sokoto for 1,500 cowries (Barth, 1965).

Barth also depicted Sokoto market as "tolerably well attended and well supplied, there being about thirty horses, three hundred of cattle for slaughtering, fifty oxen of burden and a great quantity of leather articles", like leather bags, cushions and leather dress. Large quantity of Sokoto iron, which he described as "of excellent quality" was also displayed in the market for sale. Similarly, dates formed addition to the principal merchandise in the market especially from desert merchants and in order to give a little more variety to his food, Birth himself filled a leather bag with the dates for 2000 cowries (Barth, 1965: 132). Just like in the case of Clapperton who narrated the sale of a camel he bought from Kano in Sokoto in the 1820s, at the rate of 60,000 cowries; Barth also reported similar event of selling his best camel in Sokoto, which he bought from the governor (Emir) of Katsina, at the same amount of 60,000 cowries in the 1850s. He described the incidence as 'misfortune' as it obliged him to purchase another one at a price demanded by his seller, most likely higher than 60,000 cowries, camels being very scarce at that moment in Sokoto (Barth, 1965).

Similarly, in one of his studies Adamu (1990) confirmed the use of cowries as currency by people of this part of the country during the pre-colonial period. According to him, "…Hausaland was known for its elaborate marketing system which was based on the use of cowry shells as currency" (p. 12). Even Hogendorn, who examined the role of slaves as money in the Sokoto Caliphate confessed that cowries had largely served as medium of exchange especially in carrying out low-value transactions, which was the predominant daily market activity in the then Sokoto Caliphate. According to him, "the cowrie currency of the

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Caliphate was admirably suited to the low-value transactions that made up most of the day-to-day market activity of that area" (Hogendorn, 1999, p. 63). The use of cowries in the former Sokoto province as a medium of exchange during the pre-colonial period was therefore widespread among communities of the region.

Conquest of the Study Area by the British and Colonial Monetary Policies

The conquest of the study area and indeed the entire Northern Nigeria and Nigeria at large by the British has already been greatly given the attention it deserved by earlier researchers (Burns, 1929; Perham, 1960; Tukur, 1979). Only brief remarks are therefore needed here. The history of the British conquest of Sokoto Emirate (comprising of the present day Sokoto and Zamfara States), Gwandu and Argungu Emirates at the beginning of the 20th century can be traced to as far back as 1885, the year in which Joseph Thompson secured commercial treaties from the Caliph of Sokoto and Emir of Gwandu on behalf of the National African Company (N.A.C.), later the Royal Niger Company (R.N.C). It was largely on the basis of those treaties and several others allegedly secured from the Caliph of Sokoto and the Emir of Gwandu by agents of the Royal Niger Company during the late 1880s and early 1890s; that Britain came to lay claim to Sokoto, Gwandu and Argungu, against the interest of both France and Germany during the European partition of Africa. Although Kebbi Kingdom did not enter into any treaty with the Royal Niger Company or any agent of the British Government, nonetheless, it was placed within British sphere of influence together with Sokoto and Gwandu under the terms of Anglo-French Agreement of 1890 (Tibenderanna, 1988).

In the case of Yauri Emirate, the imposition of British colonial rule can be traced back to the year 1896 when a detachment of the British Royal Niger Constabulary troops stationed at Jebba, arrived in Yelwa and established a British post. Shortly afterwards, Sir William Wallace (then Mr. William Wallace) of the British Royal Niger Constabulary troops, also arrived on his way to Sokoto and left two officers and a detachment of soldiers at Yelwa (Harris, 1939). This was done, in the words of Adamu, in order "to forestall French colonization of the Yauri side of the River Niger" (Adamu, 1968, p. 307). When the British Government took over the conquest of Northern Nigeria from the Royal Niger Company in 1900, it carried out subsequent annexations of the region and then, eventually declared it as British protectorate. By 1903, the British Government had already taken over the administration of Yauri following the appointment of a political officer, Mr. Fergus Dwyer, in Yelwa to represent the government of the Protectorate of Northern Nigeria (Adamu, 1968).

In Zuruland, the British expansion into the area dated back to the late 19th century and by 1901, Kontagora had already fallen into their hands. According to Bashir (1990: 149) "the fall of Kontagora largely means the fall of towns and villages around, like Zuruland." "With this development", he added, "the province of Kontagora was immediately created." The province was made up of four Divisions; they were Borgu, which was a combination of the 3rd class Emirates of Bussa and Kaiama; Kontagora, consisting of the 1st class Emirate of Kontagora; Yelwa consisting of the 2nd class Emirate of Yauri and Dabai (Zuru) consisting of the confederation chieftainship of Dabai under which had been brought together the Dakarkari clans (such as *Lelna*, Fakkawa, Gelawa, Dukkawa, etc) and Hausa people of Sakaba, Wasagu and Bena (Duff, 1920). The confederate state was later in 1919 divided into five districts namely; Sakaba, Dabai, Danko, Fakai and Wasagu in the then newly created Zuru Emirate (Makuku, 2005). Thus, the British conquest of what we now know as Zuru

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Emirate was consequent upon the conquest of Kontagora, which was initially placed under the rule of their traditional enemy, Abdullahi Abarshi, formerly Sarkin Yauri but at that time, Sarkin Sudan of Kontagora (Bashir).

Notwithstanding the active resistance from Sokoto, by the end of March 1903, the whole Northern Nigeria was brought under effective British occupation either by signing of treaties such as in the case of Gwandu, Argungu, Yauri and Zuru Emirates, or by means of conquest like in the case of Sokoto Emirate. It is clear from the foregoing therefore, that between 1900 and 1903, Lugard embarked on a systematic conquest of the emirates of Northern Nigeria which was concluded with the conquest of Sokoto on March 15, 1903. The capitulation of the Sokoto Caliphate led Lugard to create 13 provinces in 1903. The provinces counted 16 in 1904. They are: Adamawa, Bassa, Bauchi, Benue, Borgu, Bornu, Ilorin, Kabba, Kano, Katagum, Kontagora, Muri, Nasarawa, Nupe, Sokoto and Zaria (Apata, 1990).

Colonial economic policies that dealt with such issues as agriculture, taxation, currency, trade, mining, customs, transportation, forestry and land were introduced in the study area in particular, and in Northern Nigeria and Nigeria in general by the colonial state to incorporate the economy of the area into the British economy (Lugard, 1965). It was under British colonial economic policies in Nigeria that a policy, called monetisation of economy, was carried out by the colonial authorities. The policy was introduced to ban the use of pre-colonial currencies such as cowries and manillas, and in their place various currencies of the colonial regimes were introduced (Lugard, 1965). The new arrangement, according to Ake, did not only smooth things up for large European trading firms but also gave a further impetus to commodity production, which became the only source of the new currency for the majority of the population located outside colonial wage labour relations (Ake, 1981).

The monetization of the economy was carried out in the colonial state through a number of means, one of which was the imposition of colonial taxation. The colonial taxes were mandated to be paid in British currency; this was with a view to compelling the colonial subjects to accept the newly introduced British currency (Lugard, 1965). It was hoped that the introduction of colonial taxation would stimulate export production since most of the people would be forced to produce a surplus for paying taxes (Tibenderanna, 1988). The colonial government introduced portable forms of coins and later paper currencies which replaced the pre-colonial currencies like iron bars, cowries, and manilla. As early as 1886, British silver was introduced and by 1916, paper notes were also issued. The introduction of new currencies was aimed at facilitating commercial transactions as well as forceful participation of colonial subjects in the colonial economy (Speed, 1910; Tukur, 1979).

It is therefore correct to argue that the colonial economic policies, introduced by the British into the whole of colonial Nigeria, were geared toward production of export crops and other raw materials which were needed by their industries. There was no attempt on the part of the colonial administration to improve food production for the betterment of indigenous population. Efforts of the colonial authorities and their agents were thus concentrated on the production of such commodities as cotton, groundnuts, hides and skins: all of which were highly demanded by industries in Britain (Tibenderanna, 1988). It should be noted at this point that the success of the new economic policies imposed by the British on the citizens of its colonies relied largely on usage and acceptance of the British currency, since all the exchange relations and other economic transactions could not have been possible without a sound and widely accepted medium of exchange. That was why from the outset, Lugard,

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while outlining British colonial policy in his second speech at Sokoto on March 21 1903, made it categorically clear that "the coinage of the British will be accepted as legal tender, and rate of exchange for cowries fixed, in consultation with chiefs and they will enforce it" (Tibenderanna, 1988, p. 264). In order to ensure effective compliance of the use of its currency in its colonies, Britain enforced payments of all forms of taxes, colonial labour, court fees and fines by the colonial subjects, as well as export production and import trade, be made in the British currency. It is this aspect of the colonial economy that this paper is concerned with, which would be discussed in detail in the subsequent sections.

Early forms of Colonial Currencies in the Former Sokoto Province

The introduction of European currency generally during the late 19th century and intensification of the use of British currency during the colonial period were seen as one of the most important revolution in the West African economy (Mcphee, 1971). This was largely due to portability of the new currencies, which have the effect of boosting commercial transactions. The demonetization of transitional African currencies by the British and other Europeans served as means of penetration into the economy of the continent, which was eventually transformed from non-cash economy to the cash economy, thereby linking it with their metropolitan economy. As goods and services were paid in British currency during the colonial rule, colonial subjects had to offer their labour in the production of cash crops - commodities that the British needed most, or sell their labour to British firms in order to obtain the currency. When the British currency became widely circulated in its colonies, banks and banking institutions were also introduced (Fieldhouse, 1971).

The first set of British currencies in British West Africa (comprising the Gold Coast, Sierra Leone, The Gambia and Nigeria) was in the denominations of 2s (two shillings), 1s (one shilling) and 6d (sixpence) (Bawa, 2013). In the Nigerian area, the first major issue of currency was made in 1886, when the British colonial agents officially introduced the nickel bronze coins as substitutes for the commodity currencies. This followed the Colonial Ordinance of 1880 which made them legal tender, and which authorised the Bank of England to issue and manage them for the West Africa sub-region. The nickel bronze coins were in the values of 3d (three pence), $1^{1/2}$d (one and half penny), and 1/2d (half-penny) (Chukwu, 2010). The half-penny, according to Chukwu (2010), was conveniently used for small commercial transactions among the low income earners, especially in the rural communities.

By the 1890s, commercial transactions had begun to grow so exponentially in Nigeria that the use of cash became obvious. This development therefore, needed to be sustained by new monetary and banking system. Consequently, the British currency was declared legal tender in Nigeria (See Jhingan, 2001). As noted earlier, following the establishment of colonial rule in West Africa, the British soon put in place an economic and political system for the smooth functioning of its newly acquired territories. The colonial government had, in an attempt to make British coins more prominent, gone on to de-monetize certain coins that were in circulation. The new regulation thus recognized only British gold and silver coins and a few foreign gold coins as legal tender (Chibuike, 2009).

A number of measures had also earlier been taken by the colonial government to control the use of pre-colonial currencies. For instance, in 1902, a government proclamation fixed prices in sterling for manillas and Maria Theresa dollars, and prohibited their further importation (Ekundare, 1973). Additionally, in 1903, the colonial government introduced bronze coins

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and placed embargo on further importation and circulation of cowries, manilla and copper-wire currencies (NAK/476, 1904). By 1904, the introduction of the use of British coins had recorded progress in northern Nigeria and the institution of direct taxation continued to extend it rapidly (NAK/476, 1904). The importation of coins into northern Nigeria from the British Royal Mint for the year 1904 was in contrast with that of the previous years. This information is presented in the table below.

Table 1: Coins Importation into Northern Nigeria from Royal Mint for the Period 1901-1904

Type of currency	1901 £	1902 £	1903 £	1904 £
Gold	3,000	-	1,000	1,000
Silver	90,000	145,000	184,000	198,000
Bronze	350	-	-	300
Total	93,350	145,000	185,000	199,300

Source: NAK/476, "Annual Colonial Reports for Northern Nigeria- 1904", p. 102.

It is clear from Table 1 that the total importation of coin currency into Northern Nigeria from the royal mint for the year 1904 was higher than that of the other three preceding years. It was higher by 7.7% than that of 1903, 37.4% than that of 1902 and 113.5% than that of 1901. This means that by 1904, there had been a relatively remarkable increase in the quantity of currency imported into Northern Nigeria by the British. In his report for the year 1905, Major Burdon, the Resident of Sokoto Province, had also while providing detailed account of a dying industry at Jega in Gwandu Emirate and its trade links with the outside world, acknowledged the use of newly introduced British currency in the town and in other markets in the province particularly export crops producing areas (NAK/SOKPROF/7/81/1905).

Further introduction of the colonial currencies was made in 1908 when 1d (one penny) and 1/10d (one-tenth of a penny), were introduced. The 1d was made of a nickel while the 1/10d was initially made of aluminum but later it was changed to an alloy of nickel. Both the new coinage denominations of 1d and 1/10d were well received in the study area, and then eventually contributed significantly in rapid displacement of cowries from the region (NAK/594/311/117).

At this juncture, it should be noted that many factors have been advanced as reasons behind the introduction of British currency in Nigeria which ranged from political to economic. On the political front, it was argued that the British currency was introduced to provide a stable and portable means of payment of staff and British political agents engaged in the process of colonial conquest and administration of Nigeria. These agents included troops and police officers engaged in the pacification of various sections of the country. Others were the colonial civil servants (Chukwu, 2010). Another political reason was to demonstrate the real change of guards from Nigerians to the British. In addition to political reasons, the British currency was also introduced in Nigeria to meet the challenges posed by an expansion in the economic activities between Nigeria and Britain in the second half of the 19th century and the opening years of the 20th century (Chukwu, 2010).

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Colonial Currencies and Exchange Relations in the Former Sokoto Province, 1912-1945

During the period under review, the main system of exchange relations in the former Sokoto Province between the colonial subjects on one hand, and the British traders in particular and European traders in general on the other hand, was based on the use of currencies introduced by the British to serve as medium of exchange. Thus, up to 1912, the 2s, 1s, 6d, 3d, $1^{1/2}$ d, 1d, 1/2d and 1/10d earlier introduced by the British from 1886 to 1908, were the chief medium of exchange and means of payment in the Sokoto Province. However, with the establishment of West African Currency Board (WACB) in 1912, it began to introduce currency notes. The Board was charged with the responsibility of:

> providing for and controlling the supply of currency to the British West African Colonies and Protectorates, and to ensure that the currency is maintained in satisfactory condition, and generally to watch over the interests of the dependencies in questions so far as currency is concerned (Fuller, 2009, p. 54).

The above mandates of the Currency Board paved way for the Board to produce not only coins for the British West African territories but also notes for the region. One can therefore argue that the introduction of currency notes in Nigeria, in particular and British West Africa in general, owed its origin to the establishment of the WACB. The Board also took over the responsibility of issuing of coins which had hitherto been played by the Bank of British West Africa. In an attempt to carry out its statutory functions, the board had in addition to the earlier currencies issued in the British territories in West Africa, introduced the first currency notes of £1 (one pound), 10s (ten shillings) and 2s (two shillings) in November 1915 (Chukwu, 2010).

In July 1916, the new notes went into circulation and they became popularized among the colonial subjects of the former Sokoto Province in particular and the entire Nigerian area in general (NAK/SNP/10/5/413P/1917). The popularization of these currency notes among the populace was partly affected by legislation and by the European banks operating in the country at the time. The banks included the Bank of British West Africa (later the First Bank of Nigeria), and the Colonial Bank (later Barclays and Union Bank). By 30th June, 1917 there were £79,246 British currency notes in the denominations of £1, 10s, and 2s circulating in the whole Nigeria. The notes were more popular among the Europeans and the educated natives, the illiterate natives however received them with reluctance although the colonial government did its best to remove native prejudices by printed notices and verbal instructions (Chukwu, 2010).

Moreover, following the end of First World War in 1918, the Board further issued another currency note of relatively higher denomination for all the British dependencies in West Africa. The new currency note was in the value of £5 (five pound). It was issued with a view to reducing the effect of the shortage of the British silver currency of the war time in Nigeria. In one of their correspondences with the Secretary Northern Provinces, Kaduna, the colonial authorities in Sokoto Province acknowledged circulation of £5 British currency note in the province (NAK/SOKPROF/3/1/C.1). However, the £5 could not survive the economic slump of the late 1920s and early 1930s. In the end, the effects of the First World War inevitably

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resulted into the Great Depression of the 1930s as neither the United States nor Great Britain, both of which were on the allies' bloc and who ultimately won the war, had enough resources to single-handedly prevent the worldwide depression after the war (NAK/1435).

Thus, as from 1916, the newly introduced currency notes served as medium of exchange and means of payments in the study area as well as in Nigeria and other British West African territories (Abubakar, 2014). For instance, a ferry of a person and his load of not more than five sacks of beans, millet, maize or sorghum to a distance of not more than 50 kilometers on waters of the River Niger in Yauri and Gwandu Emirates, was paid at the rate of $3^{1/2}$ s (three and half shillings), or 4s (four shillings) (Gungun Sarki, 2012; Koko, 2014). So also, a big sized and healthy male horse was sold in most markets in the region at the rate of 30s (thirty shillings), the female one could be obtained at 20s (twenty shillings) (Gidan Kaya, 2013; Gama, 2014). That was how the use of colonial currencies as media of exchange continued to be intensified in the study area using different denominations of the pound, shilling and pence up to 1945 and of course up to the end of the British administration in Nigeria in 1960.

Consequently, as noted above, all exchange relations and payments in the province were carried out in the British currency. The Birnin Yauri District assessment report in Yauri Native Authority, Sokoto Province for the year 1940, for example, indicated that the monetary value of groundnut produced during the year was about £206.6.05 (two hundred and six pounds, six shillings and five pence) (SOKPROF/YAU/NA/7080). Similarly, the price per ton to producers of grains in Sokoto Province by 1943 was given as £9.6.8d (nine pound, six shillings and eight pence) (NAK/38784/s.48/36).

Colonial Currencies in the Study Area, 1946-1960

Consequent upon increase of economic activities, and of course political activities caused by preparations for self rule in colonial African territories both at local and international levels as from the mid 1940s, the demand for new currency notes of relatively higher denominations got an increase. This development resulted in the introduction of 20s (twenty shillings) bank note by the WACB in 1953 not only for Nigeria but also for all the British West African territories, and re-introduction of 10s (ten shillings) and £5 (five pound) bank notes introduced earlier in 1916 and 1919 respectively, but which had to be withdrawn by the Board in 1937 together with 2s, and £1 due to economic slumps created by the Great Depression (Chukwu, 2010). Thus, the 10s bank note was redesigned and re-introduced in 1953. In the former Sokoto Province, the Resident had in a memo titled 'New West African Currency Notes' dated 16th September, 1953, written to inform Native Authorities of Sokoto, Gwandu, Argungu and Yauri about introduction of the aforementioned currency notes (WJHCB/61/ARG/1/15/16). His words were:

> I have to inform you that on 1st October, 1953, new 10s, 20s and £5 will be brought into use in all British West African Territories and will be legal tender from that date. The new notes will circulate on an equal footing with the existing notes but the latter will gradually be withdrawn from circulation...I am sending you herewith the following, to be used in a publicity campaign (a) 4 specimen of 10s notes, (b) 4 specimen of 20s notes, (c) 4 specimen of £5 notes (d) a supply of posters in English, (e) a supply of posters in Hausa and (f) a supply of handbills in Hausa (WJHCB/61/ARG/1/15/16).

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After the new currency notes came into circulation, the WACB in collaboration with the currency office, Lagos, embarked on withdrawal and repatriation of substantial amounts of nickel coins from circulation. It was in view of this that Mr. H.R. Hirst, who was the Currency Officer at the Currency Office Lagos, sent a memo titled 'Repatriation of Nickel' dated 27th October, 1953 to the Regional Treasurer, Kaduna (WJHCB/CB.176/22/CO). It reads:

> As you will be aware from earlier correspondence, it is desired to withdraw and repatriate as many as possible of the nickel pennies and half-pennies. The Banks have accordingly been requested to withdraw from circulation all such coins received by them and to arrange for their onward transmission to Lagos through BBWA branches. The Board would also be prepared to meet any reasonable expenses in connection with recovery of these coins from Native Authorities holding appreciable quantities… (WJHCB/CB.176/22/CO).

Similarly, as a follow up, and in order to ensure swift repatriation of the nickel coins from Sokoto Province, the Currency Officer at the Treasury Office, Lagos, wrote another memo this time directly to the resident. The memo titled 'Repatriation of Nickel Pence and Half-Pence', dated 11th October, 1955 reads:

> In order to speed up the withdrawal of the nickel coins it would be of great assistance if arrangement could be made for the Native Administration Treasuries to retain all nickel penny and half-penny coins which pass into their hands, and for such coins to be exchanged at the nearest Branch of the Bank of British West Africa or Barclays D.C.O who are the Agents Banks of the West African Currency Board… (WJHCB/C.419/1/6/53).

To lessen effects of repatriation of the lower coins, the colonial government embarked on encouraging wider spread of the newly re-introduced 10s which was then the least currency note denomination since the 2s had already been withdrawn from circulation during the Great Depression. It was in view of achieving this goal that the Permanent Secretary, Ministry for Local Government, Northern Region, Kaduna, forwarded a Federal Circular which he described as one that "has the strongest support of the Regional Government', to all Residents of the Northern Provinces (WJHCB/C.419/1/6/53). He added that "the circular is self-explanatory and it is hoped that particular attention will be paid to it by all Native Treasury Staff who can do much to help in this matter, i.e. to use 10s notes whenever possible in place of coin" (WJHCB/C.419/1/6/53). According to the circular,

> ...it is thought appropriate that the Federal Government Departments should assist in this exercise, so far as they can, by increasing the proportion of 10s notes in their requisitions to the Banks when drawing cash for the payment of salaries or wages. This could be done by reducing the amount asked for, under both 20s notes and coins. It is thought that the more 10s notes that can be injected into the circulation, the more likelihood there will be of their passing freely from hand to hand, getting the public used to them, and eventually, to prefer them to coins (WJHCB/C.419/1/6/53).

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All memos sent from the Currency Office Lagos to Regional Treasury Office Kaduna, were meant to be further circulated to all provinces for onward circulation to all Native Authorities in northern Nigeria. Efforts were, thus, made by the colonial authorities to ensure repatriation of nickel coin currencies as well as circulation and acceptance of the newly introduced currency notes particularly the 10s currency note.

Also, as part of the preparation to prepare Nigeria for political independence in 1960, moves were equally made to position the country for economic independence and stability. One of those moves was the establishment of the Central Bank of Nigeria (CBN) – the bank of issue in 1959, and the introduction of new currencies for the country. On the first date of its establishment, 1st July 1959, the apex bank issued the first indigenous Nigerian currency notes in the denominations of £5 (five pound, blue/purple in colour), £1 (one pound, red in colour), 10s (ten shillings, green in colour) and 5s (five shillings, purple in colour). The independent currency coins were in the denominations of 2s (2 shillings), 1s (one shilling, it was made up of 12 pence), 6d (six pence), 3d (three pence), 1d (one penny) and 1/2d (half pence) (Chukwu, 2010).

Distribution of the new currency had earlier been started in June 1959 through the established currency centres of the WACB, banks and the local treasuries throughout the country. By July 1959, a total of £16.250 million notes were in circulation and by December, 1959 £54.450 million new CBN currency as against £21.3 million of the WACB currency, were in circulation. The CBN finally completed the replacement of the WACB currency with its issued currency by the end of December, 1962. On this date, the WACB effectively ended its operation in Nigeria after fifty years (Ndekwu, 1994).

The new notes and coins bore the name “Federation of Nigeria” written on their front for the first time (CBN, 2009). Following the issuance of the new Nigerian currencies, the WACB notes and coins that had hitherto circulated in the country began the process of withdrawal as legal tender from the Nigerian economy. The changeover was, however, completed in December 1962. It is reported that as at the time of completion of the changeover in December 1962, a total of £65 million notes and coins of the WACB was redeemed and its equivalent in sterling paid at par by the WACB to the CBN (Chukwu, 2010).

Some Challenges Associated with Introduction of Colonial Currencies in Nigeria

Initially, many people resisted the new currencies, and according to Chukwu, this was not unconnected with “either primordial social reasons or economic factors, or both” (Chukwu, 2010, p. 91). Lawal stated that the colonial currencies were initially rejected in Northern Nigeria, which was a predominantly Muslim community on ground that they were introduced by the antagonists of Islamic faith (the *kuffār* or unbelievers) (Lawal, 2009). However, in some other parts of the country, especially in the South where the local currencies had, for years, dominated economic relations among the local people, it was felt that the colonial currencies would impede the process of trading, hence its objection by the people (Chukwu, 2010). In the case of former Sokoto Province, oral data collected reveal that the colonial currencies were initially resisted on the ground that people in the region had been for long used to cowries as a medium of exchange and means of payments and that any attempt to instantly change the existing scenario must definitely be faced with extreme resentments (Gidan-Kaya, 2013; Umaru, 2015). Similarly, the British coins were initially resisted in the former Sokoto Province, which was a Muslim dominated area, because the currency was

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introduced by the people who the locals perceived as antagonists of Islam (Gidan, 2013; Umaru, 2015).

The colonialists also faced problems of circulating the new currencies. But through the payment of carriers and labourers on the railway lines, introduction of direct taxation, court fees and fines which were compelled to be paid only in the new currency, the newly introduced colonial currencies were eventually accepted by the colonial subjects. The payment of labourers, for example, promoted the phenomenon of wage labour in all the colonial territories and inevitably also promoted the use and acceptance of the colonial currencies (Basharu, 1988). Other means through which the British currencies received acceptability among the colonial subjects included, promotion of export production and import trade, development of banks, and then by proclamations, ordinances and decrees declaring indigenous currencies not as a legal tender (Afigbo, 1974). Kirk-Green explains that, in addition to aforementioned measures, the British went ahead to arrest and prosecute native people who were alleged to have rejected the currency introduced by the colonial government officials (Kirk-Green, 1966). Thus, through these measures, all the pre-colonial currencies were gradually annihilated in order to pave the way for the development of the modern (colonial and post-colonial) monetary system (Afigbo, 1974).

CONCLUSION

This paper has examined the history of transitions of money from commodity to colonial currencies in the former Sokoto Province of Nigeria during pre-colonial and colonial periods. It is evident from the paper that the former Sokoto province in particular and Nigeria in general have experienced transitions in terms of history of means of exchange relations and monetary system from initially, barter system to the use of what some scholars refer to as ‘trade’, ‘traditional’, ‘native’, ‘local’ or ‘commodity’ currencies. The paper has confirmed that long before the introduction of colonial currencies into the Nigerian area, barter trade and commodity currencies constituted the major medium of exchange and means of payment in which cowries and manila enjoyed widespread predominance. The cowries were the most dominant medium of exchange for many people in Sokoto Province.

However, between 1896 and 1912, the colonial government had, through the BBWA, made several attempts to replace the existing currencies of the province in particular and that of the Nigerian area in general, with colonial currencies. As time went on, those pre-colonial currencies were gradually replaced first, by the silver coinage of the BBWA and later, by the WACB currencies, issued after 1912 when the Board was established. The WACB was responsible for issuing colonial currency notes and coins in the entire Nigerian area from 1912 to 1959. Moreover, as Nigeria approached the date of political independence in 1960, moves were equally made to position the country for economic independence and stability. But, due to colonial hangover and subsequent neo-colonial syndrome, even after attaining political independence on 1st October, 1960, the country retained the names of its colonial overlord currency units: the pound, shilling and pence, until in 1973 when they were changed to Naira and kobo. It was also as part of preparation for the independence that the bank of issue - the CBN - was established and new currencies for the country were also introduced. With its formal establishment on 1st of July, 1959, the apex bank had on that same day issued the first set of Nigerian independent currency notes and coins.

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To this end, this paper is of the view that the British currencies were introduced in the colonies for both political and economic reasons, which ranged from the need to provide portable means of payment to colonial officers like colonial police and army officers as well as colonial civil servants, to the need by the British to meet the challenges caused by expansion in the economic activities between Nigeria and Britain during the colonial period. What became apparent to the British at the time was that, there was no way they could maximally exploit the colonised people and their territories without a uniform and centrally controlled means of exchange.

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- Malam Ahmadu Koko, 85 years, interviewed at Masallacin Gidan Wali, in Yelwa (Yauri Emirate), on Sunday 29th June, 2014.
- Malam Ibrahim Maginga Gungun Sarki, 80 years, interviewed in front of his residence in Gungun Sarki, on Saturday, 29th September, 2012.
- Malam Ilyasu Abubakar Gidan Kaya (seller of old currencies) at Kofar Gabas (East Gate), Sokoto Central Market, 81 years, on Saturday 28th September, 2013.

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